

I therefore, request the Government to make early arrangement for opening the sugar mill in Supaul by cancelling the previous licences and issuing afresh to another competent person in the interest of the farmers.

(vii) Need to Introduce 'Inner-Line Permit' to Restrict non-tribal settlement in Tripura

SHRI BADAL CHOUDHURY (Tripura-West) : Tripura has been predominantly a Tribal State ruled by Tribal Maharajas till the Princely State merged with the Indian Union on 15th October, 1949. But the steady inflow of Bangalee refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan in large number, ever since the partition of the country, reduced the tribals to an insignificant minority endangering their identity as tribals. To safeguard their interests the Government of Tripura set up an Autonomous Council for Tribal compact areas under the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution in 1980.

To ensure greater autonomy for said Council, the Central Government was requested by the Government of Tripura to amend the Constitution and bring the said TTAADC under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution in 1986, and it was implemented by the Parliament and the Central Government in the said year. But the infiltration of foreigners continues both in the areas under the TTAADC and outside it. Infiltration is mostly concentrated in the TTAADC areas as some vacant land is still available there. This has been endangering the tribal compactness of these areas, the entitlement of tribals to their land, their share in the development projects, their language, culture and customs.

To prevent the situation from deteriorating further, the State Government as well as the Tripura Legislative Assembly through a resolution, passed unanimously, requested the Central Government for an early introduction of "Inner-Line Permit" with a view to restricting non-tribal settlement in the TTAADC areas.

I urge upon the Government of India to consider the proposal favourably and introduce "Inner-line Permit" in TTAADC areas immediately.

(viii) Need to Build A National Highway to Dhanushkodi, Tamil Nadu

SHRIS.P. UDAYAPPAN (Ramanathapuram) : National Highway No. 49 is an important road which connects Rameswaram Island with other parts of our country. Pilgrims who visit Rameswaram desire to have a holy dip at Dhanushkodi bathing ghat also. National Highway from Mukuntharayar Chatram to Dhanushkodi is abandoned due to deposit of sand by high velocity of wind and tidal sea waves. Pilgrims coming to Rameswaram from all over India have to bear much hardship to reach Dhanushkodi due to lack of proper road facility. The fish folks of Dhanushkodi area are suffering to transport their daily catches to the marketing centre and to fetch their daily

needs from Rameshwaram and Ramanathapuram. This proposed road will also be more important from security point of view.

I request Government of India to take immediate steps to form new road to Dhanushkodi.

14.10 hrs.

DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS - (RAILWAYS)* 1997-98

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) : Now we shall take up item No. 7 - Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways), Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey.

Motion moved :

"That the Supplementary sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the third column of the Order Paper be granted to the President of India out of the Consolidated Fund to defray the charges that will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1998, in respect of the head of Demand entered in the second Column thereof - Demand Nos. 2 and 16."

Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for 1997-98 submitted to the Vote of the Lok Sabha

No. of Demand	Name of Demand	Amount of Demand for Grants submitted to the Vote of the Lok Sabha
1	2	3
		Rs
2	Miscellaneous Expenditure (General)	5,000
16.	Assets - Acquisition, Construction and Replacement	
	<i>Other Expenditure</i>	
	Capital	20,000
	Railway Funds	25,000
	Total	50,000

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY (Mandsaur) : We are discussing in the House that railways play an important role in the overall development of the country and also in

* Moved with the recommendation of the President.

[Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey]

maintaining the unity and integrity of the country. From this point of view, while considering over the requirements of the railways, we give our suggestions so that it can expand and public facilities can also be increased. There are three-four issues important therein, gauge-conversion, doubling of rail tracks, laying of fresh lines and provisions of rail network in railway board are the issues which have been discussed in the debate. Welfare-fund for the Railway Protection force has also been discussed. Suggestions have been made to make the Railway-Protection-Force more useful. We should have a sense of concern about their family interests. We have also discussed about their duties also. Many times doubts have been raised about the ability of the Railway-Protection Force. It has been alleged that it is unable in providing adequate safety to the passengers. In view of these allegations if any loophole exists, it should be considered. I would like to request the Hon'ble Minister to consider this aspect also. We have no objection to welfare fund but their efficiency should also be strengthened and improved.

The second demand, which has been made is about the gauge conversion. It was decided that we will complete the gauge conversion work in entire India by 2000. It seems to me that due to the present financial condition of the Union Government or Railways, it is not possible to expedite the work. Gauge conversion work is an important one, but it is not being given so much attention as it should be given. I would like to draw the attention of Minister of Railways that the priorities which were fixed earlier now has been changed. What are the reasons for changing the priorities on which we had started the work? Whether the priorities fixed earlier were not appropriate keeping in view of the development of the Nation or the development of that area. I would like to know as to why those priorities had been changed? I would like to give an example. The railway line between Kota and Neemach in Western Railway has been converted into broad gauge. Although provision for conversion of railway line from Neemach to Ratlam is made time and again yet the funds being provided are so meagre that gauge conversion work is not being done as expeditiously as it should be.

Minister of Railways has been taking the plea in regard to the gauge conversion that this area will be developed and it is necessary for transportation of goods as well as minerals. This gauge conversion work may be completed at the earliest. Cement Industry is there, four cement plants are working there. Soyabean factories are also there. Two-three factories of Soyabean having a capacity of 1500 tonne each are there. So gauge conversion is necessary for DOC loading and marketing of these products. The Railways receive the entire loading out of it and they will get revenue. All these goods are now transported by road. I would like to request the Minister of Railways to make provision of sufficient funds for completing the gauge conversion work from Neemach to Ratlam at the earliest which is going at slow pace so that the development of the area which has been obstructed should go properly. Although this work was to be completed during the year 1996-97.

In demand for grants, it has been demanded to equip the Railway Board with Rail network so that entire railway traffic could be operated from one place. It will be a good system. Today Railway Board has full paraphernalia in spite of that rail accidents are taking place every other day due to which many families are facing difficulties. The number of persons who die in these accidents are increasing. Recently, accidents had taken place at Faridabad Mahendergarh, Ratlam and other places. Four-five accidents took place continuously in a month, due to which the number of deceased increased. Many people were injured and there was a heavy loss of Railway Property. You want to control the entire system by railway network, but it has created stagnation. You will remove the bottlenecks, coming in the way. Sometimes, you hold the driver responsible or sometimes you say it is because of the failure of mechanical system. Railway Board has been incompetent in performing their duties. As far as, the question of the facilities in regard to the rail passengers is concerned, they should feel that they are safe.

Sir, Madhya Pradesh is a backward tribals dominated State. There has been a demand for allocation of funds for the laying new rail lines. The rail line from Vishrampur to Ambikapur in South Eastern Railway has been considered to be useful in view of Tribal areas and development as well-Sarguja is a very backward as well as tribal area. Granite, Bauxite and other minerals in great quantity are also found there. That is a substantial reserves of minerals. If we explore them and export the same to other countries, it will certainly provide a relief to the state and increase the national income. We want that the work in regard to laying of this line should be completed as early as possible. The amount of Rs. 40 crores allocated for this purpose is very less. How much time will it take to complete this line. I do not think that it could be completed with this small amount as I said that Madhya Pradesh is a neglected and deprived of the railway facilities. Time and again we have demanded that work should be started on the proposed rail line from Manmad to Indore via Dhulia. Survey has already been conducted in this regard. It is a tribal dominated area and I would like that you may please look into it. Similarly, there is a proposal for a rail line from Ratlam to Dohad. You are making provisions for laying more new rail lines. You have proposed for it in the demand for grants. Passengers are not getting such facilities as they should get. You are planning to create new Zones. You have created a Zone in Jabalpur. I would thank you for that. What's about the Bilaspur Zone? You said that it would be considered. Strike continued for several days in Bilaspur on this issue. Rail facilities came to an halt there. Honourable member has raised a question in this regard at that time it was stated that you could look into it.

