

14.19 hrs.

**SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(RAILWAYS) FOR 1997-98 – Contd.**

MR. CHAIRMAN : We will now take up further discussion and voting on the Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) of 1997-98. Shri Anant Gangaram Geete.

[Translation]

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN (Mumbai-North East) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am on a very important point of information. Ram Vilasji is looking after the Railways. From today morning the station master in Mumbai has. . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : You give a separate notice.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Sir, I received this particular information after I gave the notice. So, naturally, I could not give a separate notice. . .(Interruptions) Shri Ram Naik also gave a notice on different matter.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM NAIK (Mumbai-North) : This is a regular feature. Taking into account the gravity of the matter, we made an appeal to the Station Master and we expected that he would agree but he did not accept it. Shri Mahajan will take only two minutes. . .(Interruptions)

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I shall not take more time. I just want to say that Station Masters have started "go slow" agitation from today and when this type of agitation takes place in Railways, trains running between Mumbai and Delhi take 26 hours instead of 25 hours. But when it takes place in the sub-urban railways and the trains stop for two minutes on each station, all the commuters come on the road and they have virtually come on the road. An agitation begun in Mumbai. Due to this, the entire suburban services have come to a grinding halt. Today no sub-urban railway service is available in the Central Railway. In the morning, the situation was not grave but as soon as people started collecting the situation became graver and at the moment, according to my information, the Central railway has stopped operating completely. It is a misfortune and we all know. One crore commuters take trains daily and half of it are from Mumbai. For the last few days agitation are going on. For instance agitation took place in Thane on 6th August. Agitation was launched in Mula on 7th August and other agitations which are taking place are causing problems to the commuters. Hence, I would like to tell the hon. Railway Minister that their agitation will aggravate if he replies the Appropriation Bill further. He may consider the problems of Station Masters sympathetically and take a decision. Station

Masters are making an appeal since these problems are created by the Fifth Pay Commission. Motor-man also wanted to go on strike but they withdraw it. The station masters are on strike, tomorrow guards or any other category may go on strike. I feel that this will cause a grave problem for the commuters of Mumbai. On the appeal of the Railway Minister, running of trains may start immediately. Because of this I am requesting specially to the Railway Minister.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not know what are the demands and for which demands they are on a go slow strike. So far as Fifth Pay Commission is concerned, it is under consideration of the Government. A Fast Track Committee has been constituted for that. But no Officer will be allowed to put in danger the life of crores of passengers. Sub-urban trains run after every two minutes in Mumbai. If the Station Masters have any grievances or if they are getting less salary than the drivers or they are not getting the salary what is given to running staff the Government will consider it. The question is not related to Station Masters only, it is related to fourth grade and other employees as well. It will not be proper for the employees and officers to resort to "go slow" agitation on their own for these things and create problems for the passengers. So far as the question of appeal is concerned, the issue is before the Government for consideration. People should have patience. You too will not appreciate this thing. Ram Naikji had told me and I had told that they have no recognised union and whatever their grievances may be. I may talk to anyone and I may talk to officers in the Ministerial capacity. Without having talks with anybody, if somebody will disturb 55 lakh passengers, indulge in pelting of stones somewhere, some resort to arsoning, then I feel that my brothers Mahajan and Ram Naikji too will not appreciate. These things should not be encouraged. The Government is considering it and it will consider. The Government will consider all the issues not only this one. . .(Interruptions)

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR (Begusarai) : Please stop the system which has been started. Please stop whatever is happening in Mumbai. . .(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV (Purnea) : Please stop the agitation that has been started in Mumbai.

MR. CHAIRMAN : They have not engineered it. There is an All India Station Master's Association which is taking recourse to agitation there.

(Interruptions)

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (Kota) : Everyone has come over here from agitations. How can it be stopped? . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE (Ratnagiri) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Minister of Railways has come to the House in order to get permission of the House regarding 39 Supplementary Demands. Out of these 39 demands, only two demands are concerned with the state of Maharashtra. One demand is concerned with Bhanduk Thane at No. 39 and two lines concerned with suburban rail service are pertaining to the extension of rail lines 5 and 6.

