

## RAJYA SABHA

### \*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Friday, February 07, 2025/ Magha 18, 1946 (Saka)

### MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

#### 1. Concern Over Rising of Road Accidents in Pune

**DR. MEDHA VISHRAM KULKARNI:** There is alarming rise in road accidents in Pune city. In 2024, Pune recorded 1,400 road accidents, resulting 320 fatalities. The total number of road accidents has also increased as compared to the previous year. In 2024, about 174 two-wheeler riders lost their lives in road accidents due to over-speeding and non-compliance of norms. Pune Police has now identified 25 pro-accident zones. There are several factors that contribute to this crisis. The Bombay High Court has taken note of Pune's worsening traffic conditions and directed Pune Commissioner to take corrective measures. The Police Commissioner and Pune Municipal Commissioner have initiated steps to address traffic congestion and improve road safety. The rising number of accidents indicates that more urgent and stricter action is required. School-going children, senior citizens, pedestrians, office-going persons using two-wheelers, no one is safe on Pune's roads. There is dire need to take stricter action to prevent further loss of lives. For that, deployment of more traffic personnel and an AI-based CCTV surveillance at accident-prone zones, improvement of road conditions and completion of construction work in a time-bound manner, intensified actions against violation of rules, launching of extensive public awareness campaign, implementation of harsher penalties are all required. I request the Government to prioritize road safety and take immediate corrective measures to prevent further loss of innocent lives.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### 2. Concern over Rising of Guillain-Barre Syndrome Cases in Maharashtra

**DR. FAUZIA KHAN:** There is alarming surge in Guillain-Barre Syndrome cases in Maharashtra. As per the latest reports, the State has recorded 163 suspected cases with 127 confirmed and 28 patients requiring ventilator support. This sharp rise in failure in the public health response exposes gaps in timely diagnosis of disease and medical preparedness. The State Government has failed to take swift action. Hospitals remain inadequately equipped with essential medicines like Immunoglobulin therapy and ventilator shortages. The absence of a coordinated response from municipal and State health authorities has left patients, particularly from rural and economically weaker backgrounds, struggling for treatment. Such lapses in public health infrastructure of one of the most developed States of the country are totally unacceptable. The city administration has neither conducted adequate awareness camps nor implemented proactive measures to prevent the spread of this disorder. I urge the Government to intervene immediately by deploying a central medical response team to assess

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\*This Synopsis is not an authoritative record of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.

and manage the outbreak, by ensuring immediate supply of medicines, ventilators and critical care support, and by providing financial aid to affected families and initiating free treatment programs for those in need. The Government should conduct an independent audit of the public health response of Maharashtra and strengthening disease surveillance to prevent future outbreaks. This crisis demands immediate action. I call upon the Government to take urgent steps to contain this outbreak and ensure that such negligence is not repeated.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

### **3. Need to Address the Problems Faced by Bicycle Manufacturing Sector**

**SHRI SANJEEV ARORA:** I like to draw the attention of the Government towards most healthy, environment-friendly, meant for masses transportation-bicycles. This industry is going through some tough times and some issues need to be addressed by the concerned Ministries at the earliest possible. There should be uniform GST on bicycle and bicycle-parts. Currently, bicycle parts attract 18 per cent GST. Non-electric bicycles attract 12 per cent GST and electric bicycles attract 5 per cent GST. The fragmented GST structure burdens the manufacturers, discourages domestic production and creates unnecessary financial hurdles. A uniform GST rate of 5 per cent is required to support growth of this environmentally sustainable mode of transport. Cycles meant for handicapped persons should be made GST free. These rates need to be applicable from bicycle parts to the final production. The renewal of Bicycle Development Council has been pending since 2021. This inter-Ministerial body plays a vital role in coordinating efforts among Ministries and manufacturers to strengthen the bicycle industry. The delay in renewal of this body is hampering strategic growth and innovation of this sector. I urge the concerned Ministries to address these issues urgently, streamline projects and facilitate the industry's growth.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

### **4. Concern over Rising of Income Inequality and Weakening of Social Welfare Programs**

**SHRI MANOJ KUMAR JHA:** Income inequality is affecting many aspects of our lives. The number of billionaires is increasing, while on the contrary the number of middle and lower income groups is declining rapidly. This process has accelerated even more after Covid. If we talk about unequal distribution of income, the income of the elite class has increased tremendously, but in proportion to that, the income of the working class is continuously declining, which is a matter of concern. Unequal distribution of income not only affects the economy, but also affects social stability. It also affects democracy. Unequal distribution of income also affects subjects like health and education. In the end, I would say that take cognizance of Article 38 and Article 39.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

### **5. Demand to Providing Funds for the Research and Development of Low-cost Gene Therapy for Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA)**

**SHRI HARIS BEERAN:** I wish to draw the attention of this august House to the sufferings of patients affected by Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA). The SMA is a very rare genetic disorder that affects the nerve cells in the spinal cord. This condition is diagnosed in infancy, typically before six months. If left untreated, it is the primary cause of death. According to estimated statistics, approximately 8,000 to 25,000 people are affected by SMA every year in India. The treatments are available to manage SMA, although there is no cure. Three types of treatments exist. Firstly, gene therapy is available for infants below two years. Secondly, there is an injection-based treatment. Thirdly, molecule therapy is also an option.