Mr. Chairman Sir, it has been stated that gauge conversion work from Ajmer to Palanpur will be done, it should be completed. Here I discussed about the gauge conversion of the line from Ajmer to Chittor too. From Chittor to Kota and from Chittor to Neemach broad gauge line already exists, if it is extended from Ajmer to Chittor,

then Chittor-Neemach-Ratlam rail-line will be completed. In this way parallel rail line upto Ratlam will be completed. In case any rail-accident occurs or any natural calamity comes, then Ministry of Railways can lay a rail line from Ratlam to Kota via Chittor. In think, he will give due consideration to this important rail-line. The entire state of Rajasthan will be connected with Madhya Pradesh through it.

Mr. Chairman Sir, rail facilities has been mentioned in this supplementary Railway budget, and several demands are there. I do not want to go into the details of these demands but you have stated two things. First is about the modernisation of New Delhi Railway Station, which is very good thing. Delhi is the capital of the country, so it should be modernised but apart from this, there are many railway stations where even ordinary facilities are not available to the people, neither rest house, nor waiting room is available there and even care is not taken in regard to the providing basic amenities there. Ratlam, Ujjain, Devas, Nagda, Mandsoore and Neemach stations of Madhya Pradesh are some of stations where basic amenities are not available. I want when you are spending lakhs of rupees on modernisation of New Delhi railway station, due attention to the development of these railway stations should also be given. These stations are the important business centres of the country and I hope you will certainly give proper attention towards the development of these stations.

Like Anandpur Sahib, there are several other shrines where need of increasing passenger amenities should be considered. In the same way, there are cities of Ujjain and Onkareshwar in Madhya Pradesh which should also be considered for this purpose.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, diesel loco factory was also referred to while discussing south-eastern railway and western railway and sanctioning of amount had also found a mention therein. So far as the manufacturing of diesel Engines is concerned, we should produce them so as to have high horse power engines. I would like to draw your attention towards the Ajmer-Khandwa section in this context. On the one hand you are talking of electrification of tracks, on the other side steam engines are still being used. The condition of these steam engines is such that they move and halt at their own. At times it takes them 2-4 hours to start. I have talked about it with the Railway Board officers and the Railway's Minister but one part of that region is still pulling on with amenities again 25-30 years so. My request is that steam engines should be replaced with diesel engines in these trains.

14.24 hrs.

[SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA *in the Chair*]

It is unfortunate that the number of boggies of Chetak Express have been reduced reportedly due to inability of steam engines in carrying full load. Is it not possible to ply diesel engines there? Our friend Shri Rasa Singh Rawat

mentioned that Chetak was known for its speed. Then why is this train being driven with steam-engine and with relatively lesser boggies? Does Railway Ministry not have diesel engines any more? I held discussions with Railway Board in this regard and I have been told that diesel engines have not been plied on metre gauge lines. You are going to convert the metre gauge lines into broad gauge lines in near future. So kindly provide diesel engine for the convenience of the passengers till the gauge conversion takes place, as the passengers are facing a lot of a problems on this account.

I would like to tell you about certain railway amenities. New trains have been introduced at some places and some of them are yet to be introduced in my constituency. Recently a train has been introduced between Indore and Chennai via Jaipur. That is an important train and there may be a few such commercial centres or intermediate points, where stoppage or haltage becomes essential. I had also mentioned in this regard that railway would get additional revenue on this line. I have already submitted about the Jaipur-Chennai rail that it should have an stoppage at Shyamgarh as it is an important railway station of western Railways. It is a central place too, where the number of daily passengers departure is quite high and thus I am sure that enough additional revenue would accrue to Railway on this route. Once, on an experimental basis, you allot a stoppage there and then only you will be knowing that this public demand has got an importance and should be fulfilled. Barring a few like Jammu-Tawi Bomay or Jammu Tawi-Ahmedabad Superfast trains, which do not have even a single stoppage there usually all the trains stop. This is an intermediate point, and if someone has to journey from Shyamgarh and Dharod to Madras, one does not get any other train. Please consider this aspect as well.

There is an Intercity Express from Indore to Bhopal, which it not running as per the prescribed norms. There should be change in the timings of the train, as it should reach and come back from Bhopal in time. Halts of the train on some points, such as at Begwa of Shahjahanpur, which have been demanded should be granted. I have given priority to Ambikapur and Sarguja. You have already given your consent regarding Gondia and Jabalpur. I would like to thank you, as you are interested in completing that work. However, I would like to reiterate that Gauge conversion work from Neemach to Ratlam should be completed at the earliest. A demand has also been made for lying new lines from Indore to Dhulia via Manmad and from Ratlam-Dohad, for which survey has already been conducted. I hope that you will get the work done by taking an early decision and provide instructions to provide passenger amenities there.

[English]

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deogarh) : Mr. Chairman Sir, I thank you for providing me this opportunity to participate in this discussion on the Supplementary

[Shri Sriballav Panigrahi]

Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Railways. While participating in this discussion I have mixed feelings. Why do I have mixed feelings and why have I not got the pleasure to support the Demands wholeheartedly? Of course, I support these Demands, but I have also got some reservations.

Sir, definitely, the Minister of Railways deserves some bouquets, because he has been trying to enhance the size of the Annual Plan with increased budgetary support from the general finance. He has achieved certain degree of success in this matter.

Railways, in our system, is like a Government within a Government. We have two Budgets before Parliament. When we meet in the month of February, which is called the Budget Session, the first Budget that comes up is the Railway Budget followed by the General Budget. Therefore, to give flexibility to the Railways to manage its finances, there is a provision of a separate Budget presented in the House. This privilege is not enjoyed by any other Ministry. This is the principal mode of transport in our country. There is tremendous need for expansion of the railway network in the country. There is no doubt about it. It is not that the Government or those in authorities including the Ministers are found wanting in their endeavours to expand the network but the major constraint is the resource crunch; the lack of finance or the lack of fund stands in its way. Earlier, up-till the Fifth Plan, this Ministry was having the benefit of a very-very high percentage of Budgetary support of about 75 per cent. Now that has been drastically reduced. It was as low as 15 per cent in the Eighth Plan. Of course, this time with the personal effort of Shri Paswan, there has been a slight increase in it. I think, our Annual Plan is of the order of Rs. 8,300 crore. I will be happy to be corrected if I am wrong. Of course, you, Mr. Chairman, have better knowledge about it as you preside over the Standing Committee on Railways. With the plan size of Rs. 8,300 crore, I think, the budgetary support was of the order of Rs. 1,839 crore or something like that, which is a matter of gratification. I was happy to come across a news item saying that it has been further increased to Rs. 2,000 crore by making an additional allocation of Rs. 169 crore. I do not know whether it is correct or not. I have the press cutting which says that the budgetary support for railways is hiked to Rs. 2,000 crore. It is very good and I congratulate him for that.

After the annual Railway Budget this is the first Supplementary Budget we have before us, which is of the size of Rs. 50,000 crore only. This is symbolic that way. This document of Supplementary Demands for Grants has a financial provision of Rs. 50,000 only under two heads, under two Demands number 2 and 16. Now to meet the technical requirements, new services cannot be taken up without the approval of the House. That is why, this has come before the House. As for instance, Rs. 1,000 only has been provided as an expenditure to be approved by Parliament for Rs. 245.58 crore Sukhinda Aungal new railway line. In congratulate him for that. He has taken

steps to get the technical approval. This being the new service, there is a provision of Rs. 10 lakh. He has proposed to spend this by re-appropriation. So, it is a very-very symbolic item, a symbolic measure that we have today by way of the first Supplementary Demands for Grants.

So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister about what is happening to this additional amount of Rs. 169 crore which will go to the Ministry of Railways this year by way of increased budgetary support. We wanted some more details in the first Supplementary Demands for Grants.

Sir, we have as many Supplementary Demands for Grants for the Ministry of Railways as the number of Parliament Sessions we have every year. In the month of February we have General Budget and the Railway Budget together with the Third Supplementary Demands for Grants. Both are there at the same time. Thereafter, during the Monsoon Session, we have the First Supplementary Demands for Grants followed by Second Supplementary Demands for Grants for the Ministry of Railways in the Winter Session.