There is a demand about enhancing the equity of Konkan Railways Corporation at No. 39 and these two demands about Maharashtra have been brought in here before the House.

Sir, we had an opportunity to speak on the railway budget twice in the last sessions of Lok Sabha and every time members from Maharashtra put forth some ideas in this House about doubling of rail lines, gauge conversion, some other suggestions about new rail and some other proposals while speaking on the railway budget. Speaking in discussion over these supplementary demands here, I would like to mention this point as members of this House that when we give some suggestions over the railway budget here to the Railway Minister, we look forward to the Minister that he must pay attention to our suggestions. Here the demand which is made by the members does not concern with the member but concerns with the department and public to which they represent. But during the last two railway budgets whatsoever demands were made by the members in this House and different suggestions were also given by me and the reply of every demand has been given by the railway Minister. But here in this house I feel pained to say that whatsoever suggestions or demands were made by the colleagues of ours from Maharashtra out of them not a single one was acceded to. He gave reply of every suggestion in so sweet words that he declined every suggestion and demand. . .(Interruptions)

Sir, it seems to me that Railway Minister is doing a step-motherly treatment with Maharashtra. . .(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV : The Minister has given a lot to Maharashtra. . .(Interruptions)

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE : I am also speaking of the things given by the Minister. Daily, one crore and ten lac passengers travel by the rail/train and out of them more than 55 lac passengers travel by only Mumbai suburban rail service. . .(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJESH RANJAN ALIAS PAPPU YADAV : Sir, first time the Railway Minister has materialised Dr. Lohia's dreams in India. . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Sit down, please. The Minister in

here and he will reply of it.

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE : Mr. Chairman, Sir, a rail-lines from Mumbai extend to every corner of the country and every state as well. Whatsoever trains leave from Mumbai they are all fully packed. You would not catch hold of any unpacked train. This is the condition of Mumbai today. If you go, two or three months before you do not find any reservation tickets or booking in any state. Therefore, I would like to put it before the House that more than half of the railway revenue is collected from Mumbai and Maharashtra but what does the railways give to Mumbai ? What did the railway give in the last two railway budgets ?

Maharashtra is a developing state and Mumbai is also a developing city. Industrial developments are taking place very speedily there. New cities are coming up in Maharashtra. Big industrial cities have come up in Maharashtra to day. Demand for rail is increasing in Maharashtra but the railway Minister is not paying any attention to Maharashtra. Our colleague member, Shri Chacko had once made a demand. He wanted to introduce a train via Mumbai. He was then intervened by a hon'ble Member by saying this that if you made a demand for Mumbai your demand would not be met. Thus, Maharashtra and Mumbai are being looked upon with such eyes. We had given suggestions about Konkan Railway in the last two budget speeches. Konkan Railway is in operation from Kurla to Sawatwadi. During this rainy season this rail service remained unoperational for eight and fifteen days and so.

14.32 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

In order to make this rail properly operative, it was not given all those facilities which were needed for it. Konkan Railway is a new railway. It is a new experiment. I admit it. The area is hilly. There is sliding somewhere. Somewhere water is clogged and this rail service remained unoperative for 8 to 15 days in the rainy season. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Konkan residents suffered losses due to non-operation of trains. When casualty takes place and at the time of casualty of cow, a buffalow or a bull a farmer has to suffer the losses. As much cost of a cow or bullock a farmer recognises as much non can do because the life of a farmer is fully dependent on a cow, a buffalow or bullock. The tunnels which have been constructed are good but if you see, you will see that whatsoever bullock-cows or bufallows were killed by the trains on rail lines were killed on such a place where tunnels end because these animals are not able to catch hold of moving trains and ultimately they meet their end, if a bullock, cow or a buffalow of a farmer dies,