However, the downside is that these treatments are exorbitantly priced. Consequently, these treatments are unaffordable for most of the people. Experts have suggested that local production of these medicines, specifically generic versions, is feasible. Indian pharmaceutical companies are well-equipped to produce such generic medicines. To facilitate the production of generic medicines, an exemption under Section 100 of the Patents Act is necessary. Experts claim that producing generic medicines locally could reduce the cost of one bottle of medicine to rupees 3,063. I must refer to the National Policy for Rare Diseases, which stipulates that local manufacturing of medicines for rare diseases is permitted. Therefore, I urge upon the Government to invoke this policy to allow local production of generic medicines.

#### **6. Demand to Rename Darbhanga Airport as Kavi Kokil Vidyapati Airport**

**SHRI SANJAY KUMAR JHA:** Darbhanga Airport is the most successful airport of the country under the Udan scheme. Vidyapati was a great poet in our Mithila. When the foundation stone of the airport was being laid in 2018, it was decided that the airport should be named after him. Vidyapati was a famous poet and litterateur of languages like Maithili and Sanskrit, whose contribution to Indian literature and devotional tradition has been extremely important. He has an indelible place in the hearts of the people of the Mithila region. In this context, the Chief Minister of Bihar had also appealed to name the Darbhanga airport as Kavi Kokil Vidyapati Airport. I request the Government to honour the enduring legacy of poet Kokil Vidyapati ji and the Darbhanga airport be named after Vidyapati ji.

*(Dr. Sasmit Patra, Shrimati Dharmshila Gupta, Dr. John Brittas and Shri Prakash Chik Baraik associated)*

#### **7. Demand to Establish a National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (NIMHANS) Branch in Bellary, Karnataka**

**DR. SYED NASEER HUSSAIN:** I like to draw attention to the critical issue of mental healthcare in Karnataka, and particularly, the shortcomings of the existing National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences in Bangalore, and the pressing need for a new branch in Bellary. The NIMHANS, Bellary is severely over-burdened. The facility handles a disproportionately high volume of patients. Due to limited specialised human resources and insufficient infrastructure, NIMHANS is struggling to meet the growing mental health needs of Karnataka and also the neighbouring States. Bellary offers a strategic solution for addressing the mental health crisis in North Karnataka especially, unlike more distant districts, Bellary is centrally located making it more accessible for patients from Northern districts. Additionally, Bellary's proximity to Karnataka's mining sectors, which face highest socio-economic stress and mental health challenges, underscores the importance of establishing specialized mental healthcare in this region. Bellary's location also offers strategic connectivity to neighbouring States positioned near Hyderabad-Bangalore economic corridor. Bellary can serve as a vital hub for patients and researchers from regions like Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and even Maharashtra. This inter-State accessibility is crucial for providing mental health services to under-served areas reducing the burden on Bangalore's NIMHANS and ensuring broader regional reach. Availability of Government land and strong transport connectivity makes it an ideal location. I urge the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to prioritize the establishment of a NIMHANS branch in Bellary.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **8. Demand to Extend the Sevok-Rangpo Railway Project to Nathu La Pass**

**SHRI DORJEE TSHERING LEPCHA:** My issue is of demand for extension of railway network from Rangpo to Nathu La, Indo-Tibetan border. Sevok-Rangpo railway line

is a line currently under construction to connect the Indian State of West Bengal and Sikkim, and the first phase is expected to be completed by 2027. The Sevoke-Rangpo railway line is part of India's border strategy to enhance connectivity in the North Eastern Region. By linking Sikkim to the national railway network, the project will help integrate the region more closely with the rest of the country promoting national unity and security. The plan for extending the all important Sikkim rail link to Nathu La will only be a boon to all-weather connectivity. It will aid the Armed Forces with logistical support in the forward areas. Nathu La, a border area with Tibet, is not only a tourism attraction but also an avalanche-prone area. At present, road connectivity provides a comfortable travel experiences for tourists and the Forces but all that depends on favourable weather. I urge upon the Government to take up completion of all phases of the Sevoke-Rangpo Rail line till Nathu La on priority basis as once completed, this rail line is expected to have a significant positive impact on the local economy. It will improve transportation efficiency, reduce travel time, and make Sikkim more accessible to tourists and businesses. This, in turn, will lead to increased economic activities and job-creation in the region. This will also aid our Armed Forces with better connectivity.

*(Shri Sujeet Kumar, Dr. Sasmit Patra, Shri Maharaja Sanajaoba Leishemba, Shri Dhananjay Bhimrao Mahadik, and Shri Devendra Pratap Singh associated)*

#### **9. Concern over Exponential Rise in the Non-Communicable Diseases due to Surge in Consumption of Ultra-processed Foods in India**

