

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Monday, March 17, 2025/ Phalgun 26, 1946 (Saka)

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, I am pleased to extend greetings to the hon'ble Member of Parliament, Shri Jaggesh, on his birthday today.

Shri Jaggesh, a Member of this august House since July 2022, had also been a Member of Karnataka Legislative Assembly (2008-2009) and Legislative Council (2010-2016). Popularly known as 'Navarasa Nayaka', Shri Jaggesh, is an award winning Kannada cinema actor. In a career spanning over four decades, and still counting, he acted in lead roles in more than a century and a half - 150 films admired by lakhs all over. Married to Shrimati Parimala, the couple is blessed with sons Gururaj and Yathiraj both promising and budding talents in Kannada film industry.

Hon'ble Members, on my own and on behalf of this House, I wish him a happy, long, healthy life and extend greetings to his family members.

MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

1. Concern over Increasing Cases of Fake Surgeries in Country

SHRI IRANNA KADADI: Doctors have been given the status of God for centuries, but today excessive commercialization in the medical field has endangered the dignity of this profession. High fees of medical colleges, increasing number of private hospitals and privatization of health services have turned it into a market-based system. Procedures like knee replacement, cataract surgery, gall bladder removal, angioplasty and spinal surgery are now being done in many places to take unfair advantage of the insurance amount. In many private hospitals, the income of doctors depends on the number of surgeries they perform. They are given targets, which is pushing patients to undergo unnecessary operations. The Government has started schemes like Ayushman Bharat to provide health care to the poor, but now cases of fake surgeries and fake claims are coming to light in this too, which is affecting the safety of patients and the credibility of the Government schemes. Apart from this, fake doctors and untrained doctors are treating patients without qualification, which poses a serious threat to their lives. I urge the Government to take strict action against such unauthorized doctors and clinics. Regular audit of private hospitals should be made mandatory to prevent fake surgeries and concrete steps should be taken to stop the fraud in Government health schemes, so that the safety of patients is ensured and the dignity of the medical profession is also maintained.

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

2. Demand to Announce Minimum Support Price for Makhana (Foxnuts) and to Include it under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) in the State of Bihar

SHRI SANJAY KUMAR JHA: The livelihood of lakhs of families in Bihar is linked to the production and processing of Makhana. Cultivation of Makhana is an extraordinary and painful process. Traditionally, Makhana has been produced in deep ponds, where farmers dive into the water to collect Makhana seeds. This process costs a lot of time, energy and labour. The farmers have started the process of planting Makhana nurseries in the fields during the last few years with the help of the government of Bihar. Before planting nurseries in the field, the field is deeply ploughed two-three times and about 2 to 3 feet of water is filled. The fruit of Makhana is thorny and surrounded by peels, which makes it difficult to extract and produce it. While extracting Makhana from water, about 20 to 25 percent of Makhana is left and even while removing it, the same percentage of Makhana gets spoiled. The cultivation of one acre of Makhana costs about ₹ 60,000 to 75,000. The market price of Makhana is high, but as soon as farmers bring their crop to the market, its price suddenly falls, causing huge losses to farmers. I request the Government to include Makhana in the list of Minimum Support Price to solve this problem so that farmers can get a fair price. Apart from this, arrangements should be made by the government institutions to buy Makhana at MSP. Makhana should also be included in the crop insurance scheme so that farmers can get financial security and they can avoid the risk of crop failure. I want to thank the government that it has taken a revolutionary step to change the lives of Makhana farmers by forming the Makhana Board.

3. Concern over the Problem of Unauthorized Parking near Supreme Court, Delhi High Court & Patiala House Court

SHRI KUNWAR RATANJEET PRATAP NARAYAN SINGH: I want to draw the attention of the Government to a very important issue. The Supreme Court, Delhi High Court and Patiala House Court are located near the India Gate Circle. There is no parking space for lawyers and clients there. India Gate is a tourist spot and also a high-security zone. Due to lack of parking space, lawyers face a lot of difficulty in parking their vehicles. Patiala House Court is located exactly on the circle. Lawyers park their vehicles there and are unable to reach to attend to their cases on time. There should be a designated parking space for these three courts, from where the ferry runs and lawyers and clients do not face any difficulty in reaching the courts on time.

4. Need to Address the Problem of Water in Morni Hills, Haryana

SHRI KARTIKEYA SHARMA: There are many problems related to ground water resources in the state of Haryana, especially in the hilly areas of Panchkula, Kalka, and Morni Hills region. Work can be done only with the coordination of the Central and State government to prepare schematics and map of water sources, identify water deficient areas, and prepare plans for them. Due to the complex conditions in these areas, the situation becomes even more difficult due to climate change and lack of rain. I expect more cooperation from the Central Government and the Government of Haryana so that water can reach the areas which have been left out. Projects for harvesting rainwater and providing tap water in water-scarce areas should be accelerated under Amrit Bharat and National Water Mission. Technical assistance should be provided under Amrit 2.0 for water testing laboratories. Wells, ponds, and lakes should be revived under Amrit Sarovar Mission. Groundwater resources should be mapped through the Central Ground Water Board, which

will help in reviving the reservoirs. Help should be provided to Haryana in creating a circular economy for reuse and conservation of water.

5. Concern over Problems Faced by Women in Availing the Benefits of 'PM Silai Machine Yojana'

SHRI MAHENDRA BHATT: I want to draw the attention of the Government towards the problems faced by women in the free sewing machine distribution scheme. The Government is running a free sewing machine distribution scheme across the country for more than 50 thousand needy women between 20 and 40 years of age in every state to enable the sisters to stand on their own feet and to maintain prosperity in the families of workers. There are many states where women are not allowed to go out of their homes to work as labourers and women are willing to work for employment. This scheme has been run by the Government for this purpose. The objective is clear that economically weak women should be made self-reliant. Women from both the urban and rural areas get the benefit of this scheme. While registration in the Construction Workers Welfare Board is relatively easier in urban areas, but it poses significant challenges in rural regions. Although online applications have been introduced for scheme registration, workers still face numerous difficulties in getting registered under the Building and Construction Workers Welfare Board of the Labour Department. The verification process by labour department officials is time-consuming, and corruption remains a persistent issue. To ensure that rural women benefit from this scheme, it should be extended to include workers under the MNREGA scheme as well. There is an urgent need to make provisions for this so that rural women are not forced to make repeated visits to the Labour Welfare Board offices, and the scheme can be safeguarded from widespread corruption.