his life goes to destruction. It is a very serious matter. Konkan Railway Corporation has not paid any attention to it that when a train comes out of the tunnel, these animals can not catch hold of the trains and four and five animals altogether are crushed by the train. These animals go there to graze. I would like to make a request to you that where the tunnel ends and the train comes out of it, there needs at least 100 metre long railing because a cow, a bullock and a buffalo etc. Continue straying there to graze. These animals do not come to know as to when the train will come out of the tunnel? When the train comes nearer to them, they are crushed by it. There is need of one hundred meter long iron railing on the either sides of the tunnel. It can save the life of the animals.

Konkan Rail line has been extended and led through hills and hillocks. Surplus land does not come into view in Konkan. This is fully hilly area. The farmers are doing agriculture there by cutting the mountains. Their fields/farms are in the east and west of it. There are some such places where there are primary and other high schools. The children go to school there by crossing the rail line. During the last days an accident took place near the Pen Railway Station in which two school girls were died. Many a time the representatives of those people and surpanches of the villages called for a demand saying this that the train passes through those villages, colonies and near the schools. The construction of a Pedestrian bridge is a must so that school children may not cross the rail tracks. But this demand of ours has not been met so far and that is why accidents continue taking places there. I would like to draw the attention of the Railways Minister to it and call for a demand that a pedestrian bridge should be constructed in those big villages where the train moves near the schools and colleges. Hardly 2 or 4 pedestrian bridges are seen from Panvel to Sawantbadi. Their number should be increased.

We have always been demanding to undertake Konkan Rail Project from Dadar. We make this demand to day also. This demand is being made not only by we Members of Parliament but also by the people of Konkan and Mumbai. Konkan Rail Project was completed in record time. Perhaps it is the first ever such Rail Project which has been completed in the shortest duration. This is why the people of Konkan have welcomed it. This project seemed to be a dream of the people of Konkan. Their dream now, has materialised. The people of Mumbai also welcomed it. The people of Konkan come to Mumbai in search of their livelihood. More than 50 per cent people and especially the youths come to big cities like Mumbai, Thane, Pune, etc. to attend their place of work in factories. . . (Interruptions). Mumbai is a port of Konkan. Konkan constitutes the five districts Mumbai, Thane, Raigarh, Ratnagiri and Sindhurg. The demand of the people of Konkan must

be met. The Kurla Terminus from where this train originates, is a sub-urban Railway Station. The railway ticket worth Rs. 37 is booked to reach railway station in my home district Khed. We get down at Kurla station by local train and we have to pay the rickshaw fare of Rs. 40 to reach Kurla terminus. This train is meant for the poor and the farmers. This train was introduced for local development. This point must be noted. Kurla terminus has no other facilities. Why demand is made to originate it from Dadar? Dadar is the centre of Mumbai. . . (Interruptions)

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : The passengers of the Kurla railway station do not have passenger amenities. What should be done by the Department of Railways and the State Government? Please point it out, because the area of Mumbai is developing. Every area should be developed. So, Please throw light as to what contribution can be made by the Department of Railways and what responsibility should be borne by the State Government? Please explain it and we will look into our lapses, if any. Kurla is in Mumbai and it has not developed till date and people fail to reach there. What is the reason?