**SHRI SUJEET KUMAR:** There is an alarming rise in the consumption of ultra-packaged food which are high on salt, sugar, unhealthy fat, but offer minimum nutrition. The World Health Organization Report states that India's spending on the ultra packaged foods skyrocketed to almost 38 billion in 2019 which is more than 40-times increase in the consumption of fast food in a period of 13 years. This excessive consumption of junk food and poor lifestyle is one of the key reasons for the alarming increase in the Non-Communicable Diseases. ICMR Report shows that NCD-related deaths in India rose to 61.8 per cent in 2016. The most worrisome part is that the children are getting addicted to junk food because advertisements target the children and their impressionable minds. 41 per cent of our population is under 18. Due to this our children will end up growing as unhealthy citizens. The second worrisome aspect is that the same companies, the same brands, which sell better quality ingredients and food products in Western countries, sell cheaper versions of those brands in India, which has huge consequences for our citizens' health. They prioritize profit over the health of Indian citizens, taking advantage of our regulatory loopholes. The Government should take enough measures to strengthen the regulations. I urge the Government to take action by making stricter FSSAI Regulations, by considering a health tax on the junk food, and by adopting mandatory front-of-pack labelling.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **10. Need to Initiate Comprehensive Policies for the Welfare of Indian Expatriates in the GCC Countries**

**SHRI SANDOSH KUMAR P:** We have a very huge Indian population living in GCC countries. There are a lot of issues and concerns related to this pravasi community. The first issue is related to the hike in air fare, especially during the peak season. Unfortunately, our Aviation Ministry has become a mute spectator to this exploitation. I urge the Government to take necessary steps to control the air fare. Secondly, the mortal remains of an Indian dying in any of the GCC countries must be taken back to the homeland. For that Air India is charging double the fare that Air Arabia charges. Thirdly, the Indian Community

Welfare Fund, is a huge amount that is with the Indian embassies in the GCC countries, but it is unused and of no use. We have to ensure that pravasis get to exercise their franchise. To address all these issues, we need a comprehensive and thorough policy which should be pragmatic as well.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

### **11. Concern over Opening up the Country's Offshore Sand Blocks for Mining by Private Entities**

**SHRI JOSE K. MANI:** Opening up country's offshore sand blocks for mining by private entities is a serious concern for the State of Kerala, especially the coastal areas of Kerala, and also the country. During 2023, the Offshore Areas Mineral Act was amended. The motive behind the Amendment was to allow private players into offshore mining. This has opened the doors for unchecked exploitation of marine resources and the people. The Geological Survey of India has found about 745 million tonnes of sand near Kollam in Kerala, Allepy, Ponnani, etc. Surprisingly, the Centre has already invited tenders of mining across 242 sq.km of Kollam coast. As we all know, whenever a huge capital investment is made and profit making projects are auctioned, it goes to one or two companies. Now, this Government is going to deport 10 lakh fishermen from the coastal areas of Kollam. The venture is done without considering the State's interest and the impact on the environment and the marine world. Moreover, not a single rupee is being paid as royalty to the State Government or to the fishermen to compensate. The coastal line of Kerala is about 590 km and more than 10 lakh fishermen are living in the coastal area. Deep mining will destroy the ecosystem.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

### **12. Demand to include Kurmali, Mundari, Nagpuri and Ho languages of Jharkhand in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution**

**SHRI PRADIP KUMAR VARMA:** Important languages like Kudmali, Khortha, Mundari, Nagpuri and Ho are spoken in Jharkhand, which are not only the mother tongues of lakhs of people but also their cultural, social and historical identity. The language of Bhagwan Birsa Munda's movement 'Ulgulan' was also Mundari. This language is the identity of the Munda community, which has contributed significantly to the development of Jharkhand's history and culture. 'Ho' language is spoken exclusively in Singhbhum region and it is spoken by the people of the 'Ho' tribe in large numbers. Kudmali language is spoken by the Kurmi community of Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha. Its literary and cultural importance is also immense. Nagpuri language has also been widely the original language of communication in the entire state including the capital of Jharkhand. I urge the Government to include these languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

### **13. Need for Government Interventions and Legislations for Regulating AI-Generated Deepfake Videos**

**SHRIMATI DARSHANA SINGH:** In today's era, technology has become an integral part of our lives. On one hand, technology is helping to make our lives easier, on the other hand, sometimes it also causes some serious problems. At present, new technologies including Deepfake are being developed internationally, which changes a person's face, voice or gestures using Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Negative use of this technology may not only endanger personal privacy, but also create many other serious problems in the society. This technology makes video and audio so accurate that it is very

difficult to differentiate between real and fake. I request the Government to take strict legal action against those misusing Deepfake technology.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **14. Concern over the problems Faced by Potato Farmers in the Country**

**SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN:** The condition of potato farmers across the country is very pathetic. In 2014, Shri Narendra Modi had assured potato farmers in a public meeting in Agra that after coming to power, a potato processing unit on the lines of the potato processing unit in Banaskantha, Gujarat will be set up. The cost of potato comes around Rs 1,600 per quintal and the last time the purchase announced by the Uttar Pradesh Government was Rs 459 per quintal. There can be no bigger joke than this. The unfortunate situation is that potato is included in horticulture, which should be removed and included in agriculture. There is a Potato Board in China and China estimates in advance how many acres of potato has been sown, how much will be produced in the country, how much will be consumed and how much will get wasted. A similar Board should be established in our country as well. Farmers do not get high quality seeds. There is no proper system of research in the country. The potato farmer is able to get only 65 percent of the price of his crop from the potato he produces. Therefore, I request the Government to make arrangements for potato processing.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **15. Demand to Include the Musi River in Hyderabad as Part of the Country's Major River Rejuvenation Project.**