Now, I would switch over to other items. This is the first year of the Ninth Plan. Probably, the Ninth Plan is yet to be finalised. How long will it take? How long we will be going on an *ad hoc* basis? Adhocism is not conducive to planned growth of our economy in different sectors including the Railways. Rs. 65,000 crore, as I believe, is the projected Ninth Plan size of the Ministry of Railways. At the rate of Rs. 2,000 crore budgetary support per annum they will be then getting Rs. 10,000 crore as budgetary support for the entire plan period plan size, it is feared that it will be as low as Rs. 40,000 crore. At the maximum it will touch Rs. 50,000 crore. That is why I say that this will not be in the interests of the country. The entire Rs. 65,000 crore. So, against the projected amount of Rs. 65,000 crore which has been projected, should be cleared by the Planning Commission. I lend my support also to the Ninth Plan, as prepared by the Ministry of Railways.

Sir, safety, security, punctuality and the cleanliness are the declared mottoes, much publicised objectives of the Railways. Of course, we saw the photograph of the hon. Minister Shri Paswan in almost all the national dailies holding a broomstick and cleaning a railway station. I think, that was a track near New Delhi Railway Station. I congratulate him for that. Really, he has taken the initiative in regard to cleanliness of the railway platforms etc. There, some programme on creation of awareness was organised and I think, the hon. Minister of Railways himself inaugurated it by cleaning the railway platform or some track. On this I am reminded of one thing--our esteemed friend Shri K.P. Singh Deo is also present--that in Orissa, everybody knows. Lord Jagannath Car Festival is in Puri. In the Car Festival, after the deities are brought in procession which is called *Pohondi*, from the temple itself, they are placed on the cars, the chariots. Thereafter, Maharaja Gajapathi of Puri comes himself there is a legend behind it--and then cleans the floors of all the three chariots, of

course, with a golden broomstick, while we saw in the newspapers the photograph of the hon. Minister of Railways sweeping one track I do not know whether that was also some silver or other type of broomstick, but he was doing it. Anyway, he has taken the initiative. But in addition to that, I would also like the hon. Minister to have some surprise checks on the railway platforms and running trains.

Sir, there is a terrific deterioration in the services of the Railways.

Only a few prestigious superfast trains are being monitored and taken care of. But sufferings of passengers due to non-adherence to punctuality and safety standard casualty are very much on the increase.

Coming to the safety aspect, it is with a mixed feeling that I am participating in the debate. The other side of the railways is lack of safety. People are now scared of train journey. In the month of July alone there have been four major accidents which claimed a large number of lives. Loss of life and property has taken place in a big way in several train accidents, including the Faridabad accident. We do not know where we are heading.

Coming to the month of August, in the first week, on 3rd, a sitting Minister in this Union Council of Ministers, Shri Sheesh Ram Ola, Minister of State for Water Resources, has been the victim himself. I would like to quote what he has said about his own experience. He has spoken something to the Press. He was one among the thirteen persons injured when Shekhawati Express derailed in an act of suspected sabotage, or whatever it is. What he has said is important. I am pained to come across this. Shri Sheesh Ram Ola was unhappy with the response of the railway officials. Accidents do occur sometimes. But what has been the response towards those accidents of the officials concerned? Shri Sheesh Ram Ola was unhappy with the response of the railway officials. He said : " I managed to make a phone call to the railway authorities soon after the accident. I informed them that several bogies had derailed and people were trapped inside the train. Still no official came till 5.30 a.m. It was only three hours after the accidents that the officials were sighted. "Three hours after the accident, that too after a Minister personally intervened! He took the trouble of telephoning the officials concerned.

Regarding the Faridabad accident, it is at a stone's throw distance from the Rail Bhawan. But it took several hours for the occupants of the Rail Bhawan, the big *babus* to visit the site. Even the Minister could not go very promptly. I do not know at what time he was not conveyed this news, whether there was any delay or whether the Minister himself was present in the Capital. The fact is that he also could not go. The Minister should have gone to the accident site judging the short distance from the Capital much earlier. Even the medical relief van took more than three hours to go from Delhi to Faridabad. This is the callous attitude.

[*Translation*]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : Mr. Chairman Sir, when I introduced new zones in Railways, Many a people were criticising the same. The incident which took place at Faridabad does not fall within the Delhi Zone, but it falls under the Mumbai Zonal office. The people, who went to the site of the accident, they were personnel as they went there beside those from there only. You can understand as to how much time it would take if the General Manager has to reach Delhi from Mumbai, even if takes a flight. Whenever we raise the matter of decentralisation and establishing of new zones. Many problems come in our way, which pain us. So far as the question of the officers is concerned, they reached accident site in time but only they failed reach the site who were actually supposed to work there who were responsible for security arrangements and cleanlines and making investigation. Well, clean-liness and making investigation. Well, you are aware, that we can not remove anything from the site of the accident, until the investigation officers or other officers concerned reach the site.

So far as I am concerned I had gone out. I returned to Delhi at 9 O'clock on that very day. I did not go straightway to the Parliament though I could do so I knew that I would have to face criticism here. I was, however, least bothered about that. Instead, I went to the spot of accident and stayed there for as many as four hours. I came to the Parliament only thereafter and replied to the queries.

So far as the case of Mahendragarh is concerned, railway was not involved in the incident that had occurred there. The State Government has accepted this fact. Fishplates were removed from the railway tracks. That accident took place at quarter to 3 O' clock and I had immediately telephoned to the concerned railway guard. Feeling concerned, the officer rushed to Mahendragarh. So far as my reaching the spot.... (*Interruptions*)

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (Kota) : Whatever you are telling is totally wrong. You tell us at what time 'your' railway officer reached to the site (*Interruptions*). He is his colleague. He got his three limbs broken. I have met him.... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN : This is not going on record.

.....(*Interruptions*)*

[*Translation*]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please take your seat.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : You are a front ranking leader and you have just now entered into the Chamber.

* Not recorded.

You have not listened to whole of my speech as also what I had been telling therein. I was narrating the accident so that our hon. Members need not repeat that. This is why I have intervened... (*Interruptions*)

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : When did your railway officer reach to the spot for the first time? Please reply to this point. (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please take your seat.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : There is a BJP supported government in Haryana. You have your own government there. You ask the Haryana Government whether railway or the State Government is responsible for the accident (*Interruptions*)

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : At what time the railway officer reached there? At what time did he touch Shri Shish Ram Ola?

MR. CHAIRMAN : Joshiji, please take your seat.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Mr. Chairman, Sir, you are the Chairman of the Standing Committee. You are aware that we do not have such a car so as to reach the spot immediately in case of an accident. Major accidents including road accidents occur in every State taking a large toll. I, however, do not intend to justify that accident. But I am trying to press the point that Mahendragarh is not such a big place where an extra engine could be parked. We can use railway engine only to pull a train to reach our destination. As soon as the news of accident came from there we made the arrangement of a train. Our senior medical officer reached there. Moreover, a special relief train was sent from here. The place where accident took place is an isolated place. There is no station there. Joshiji, you are going on telling your own points and you are not ready to listen about the problems of others. What more you want when the relief train reaches the site at 5 minutes passed 5 O'clock whereas the accident had occurred quarter to 3 O'clock? Moreover, that is not on the main line. We do not have any magic switch to reach there immediately by pressing it (*Interruptions*)

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : It is all right that you do not have any magic switch, but tell me one thing (*Interruptions*) That is all right. Tell me who had appointed him there if not the railway authority? (*Interruptions*)

Mr. Chairman, Sir, he came himself. The railway authorities did not have the sense to hospitalise the Union Minister of Railways hurt in a rail accident. You reply to my this question. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : He will not reply.

.... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN : This will not go on record.

.... (*Interruptions*)*

[*Translation*]

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGARHI : Mr Chairman, Sir, we were showing our concern on the fact that so many accidents have taken place during the last two-three months and all those have been serious accidents.