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Kurla Terminus is a name but this terminus is not actually located in Kurla. It is located at Ghotkopar which has a big housing colony named Lokmanya Tilak Nagar. A passenger coming out of Kurla station and destined to go to the East ward does not get any taxi or autorickshaw there for his destination. The road is very narrow and it passes through the colony. Trains run once a day there. There are thousands of taxi and train passengers. One train passes during the day and two trains pass during night. One has to pay Rs. 40 to hire a rickshaw for ones destination. There is no other vehicle there. I am telling about the route from Kurla to Kurla terminus. But there is no facility for travelling from Kurla terminus to any where in Mumbai. For this one has to go to Kurla station or Bhandup station. This demand is being made for this very inconvenience. Secondly, Dadar is a centre-place market. Dadar has markets of vegetables, fruits-foodgrains. The most of the people of Konkan live in cities. Those who are the Mumbaities, and residents of the sub-urban areas, can return their home from Dadar any time they want but they cannot do so from Kurla. Then why this demand is made? This is not for getting any political mileage. Moreover, nobody bothers as to who will be credited, either Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thakre or Shri Ram Vilas Paswan for introducing the train from Dadar. We are ready to give this credit to him also. This is no political demand. Your party Janata Dal has made this demand. This demand has been made on behalf of the people also. Moreover, since we are celebrating the golden jubilee of independence, I don't think that our Minister of Railways would feel happy if the people come to street. This must be contemplated

[Shri Anant Gangaram Geete]

as to why people take resort to coming to street ? But it is reality that if the demand is not met, the people would come to street. Therefore, the issue of introducing train from Dadar will have to be considered seriously. I request the Government to convene a meeting of the hon. Members of Parliament of Mumbai and railway officials to find any way out. We also would cooperate the Government in this regard.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : All right.

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE : Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, a new subject is being discussed in Mumbai. Our hon. Minister has returned after changing the name of the Dadar Railway station. Only two persons have demanded so far to rename that station as Chaitya Bhumi. Nobody else made this demand so far. Those two persons made this demand long back in 1997. They are Shri Upendra Shinde, MLA and Shri Sunil Kohli, President, North Mumbai district youth congress. Reply has been sent to the duo by the Railways. The Chief Commercial Manager Shri A.K. Sinha has replied to Shri Shinde that their work cannot be done by them. The Ministry of Home Affairs in the Centre should be consulted to give a new name or change the present name. The Government of Maharashtra should be requested therefore. The reply sent by the Chief Commercial Manager Shri A.K. Sinha to Shri Upendra Shinde on February 13rd, 1997. The Desk Officer to the Government of Maharashtra also replied to Shri Sunil Kohli that the changes in the names of any Stations are made in accordance with the guidelines prescribed by the Department of Home. The guidelines clearly read that name of a State is changed on the basis of any genuine reason and any specific event, but the name of a historical place cannot be changed. Before changing the name of a place, the local representatives of the people and the State Government have to be taken into confidence. Therefore, the various guidelines prescribed therefore have to be observed while changing name of any station.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, a major development took place in Maharashtra which had its repercussion all over the country. Discussion continued for 13 hours on this issue in the House. The incident had disturbed Maharashtra, but the situation has now calmed down. How did our hon. Minister of Railways made up his mind to rename Dadar as Chaitya Bhumi. This news has appeared in various newspapers in a more exaggerating manner. According to the newspaper, the hon. Minister has stated that the Ministry would look into rules, provisions and if it is in his jurisdiction, he would change the name. What is the ultimate objective of the hon. Minister ? People from all

sections of Mumbai have opposed it. Dalit leaders have opposed it, an article written by the Dalit leader Shri Namdev Dhasal, has been published today in Marathi newspaper in which he has requested to the Railway Minister to firstly solve the Bodh Gaya problem and then raise the Chhaitya Bhoomi issue. I do not want to indulge in politics here but the city which was sitting on a volcano initially has become quiet now, what is the motive of the Railway Minister by raising the issue again when this is being opposed by all parties.

Whenever the question of changing the name of Dadar railway station is raised. We should not forget that it is a historical place, Dadar holds an important place in India's independence, our freedom fighters had fought the freedom struggle from Dadar, Dadar has its own history, Dadar railway station is the pride of the people of Mumbai then the question is that what is the use of changing its name. The Railway Minister never thought about changing its name from Dadar to Chhaitya Bhoomi then why it is being felt necessary today ? It became Chhaitya Bhoomi from the day Baba Saheb Ambedkar attained Nirvana there, but this demand was never made till today then why is it so today ?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my friend Shri Mohan Rawale had raised a question during zero Hour. . . (Interruptions)

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : It is true that the President of the Youth Congress has made this demand, it is also true that the Dalit senas have made this demand, it is also true that people from the Janta Dal have made this demand but it is equally true that this demand has come from the Treasury Benches and leaders of the opposition. I have a letter written by Shri Pramod Mahajan dated the 3rd of May, 1997 with me in which he has made this demand - then how do you say that this has been opposed by all ?