**SHRI ANIL KUMAR YADAV MANDADI:** The history of the Musi River spans centuries. In the past, it served as a vital source of drinking water for the city of Hyderabad, supported farming on thousands of acres of land, and provided a livelihood for our fishermen brothers. However, the current state of the Musi River is a tragic one. Today, it is polluted with garbage and industrial chemical waste from Hyderabad, causing the river to resemble a drain. As a result, the people living in the small settlements along the river suffer from frequent illnesses every year. The Congress government has repeatedly urged the Central Government to allocate funds for the revival of the Musi River. Despite these ongoing requests, our government has not received any support from the Central Government. We strongly demand that the Central Government provide budgetary assistance as soon as possible to restore the Musi River at the earliest.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

#### **16. Concern over the Difficult Situation arising due to Recession in the Diamond Industry**

**SHRI GOVINDBHAI LALJIBHAI DHOLAKIA:** Surat, an industrial city of Gujarat, is world famous for textiles and diamonds. This industry provides livelihood to 10 lakh gemstone artisans directly and 50 lakh people indirectly, but this industry is going through a serious crisis. Today lakhs of gemstone artisans are facing unemployment and salary cuts. I request the Minister of Commerce and Industry to constitute a Gemstone Artisans Welfare Board on the lines of Gujarat Shramyogi Kalyan Board and a special campaign should be launched to provide the benefits of the schemes of the Central and State Government to these gemstone artisans. Gemstone artisans should be exempted from professional tax and they should be extended loans at concessional rates. A high level committee should also be constituted to overcome this crisis.

*(Several hon'ble Members associated.)*

## **17. Concern over the Rising Use of Narcotic Drugs among Adolescents and Young Adults**

**SHRIMATI JEBI MATHER HISHAM:** The adolescents, young boys and girls in the State of Kerala are dripping into the drugs at a very high level. Escalation in drug-related crimes in Kerala is deeply concerning. There have been several instances where adolescents have murdered their close relatives under the influence of drugs. The number of cases under the narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances surged from 5,695 in 2021 to 26,619 in 2022. In 2022 alone, Kerala accounted for 27,545 drug-related arrests, representing 29.4 per cent of India's total NDPS arrests. The NCB has further confirmed that high intensity drugs like MDMA, LSD and cocaine are being trafficked into Kerala from international sources, worsening the crisis. A Kerala Excise Department survey indicates a sharp rise in drug demand among adolescents, further exposing the failure to control this menace. Given the gravity of the situation in Kerala, I urge the Union Government to collaborate with the State in formulating a comprehensive national strategy to combat drug addiction.

*(Shri Haris Beeran, Dr. Sasmit Patra, Dr. Fauzia Khan, Shri Sujeet Kumar and Shri Sanjeev Arora associated.)*

## **18. Demand to Address the Problems Faced by Farmers in Maharashtra**

**\*SHRIMATI RAJANI ASHOKRAO PATIL:** Farmers are the ones who suffer the most from the fury of nature and the administration's apathy. Despite praising these farmers as the country's food providers, no significant efforts are being made to address their problems. It is true that farmers, especially in my Marathwada region, are facing death today due to problems like crop loss and debt burden. In 2021, the Maharashtra Government announced that it would provide agricultural insurance for one rupee. Farmers had taken insurance with the hope that even if their crops were destroyed, they would get insurance coverage. But that didn't happen, rather a huge insurance scam of about Rs 500 crore has taken place in Maharashtra. The government has failed to provide a satisfactory answer regarding when the promises made about MSP for various crops, including soybean, cotton, and onion, will be fulfilled. This year, the soybean crop is ready, but due to a shortage of jute bags for storage, it is not being purchased. The estimated price of soybean is Rs 6,000 per quintal, but farmers are barely getting Rs 3.8-4.5 thousand. The demand for legal guarantee for MSP is also pending. As electricity is supplied at night for agriculture in my State, farmers have to risk their lives to water their crops. The cost of fertilizers, pesticides, equipment, fuel and labor has increased by 50 percent in the last three years. What you call *Amritkaal* has become *Vishkaal* for farmers. Before using artificial intelligence in the agriculture sector, farmers should be empowered by training them in artificial intelligence technology.

*(Dr. Sasmit Patra and Dr. Fauzia Khan associated.)*

## **19. Need for Protection to Depositors of Cooperative Credit Institutions and Measures to Regulate Cooperative Credit Institutions**

**SHRI DHANANJAY BHIMRAO MAHADIK:** Loans are provided to small industries and businesses through co-operative credit institutions in the country and state, but due to financial scams being exposed in many institutions, the confidence of depositors in these small credit institutions is decreasing. These institutions are not given insurance

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\* Spoke in Marathi.

protection despite regular cooperative audits. Therefore, insurance protection should be made available to the depositors of cooperative credit institutions.