[*English*]

... (*Interruptions*)* In an accident that had occurred due to bomb blasts in Bhatinda 34 people were killed and 64 injured. In an accident on Simla-Kalka route in which a toy train was involved three people were killed and seven injured.

In a train-bus collision eight people were killed and 25 people were injured. Like this, a series of accidents have taken place. This is not a good commentary on the functioning of the Ministry of Railways. I am not holding the hon. Minister personally responsible for all the accidents. What I want to say is that there should be some soul searching by the Rail Bhawan and by the hon. Minister himself because safety, punctuality and cleanliness should be given high priority.

Once the accident takes place, it is customary on the part of the Ministry to entrust the Commissioner of Safety with the task of inquiring into the accident. He takes his own time. He brings out a report. What is more important than all these things is that, when an accident takes place, the Ministry should know how to deal with the situation. In many cases there is lack of preparation to deal with such eventualities. When the medical van and relief train are called, by the time they reach the place of accident, it is all over. So, they have to be in a state of readiness all the time. (*Interruptions*) Fire, bomb blast and accidents are the three main reasons for the loss of life and property. Sometimes it is due to mechanical failure and at some other times, it is due to human failure.

What I would like to stress is that safety aspect should not be ignored. We should not let the safety aspect take the back seat. I would request the hon. Minister not to let the safety aspect. Of course, it is not to undermine the importance of new tracks or the need for gauge conversion, but it should not be done at the cost of safety.

* Not recorded.

So far, there has been no announcement of any plan for systematic maintenance and repair works of tracks that have been antiquated. Too many accidents have taken place because of worn-out tracks also. Even the signalling system is sometimes defunct. Because of all these things, a large number of accidents are taking place. That is why, while becoming ambitious for the expansion of railway network, these works should also not be ignored or neglected. This is what I wanted to bring home.

I would like to quote from the Report of the Standing Committee on Railways. I think, Sir, you will also be happy about it. Regarding safety and crimes, I would like to say that crimes are also increasing in running trains. The Committee has found that there has been a decrease under the Head 'Safety' of the Demands in Revised Estimates. This is one thing which is seen.

There has been a reduction in the allocation of safety camps and training courses and other expenses. This is on page 55, paragraph 1.88. This has been found while scrutinising the budgetary demands of the Ministry of Railways for the current year. These are the observations made by the Standing Committee under the Chairmanship of the present Chairman who is now presiding over the House. It indicates that less number of safety camps and training courses were organised during the year than envisaged. Even the budgetary provision is not being exhausted. Budgetary provision is always less than the requirement. This is also a common knowledge. We are not able to provide for the requirement and even what has been provided for is not properly spent. That amount is not exhausted. This is evident from your report, Mr. Chairman. And the allocation has been substantially raised to Rs. 2.58 crores.

"The Committee are of the view that since safety is of foremost importance; more safety camps be organised and intensive training be provided to officers and staff."

Again coming to the first paragraph of page 57, it is stated:

"The Committee are concerned to note that there has been a large scale increase in crimes like dacoity and robberies in running trains."

So, in running trains, a large number of dacoity and thefts are taking place. On the other side, accidents are also taking place. So, the atmosphere is not conducive now. That is why, with all the best intention of the hon. Railway Minister, things in the railways sector are deteriorating.

People are talking about one thing. The political situation is such in the country that even many people including Ministers are more occupied with political work and are not able to spend the required time to look into the functioning of their Ministers, etc. This point is being talked about. Of course, this is democracy and Ministers are

political leaders and they have also to spend time on political aspects but that should not be at the expense of their Ministerial responsibility.

Sir, since you asked me to be conscious of the time factor, I would now switch over to some of the genuine demands of my State, Orissa. Orissa is famous on the negative side, from the angle of poverty. Bihar and Orissa are on the top of the list of poor States of our country. The hon. Minister himself belongs to Bihar. Again, Orissa is an abode of natural calamity. Right now, Orissa is having severe floods.

15.00 hrs.

The rivers are in full spate; they are over-flown and large areas are inundated by floods thereby aggravating the sufferings of the poor people.

Sir, Orissa has abundant natural resources in terms of minerals and forestry. There are a lot of potentialities for this State to become an advanced State. But one of the bottlenecks to its becoming advanced is the lack of infrastructure; and lack of railway infrastructure is at the root of the object poverty of the State of Orissa. I submit again that one of the reasons is the lack of railway communication.

15.01 hrs.

[PROF. RITA VERMA *in the Chair*]

Certain new railway lines and projects have been cleared recently. I would like to request the hon. Minister for Railways to give his personal attention to these lines and projects so that work on these lines could be speeded up. The Railway Ministry has finally declared that the Sambalpur-Talcher line would be completed and thrown open for passenger traffic before March, 1998. There should not be any further extension of time. The Railway Ministry should ensure its completion within the stipulated time-frame.

Sir, regarding the other lines I would like to submit that meagre funds have been provided for the Khurda - Bolangir, Kalahandi, the Lanjigarh-Junagarh railway lines. I would like to request that more funds should be provided, and work should also be expedited for these lines.

I am grateful to the hon. Railway Minister for the Angul-Sukhinda project. There was a survey for this and now it has been decided that work would be undertaken for this project. Technically, the hon. Minister has provided for some funds in this Supplementary Demands for Grants. I would like to submit that in the Sukhinda region, about 20 steel plants have been proposed and are in the pipeline. I do not know as to how many of them would be set up but right now preparation for construction of two to three steel plants are going on. So, top priority should be given for the completion of this Angul-Sukhinda line. It would connect

[Shri Sriballav Panigarhi]

Angul with Sukhinda by the side of Talcher, which covers coal belt and should be a priority line.

The hon. Railway Minister has agreed to carry out a survey for the Talcher-Vimlagarh line. I would like to request that it should be expedited. Then again, keeping in view the importance of the sector, the Raipur - Bargarh should be a loop line. I would submit that instead of having a third line along the Howrah - Mumabi sector, there should be a loop line. A survey should be ordered for this as early as possible.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Of which line are you referring to?

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : I am submitting about the survey for the Bargarh - Raipur line. A survey has already been ordered for the Talcher- Vimlagarh line and this needs to be expedited.

Sir, I would like to submit about one thing and that is the East Coast Zone has not yet been made fully functional. The hon. Railway Minister has taken the initiative for creation of six new Railway zones, including one in the State of Orissa. Here again, there is an anomaly. Here it has been mentioned that the Angul - Sukhinda line is in the South-Eastern Railway but now it comes under the East Coast Railway. The whole of Orissa - it is a small State - should now come under this new Zone. We have been repeatedly, systematically, every time bringing it to the notice of the Railway Minister that even the new Railway Division located at Sambalpur should not be a truncated Division.

Its jurisdiction is very-very limited and important places like Rourkela, Jharsiguda which are very near to Sambalpur are under the jurisdiction of Chakradharpur. So the jurisdiction should be redefined and determined in respect of Sambalpur Division and the new East Coast Zone. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister that for this no financial involvement is there. I do not know why this bureaucratic bottleneck is there for all these things; the officials in the Railway Board do not listen to the reasons. It is only when violence is resorted to and when trains are stopped, then only that they come to understand the problem. What is this?`

Once what happened was that when the Ispat Express was extended from Jharsiguda up to Sambalpur people demonstrated for its stoppage at Rangali. At my residence, I am grateful, that the South-Eastern Railway General Manager came and an understanding was reached that there would be a stoppage of that train at Rangali. But two years after, even today, that has not been allowed. What sort of a set up is this? We cooperate with the hon. Minister and with the Railways. We do not resort to these agitational methods straightaway. Is that our weakness?

So, the work on Khurda-Bolangir sections, etc. should be speeded up. With regard to overbridges and other passenger amenities, Orissa, particularly the Western part of Orissa, is again a case of criminal neglect. Talcher is one place where, I am told, the daily income of Railways is more than one crore rupees. But in Talcher we do not have any overbridge. Hundreds of trucks have to wait for long to get across the line. I do not say they wait continuously for eight to ten hours. But out of twenty-four hours, about eight to ten hours is the duration of closure of crossings.