6. Need to Establish a Branch of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in Nanded District of Maharashtra State

DR. AJEET MADHAVRAO GOPCHADE: There is a need to establish a branch of Indian Council of Agricultural Research in Nanded district of Maharashtra state for the progress of farmers. Marathwada, a drought prone region of Maharashtra, is facing many serious agricultural problems. There are issues like water scarcity, uneven rainfall and effects of climate change. Due to these problems, crops are getting damaged and failing, causing hardships to farmers. Droughts occur frequently in villages, which severely impacts the local income level. This has a negative impact on their economic condition, as their income is not stable due to lack of diversity of agricultural crops. Thus, drought conditions not only affect agricultural production but also challenge the living standards of farmers. To strengthen the drought-prone agricultural sector of Marathwada, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) should prioritize research on drought-resistant crops, efficient rainwater management, and climate-resilient farming techniques. In this context, I request the government to establish a temporary branch of ICAR's Drought Land Research Institute in Nanded, so that ICAR scientists and officials, in collaboration with local agricultural officials, can regularly meet farmers in every village of Marathwada and provide information on drought-resistant crops, which will facilitate economic development of this drought-prone region.

7. Need for a National Policy on School Transport Safety

DR. FAUZIA KHAN: The increasing number of accidents involving school vans and buses has become a serious issue, necessitating immediate action. Despite existing State-specific laws and guidelines from the CBSE and directives from the Supreme Court, several notable enforcement challenges and fundamental issues still persist. Currently, Indian law

does not mandate seat-belts in school buses. While some States have instituted requirements for CCTV cameras in school buses, these practices are not universally applied. India does not have a uniform comprehensive national policy on school transport safety. There is lack of regulation and safety measures for auto rickshaws and e-rickshaws ferrying children. To address these issues, I urge the Government to formulate a national school transport policy to establish uniform safety regulations across all States. This policy should mandate seatbelts, CCTV cameras and GPS in school vehicles. Regular safety audits on all school vehicles should become a standard practice. Schools must implement effective grievance redressal mechanisms. It is imperative to ensure that school drivers receive regular training and sensitization.

8. Demand for Taslima Nasreen's Safe Return to Kolkata

©**SHRI SAMIK BHATTACHARYA:** Taslima Nasreen wrote a novel, namely, 'Lajja', about the unspeakable atrocities against the Hindu minorities in Bangladesh. This compelled her to leave Bangladesh in the year 2004. She got shelter in Kolkata, and, thereafter, an unfortunate incident happened which had been orchestrated by the then Congress leader. I am thankful to the Congress leadership that it expelled that person. But, the most unfortunate thing is that after that expulsion, the Trinamool Congress had accepted that person and sent him to the Parliament of the country. So, the situation compelled Dr. Taslima Nasreen to leave Kolkata again. If someone is in danger anywhere in the world, the people of this country welcome him here. This is a centuries-old tradition here and this is the culture of this country. She wants to come back to Kolkata.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

9. Demand to Rename Places having Colonial Names

DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL: Even after 77 years of independence, many of our High Courts, roads, hospitals, universities etc. are carrying British names, which make us feel slavery. The Government exhibited a nationalistic thinking by renaming 'Rajpath' to 'Kartavya Path', 'Indian Penal Code' to 'Bharatiya Nyay Samhita' and 'Allahabad' to 'Prayagraj', but is this enough? Even today, many of our High Courts, like Bombay High Court, Madras High Court etc. are carrying British era names. In Delhi itself, many roads like Minto Road, Chelmsford Road, etc. also bear British names. I was surprised to know that though the city of Allahabad has been renamed as Prayagraj, the name of its High Court is still Allahabad High Court. The name of its university is still Allahabad University. The name of its Lok Sabha constituency is also Allahabad. Similarly, we may have to consider the names of Gateway of India and India Gate. In addition to it, Delhi still has the tomb of Lieutenant Edwards, who brutally crushed the Indians in the 1857 revolution. Now that we are a bigger economy than Britain, it is important for us to ponder over this aspect. I request the Government to form a Parliamentary Committee in this regard.

10. Demand to Establish Industrial Units in the Upper Regions of Himachal Pradesh

DR. SIKANDER KUMAR: So far, industrial units have been established in only two or three districts of Himachal Pradesh, leaving the rest of the state largely deprived of industrial development. As a result, employment opportunities in these areas remain scarce. If small and large industrial units are set up in other districts, similar to Solan, Una, and Sirmaur, it will not only promote regional development but also create employment and self-

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employment opportunities for the local population. Due to lack of adequate employment opportunities in Himachal Pradesh, most of the youth there are forced to go to other States in search of employment after completing their studies. In such a situation, if industrial units are set up in the middle and upper regions of Himachal Pradesh, the people there will be able to get employment at their doorstep and they will be able to become economically self-reliant. By doing this, Himachal Pradesh will also move ahead in the industrial sector along with other States and will make an important contribution to the economy of the State and the country.

11. Concerns over Foreign Influence in Indian Elections

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: The US President Donald Trump has reiterated several times that they have given 21 million dollars to increase the number of voters in India. This is a very serious matter. Finance Ministry says that we have not received any money and the country's Foreign Minister says that it is being investigated. The Government's stand on such a serious matter is not yet clear. Till date, no statement has come from the Prime Minister in this regard. The silence of the Government on such a serious issue is a matter of even greater concern. If foreign funds are flowing into our country, and if another nation is interfering in our internal affairs without our knowledge of the source and purpose of these funds, it raises serious concerns about the effectiveness of our intelligence system. I would like to request that the Prime Minister should clarify the situation on the floor of the Rajya Sabha.

12. Demand to Increase the Funding for Renovation Works of Group of Monuments at Hampi

SHRI JAGESH: The ancient ruins of Hampi are a testament to the grandeur of the Vijayanagara Empire and have rightfully earned the status of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Today, the site boasts over 1,600 surviving structures, including temples, forts, etc. Hampi is the second most-visited tourist destination in Karnataka generating an average revenue of Rs 4.21 crore annually from ticket sales alone. The Archaeological Survey of India is reportedly lacking adequate funds, putting the preservation of this historic site at risk. Unfortunately, even the revenue collected from ticket sales is not allocated for restoration efforts. To prevent further deterioration of these monumental structures, an immediate allocation of at least Rs 25 crore is essential. Over the past five years, the ASI has received an average of just Rs 1.63 crore annually from the Central Government for core conservation work at Hampi. The irregular release of funds has left many restoration projects, some of which are decades old, unfinished. Given the significance of Hampi as a cultural and historical landmark, it is imperative that the funding for conservation and restoration be increased and released without delay.

13. Demand to Improve the Economic Condition of Women Associated with Self Help Groups in the Country

SHRIMATI SANGEETA YADAV: If India is to be made a developed nation by 2047, there is a great need to increase the participation of women. Globally, the entrepreneurship rate of women is 37 percent, whereas at present this rate in our country is only 13.76 percent. There has been an improvement in the female labour force participation in the country, but the situation is still not satisfactory. In the financial year 2022, public banks had opened accounts of 1.6 million women, whereas in the financial year 2024 this number has come down to only 1.1 million. Women Help Groups and women Cooperative Banks are also not getting adequate financial support. There is a need to take concrete and

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effective steps by the Government to ensure women's access to financial resources. At the same time, their participation in loan schemes should also be increased. Some necessary policy reforms should also be brought about to empower women entrepreneurship, so that India can be made a developed nation. Some training programmes should also be rolled out for women.