*(Dr. Fauzia Khan, Dr. Sasmit Patra and Shri Dorjee Tshering Lepcha associated.)*

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### **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS**

The following Bills were introduced:

1. The Artificial Intelligence (Protection of Rights of Employees) Bill, 2023
2. The Deepfake Prevention and Criminalisation Bill, 2023
3. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Amendment of Article 368)
4. The Asha Workers (Regularization of Service and Other Benefits) Bill, 2024
5. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Insertion of New Article 21-B and Amendment of the Seventh Schedule)
6. The Entrepreneurship Leave Bill, 2024
7. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Amendment of Article 85)
8. The Right to Digital Literacy Bill, 2024
9. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (Amendment) Bill, 2024
10. The National Tribal Heritage Council Bill, 2024.
11. The Coaching Institutes (Accountability and Regulation) Bill, 2024
12. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Insertion of New Part Xiv B and Amendment of the Seventh Schedule)
13. The National Agricultural Commission Bill, 2024
14. The Release of Mortal Remains by Clinical Establishments Bill, 2024
15. The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024
16. The Virtual Court Proceedings Bill, 2024
17. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Amendment of Articles 124, 217 and 224)
18. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Insertion of New Article 21- B and Substitution of Article 39-A)
19. The Right to Free Public Health Care Bill, 2024
20. The National Commission for Workers Bill, 2024
21. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill, 2024
22. The Digital Personal Data Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2024
23. The National Commission for the Welfare of Salt Workers Bill, 2024
24. The Parliament (Productivity Enhancement) Bill, 2024
25. The Prevention of Custodial Torture Bill, 2024
26. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Amendment of Articles 124 and 216)

27. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Insertion of New Articles 48-B and 51-B)
28. The Public Works (Quality Assurance and Transparency) Bill, 2024
29. The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024
30. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Insertion of New Article 21-B and Amendment of the Seventh Schedule)
31. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2024
32. The Makhana (Fox Nut) Industry (Promotion and Development) Bill, 2024
33. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2025 (Amendment of Article 293)
34. The Code on Social Security (Amendment) Bill, 2024
35. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Amendment of Article 158)
36. The Criminal Laws (Repeal) Bill, 2024
37. The Recognition of Legal Person Status of Rivers Bill, 2024
38. The Prevention of Black Magic, Witch-Hunting and Superstitious Practices Bill, 2024
39. The Private Universities (Prevention of Sale of Degrees) Bill, 2024
40. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Amendment of the Seventh Schedule)
41. Rainwater Harvesting in Government Establishments and Schools Bill, 2024
42. Compulsory Self-Defence Training in Educational Institutions Bill, 2024
43. Code on Social Security (Amendment) Bill, 2024
44. Voyeurism (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill, 2024
45. Medicines and Medical Devices (Price Control and Accessibility) Bill, 2025
46. The Digital Health Records (Mandatory Use) Bill, 2025
47. The Sustainable Fashion (Promotion and Regulation) Bill, 2025
48. The Online Hate Speech (Prevention) Bill, 2024
49. The Viral Hepatitis (Prevention and Control) Bill, 2025

#### **The Prevention of Fraudulent Calls Bills, 2024**

*The motion for withdrawal of the Bill was adopted.*

#### **The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2024**

**DR. FAUZIA KHAN, moving the motion for consideration of the Bill, said:** I am proposing this amendment to address delays and coordination gaps among police, CWCs, and Special Courts, which increase trauma for child victims. Courts have repeatedly emphasized the importance of timely reporting, as seen in *Shankar Kishan Rao Khade vs. State of Maharashtra (2013)*, where failure to report sexual offences against minors was deemed as shielding offenders. Stronger legislative mandates are necessary to ensure timely reporting, confidentiality, and protection for whistleblowers.

One key amendment is to Section 21(2), expanding the penalty for failing to report suspected—not just confirmed—child abuse. The *Muzaffarpur Shelter Home case* exposed systemic failures where authorities ignored early signs of abuse. This amendment ensures

proactive intervention by mandating reporting obligations for schools, colleges, and workplaces. Similar international provisions exist, such as the U.S. *Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act*. Another amendment, to Section 25(2), ensures that a child's statement before the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) is given weight alongside statements made before a magistrate. This change addresses trauma-related inconsistencies in testimonies, improving conviction rates. Internationally, the *EU Victims' Rights Directive* and Canada's *Bill C-2* allow recorded statements to reduce victim distress. Addressing online threats is also critical. Institutions must ensure timely reporting of digital crimes, particularly child sexual abuse material, with strict penalties for non-compliance.

A major reform involves restructuring the victim compensation framework. I propose replacing Section 33 with Chapter VIII A, ensuring financial aid regardless of case outcomes. Too often, victims receive no support if a case ends in acquittal due to lack of evidence or hostile witnesses. My amendment mandates interim and final compensation for therapy, rehabilitation, and education. If offenders cannot pay, the government will step in through the *District Legal Services Authority (DLSA)*. Special courts will be empowered to grant interim relief immediately after FIR registration. In cases involving juvenile offenders, victims will be entitled to financial aid for medical and psychological recovery. Additionally, victims of digital crimes will receive urgent support for legal expenses and counseling. The *Saibaj Noormohammad Shaikh* case underscored the importance of victim compensation. This amendment codifies existing provisions into law for stronger enforcement. Internationally, Germany's *OEG Victim Compensation Act* and the UK's *Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme* offer state-funded aid—our framework must align with these best practices. I propose to amend Section 43 to improve stakeholder training. While the law mandates awareness programs for government officials, I propose extending this to school authorities, teachers, and childcare staff to ensure they can report and handle cases effectively. A 2018 *NLSIU report* highlighted how untrained investigators often retraumatize children by mishandling cases. The *National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)* has already developed safety guidelines, which must be widely implemented. Training should also cover specialized approaches for victims with disabilities and cybersecurity threats. Globally, Australia's *Child Safe Standards* mandate similar protective policies.