Now do you want to say that Shri Pramod Mahajan is not a leader of the B.J.P. or he has got no concern with Mumbai ?

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Hon. Railway Minister has mentioned about the demand made by Shri Pramod Mahajan ji in 1997. He had made this demand in the month of May. . . (Interruptions)

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : When you blame me of playing politics then say about them that they do the same. If a Member of Parliament or leader of any Party writes a letter to me then should I not do the needful ? If I attend to the problem then you would blame us of playing politics. Do you want to say that leaders of all the political parties barring the Shiv Sena play politics ?

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, leaders of all the political parties in the country indulge themselves in politics and that is why they are here or in their political parties. We are here only because of being in politics but everything should be done at proper time. . . (Interruptions)

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : It is the 3rd of May, 1997.

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am saying only this much that please do not try to put Mumbai on a volcano. Mumbai is quiet and it should be left so. An undisturbed Mumbai is in the interest of the country and the Railways as well. One third of the country's revenue is collected from Maharashtra. Therefore, I am repeatedly making the request that an undisturbed Mumbai is in the interest of the country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have read another statement in the Newspapers which says that jobs in the Railways would be provided to the families of those killed in the firing. Jobs should be provided to them, we are not opposing it, but when it is done to attain political gains then we oppose it. I would like to ask through you that how many accidents have taken place since Shri Paswanji has taken over as the Minister of Railways and how many persons belonging to the families of those killed in these accidents have been provided jobs by him ? Now he is going to complete two years as Minister of Railways but can he provide a single example of the fact that has been published in the newspaper ? Then why it is being said today that jobs would be provided to them in the Railways. It is nothing but politics.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is his responsibility and I think that he is not discharging his duties properly. That is why he is doing the politics of the Dalits. It is the responsibility of the Railway Minister to provide jobs to the family members of those killed in the accidents so that they can maintain themselves, but you have provided jobs to none, then why are you giving jobs to them only. Is it not politics ? You are a leader, we are not objecting it, but please do not play such politics which disturbs peace.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question of Secularism is before me. I would like to ask the Prime Minister that whether he is going to put an end to the politics based on religion and going to start politics based on castes. It is unfortunate that your government is acting in this manner. We are not going to discuss whether one is a or not. I want to say that the Dalit, whether he is a Hindu or otherwise is the son of the soil. They are born on this soil. We do not want to discriminate between one category of the Dalits to the another. We have the same blood in our veins. We do not believe that we are different. But we

oppose the way the Dalits are being instigated to attain political ends. The honourable Minister is giving a step motherly treatments to Maharashtra. This is what we feel here. I would humbly tell him that he is the Minister of Railways for the whole country and not of a particular class alone.

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI (Shahabad) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, before speaking on the Supplementary Demands of Railways I have to say that being in the opposition does not mean that we should not appreciate praiseworthy job done by any one in Government. Shri Paswanji has worked very hard. He met and gave a patient hearing to the members of every party in parliament and also made an effort to fulfil the promises given to them. I just can't restrain myself in praising him for this and welcome the courage shown to form the idea of changing the name of Dadar to Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar. It is a welcome step. Dadar is a place where Baba Saheb Ambedkar had passed major span of his life and where he had started the countrywide social revolution. Many memories of Dadar had been associated with Baba Saheb Ambedkar. During his one or two trips to Uttar Pradesh a district in the state was named after him. Similarly a University was named after him. When the name of an old university was renamed by his name, then if a name of the region like Dadar would not be rechristened on his name, then which place would suit this purpose. Some people may have felt hurt but nobody had objected to the practice of naming roads, hospitals, colleges, colonies and airports etc. after the members of the one dynasty. But now we are getting objections from all quarters when something is renamed after a person who has done, a great work for the humanity, who has struggled throughout his life to break down the social set up devised over thousands of years ago.