14. Demand to accord Biosphere Reserve status to Gandhamardan Hill, Odisha

SHRI SUJEET KUMAR: The Gandhamardan Hill Range is an extremely ecologically sensitive biodiversity region in Odisha. There is an urgent need to conserve this ecological hotspot and bring it to the national and international attention. As per the Regional Research Institute of Ayurveda, Bhubaneswar, and the Botanical Survey of India, there are close to 1,200 species of medicinal plants in the Gandhamardan region of which 300 medicinal plants are actively being used in Ayurveda, Siddha and other branches of AYUSH. Not just its ecological wealth, but the Gandhamardan Hill Range holds immense historical, cultural and religious significance. This hill region is also home to some vulnerable tribal groups who have resided in this hill region for centuries. They have played a crucial role in preserving its natural heritage, traditional knowledge and they have also been following sustainable practices. I would urge the Ministry of Environment and Forests to take urgent steps to designate the Gandhamardan Hill Region as a biosphere reserve.

15. Concern over Increasing Cases of Grabbing of NRIs' Properties in Our Country

SHRI SATNAM SINGH SANDHU: From the country's freedom struggle to its journey toward a developed India, our overseas Indians have made a significant contribution. Perhaps that is why our Prime Minister honors them by referring to them as "Rashtradoots" (Ambassadors of the Nation). It is a matter of pride for us that now the NRIs are playing a very influential role at the global level and are also sending a lot of money for the development of the country. Despite living thousands of miles away from the country, the heart of the NRIs beats for India. To stay connected with the country, they have not sold their houses and properties. They are also making new investments in their country. But countless cases of illegal occupation and fraud on their properties are coming to light. Due to this, an atmosphere of fear is being created among the NRIs regarding their properties and they prefer to sell their properties. This is a very serious matter. Today, there is a need to put in place a new system to ensure the safety of the properties of the NRIs, under which such properties should be secured after mapping

DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS – Contd.

SHRI SANJAY SETH: After 2014, when Hon'ble Narendra Modi Ji assumed the post of Prime Minister, we have seen a huge change. His vision has been to make the railways world-class and connect every corner of the country with rail. His vision has been to make travel comfortable. Today, under the same vision, our Indian Railways has emerged as the fourth largest network in the world. Hon'ble Prime Minister has worked to connect the entire country, whether it is Meghalaya, Manipur, Sikkim, Kashmir, Udhampur-Kashmir-Baramulla train, the Hon'ble Prime Minister has done the work of connecting the entire country with rail during his time. At present, 136 Vande Bharat trains are running and the first bullet train is making its dream come true, very soon it will be seen running on the tracks. We are also testing the first hydrogen-powered train, which will run between Jind and Sonapat stations in Haryana. Its design has been prepared by RDSO in Uttar Pradesh and hydrogen will be used as fuel in it. In view of the encroachments on the vacant land of the railways, an organization named RLDA has been formed. When the UPA Government was in

power in the year 2013-14, less than Rs. 40 thousand crore was given on security, whereas in the NDA Government, Rs 1,16,000 crore has been given for this.

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: I want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister, that many projects are still pending in Tamil Nadu that are not being taken seriously. one of the pending projects is a new railway line from Puducherry to Bengaluru, via., Jolarpet, Krishnagiri and Hosur, which is connecting two States and one Union Territory, viz., Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Puducherry. Several thousand people every day suffer for want for a direct railway link between Puducherry and Bengaluru. This project is still pending since 1984. Areas of my constituency come under this project. Krishnagiri and Hosur are very important. It has to be considered. There is an urgent need to have a doubling of railway line between Trichy and Erode, via., Karur. There is also a need for doubling of railway line between Karur and Salem, via., Namakkal and Rasipuram. Now, I come to maintenance facilities and safety aspects in the Indian Railways. What we normally see is that once a new train is introduced, the earlier prestigious trains are relegated the background. This has happened with Brindavan Express after the introduction of prestigious Shatabdi Express and now Shatabdi Express is being sidelined with the introduction of Vande Bharat. They contain very old bogies and damaged seats. Facilities that were available earlier are being curtailed. The food quality is also very poor. Sanitation is not being kept at all and the toilets are not clean. People complain that the facilities that were available at the time of introduction of such trains are not available now and such facilities should be maintained. New coaches must be there in Shatabdi Express. I have already said about the safety of passengers, especially, the women passengers. As you know in an incident a male entered in a lady compartment at Jolarpet Junction. The lady was pregnant and she was thrown out. This is the situation. Therefore, safety is very important. The hon'ble Minister must consider these safety measures by introducing police officials and TTRs in each compartment.

SHRI MITHLESH KUMAR: I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, whose visionary leadership has played a vital role in the unprecedented success of Maha Kumbh Mela, 2025. Maha Kumbh was a special huge gathering of devotees in Prayagraj. I thank Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, who provided every Indian an opportunity to visit Maha Kumbh. Railways have done a great job by running more than 17 thousand trains. In Prayagraj itself, Railways handled five crore devotees, while in nearby areas like Varanasi, Ayodhya, Chitrakoot, Lucknow, DDU, Kanpur, Jhansi and Jabalpur, it handled 15 crore passengers. I heartily thank Hon'ble Railway Minister. A significant part of this budget is dedicated to new railway lines, with Rs 32, 235.24 crore allocated to improve connectivity across the country. This Budget reaffirms our unwavering commitment to transform Indian Railways into a modern, efficient and safe transport network. Together we are laying the foundation for a future-ready railway network that will accelerate India's progress, strengthen national unity and retain the confidence of every citizen who depends on this vital lifeline. UP has received Rs. 19,858 crore as Railway Budget for 2025 from the Hon'ble Railway Minister in the Union Budget, which includes major projects like new railway lines, equipping tracks with Kavach system. The new railway line from Mailani to Shahjahanpur, Farrukhabad was approved in the 2010 Budget. Whose length was 105 km, in which the names of railway stations were also marked and a budget of Rs. 1,000 crore was also released by the then government, but due to the indifference of that government, this railway line could not be built. Because there was a great need to work for people to go from Purnagiri to Gangaji, so I request the Hon'ble Minister that from the budget you have given for the development of railways in Uttar Pradesh, please release it as soon as possible for laying a new railway line on the much-awaited Mailani-Farrukhabad rail project. Shahjahanpur was also included in the 1,337 railway stations under the 'Amrit Yojana', but