In conclusion, this Bill strengthens the POCSO Act by closing legal loopholes, ensuring victim compensation, and enhancing institutional accountability. By mandating timely reporting, expanding compensation rights, and improving training, these amendments will make child protection more effective, transparent, and victim-centric.

**DR. RADHA MOHAN DAS AGRAWAL:** I was unaware that such an important bill was being introduced, and I regret not knowing earlier. However, I fully acknowledge the sensitivity of this issue. As a former MLA from Gorakhpur and a paediatrician, I recall a heartbreaking incident where a four- or five-year-old child was sexually abused within a school premises. The young parents were devastated—not just by the crime itself, but by how society treated them afterward. Instead of supporting them, the school administration and the community pressurized them to stay silent, arguing that the child was too young to remember the trauma and that legal action would only create more trouble. When I met them, I asked if they wanted to fight for justice or drop the matter. They firmly said they wanted to fight, so I assured them of my support. I pressurized the SSP to ensure that an FIR was filed, despite intense social and political pressure to suppress the case. Even after the FIR was registered. The parents faced continuous pressure to withdraw the complaint, but they stood firm. This experience reinforced my belief that legal and systemic reforms are essential to protect child victims and ensure justice. Society must stand with victims instead of silencing them.

Since I was a doctor, I took her to a government clinic. The doctor told me that she had been molested. I pressurised the administration to take action on this heinous crime. They did not respond properly. After that, due to extreme political pressure, her parents themselves requested me not to take further action on this case. Nothing much happened on the matter. Fauzia ji has brought such an important issue, but if we think that only the police will stop this crime, the country's justice system will do it, the court will give punishment, and the crime will be controlled out of fear - thinking like this is greatly underestimating the whole issue. Most of the incidents of child sexual abuse happen within the four walls of the house. It happens by family, relatives, our friends or very close relations. Many times, the child does not even understand what has happened. I thought that such an important subject would be considered very seriously. But the serious psychological thinking that should have been done did not happen. People who do such things are mostly mentally derailed. Now the question is that there is no system for mental health check-up in our country. We teach, but there is never an attempt to do a psychological analysis of any student. There is no such system. There is no process anywhere in this entire education system, in this entire private or government service system, to evaluate the personality of a person. In today's era, every person is slowly becoming mentally abnormal. Talking about POCSO, there are many such crimes in it which are difficult to prove. What kind of action are we going to take on them? We cannot install CCTV cameras in every house, small schools, relatives' houses, hostels, tuitions etc. These statistics are the worst in the country in Maharashtra. This happened to 22,172 children out of one lakh children. This is more than 20 percent. But these statistics and reports are also the tip of the iceberg. If we go deeper, there will be no child left who has not been subjected to this type of incest. If the parents hide it out of fear of society, then that is a different matter. When the Government itself investigated this, the figures of sexual abuse of children were found to be 53 percent. We will be surprised to know that this figure is increasing every year. It is not that the government did not do anything. In 2012, when the POCSO law came for the first time, there was an opposition Government. The child's mind is very sensitive. Once some things get into his heart and mind, they do not go away. We get many such patients who do abnormal acts. Most of the mentally deranged people have also been victims of similar crimes in childhood. They start becoming eager to take revenge for those things. Children who are victims of such crimes remain nervous, scared, all these psychological manifestations are actually born from these crimes somewhere. There is a disorder of lack of concentration, all these problems are built around this problem. Now I will come to its legal aspect. Our government had built a one stop centre in 2015. If you go there, medical examination and police investigation etc. everything is done under one roof. If you do not want to stay at home at present, then that centre will also arrange for that for you. Today there are about 900 centres all over the country. We had made changes in the POCSO Act in 2019. There has been a huge difference in the POCSO Act between 2012 and 2019, punishments have been changed, punishments have become more stringent. If someone tempts or scares a child for this purpose, then even more stringent action has been taken against him. Very strict provisions have also been made regarding social media and pornography etc. There have been orders of the hon'ble courts that there should be a juvenile police unit in every district. Our government has implemented this. This is a very serious problem, so deep thinking is needed. We have to think very deeply about our entire education and health system. We should form a good national level task force which will consider these issues very seriously and in an innovative way.

**SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH:** In 2019, when this topic was discussed in this House, the then Chairman had constituted a committee of MPs on this subject, this committee submitted its report in 2020. There were five major recommendations in this report. First,

legal changes should be made. Second, technical measures should be taken. Third, institutional measures should be taken which strengthen it. Fourth, we have to take social and educational measures in schools and colleges. Change is needed in this. The fifth was a measure to make changes at the state level. I think that we need to take many more steps beyond POCSO. Along with the measures suggested by the said committee, other measures should also be taken.