I would congratulate Mr. Paswan for having shown a great courage by announcing naming Dadar Railway Station with that of Shri Baba Saheb name from the important land where his last rites were performed. Mr. Paswan has done many such good and big works. He has also shown keen interest in Konkan Railway project. The work which was assumed to be a impossible feat finally materialised . . . (Interruptions) I would not say that it was already functioning. . . (Interruptions) I know that in one or two years . . . (Interruptions) Please hear me. I am well aware of the fact that no force in the world could complete the Konkan Railway Project in one or two years. It's work was already going on. I agree that after taking charge of it he speedily disposed of the remaining typical work related to it.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You please speak about Supplementary Demands.

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI : I am coming to that issue only. I have a grievance that in my constituency which is very

[Shri Iliyas Azmi]

backward in respect of railway facilities. Well, he has paid attention to it but here the trains are driven even slower than the slowest speed of trains in railways. On my making great effort you have announced in your Budget speech that new railway lines from Gola to Mahammadi, Shahjahanpur to Farrukhabad would be layed. Meanwhile I had talked to him. I have also received his letter saying the northern eastern railways was surveying it. But I would like to say as Shri Paswanji is also present here, that even after one year no survey has been done in this regard. No team has been deputed there and no work related to the measurement of land and making maping has been done so as to which way the railway track would be layed, which areas would it cover, where the Railway Stations would be established and etc. Therefore, Sir, I would request you to use the time you have got and do something as the future is unknown. We can not even say as to how long would the Government last. So, let some work be done now. . . .(Interruptions)

15.00 hrs.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Your party has got only three minutes. Therefore, kindly conclude at the earliest.

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI : Sir, I would not take more time.

No survey has been done on the land, there as yet. Therefore, I would request honourable Minister of Railways to initiate the survey work on this track so that the people may feel in high spirits. Many problems come in the way of aquisition of land. If I come to know as to which way the railway line would be layed, then I would do my best to avoid any land dispute acquisition. Shajahanpur is on Delhi-Lucknow route. All the superfast trains have a haltage at Shajanpur. Hardoi is situated earlier to it. Hardoi is one and half bigger than Shajahanpur district in terms of area and population. Many such trains which have stoppage at Shahjananpur do not stop at Hardoi. I have written many letters in this regard. In reply I was told that there are many trains to Delhi via Hardoi I would like to convey Shri Paswanji that the trains coming from Bihar are usually packed beyond their capacity and even the roofs are also not spared. Even if the trains stop at Hardoi no passenger can board the train as the trains are generally 'crowded'. Therefore I would humbly request to extend the 375 and 376 down passenger trains running between Delhi and Shajahanpur to Balamau so that the commuters of this area are atleast benefitted by the passenger services. Many letters complaining various problems have been received. But there is not any such problem in the entire world which cannot be solved.

Recently I had mentioned that no train stops at

Shahbad, which has a population of over a lakh. I had made request for stoppages of certain trains. Paswanji had once issued orders to this effect but the officers did not comply with these orders. Instead they dumped it. Earlier there was one more train called Jammu Tawi-Sealdah Express which used to stop at Shahbad. Later when I started putting efforts for having stoppages of other trains as well at this station mean while the stoppage of Jammu Tawi Sealdah Express was suspended. I also urge you to pay attention towards this.

Earlier Shahbad was known for fruit production. The State Government had declared, it alongwith ninety villages falling within the State a fruit belt area. As a result, we can hope rapid development of the region. Hence, it becomes a necessity to provide stoppages of these trains at Shahbad. the Central Government Scheme would also be implemented there. More number of employees and officers would start living there since it has been delcared as fruit belt area. Therefore, for the convenience of all it becomes must to provide stoppages of some trains over here. . . .(Interruptions).