due to the indifference of the officials, no work has been done there for the last 6 months and even the rods have rusted. We have sent letters to DRM Moradabad several times, but no work has been done by them. I request the Hon'ble Minister to run a new Vande Bharat train from New Delhi to Lucknow with stoppages at Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly and Shahjahanpur from this railway budget. It is very important for this train to stop at Shahjahanpur, so in public interest, the said railway line Mailani-Farrukhabad and running of Vande Bharat train should also be included. Please give Shahjahanpur railway stoppage to Dibrugarh Rajdhani Express, which runs from Delhi to Dibrugarh. A train runs from Bareilly – 14315. If its stoppage is made at Shahjahanpur, the railway will become a washing machine in MER, because the railway has a lot of land in Shahjahanpur. I request the Government of India that even if the land is yours, transfer that land to Shahjahanpur Municipal Corporation, so that the traffic problem can be solved and road construction work can be done in it.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR BHUYAN: I rise to speak on the ground realities about railway activities in Assam. The project or works which were announced or are under execution are not coming into reality on time. There is no double line facility in entire length and breadth of the State. In this 21st Century, to traverse a distance of around 500 Km from Guwahati to Dibrugarh, it requires more than 12 hours in Express train. The Rajdhani Express from New Delhi to Dibrugarh cannot run upto Dibrugarh on electric engine and from Guwahati to Dibrugarh, engine has to be replaced by a diesel one. It is really a matter of concern as to when railway infrastructure improvement will attain its desired standard. Although the North- East Frontier Railway is one of the oldest zonal railways set ups, it has always been treated step-motherly in comparison to new zonal set up which has come up much later than the North-East Frontier Railway. In the matter of Group C and Group D employment, the people of Assam are not getting their due share. In this 21st Century, laying of line or introduction of a weekly train cannot be a solace. In terms of quality and quantity, proper train service is the need of the hour and there is a lot to be done for the State of Assam and North-East. Indian Railways should rise to the aspirations of this strategical and sensitive area of the country. To meet power requirement, there was an announcement to set up a power-generating station in Assam, but nothing tangible is seen on ground. Creation of a separate Railway Zone has been a long-pending demand from the people of the North-Eastern States. I request the Hon.ble Railway Minister to disclose the fate of the proposed power-generating station in Assam. Although Rangia Railway Division was created after long persuasion and agitation, the Division is far behind to meet the aspirations of the people.

SHRI NARHARI AMIN: Under the able leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, the budget of the Railway Ministry has increased more than four times in the last 10 years. 34,000 km of new railway tracks have been built, which is more than the total railway lines of a rich country like Germany. Before 2014, the country had metro train network in five cities. In the last 10 years, the Bharatiya Janata Party government has provided metro facilities in 12 cities. Most importantly, for the security of railways, the Government of India has made a provision of Rs. 45 thousand crores in the Railway Security Fund in the budget. A provision of Rs. 7,134 crores has been made to strengthen the Border Roads Organisation for the development of railways in the border areas. On the occasion of the recently concluded Maha Kumbh in the country, there was a plan to run 13 thousand trains, while the Government of India ran 17,330 trains to provide better facilities to the people in the Maha Kumbh. In the last 10 years, 3,10,000 new toilets have been built to increase facilities at railway stations. The Government of India has also provided toilet facilities in 50 percent of locomotive engines. During the UPA Government, 4 lakh 11 thousand people got employment, while in the government of the respected Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, the Government of India has provided employment to 5 lakh 2 thousand people in different

categories in 10 years. Suraksha Kavach are being installed on the country's most trafficked Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Kolkata routes and in the coming time, Suraksha Kavach systems will also be installed on Mumbai-Chennai and Chennai-Kolkata routes. In the next three years, 50 new Namoo Bharat Rapid Trains, 200 new Vande Bharat trains and 100 new Amrit Bharat trains will be run between two cities in the country.

SHRI RAJIB BHATTACHARJEE: Railways are a cornerstone of our lives. The slogan of developed India which we are giving, cannot move forward in the absence of rail facilities. Right now there was talk of high-speed trains, like Vande Bharat Express was being mentioned. The first Vande Bharat Express that started in 2019 was for Delhi-Varanasi route. Today, it has been shown in the budget that 136 such trains are running. 24 states and 280 districts are being included in this. This is a matter of great pride for us. In this budget, a good provision has been made for safety equipment in relation to rail safety. Many governments have come and gone, but no one thought about the Northeast. After Modi came to power, a campaign has been launched for the development of the Northeast. For the first time, work has been done to establish railway broad gauge connectivity in Agartala. Unprecedented development has been done in rail connectivity in Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. The work of rail electrification has been completed to 86 percent and a provision has been made in the budget to make it 100 percent by 2030. Because - right and clean intentions, means right development.

SHRI G.K. VASAN: The Indian Railways has seen significant milestones. There has been a shift from coal-based steam engine to diesel locomotives to nation-wide electrification. With on-going modernization, there is an effort to improve efficiency and services. Passenger comfort has been given higher priority on Indian Railways. We now have Vande Bharat and Vande Bharat sleeper trains for passengers to provide new age facilities like LED screens, WiFi and comfortable seating, while at the same time, reaching destinations at a proper time. The whole country is now looking forward to the bullet train to take us on the path towards Viksit Bharat. Trains are the lifeline for the movement of both people and goods. It unites diverse cultures as we indulge in tourism and pilgrimage. There is always a need to introduce new trains in the country, extend existing trains and also build new lines. Like Kumbh Mela in the North, Mahamaham in the South in Tamil Nadu takes place in Kumbakonam once in 12 years. Therefore, Kumbakonam Railway Station should be modernised. In the South, there is a popular demand about introduction of various new trains on different routes. There is growing demand for several train stoppages also. There are many important rail projects which are pending in the state of Tamil Nadu. Some projects are on fast-track also. I would like to request the hon'ble Minister to take note of the pending projects and get the same completed within the stipulated time.

SHRI RAMESWAR TELI: The Railway Department is doing a very good job. The number of accidents has reduced significantly, only 30 accidents have occurred in 2024-25. Electrification work is going on in our Assam which will be completed in the entire state by March 31. About 50 stations will be built in Assam under Amrit Bharat Station. Vistadome train runs from Guwahati to New Haflong, in which tourists travel. If you ever sit in the Vistadome train, you will know how our Railway Department is working. I request that the Vande Bharat train running from Guwahati to Dibrugarh should be started soon.

SHRI A.A. RAHIM: The condition of loco pilots is pathetic; their working hours are highly uncertain, they do not even receive a weekly rest. This 'inhuman overtime work' severely affects the safety of Indian Railways. Railway Ministry issued an order to reappoint retired staff for the vacant posts on contractual basis, whereas lakhs of Indian youths are waiting for jobs. Reappointing retired staff in critical functions such as railway signalling

and loco running will have far-reaching consequences. It will also affect the safety. I would urge upon the Government to revoke this decision. 361 railway workers lost their lives on the tracks in the last five years due to the negligence of Indian Railways. There has been no effort to increase the number of train services or allocate additional coaches in proportion to the growing passenger demand in Kerala. Kerala is one of the States which generates the highest revenue for the Railways. Yet, the railway infrastructure in Kerala remains deplorable.