Madam, I conclude by demanding that Chainpal, should be made a new station. The General Manager, Railways had said that he would personally look into it. It is along the new Sambalpur-Talchar line. Chainpal Road, which should be renamed as Talcher Road, also needs an overbridge at Chainpal and another overbridge at Belpaher. Two stoppages of Uttakal Express, one at Garhposh and another at Baghbihi, should be there on that line. Three new trains, Sambalpur-Rourkela, a passenger or DMU should start from Rourkela in the morning and should come back from Sambalpur in the evening. One new train, either from Rourkela should be started or even for that purpose from Tata to be routed through Jharsiguda, Sambalpur upto Raipur or Mumbai. It is a genuine demand of the people of that area. I would also demand that Kochin-Bilaspur Express should be extended up-to Jharsiguda.

I would also like to draw the attention of the hon. Railway Minister towards modernisation of certain Railway Stations. Some of the stations in Orissa are giving huge income to the Railways, like Talcher, Jharsiguda, Belpar, Brajrajnagar, etc. The condition at Sambalpur - the divisional Zonal Head-quarters Railway Station is far-far unsatisfactory. So, the convenience of the passengers should be looked into properly'

With this, I support the Supplementary Demands for Grants and would expect from the hon. Railway Minister an assurance that we would give top priority to the projects of backward areas of Orissa and other parts of the country. I appreciate the thrust that the hon. Railway Minister has given to the backward areas. I also appreciate the hon. Railway Minister, who has said that 'Railway cannot be a commercial organisation, Railway is a vehicle for the development of backward areas' From that angle also, Orissa and Bihar should get priority'.

Madam, it is time that we give top priority to safety and other aspects, which I have dealt. With this, I once again support the Supplementary Demands for Grants presented by the hon. Railway Minister and demand that there should be a hike in the budgetary support and that amount should be properly spent for the development of backward areas from the Railways point of view.

SHRI QAMARUL ISLAM (Gulbarga) : Madam Chairman, the supplementary demands for grants for Railways has come before this House.

[Translation]

It is now before the House. There are two demands in it - No.2 and 16.

[English]

Demand No. 2 deals with survey and other miscellaneous.

[Translation]

Demand No. 16 includes construction of new lines, bridges and other works. These are 39 items of work in it. I support this demand. As a matter of fact it is just for one year that I am a Member of this House. I represent that part of Karnataka which is very backward and which once used to be the part of Nizam. It was under the rule of Nizam. There was a survey conducted in 1956 to construct a new line in that area. It is a matter of happiness that now when our country is celebrating 50 years of its independence the construction of new railway lines in Gulbarga and Bider of Hyderabad, Karnataka where the People did witness the freedom of India but did not witness rail engines and boggies in their area, has been included in the plan as it is mentioned against item No. 24 out of 39 items of works. I am thankful to the hon'ble Minister for this who has been kind enough to visit that area several times. The people of that area have got special affection with Ram Vilas ji. They raised this demand there several times. I had also put this demand during the budget discussion last time. That time he had only given an assurance that construction of new railway lines in Gulbarga and Bider would be taken up after the completion of survey. Recently it has been upgraded to the tune of Rs. 242 crore and that has been included in the present demand after completing other formalities. I am thankful for this. Here I would also like to highlight its importance because security of our country is our paramount concern. At present there is only one railway line in our area. In case of any emergency or in the situation of war.

[English]

There is no other line.

[Translation]

Which goes parallel to it or which may link it. That line stretches from Bider to Hubly, Bider to Hospet. In the first phase of work construction lines from Bider to Gulbarga has been included. A survey for construction of line from Gulbarga to Hubly has been included in the last budget. I hope that this will also be included in the next budget. This is the most important railway line from defence point of view. This line is also important from security point of view of our country. I also appreciate this for giving due importance to this point.

Secondly, we have an important Upper Krishna Irrigation Project and as per the recommendation of Bacchawat Commission we have to utilise water from there

by the end of two thousand year. After investing more than two thousand crore rupees the Upper Krishna Project is near completion. It was highly essential to have a railway line in that area so as to streamline the transportation of foodgrains which we shall produce after the irrigation facility in various parts of India. That point has also been taken notice of while including construction of the said railway line in the supplementary demands for grants.

[English]

Transportation of the foodgrains, which will be produced because of the heavy irrigation in the Upper Krishna Valley of Karnataka, or Hyderabad, Karnataka and Gulbarga district has been kept in view.

[Translation]

I am thankful to you for this.

Thirdly, I would like to say that the distance of Delhi would be reduced by 275 K.M. we shall now go enroute Warli, Baijnath, Beed instead of Sholapur Gaon which subsequently reduce the distance by 275 K.M. Marathwada and Hyderabad, Karnataka will get connected. This is a very good thing. This was a demand on the part of nine members hailing from Marathwada to Hyderabad and Karnataka. This distance of Gulbarga Bider line is 116 K.M. in between which these are 12 stations.

But this is just a beginning. The demand of we nine M.Ps. is being fulfilled. Out of these nine M.Ps. five are from Marathwada and four are from Hyderabad and Karnataka. I am thankful for inclusion of this Project in the demand. After this our another major demand is related to computerisation. The problem after computerisation is that

[English]

Udyan Express is the only train which starts from Mumbai to Bangalore and from Bangalore to Mumbai.

[Translation]

All M.L.As, M.Ps. and other V.I.P.s including those who come from Gulbarga and Bider who go from there to attend session take the train from there. This is because the Divisional Head quarter is located there. After the introduction of the computer system the problem is that berths may also be allotted to other persons in case they are available.

We have got a 240 seats quota of second class sleeper but only four coaches are attached. One general and three boggies from Sholapur to Udhyan are attached with these. It has only 21 boggies. For it, two engines are attached from Sholapur. When this train arrives in Sholapur from Mumbai, it reaches here with only 17 coaches. After arriving in Sholapur, the number of coaches are increased to 21. As one engine can carry 18 coaches therefore when four more coaches are attached one more engine is also

[Shri Qamarul Islam]

attached. I would earnestly request the Railway Minister to introduce a new train from Sholapur to Mysore so that those who want to reach Bangalore and Mysore from Gulbarga, Raichur and Sholapur do not get stranded at Bangalore. Udhyan is being run with two engines and after arriving at Sholapur from Mumbai, its coaches are increased from 17 to 21 thereby increasing the capacity. When all this is being done, I think it should not be very difficult for Railways to introduce a new train. I do not think that the Railways can not arrange for 8-10 extra coaches to introduce a new train. I, therefore, again demand that a new train should be introduced from Sholapur, to Bangalore and Mysore via Gulbarga, Raichur and Guntkal and until introduction of a new train, our first and second class quota in 'Udhyan' should be delinked so that people of Gulbarga could avail the reservation facility. The same system is in operation in the train plying on Pune-Ahmedabad route. You have acceded to their demand and

[English]

You have delinked only for the train, why can you not delink this Gulbarga quota of the Udhyan Express from that, so that nobody can pick up?

[Translation]

We should do it there also.

Secondly, if it takes two months to introduce the new train till then two more coaches could be attached and instead of 21 coaches there should be 24 coaches. Our quota of 240 seats should also be increased to 350-400 seats. Similarly, two more coaches should be attached to Udhyan Express and the quota of 140 be increased to 400. This would benefit the people of this backward area to a great extent. The people of this area want to go to Bangalore. With the introduction of Udhyan Express they can easily make it to Bangalore.

Thirdly, the Hossain Sagar Express train runs on Mumbai-Hyderabad route. After Sitapur district of Bihar, Gulbarga is a very important town. A large number of Cement and lime stone factories are there and one-third revenue of Karnataka is collected from this area. Shri Reddy is saying that a large number students of Bihar take advantage of it and in view of large number of factories in this area, the train should be stopped here. I have also written to the Railway Minister and the Officers to provide a stoppage of Chennai Express at Nalawar station and also suitably increase the first class and A.C quota in Chennai Express and Hussein Sagar Express which is at present 2-4 seats, I have written a letter to the authorities in this regard and it should be done expeditiously and on priority basis. It may not be something big for you but it would certainly benefit the people of this area.