**DR. SUDHANSHU TRIVEDI:** If we view the technical, legal, and moral aspects of this issue, legal measures alone are not sufficient; a change in mindset is also necessary. The government has implemented laws such as the Juvenile Justice Act, 2016, the Criminal Law Amendment, 2018, and the POCSO Amendment, 2019 to prevent crimes against children. For effective implementation, initiatives like SHe-Box, an IT platform, and an Integrated Child Helpline operational in 669 districts have been introduced. Additionally, the Child Marriage Free India campaign was launched to bring about a shift in societal mindset. The Modi government made stringent amendments to the POCSO Act, strengthening Sections 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 14, 15, 34, 42, and 45. Punishments were made more severe, including the provision for the death penalty. Specifically, amendments to Sections 14 and 15 introduced strict measures to combat child pornography-related crimes. The previous Act did not have a proper definition of child pornography. When this Act was introduced, our government provided a clear and precise definition to ensure that it was properly defined, and that no offender could find a way to escape punishment. Today, as we enter the era of artificial intelligence, provisions have been made to address this issue. This would also include cartoons, animated pictures, and other such content. The Act aims to provide a comprehensive and effective definition of child pornography, ensuring that no one can exploit any legal loophole in the future. There have been several instances where foreign nationals visit the country, legally marry young girls using technicalities, and take them away. In reality, they are practically purchasing them only for sexual abuse. A 16-17-year-old girl went to the Santosh Nagar police station in Hyderabad to file a complaint stating that she was being married off for the fifth time at such a young age. If we truly want to fight against regressive mindsets, then there should be no room for politics in such matters. To combat child abuse, our government has sought Interpol's assistance in 3,500 cases. This demonstrates that Prime Minister Modi's government is not only committed to fighting child abuse within the country but also beyond its borders, wherever such crimes occur. In 2014, our government decided to block pornographic websites. However, certain sections of society stood up against it, claiming that it was an attack on freedom of expression. If you look at criminal data records and available investigation reports, you will find two common factors among those who have committed sexual crimes against children: They are addicted to drugs. Their phones contain a large number of pornographic clips and similar content. In conclusion, I would just like to say that we all need to honestly reflect on this issue. Prime Minister Modi's government has taken strong legal measures and is committed to taking more in the future. At this moment, I do not see any additional legal changes as necessary. However, it is crucial to fight at the level of mindset. For this, we all must rise above vote-bank politics and political gains and losses. Only then will we witness a new and transformed India.

**SHRI SANJEEV ARORA:** I rise today to speak in support of the Private Member's Bill moved by the hon. Member, Dr. Fauzia Khan. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2024 is a crucial step forward in ensuring the safety, justice and protection of children from sexual abuse. While the POCSO Act has been a landmark law, involving challenges over the years highlighted by various stakeholders indicate the need for reforms, which this Amendment Bill seeks to address. Our children are vulnerable. Ensuring timely production of victims before other people force them not to go there is very important. Strengthening the role of CWC,

introduction of robust compensation framework, etc., all this will help. If our laws are stricter, people tend to be scared. Another important point is mandatory training and awareness. My request, through this speech, to the people, who are listening, is that parents need to be friends. The amendment to Section 43 in this Bill mandates regular training for institutional heads and staff to ensure that they are equipped to recognise signs of abuse and act swiftly. Enhanced digital monitoring and tracking, leveraging digital tools to monitor the progress of child abuse cases, and compensation claims will increase transparency and ensure timely interventions allowing children to receive the necessary care and support without delay. National campaigns to educate children, parents, and educators about child rights and reporting mechanisms will empower communities to act when abuse is suspected. On strengthening institutional accountability, schools must face strong penalties for failing to report cases of abuse. There should be faster judicial process for child sexual abuse cases. Collaboration with child protection NGOs will enhance effectiveness of the provisions of the Bill. Another issue is criminalisation of unauthorised disclosure of identity of victims and their families. On addressing legal ambiguities, the Bill clears confusion around reporting obligations and compensation mechanisms, providing greater clarity and better enforcement of POCSO. The Bill prioritises immediate need of victims, ensuring that financial support is provided without delay and that the child's safety is the top priority. By passing this Bill, we will ensure that our legal system is more responsive to the needs of child victims, enabling swift action and justice.

**SHRI SANJAY YADAV:** Since our current POCSO Act, 2012 requires some reconsideration, there is a need to properly define child pornography in the existing Act. Due to this lack of clarity, it has become quite difficult to prove the accused guilty and ensure their punishment in cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse. The current Act also lacks provisions regarding online crimes, which have become increasingly common. Criminals target children through chatting, social media, and various websites, using these platforms to commit offenses against them. Recently, it was observed how a Pakistani grooming gang systematically sexually abused thousands of British children. Initially, they targeted children through social media sites and chatting platforms, lured them in, and later raped and blackmailed them in an organized manner. From 1997 to 2014, individuals of Pakistani origin living in Britain raped 1,400 white girls. We must also consider why Australia has completely banned social media usage for children under 16. Additionally, the POCSO Act, 2012 lacks detailed guidelines on justice for victims, their rehabilitation, continued education, mental health support, and reintegration into society. The goal of the law should not be limited to punishing offenders but should also ensure that victims are reintegrated into society with dignity and empowerment. Most victims of child sexual abuse belong to marginalized communities. A shocking example is the Muzaffarpur Shelter Home case, where hundreds of young girls were subjected to abuse. Families from such backgrounds lack the resources to support their children through long legal battles. Therefore, the legal system must take additional measures to ensure justice and rehabilitation for such victims. Financial help is essential for the families of weaker sections during the legal process and to prevent recurrence of crime even after getting justice, they should be financially protected by making laws for their rehabilitation, education, social security etc. After the Nirbhaya incident, a positive initiative was taken by the Government in the country, but not only the Government but the society also needs to be sensitized in this. For this, there is a need to run a wide awareness campaign. *(Speech unfinished)*

*Discussion not concluded.*

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## SPECIAL MENTIONS

### 1. Demand for Efficacious Implementation of Village Map Application

**SMT. SANGEETA YADAV:** Village Map Application is an important step, which will be helpful in promoting transparency and administrative reforms in rural development.