SHRI P. P. SUNEER: Once the nation's lifeline, Railways has now become a PR-driven vehicle that prioritises image over passenger safety and inclusivity. The abolition of the separate Railway Budget in 2017 was a monumental blunder. It silenced critical parliamentary scrutiny, leaving Railways to function as just another Department neglecting the needs of ordinary citizens. 40 train accidents in the past year claimed 313 lives and injured 744. Yet, funds from the Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh, meant for safety improvements, were misused for luxuries like foot massagers and office furniture. Projects like the Vande Bharat Express dominate headlines, while ordinary passengers suffer in overcrowded and unsafe coaches. Critical safety-related posts remain vacant, and the recent cancellation of pending selections exposes the system's decay. The Railways have also neglected Kerala, exposing both operational gaps and disregard for legitimate demands. Train stops discontinued during COVID-19 remain unrestored, causing hardship for many passengers. The Indian Railways must return to its core values of safety, service and accessibility to the common man.

DR. K. LAXMAN: The Indian Railways is crucial for the economic, social and cultural integration of India, employing 12.3 lakh people. This year's rail budget is of ₹2.52 lakh crore, wherein 42% earmarked for salaries and 22% for pensions. Despite 64% of the budget going to salaries and pensions, the railways have made remarkable progress during the last 10 years. During the NDA tenure, 5.02 lakh jobs have been created in the railways which is 20% more than the UPA's 4 lakh. In the last 10 years, 31,180 km of new tracks have been laid which is equal to the total rail network of Australia. India is undergoing the largest station redevelopment programme, with 1,337 AMRUT stations being modernised. In Telangana, the budget allocation under the UPA was ₹886 crore annually which has now increased to ₹5,337 crore. Since 2014, Telangana has laid 753 km of new tracks and achieved 100% electrification in 1,096 km. Currently, 22 projects worth ₹40,000 crore are in the pipeline, including 40 AMRUT stations with a budget of ₹2,000 crore. Telangana now has five Vande Bharat trains and along with Andhra Pradesh combined strength is 13. Secunderabad and Hyderabad stations are being redeveloped at ₹715 crore and ₹327 crore respectively. Despite prolonged Congress rule and even Indira Gandhi representing Medak, no railway station was established there. Under Modiji, Medak, Siddipet and Komuraveli have now railway stations. Thanks to Modiji and Ashwini Vaishnavji, railways in Telangana are witnessing unprecedented development.

DR. FAUZIA KHAN: It's the duty of an MP to voice the struggles and pains of millions, seeking justice and empathy from the government. Parliament debates shouldn't just focus on praising one's own work and criticizing others - people need solutions, not political scoring. Railways are the primary mode of transport for the poor, farmers, and laborers. While we talk about a "*Viksit Bharat*" (Developed India) with bullet trains, the reality for many remains "*Vanchit Bharat*" (Deprived India) - dirty stations, overcrowded trains, and poor sanitation. Even First AC compartments suffer from broken curtains, dirty toilets, and pests - the situation in general class is unimaginable. There have been budget cuts of 8.7% in customer amenities, including toilets and sanitation, and spending has been low - 56% in 2022-23, 86% in 2023-24, and 64% till December 2024. Repair and maintenance budgets have also been reduced. We need empathy to address these issues - cold storage supply

chains for farmers, reserved coaches for students appearing for exams, and better reservation systems. I urge the Rail Minister to consider reducing ticket prices.

SHRI RAMJI: While discussing the functioning of the Ministry of Railway in Parliament, I want to highlight the importance of railways for the country. Railways are the lifeline of the country as crores of people travel by it every day. Therefore, it is important to provide better facilities in railways and strengthen the country's economy by making it a source of profit. I emphasize the lack of cleanliness in trains, especially in Rajdhani trains. Security is also a big concern, as incidents of vandalism and assault keep happening in trains. Despite high technology, incidents of rail accidents and derailments are not decreasing. Apart from this, punctuality of trains is also a problem. The distance from Delhi to Lucknow is only 450-500 km, but a superfast train takes 9 hours to reach there. I appreciate the Railway Minister for starting the Vande Bharat train, but it is a high-class train in which the poor cannot travel. Therefore, I request the Minister to run a low-budget Vande Bharat train for the poor. Passengers face difficulties due to heavy rush in trains during festivals. I demand to add extra general bogies in trains so that the crowd can be controlled. Finally, I demand direct train service to Lakhimpur Kheri. Due to lack of direct train from there to Delhi or Mumbai, passengers have to go to Lucknow or Shahjahanpur to catch the train. Lakhimpur has Dudhwa National Park and Tiger Reserve, but due to lack of connectivity, tourism and employment are getting affected. I requested the Minister to pay attention to the connectivity of Lakhimpur.

SHRI K. VANLALVENA: The 51.38 km long Bairabi to Sairang rail project in Mizoram marks a significant milestone in connecting the state's capital, Aizawl, to the Indian railway network. The project was sanctioned by the Railway Board in 1999, with the PET survey approved in 2003 and completed in 2006. It was declared a national project in 2008-09, with the final detailed estimate sanctioned in 2011. The project includes 32 underground tunnels (99% complete), 15 cut-and-cover tunnels (99% complete), 55 major bridges, 89 minor bridges, five Road Over Bridges, and four Road Under Bridges — all completed. With ₹7,714 crore already spent out of the total ₹8,215 crore budget, the project's physical progress stands at 95%. Notably, six bridges exceed 70m in height, with the tallest at 114m, and all structures are designed to withstand seismic activity. Despite challenging terrain, poor geology, and logistical issues, the project is expected to be completed by July 2025. I expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Railways and invited members to its opening ceremony in Aizawl.

DR. SARFRAZ AHMAD: The Railway Ministry has made significant progress, but there are key areas that need attention. While premium and fast trains are a positive step, older trains that serve the common man must not be neglected. Regular maintenance and improvement of existing trains are essential. Instead of focusing on past shortcomings, the ministry should focus on delivering better services today, as that's what the masses care about. Outsourcing in railways needs proper evaluation to ensure it benefits passengers. Complaints, especially regarding deteriorating food quality on Rajdhani trains, often go unanswered. The Railway Standing Committee, which includes members from all parties, discusses issues, but follow-ups and resolutions are lacking. Unlike earlier consultative committees, where MPs' concerns were promptly addressed, today's system shows a lack of accountability. Many stations and halts lack basic amenities. For instance, Maheshmunda Junction on the Madhupur-Giridih line lacks a foot overbridge, forcing children to dangerously cross tracks. While new trains are a welcome development, the focus should be on improving the overall passenger experience across all services.