Mr. Chariman, Sir, the Karnataka Express plies between Delhi and Bangalore via Gulbarga. Earlier there

was a quota of 40 berths from there but when it was found that the number of passenger was less, it was reduced. Today atleast 100 people remain in the waiting list daily. This is the only train which connects with Delhi, Therefore, the quota should be increased to 60-70 seats. Gulbarga is a renowned university and ranks 23rd among the universities in the country. A large number of student come from Bihar here as there are several medical colleges, engineering colleges. D. Pharma and other educational institutions. Moreover, it is a backward area and people reach Gulbarga via Delhi. The students hailing from Bihar go back by Karnataka Express. There is 22 seat quota in this train which should be increased for both to and fro journey.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would request the Railway Minister to link Gulbarga from Patna so that people could also make it for Mumbai easily. This arrangement would also help the students a great deal. As we are celebrating our 50th year of independence, I must mention it here that our Hon'ble Railway Minister has fulfilled the genuine demands made by Members and I do hope that he would also fulfil my demand as well. With these words, I extend my sincere thanks to you for giving me an opportunity to express my views.

[English]

DR. ASIMBALA (Navadwip) : Madam, Chairperson. A gradual transformation from railway-dominated transport to road-dominated transport has been seen in the last few decades. The Railways' share has decreased from about 36 per cent of the total passenger-kilometres in 1991 to about 16% per cent in 1993-94.

There was decrease in 1993-94. During the same period the share of Railways for freight transportation, that is tonne kilometres, has declined from 62 per cent to 42 per cent. The National Transport Policy Committee. (N.T.P.C.) in 1980 has given a model split of 72 to 78 per cent for railways and railway representatives for distance trains the railways are also one of the least consumers of energy. That means our railway transport system has been demanding more. The N.T.P.C has also recommended to increase the railway transport system.

The main thing is that the excess of railway earnings over expenses is much smaller compared to the investment needs. The Railways are demanding more investments. But the earnings are very little which is the main problem of railway expansion. Our Government has to look into this matter and find out as to how to get more resources for the development of the railway network.

The N.T.P.C. has also given a number of suggestions which are to be implemented. During the last one year the Railways have earned greater earnings compared to the previous two-three years. To review the whole gamut of the working of the railways a High-Powered Railway Reforms Committee was constituted in May, 1981 under the chairmanship of Shri B.D. Pandey which was for zone

formation. That also has been implemented now. I congratulate the hon. Minister that the Railways have implemented the recommendations that have been made by the High-Powered Reforms Committee.

The main thing with regard to Railway is maintaining cleanliness and the providing better passenger amenities. The need for cleanliness is more. That is much insufficient now. In most of the stations, in the waiting rooms and in the trains, cleanliness is not sufficient. It very much requires improvement. Presently cleanliness is lacking in the Railways.

In his Budget speech recently the hon. Minister has assured that the regional economic imbalances which are there would be minimised through the railway network. In this regard the Government has taken some steps. In the North-Eastern region also they have taken up some programmes and are going to implement some of the programmes regarding railway lines. For example, in Sikkim there is no railway line. The hon. Minister of Railways has given order for a survey of that area. Some computerised railway reservation centres have also been installed in the North-Eastern region. It is a very good gesture on the part of the Government.

I must also mention that the people are suffering very much for want of confirmation of their journey tickets. The passengers while coming from Calcutta upwards to Delhi and other places are finding it difficult to get return reservations. The ordinary people are not getting the reservation and they are suffering very much. While coming to Delhi they are going here and there to get the reservation to back to their places which is not available to the ordinary people.

So, our Minister of Railways should look into this matter. With this, I would also mention some of the demands in my area as well as in West Bengal. In the Budget Speech, the Minister had said that the gauge conversion work would be taken up because the Government policy was for unigauge. Some unigauge works have already been taken up in South-Eastern and Southern Railways. In my area and in West Bengal the gauge conversion works have not been taken up though the Minister had promised in the last Budget Speech that in the next phase, that would be taken up. I would also request the Minister to take up 20 to 25 kilometres line from Shantipur to Nabadwip Ghat for gauge conversion for which survey has already been done in 1993 but the gauge conversion programme has not yet been taken up. I would request the Minister to take up that gauge conversion project. I would also request that the gauge conversion work of Bankura-Damodar railway line and expansion work from Tarakeswar to Aram Bagh may be taken up.

In the last Budget, there was proposal to increase the outlay of Eklakhi-Balurghat line. I do not know whether that project has been taken up or not. I would request the railway authorities to take up this project and also some

other projects for early implementation. Howrah-Amta line is a very old line. In 1971, ex-Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi had laid the foundation stone for Howrah-Amta line, but it has not yet been completed. Tamluk-Digha line has also remained as it is. It has not been completed. Lakhshmikantpur to Namkhana line has also not been completed.

There is another programme to double the line from Kalinarayanpur to Krishnagar. Krishnagar is one of the district headquarters. Kalinarayanpur to Krishnagar line is 22 kilometres long. Sometimes it takes more than an hour to reach Krishnagar. This is a long-standing demand to double the line. We are pressing hard to the railway authorities, but no action has been taken by them. I would request the Minister to take up this case also.

The techno-economic survey to extend the Metro from Tollyganj to New Garia and from Dumdum to Barrackpore was to be done. The Minister had assured that the survey would be conducted. But I do not know whether that survey has been completed or not. I would request the Minister to kindly expedite this matter.

There is Chittaranjan Locomotive Works shops. This has to be expanded so that more electric locos would be coming up each year. Kanchrapar Workshop is a repairing workshop which is very famous. It has a lot of space and land. We would request the Minister and demand to convert it into an integral coach factory.

Ranaghat railway junction is a very busy railway junction and an important link between Ranaghat-Bongaon, Ranaghat-Lalgola, Ranaghat-Shantipur, Ranaghat-Gede and Ranaghat-Calcutta.

During peak hours the office goes and students suffer very much because the railway gate near Durgadas Park remains closed for more than half-an-hour. The situation is very bad there. So, I would request the Minister of Railways to take for construction of a fly-over in that place. Similarly, there is a railway gate in Ranaghat-Dayabari Railway line through which the National Highway No. 34 passes. Thousands of vehicles are passing in that road from Calcutta. This National Highway goes to North Bengal, Assam and other parts of the North Eastern Region. When a train passes in that line, hundreds of vehicles are stranded there for a long time. The situation is very critical there. So, I demand that the Minister of Railway should take steps to construct a fly-over there also. This fly-over is very much essential for the development of that area.

In North Bengal and South Bengal several projects are pending. They should be implemented soon so that there would be railway link between North Bengal and South Bengal. These projects are very much essential for the socio-economic development of North Bengal and South Bengal.

Madam, for a long time, no new trains have been introduced in Howrah Division. So, I demand that a new

[Dr. Asim Bala]

Superfast Express like Rajdhani Express should be introduced from Howrah to Mumbai. It is very essential because there is no superfast train from Howrah to Mumbai at present. Whatever trains are there now, they cannot cope up with the increasing demands of the passengers.

A new railway line from Kumarghat to Agartala is to be constructed to covering a distance of 119 kilometres in the North Eastern Frontier Railway, at an anticipated cost of Rs. 575 crore. The budget outlay made during the year 1996-97 was just Rs. 1 crore. I would request the Minister of Railways to expedite the completion of that line.

There is a lot of passenger congestion in the trains running between Sealdah and Bongaon. Whatever trains are running in that line, they are not sufficient and the frequency of trains in that line should be increased.

Finally, introduction of a shuttle train between Bongaon and Barasat is very much essential, because most of the passengers in that line are office goers. They are all coming from a long distance and are attending office at Barasat. So, I would request the Minister of Railways to introduce a shuttle train in that line.