The Government should also effectively implement administrative reforms and transparency in rural areas through this application. It should also be ensured that transparency is maintained in the implementation of government schemes and programs in Gram Panchayats, so that common citizens can get correct information about their rights and schemes. I urge upon the Government to implement disaster management and natural resource management even more effectively under the Village Map Application.

## **2. Need to Conserve Jahaz Haveli in Punjab**

**\*SHRI SATNAM SINGH SANDHU:** I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the plight of the heritage mansion of Veer Todarmal Ji, a Hindu Jain who had purchased the world's most expensive piece of land for Sikhism. Todarmal Ji was a great devotee of the Guru Ghar and is a great example of Hindu Sikh brotherhood in the history of Punjab. He had performed the last rites of Mata Gujri Ji and younger Sahibzadas Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji. For this purpose, he had purchased the world's most expensive piece of land at that time by spending 7,800 gold coins. It is a great tragedy that we could not take care of the heritage memorial mansion of a great philanthropist like Todarmal Ji on the land of Punjab. I urge upon the Government to take care of this historical heritage of Sikhism and the Archaeological Department of India should take immediate steps to take care of this old heritage, a symbol of Hindu-Sikh brotherhood, so that our future generations can always remember and draw inspiration from this great historical heritage.

*(Dr. John Brittas associated.)*

## **3. Demand for Preserving the Heritage of Jaipur City**

**SHRI GHANSHYAM TIWARI:** I would like to draw special attention to the preservation of the historical and cultural heritage of the city of Jaipur in the state of Rajasthan. Jaipur is a unique amalgamation of Indian architecture, culture and history. This city is not only famous for its grandeur and historical importance, but it has also been recognized as a 'World Heritage City' by UNESCO. The heritage of Jaipur is a precious heritage not only for Rajasthan or India, but for the entire world. For its preservation, the Government, local administration and all sections of the society need to work together. The historical sites of Jaipur are unique symbols of Indian culture, and we should make every effort to preserve them. I urge upon the Government to take necessary action in this regard.

*(Dr. John Brittas, Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla and Shri Sandosh Kumar P associated.)*

## **4. Demand for Development of Bhiwani Airstrip as Container Terminal**

**SHRIMATI KIRAN CHOUDHRY:** I want to draw the attention of the Government to the urgent need for infrastructure development in Haryana, specifically, the transformation of the Bhiwani airstrip into a container terminal and cargo hub. Haryana still lacks a dedicated airport, relying on Chandigarh and Delhi for air connectivity. Bhiwani is uniquely positioned as an ideal location for such a project due to its excellent road connectivity. Developing a container terminal here would provide seamless freight movement, enhance industrial supply chains, and facilitate exports. Establishing a cargo hub in Bhiwani would reduce transportation costs, improve efficiency, and attract major investments in warehousing. I urge upon the Government to conduct a detailed feasibility study and allocate necessary resources to transform Bhiwani airstrip into a state-of-the-art cargo terminal.

*(Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla associated.)*

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\* Spoke in Punjabi.

### **5. Requesting to increase the Frequency of Train No. 16861/62 Puducherry–Kanyakumari Weekly Express to a Daily Service**

**SHRI M. MOHAMED ABDULLA:** Train No. 16861/62 Puducherry–Kanyakumari Weekly Express was inaugurated on 18th July 2013. It is a crucial mode of transport connecting key pilgrimage and heritage cities in Tamil Nadu as well as Puducherry. Its average occupancy exceeds 150% in both directions, highlighting the overwhelming demand for this service. Despite operating for over 10 years with such high occupancy, the frequency of this train has not been increased. This route holds immense cultural, religious, and economic importance, connecting cities of historical and spiritual relevance. By operating only once a week, the service remains inadequate to meet the growing demand of residents, students, and pilgrims. I urge upon the Government to take necessary steps to increase the frequency of the Puducherry–Kanyakumari Weekly Express to a daily service.

*(Shri Sandosh Kumar P, Dr. V. Sivadasan Dr. John Brittas and Shri A. A. Rahim associated.)*

### **6. Need to Establish an AIIMS Hospital in Rural Area of Manipur**

**SHRI MAHARAJA SANAJAOBA LEISHEMBA:** Within a short span of time, there are around 25 AIIMS Hospitals established at different regions of the country. To meet the health care requirements of 140 crore Indians, we need establishment of medical institutes like AIIMS in all corners of the country. The present medical infrastructure in Manipur is also inadequate in comparison with population. By establishing an AIIMS Hospital in Manipur, quality and affordable healthcare facilities could be provided to the needy and poor rural people of the State. I urge upon the Government to establish a full-fledged AIIMS hospital in rural area of Manipur to address the healthcare needs of the poor rural people of Manipur.

*(Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla associated.)*

**P. C. MODY,**  
*Secretary-General.*

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