SHRI MISSION RANJAN DAS: An allocation of Rs 2.55 lakh crore has been made in this Rail budget, which reflects the government's commitment to improve rail infrastructure and passenger services. Giving priority to public safety, a provision of Rs 1.16 lakh crore has been made in this budget. This will make the railway network in the country more safe and modern. In this budget, there is a plan to operate 200 new Vande Bharat trains in the next two to three years, which will save time for passengers and make the journey more comfortable. Apart from this, the number of 'Amrit Bharat Train' and 'Namo Bharat Train' will also be increased. In the last ten years, 1,824 km of railway line has been expanded by converting meter gauge to broad gauge in the north eastern states. An allocation of Rs 10,440 crore has been made for the North East. This will accelerate the pace of development of the North East. The 'Advantage Assam' program has new schemes for Assam and the North East. A new Vande Bharat train will be run from New Jalpaiguri to Guwahati and two new Amrit Bharat trains will start in Assam in the next 10 months. There will be a total of 90 Amrit Bharat stations in the North-East this year and six new Gati Shakti cargo terminals will be established in Assam. The railway network will be electrified in the entire North-East and a new railway line will be laid between Assam-Bhutan. Four railway lines will be laid in the Chicken Neck region, which will improve the rail network of the North-East. A new manufacturing unit will be established in Assam. Two new intercity trains between Silchar-Guwahati and Guwahati-Agartala have also been announced. Due to the priority given to the North-East, the plan to connect Mizoram's capital Aizawl with rail service is likely to be completed by next July. This will expand the railway network as well as improve passenger facilities and freight transport.

SHRI RAVI CHANDRA VADDIRAJU: This year the allocation to Railways is more than the previous Budget, and it reflects the Government's commitment to modernizing and expanding this vital sector. However, Telangana's share in the projects is nominal. Bhadrachalam, located on the banks of the River Godavari, is now called Bhadrachalam. Bhadrachalam is also known as Southern Ayodhya. However, I must express that the NDA government has not allocated any funds or new trains for Bhadrachalam or Telangana. Key demands, such as the establishment of Kazipet as a separate railway division and completion of pending infrastructure projects have not been addressed. Issues of land acquisition, non-release of State Government's share in costs are leading to delays in completion of projects. Many train services that were canceled during the COVID-19 pandemic have yet to be restored. Many requests for stoppage of several trains at Mahabubabad, Dornakal, Kesamudram stations were rejected. Despite several requests for proposals for new trains, not a single new train has been announced. People are requesting that a new railway station at Chinna Kodur, which is between the Siddipet and Gurralongondi in the Siddipet district. Even important stations do not have restrooms or infrastructure facilities for women, the disabled, and the elderly. There is a need for reforms in the medical and health service in Telangana Railway Hospitals.

SHRI UPENDRA KUSHWAHA: Bihar is an important state, and East-Central Railway mainly covers all the parts of Bihar in terms of rail. An old project is near Bihta-Patna, there is an old plan to build a new railway line from there to Aurangabad. This is an approved plan. This project should be implemented. The second project is in Dalmianagar. It was decided to set up a rail coach repair factory on that land. This factory should be set up in Dalmianagar soon. Before the Corona epidemic, trains used to stop at important stations like Dehri on Son, Vikramganj, Sasaram etc. It is requested that railway stoppage should be scheduled at those stations like before.

[£] Spoke in Telugu.

SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE: I will talk about the percentage of the Railway expenditure State-wise. I will mention about three States, where the expenditure has come down in comparison to the previous year. Bengal is one of them. Railways have prioritized the bullet train over a dedicated freight corridor. Bullet train costs much more than the dedicated freight corridor and it serves the common man by transporting essential commodities. Work in the important Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor, from Sonnagar in Bihar to Dhankuni in West Bengal is not commenced yet. The reason is not explained. The Government has stopped many welfare schemes; Garib Rath has been stopped. The concession to the senior citizens has also been taken away. The journalists and their families must also get this concession. Railways, which is essentially a public transport, was meant to unite this country. Today, the Government has used it to create a gap between those who can afford speed and comfort and the others who cannot even find a seat. Railway as a public transport must be protected.

SHRI DHAIRYASHIL MOHAN PATIL: I come from the Konkan region of Maharashtra state. It is an area with difficult geography. The geographical inaccessibility of Konkan was considered and Konkan Railway was established and due to this Konkan has come into the mainstream of development. The Government is committed to ease traffic in Konkan and new high-speed trains are making travel here faster and safer. Track doubling is taking place. Konkan Railway has been completely electrified. New traffic signaling systems have been created. Ro-Ro services have been created, many modernization works have been done here. My request is that Pen is an important place to go to Konkan after Mumbai. There is a large industrial area here and due to its proximity to Mumbai, it is very important for many passengers, many students, many employed people to get a stoppage in Pen. Recently, due to Atal Setu, the area of Pen and Panvel has also come very close to Mumbai. Due to this, what I have told here about the area of Pen is very important.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAY; THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING; AND THE MINISTER OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW), replying to the discussion, said: In this debate many people gave very good suggestions, many people debated very aggressively. The joy of this dignified house of democracy is that everyone expresses their views in their own way and by taking them all together this country moves forward. I will first talk about the financial aspect. For many years, the biggest need of the Railways was that it was not getting the support it needed for capital expenditure. The Prime Minister has fulfilled that need and because of this, today we have been able to reach much better conditions than before. We have come out of the many difficulties that came in the financial condition of the railways due to Covid. Overall, the railways are able to meet all the major expenses from their own revenue today. The railways are able to meet all the expenses like employee cost, operating cost etc. from their own revenue today. The subsidy to the passengers has increased as compared to earlier. A discount of about 47 percent is given on a passenger. This is a social responsibility. Many hon'ble Members have raised the question that what are you doing for the passengers. The railways have made many big provisions to ensure facilities for the passengers and especially to keep the fares as low as possible. If we compare only with the countries around us, then our railways have the lowest fares in India. If we compare it with western countries, there the fare charged is 10 times, 15 times, 20 times more. There has been no increase in fares after 2020. A very small increase was made in 2020 as well. The overall financial benefits of electrification have started accruing from 2018-19. The overall number of passengers has increased, cargo has also increased, but the overall energy cost has now stabilized at around Rs 30-32 thousand crores. This is a very positive thing. This is the result of the far-sighted thinking of the Prime Minister. Today, the

Railways is trying to make up for the costs that had increased due to the Seventh Pay Commission. The Railways has made many big achievements. This is a matter of pride for everyone, a matter of pride for the entire country. In the year ending on March 31, Indian Railways will be among the top three countries in the world in carrying cargo. 34,000 kilometers have been crossed in track construction, which is more than the entire network of Germany. Many respected Members raised questions about track replacement. About 50,000 km of tracks have been replaced and better-quality tracks have been laid. More than 12,000 flyovers and underpasses have been built to overcome many problems. LHB coaches are much safer than the old generation ICF coaches. I would like to say with full responsibility that in the third term of Modi ji, we will replace all the ICF coaches with LHB coaches. This year 1,400 locomotives are being manufactured. If we add the entire America and Europe, more locomotives are being manufactured here this year. Almost two lakh wagons have been added. 14,000 bridges have been rebuilt.