With these words, I conclude.

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR (Barh) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, we are discussing the Demands for Supplementary Grants (Railways) right now....(Interruptions)

Reddy Saheb, you have been talking with the hon. Minister for quite sometime. Let us also convey our views to the hon. Minister. You are already a member of the ruling party (Interruptions)

Sir, we are discussing the Supplementary Demands. The Statement of the hon. Minister regarding Supplementary Demands has been laid on the Table of the House and I want to congratulate him for the projects which are mentioned therein, particularly the proposal which has been put up for construction of a rail bridge over the Ganga, linking Monghyr and Khagaria. I felicitate him for that since this has been a long-standing demand of the people there. Sir, if we cast a look at Bihar, we find that the number of bridges over Ganga in Bihar is very less in proportion to the length of the river traversing the State. We urge that the construction of road bridges and rail bridges should taken up simultaneously.

Mr. Chairman, Sir the previous Government had made a provision for construction of both the bridges simultaneously. The then Prime Minister, certain members of the Planning Commission including Shri Brahamanand Mandal and Mr. George Fernandes, had a lengthy discussion on this issue which had kept our hopes alive that rail bridge and road bridge would be constructed

simultaneously. We therefore, want to remind the hon. Railway Minister of his Railway Budget Speech which he made and what we discussed here and the statement following his reply to the said discussion. I want to draw his attention towards that and want to tell that Bihar has been a neglected lot in the matter of railways and not now but for the many years.

Members from Bihar have been raising their voices not only in this House, but also outside, not only for construction of new rail lines. Certain Members belonging to Parliament from Bihar has been raising all these demands and thus crying in wilderness in fact. There had been demands from Orissa and West Bengal and also from Bihar but the previous Governments did not pay any attention towards railway needs and problems of backward areas. Since Paswanji has taken over as Railway Minister, he has started giving attention towards railway needs and problems of these backward areas for which many people have also indulged in criticising him and have asked him whether he is a Railway Minister of Bihar or that of the Union as a whole.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, if we go through the details of construction works executed by Railways in the last 10-15 years, we will find that the Railways have expanded everywhere except Bihar which is lagging behind in the matter of railways. However, Railway symbolises national integration since it does the work of squeezing the country. Therefore, I have drawn attention of the House towards Bihar which has been neglected in the last some years. I want to remind the hon. Minister of his speech wherein he highlighted the works done in many areas and we welcome that. A demand has constantly been made to the hon. Minister for the construction of the Buddhist Railway circuit. The construction work of rail line from Bakhtiarapur to Rajgiri was started in 1960. There was a company named the Light Railway Company at that time and that was merged in the Indian Railways later and its all assets became the property of the Indian Railways and was later converted into broad gauge line and this broad gauge line was constructed 35 years back so that a link is established for Rajgiri and Bodh Gaya and one Buddhist Circuit is constructed there.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Japan was to provide financial assistance for the construction of the said Buddhist Circuit at one point of time and no initiative was taken for that as a result of which that could not be implemented. Some work was done when George Fernandes Saheb was the Railway Minister. An agitation was going on there in the country due to the Mandal Commission Report and people retracted after going ahead to some extent in this regard, as a result of which this matter has been hanging fire. I want to remind those days, five years back of the last Lok Sabha, the tenth Lok Sabha. Some Members of Parliament including those from Bihar has been repeatedly saying in this House each year that Rajgir should be linked with Gaya and only 22 kilometres of rail track would have to be constructed upto a place named Hiswa for this purpose and if this is done, the Buddhist circuit would in a way be constructed.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the second thing is that Indian Railway had acquired railway line from Fatuha to Islampur 15 years earlier which was owned by Light-Railway Company. The employees of that company were adjusted to an extent but the operation of that railway line came to a stop.

Later on the area was flooded and that caused a substantial loss to the railway line. Further, the Indian Railway auctioned that railway line and sold it out. The people occupied it illegally from here and there. Even the Government of Bihar also occupied the land. The demand used to be raised in this regard. That does not only relate to our area but also relates to Nalanda. The People of other areas also have been raising it because it is of public importance. The Minister had stated that Fatua and Islampur railway-line would be restored and would connect Islampur with Rajgir so that a railway network may develop there properly. You have to do nothing new there, but only restore whatever existed there and connect Islampur to Rajgir. You would have to construct a new 22 kilometre long railway section to connect Rajgir to Bodhgaya. It would also create Buddhist circuit.

The hon. Minister has not so far paid attention to Madhya Pradesh. I request him to pay attention towards this also. Last time, when the railway budget was being discussed, we had reminded him in this regard. But he is not paying attention towards it deliberately as he is having relations in that area. He has relation in Fathua and is not paying attention towards it on account of that. Perhaps he takes it as his own area.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Are you interested in having a railway line between Rajgir and Hiswa only or Hiswa, Rajgir, Islampur and Fatuha. If it is about Hiswa only, it is alright because it involves short length and we will make the announcement to that effect whenever you so desire.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Please make the announcement just now.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : It is very essential to connect the Buddhist circuit. I definitely assure you that I would take up it in the next budget, but I am not sure whether I would remain a Minister or not. But I assure you that if I remain the Minister, I would take up Fatuha, Islampur, Rajgir and Hiswa issue. I want to give this assurance to you. The line between Hiswa and Rajgir which you have mentioned, is a Buddhist circuit and you have rightly stated that if it was developed, we would get donation from abroad. I myself is concerned about that and if it falls under the jurisdiction of the Minister, I would certainly try to take up that work in that budget.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Thank you very much Sir. But I would like to request you to make announcement to that effect in the next budget. We think that laying of railway lines in Fatuha, Islampur and Rajgir would be a major achievement for this entire region. The people of that area would remember you for that.

I had made request last time also Madam Chairperson, you would be surprised to know that there is Hathida Junction where a railway-cum-road bridge was constructed on the river Ganga first of all. There is Hathida and the junction is named after that. There is Hathida junction below that but still that junction is a flag station. There is curve there. You would be surprised to know that signal facility does not exist there. The people have to come upward to catch a train. They board the trains underneath also. There is a curve there. The person, standing on one side can not see person standing on other side and signal facility is not available there. Thousands of passengers travel every day from there. Neither the signal system nor the public Address system is available there. As a result, dozens of people get killed every year. It occurs not due to the human fault but on account of railways' fault. The people without guessing about the other side, start crossing that railway line-cum-road bridge. That causes such accidents. I had requested last time also but we got the reply that that was a flag station. You must be personally aware of the geographical position or the importance of this area and Shri Ramendra Babu and Shatrughan Babu who are present here and represent Begusarai and Balia, must be aware of the importance of this place.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : (Begusarai) : We fully agree with you.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Therefore, at least signals should be provided there and Flag Station should be removed from there. We are placing minimum and planned demand before you.

The third thing for which I want to appreciate you is the announcement of complementary passes for the persons receiving Gallantry Service Award, President Police Award and Police Awards. But the people who are known for their distinguished or specialised service for long periods are also awarded with the awards of President Police Medals and police medals by the Hon'ble President. The receivers of gallantry awards have been given this honour but the awardees of medals for distinguished services have not been given this facility. I would like to request you to consider that point also. These four awards are provided by the Hon'ble President under the same resolution, rule and purpose. Therefore, discrimination should not be made in that. I had also written to you in this regard. You please conduct inquiry in this regard at your own level and get it reviewed while giving reply. Please try to take note of this issue also.

I am not raising this issue for making a complaint. Railway Board is known for its courtesy. It does not lack on that point. They provide information to the Members of Parliament about the launching of the projects etc. in their constituencies. They contact and try to ensure their participation. But I am compelled to register my protest in this House and if you observe the entire network of Indian Railways under which the Eastern Railway is the oldest, you would come to know all about Eastern Railway situated

[Shri Nitish Kumar]

in Calcutta which also houses the headquarters of South-Eastern Railway. You would find out the difference there itself. In the Eastern Railway itself, if you enter the Danapur division, you yourself would understand that it is Danapur Division. All the trains arrive usually in time in Mugalsarai. But as soon as the train enters the Danapur division, it becomes late without any reason.