When corrosion occurs in bridges, they become unsafe, so the reconstruction of bridges has to be done in a highly sophisticated and technical manner. 14,000 bridges have been rebuilt. Artificial intelligence and several other technologies are also being used in the maintenance of bridges. Digital control has started coming on a real mass scale, and we have now brought 3,300 stations under digital control. Today, metro coaches are being exported from our country to Australia. The coach is at the top, and the bogie, which is the underframe, is at the bottom. The export of that underframe has now started to the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, France, Australia, and many other countries. Propulsion, which is a very important part of power electronics and power trains, is now being exported to France, Mexico, Romania, Spain, Germany, and Italy. This is also a matter of pride. Passenger coaches are being sent to Mozambique, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Locomotives are now being sent to Mozambique, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. In Bihar's Saran district, in Madhahora, a factory has been set up. The export of over 100 locomotives manufactured in that factory will soon begin. Now, 'Made in Bihar' locomotives will go to the world. Forged wheels from Tamil Nadu will soon be exported to the entire world. This year, the railways will also achieve Scope 1, net zero. In 2025, Hon'ble Prime Minister has set a target of Scope 2 by 2030. The carbon dioxide emitted by the railways and the benefits it brings to the environment will be completely offset directly, and the energy that is purchased, which currently includes some fossil fuel-based energy, has a target of 2030. We have created an annual calendar for systematic recruitment – which categories of vacancies will be issued in the first, second, third, and fourth quarters, and vacancies are being issued accordingly. In the last 10 years, the railways have provided employment to more than 5 lakh people. The process of recruiting 1 lakh people is ongoing. The recruitment process for loco pilots is also ongoing. There is a very strong focus on safety, a very clear and laser-sharp focus and it has yielded results. Many technological changes have been made, including longer rail, higher tensile strength, Electronic Interlocking at stations as well as level-crossing gates. Increasing the number of fog safety devices, development of Kavach is complete and its roll-out has now started. Along with all these improvements, thick web switches and weldable crossings are also being introduced. Much more work is being done in these areas than before and we are seeing good results. If we look at a small parameter, weld failure, there has been a 92 per cent reduction in failures at two places where welding takes place. Similarly, the number of rail fractures, which were around 2,500 in 2013-14, have now come down to less than 250, i.e. there has been a 91 per cent reduction in rail fractures. All these results are measured, locked and factual. Special attention has been paid to the training of staff. Maintenance practices have improved a lot. Infrastructure has improved a lot compared to earlier. Construction of flyovers and removal of un-manned level crossings have also benefited the railways in a big way. In total, about Rs 1,16,000 crore has been invested for the safety of

railways, Revenue Expenditure as well as Capital Expenditure, both put together are many times more than before and this has been continuing for two-three years. The Hon'ble MP raised the question of the use of RRSK funds, especially with reference to foot massagers. Due to the design of old trains which make the loco pilots stand for 10 to 11 hours, foot massagers have been provided in the rest rooms of the loco pilots in their running rooms. RRSK funds have been utilized very well. There has been a significant reduction in accidents due to safety measures. In 2005-06, when Hon'ble Lalu ji was the Railway Minister, there were 234 accidents per year and if we add derailments to it, then this number used to become 698, i.e. on-an-average 2 per day - i.e. 698 in 365 days, meaning 2 per day. When Hon'ble Mamata ji was the Railway Minister, there used to be 165 accidents in a year and if we add derailments to it, then this number used to reach 395, i.e. on-an-average, one per day, i.e. during Hon'ble Mamta ji's time, there used to be one accident or derailment every day. When Hon'ble Kharge ji was the Railway Minister, there were 118 accidents and 263 derailments, taking the total to 381, which is again more than one every day. Today the number of accidents has come down to 30 and derailments to 43, i.e. a total of 73, which was around 700 earlier. That is one-tenth or 90 percent reduction! But, we should not be satisfied at that. I am saying with full responsibility that we should not be satisfied at that and we should aim and strive to significantly reduce it further.

Every incident, small or big, we are making sure that we go to the root cause and wherever people are making any mistakes or equipment are faulty or there are design issues, we are changing those and making sure that that particular cause should not be repeated. That is the approach with which we are taking. We are trying with complete sincerity, with complete integrity, to bring as much knowledge as we can from around the world for the innovation of our own people. Its results have also come and even better results will come in the future. Many MPs said that you did not do recruitment. How can anyone place such a misleading fact, which is so far from the truth, in this House. In these ten years, five lakh people have been given employment. An MP from Kerala said this regarding Loco Pilots. 18,40,000 candidates appeared in the Loco Pilots' exam. Its exam lasted for five days. The exam was conducted in 15 shifts, 156 cities, 346 centres and 15 languages. Absolutely no problem, totally transparent. There were exams up to Level-I, Level-II and Level-VI. Railway and Defence are such two departments which rise above politics because they are the need of the country, the backbone of the country and the lifeline of the country. Currently, there are more than 12 lakh employees, out of which 40 per cent employees have been recruited in these ten years. The entire staff strength is very young and I am very proud of them. Many hon'ble MPs raised this issue that if you run premium trains, then what will the ordinary passengers do? The entire focus of the Railways is on the lower income and middle income group. I would like to tell you with absolute clarity that earlier the ratio of general coaches, i.e. non-AC and AC coaches used to be two-third and one-third. Now that proportion has increased to 70/30. The ratio of 70% and 30% shows how our commitment to *Antyodaya*, that is to work for the poorest of the poor, is being fulfilled. According to the production plan that we have in hand right now, there is a total program of manufacturing 17 thousand general coaches of AC, sleeper plus general, i.e. non AC coaches, so no one should make that allegation. Our core is 'Nation First, Always First', *Antyodaya* is at our core. Every programme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi clearly shows how this government and Modi ji are dedicated to the poor are determined to work day and night to bring a positive change in their lives. Last year, during the Holi season, 604 special trains were run, in which about eight and a half lakh people travelled. That experiment was further expanded in the summer season of last year. 12,919 special trains were run and about 1 crore, 80 lakh people got a chance to travel in them. Last year, that experiment was institutionalized during Chhath and Diwali. Holding areas were made at about 8 stations, tents were put up, food was arranged,

drinking water was arranged, ticket counters were shifted from inside the station to the holding area outside. A new bridge was built on Ganga ji for the management of Kumbh. We were working on it for about two and a half years, the Jangi- Phaphamau line was doubled, 21 flyovers and underpasses were built, 3 new washing lines were built, barracks were built for the staff and 23 permanent holding areas were made. Work was done in a very scientific manner in the holding areas as well. Red colour code was given for the trains going towards Lucknow and Ayodhya, blue colour code was given for the trains going towards Deen Dayal Upadhyaya and Sasaram Patna, yellow colour code was given for the trains going towards Manikpur, Jhansi, Satna, Katni, Madhya Pradesh and green colour code was given for Kanpur, Agra, Delhi. In this way, overall such an arrangement was made so that passengers could travel comfortably with minimum inconvenience. Around four and a half crore passengers travelled by trains. Railway employees also worked day and night. I would like to give an example in which a female constable is working while keeping her child in a sling. There were many such examples. Every officer used to work 24 hours a day. War rooms were made. There would not have been a single day when someone would have come out of the war room before 2-2:30 in the night. I myself went to the war room of the Railway Board many times around 3:30-4:00 in the morning. An incident happened at New Delhi station, it was a very sad and painful incident, but overall the public expectations were fulfilled during the time of Maha Kumbh. All the data related to that incident, including CCTV footage, everything is safe and secure. A high level committee is investigating it properly. They are communicating with 200-300 people, so that we can know what the actual facts are, but what is more important is what steps have been taken? In this regard, 10 total steps have been taken so that 60 stations across the country have been identified where sudden rush and seasonal rush comes. Permanent holding areas will be made in all of them, full access control will be done, latest modern CCTV cameras, latest modern walkie-talkies - whatever steps are to be taken, those are 10 identified steps so that such problems do not arise in future.

To meet the demand of railway travel, on the one hand the infrastructure is being expanded, 34,000 kilometers of new tracks have been built - along with this, work is being done in the country under the guidance and leadership of the Prime Minister to bring in totally new technology for coaches, trains and locomotives. Work is also going on to develop beautiful modern coaches of very new technology in our narrow gauge trains. The first track has been made. It has been made for Kalka-Shimla. A train of a completely new design will be made very soon for Kalka-Shimla. When you see it, you will also feel happy. For our working class or the class that goes to work from rural areas to big cities, 100 Amrit Bharat trains which are completely non-AC are being made. These have the same features as Vande Bharat. The noise level in Vande Bharat train is 100 times less than that of an aircraft. The bogies in it are of much better design than the global standards of design margins. This kind of device, this kind of technology has been installed in its air circulation system. This is called Ultraviolet (UV) technology, which kills 99.9 per cent of germs, so that the air that comes in, the air that remains inside the coach, that air always remains clean. This kind of technology is being brought in and this is a very big system. There are more than one lakh coaches in total, all of them have to be replaced, systematically one-by-one. This system has been started. Over a period of time, old coaches will be removed and new coaches will come everywhere. All of these will have all these features. Namo Bharat trains, which are for short distances, about 50 such trains are being made. They will also have both AC and Non-AC variants. In this way, this Namo Bharat train will be for local trips, for distances between two small cities. 238 new trains are being made for Mumbai, which will be of very good quality, totally new generation trains. The time has come to replace the old coaches and bring in new type of coaches with new technology.

Kawach was discussed. I had explained its technical aspects in detail in the last debate. Its development was completed in July last year. RDSO approved it and now the work of installing it on about 10,000 locomotives is going on on a massive scale and work is going on for 15,000 kilometres. We have trained more than 20 thousand field staff. This is very important. We have signed MoU with 13 engineering colleges so that training for Kawach can be done. We all need to understand that this is not just a device. It is like creating a complete telecom network. A telecom tower is built every four-five kilometres. A complete radio network is built on top of it. Devices are installed every 100 meters on the entire track. A cable network of optical fibre is laid along the entire railway track. A data center is built at every station and the data of all those stations comes to a central computer center. At the same time, a device is installed on the locomotive or the train. It is very, very complex. It is like creating a full BSNL company. In this way, it is as big a task as creating a network like a complete telecom company, but we are moving forward with a resolution. For this kind of work, which is called Automatic Train Protection Technology, the rich countries, whose networks were half of ours, took about 20 years, but Modi ji has given us a clear target and we are moving forward with the resolution that within 5-6 years the entire country has to be covered with *Kavach* network. We are working with this kind of resolution. Many people are cooperating in this. Faculty members, Engineering Colleges, AICTE, all of them are cooperating in this. Many people talked about water-logging, many MPs raised this issue. There are about 14,000 total under-passes in the country. To solve water-logging, pumps have been installed in about 4 thousand under-passes and permanent corrections have been done in about 1,800 under-passes. There are three types of permanent corrections. To remove the water that comes from outside, it includes covering the approach road, building sidewalls, making humps and drains.

For the seepage that occurs from the ground, steps like sealing the joints, PU grouting, lining and concreting have been taken. This year we will work with more concentration and more alertness. Along with this, we are also changing the entire design. A new type of design has been made. That design has been installed at 6 places right now. If that experience is found to be good, then ROB's of the same new design will be built across the country. A little more cooperation is still needed to work with many states, because the railway builds the portion covered by the railway, but the rest of the approach road of the flyover requires the help of the State Government. For example, there are 88 flyovers in Tamil Nadu, whose work is held up. Only 14 percent of the land has been acquired in Kerala. Only 21 percent of the land has been made available in West Bengal. Kolkata Metro is a very important project. The Kolkata Metro project was started in 1972. From 1972 to 2014, i.e. in 42 years, 28 km of Kolkata Metro work was done and after 2014, 38 km of Kolkata Metro has been built till now. The New Barrackpore to Barasat section has heavy encroachment, please help. Baranagar to Barrackpore, where only the utility needs to be shifted. Mominpur to BBD Khidirpur station, which is in Bhawanipur constituency, there too, only the land of the West Bengal government is needed. Please get it, we will take the work forward at a faster pace. In these 10 years, many such projects have been done, which are raising the name of India not only in the country but in the whole world. The Chenab Bridge connecting Jammu and Kashmir is 35 meters taller than the Eiffel Tower. The dream of connecting Kashmir and Jammu by rail, which was a big dream for many years, will be fulfilled very soon. The technical strength of engineers in this country and the commitment of leadership is clearly visible from the completion of such projects. Himalayas are very young mountains and tunneling in them is very difficult, but still the tunneling has been done very well there. Since the construction of railways began, till 2014, there were 125 kilometers of railway tunnels in the entire railway network of India. Whereas in the period from 2014 to 2025, 460 kilometers of new rail tunneling has been done. Gati Shakti University has been built keeping in mind a

specialized transportation sector; a Special Masters Course on bridge and tunneling has been started in it. Manufacturing of Tunnel Boring Machines (TBM) has also started in Chennai now. Four bridges have been built on Ganga ji - at Prayagraj, Ghazipur, Patna and Munger. Railways are a very environment-friendly mode of transportation. If we consider the benefits of electrification of railways as a reference, then diesel cost of railways has been saved by Rs 29 thousand crores if we consider 2018-19 as a reference. This has also saved important foreign exchange. Most importantly, this has reduced the emission of carbon dioxide drastically. If we translate this into number of trees, then this is equivalent to 16 crore trees. Electrification of railways is very important. The Government is working with determination and focus for day-to-day improvement at every level - be it punctuality, safety, cleanliness or new technology in railways.

Discussion concluded.

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***Supplement covering rest of the proceedings is being issued separately.