One day we reached Patna Junction. We were to go to Farakkha via east. The train was in time. Farakkha train arrived at the Danapur station in time. Danapur is located at a distance of 15 km. from Patna. But the train arrived at the Patna junction by 5 hours late without any valid reason, so this is the situation. Similarly so far as the question of protocol is concerned whether you introduce a new train or provide a halt or you provide any other facility we are never informed by the divisional headquarters even if the work is being done because of our efforts though we receive information from your office. Therefore efforts should also be made to improve its efficiency. The way the other works like sanitation are done should also be taken care of.

We have seen your photograph in the today's newspapers itself. You are cleaning the New Delhi Railway Station with a brook launching a sanitation drive. I do not know what impact this sanitation drive has on your officers. But the sanitation condition in the trains passing via Patna is ridiculous about which I have emphasised a number of times. You have really done a tremendous job by introducing a Rajdhani Express to Patna. But who will travel for 16 hours in Rajdhani Express. Rajdhani Express reaches in 12-13 hours. Still its duration can be reduced. Even if it is diverted via Lucknow, its duration can be reduced by one and a half to quarter to two hours. Although there is no need to divert it via Lucknow. Atal Ji is not present here. Neither he nor other people in Lucknow will board the train. Neither the people from Lucknow board this train for going from Delhi, nor any person coming from Patna will get down at Lucknow in late hours at night. One has to wait at the platform for three hours. It is not at all beneficial to go to Lucknow by this train and there are much better trains from Delhi for going to Lucknow. Therefore, it should have a direct route. If you wish to provide this facility to any other area of Uttar Pradesh by diverting the route of this train then it is welcome. Less time will be taken by running it on the main line.

I would like to say a few words about your policy in regard to the catering services. Railways are not incurring any losses on account of catering services while glancing through all the previous budget you will find that profit to the tune of more than a crore of rupees have been earned by the catering services. Catering services have never suffered any losses through, as you have seen, that Railways are liberally spending on organising programmes. In spite of bearing all these expenses, catering services are running in profits, but you have privatised the same. Now it has been privatised as you have launched the sanitation drive

it will definitely leave some impact on your employees, but you have given the responsibility of sanitation to the private sector, it would hardly have any impact on the private sector. When we initially become member of Parliament we remember that if it was mentioned in the reservation chart that a member of Parliament is travelling they would upkeep, maintain and clean the railway stations in somewhat better way may be for the sake of ostentation. At present you go on calling a man for cleaning the place, nobody will turn up. This is the impact of privatisation. This is the situation.

Whatever responsibility or role you have assigned to the private sector whether is bedroll facility to the private sector is providing very poor services and that is beyond explanation. You have started Rajdhani Express, while we were travelling by this train, it is disgusting to say anything to anybody about the bedroll provided to us in the train which was untidy unwashed and it was quite unhygienic for use but when we called the train Superintendent and showed the bedroll to him he said that it is not up to the mark. We unfolded the bedsheets which were quite untidy and shown to him. Four-five bedsheets were unfolded in front of me. He saw those and said that these are not upto the mark. I told him that don't say that it is not upto the mark rather call it unhygienic. I suggested him to show it to his seniors. I directed him to write a letter immediately. I have made a complaint before you too. In all the trains, which are starting from Danapur Station, the bedroll and catering services are quite substandard. I would therefore urge upon you that this very division comes under the capital city of the State and the state to which you belong to. Now you have already declared the Zonal Headquarter in Hazipur too, where work has already been started. Now it is a challenge for you. It is like a challenge that when the division as well as headquarter is in your constituency, it should be clean, equipped with better facilities and it should Defere as a model. It should be upto the standard be it the issue of sanitation or whatever it is. I would urge upon from that a special initiative is needed for it.

Last time, when the main budget was presented here, we have explained the situation of Bihar during the discussion. The complaints of my colleagues from Uttar Pradesh should also be considered. Many trains are running in Uttar Pradesh. Prayagraj Express is one, you just travel by it. They are not providing bedsheets with the blankets, normally these blankets are covered but no where in the country this is followed. There are so many excellent trains in UP and on the other hand there is Plamau Express in Bihar I do not know, how it has been changed as Link Express from Singrauli. I myself and some other persons were travelling. The train stopped there for 45 minutes, it was not fully electrified. We decided to move around with a torch. Do you know what reply the Ministry of Railways gave to us? Their reply was that the electric system in the train is fully working. What could we say? Now in this august House whatever we people say is not heeded. Whatever facts are given by us are lost in the dim and facts

received from the lower level are headed. This is the situation. The fact reveal us that the trains are not being operated satisfactorily.

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Air-conditioning plant was not working well in that train.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : You are telling the truth. They switch off the air-conditioning plant. If you want air-conditioning plant to be operated in the trains in Bihar then the presence of some member of Parliament or Railway official is essential in that train. Once I was travelling by Tata Express..... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Nitish ji, air conditioning plant was switched off in that train. It is not functioning for the last one week. A.C. two-tier coach is also not being attached.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : That is also not working (*Interruptions*) There is only one A.C. two tier compartment in Tata Express. In your area, Ganga Damodar Express is there. There is an A.C. two tier compartment in it too. There is a Patna Hatiya Express, which is having an A.C. two tier compartment but do you know, if any member of Parliament or Railway official is not travelling in that train, the A.C. starts functioning only after half when the train starts. Even they try to before us that the air conditioning is already functioning. We ourself go and examine whether the air conditioning is functioning or not.

We have to go and check ourselves whether it is at slow speed or high speed or it is only the fan which is moving and get it operated properly. Then, we caution the passengers that it is their money, the expenses of which they are travelling and it is their right and why should they not register complaints, so this is the position.

Now, thanking you I would like to submit that an overall improvement should be made in the whole system for effective running of the trains. I would like to request you while concluding that members of Parliament do not get sufficient time to take part in the divisional Railway Users Consultative Committee meetings themselves held at the divisional level and I therefore request you to kindly nominate a representative of members of Parliament as a matter of policy to this committee so that he may discuss on the day to day affairs at the divisional head quarter level concerning matters relating to the respective Parliamentary constituency of an M.P.

16.00 hrs.

The members may otherwise, pay a visit whenever they get an opportunity to do so. But their representatives meant for this purpose would be doing their job. It is for that reason, I request you to see to it.

What I had submitted last time I am again emphasising that one day every member of Parliament has to become an Ex-MP. So whatever facility, they are getting at present through Lok Sabha is all right as an Ex-MP has got the facility that he can travel by A.C. II tier with his attendant. But my submission is that he should be provided with A.C. first class travelling facility if he travels alone.

While concluding I hope that you would take note of these points and take appropriate action. Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for having an opportunity to me to speak.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : Tommorrow is Friday and I have to go out of Delhi tomorrow. The discussion which remained inconclusive today, should be taken up on Monday instead of tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Speaker would decide this issue.

16.02 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Need for Streamlining the Public Distribution System

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, we shall take up the item No. 16 — Discussion Under Rule 193 on the need for streamlining the Public Distribution System.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : Madam, Chairperson, I rise to raise a discussion on the need for streamlining the Public Distribution System under Rule 193.

The Public Distribution System is a welfare measure of our Government meant to serve the poor people and the common man. The Public Distribution System is in practice, in vogue in our country after Independence since early Fifties. Of course from time to time, it has undergone some changes here and there in different States to suit to the local requirements. The Government of India also, from time to time, has brought out guidelines to streamline the system.

Ours being an agricultural country and a vast country, the entire food requirement or requirement or essential commodities of the total population cannot be met by the Government through the Public Distribution System. Only a small fraction, a small portion of the requirement of the people is met through this system. Basically it is meant to provide succour to the poor people; to the needy people, Whenever scarcity condition developes in any part of the State, there also the State Government strengthens the