I have never taken more time than allotted to me by the chair. Therefore I would just like to put forth one more point. Gauge conversion of Shahganj-Mau line has been undertaken and it has been connected with broad gauge. This is a good thing. Delhi has been connection with that region. Lakhs of people from Azamgarh are settled abroad. Lakhs of people are also staying in Mumbai and other cities. Till now they were facing problems to board down at Benaras. The Commuters from Delhi were also facing the same problem. Honourable Minister for Railways had done a good thing by introducing a train on this route. I had received a letter from him. Wherein it was mentioned that there is paucity of resources for introducing direct service to Mumbai. Mumbai is in need of direct service. I am referring it as Mumbai. You had objected on changing of its name. Mumbai has also its own history and you have neglected Mumbai's history while changing its name. Dadar too has a history. There is no difference if the name is changed. I would say that resources for a train to Mumbai can easily be gathered if you were interested in it. It is not a big issue. You may give more stoppages from Mau to Shahganj Jaunpur Allahabad. After Allahabad with 2-4 stoppages a superfast train in this 'route should be introduced.

I conclude with these words.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI RAM NAIK : Sir, I am on a pont of order. What type of a statement is the hon. Minister presentling to the House ?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It is a statement regarding an accident.

SHRI RAM NAIK : it is a courtesy that if an item is not included in the List of Business, information regarding such an item is passed on to hon. Members and it is also displayed on the CCTV so that hon. Members who are in the Central Hall or in the Library can come and listen to the statement presented by the Minister. This simple courtesy should be extended to this House. Whenever a statement is to be presented, prior information should be given.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The hon. Speaker has already permitted him. In future, this will be done.

SHRI RAM NAIK : I have nothing to say. But, ultimately, courtesy demands that intimation is to be given to hon. Members.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : This will be done in future.

15.06 hrs.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Re : Accident in Substantial Expansion Project of Madras Fertilizers Ltd. on 8.8.1997

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICAL AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : Sir, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. I rise to make a *suo motu* statement regarding the accident in MFL's substantial expansion project on 8.8.1997.

An unfortunate accident occurred in the night of 8.8.1997 during the final stage of commissioning of the Substantial Expansion and Modernisation Project of Madras Fertilizers Limited at Manali near Chennai. At 9.13 p.m., one of the manhole covers in the Secondary Reformer-RG Boiler section blew out with a loud report. The noise startled some contract workers who were engaged in insulation and other mechanical work. While rushing out in panic, 25 of the workers sustained various injuries. Two of the injured later succumbed to their injuries. The injured, who have been hospitalised, are expected to be discharged shortly.

Within two minutes of the accident, corrective action was taken by the Control Room for ensuring a safe shut down of the plant. The extent of damage is not expected to be serious. An exact assessment will, however, be possible only after two to three days, when the equipment has cooled down.

Dr. G.B. Purohit, Adviser, Department of Fertilizers was deputed on 9.8.1997 to make an on-the-spot assessment

and assist the project authorities in organising the resumption of the commissioning activities.

On 10.8.97, I myself proceeded to Chennai to see the victims of the accident and enquire after their welfare. Shri N.V.N. Somu, the hon. Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence, who is also the Member of Parliament of the area, Shri Sundaram, State Minister of Tamil Nadu Government and Shri Anil Kumar, Secretary (Fertilizers) also accompanied me. An ex-gratia assistance of Rs.1 lakh each to the families of the deceased has been announced. Ex-gratia assistance of Rs. 10,000 each is being given to 16 workers, who have suffered grievous injuries and Rs. 5,000 each to seven workers, who have sustained minor injuries.

I also visited the plant to confer with the management of MFL and review the progress of the efforts being undertaken by the project authorities for regaining the momentum of the execution of the project. It is expected that the commissioning activities will soon be resumed.

The management of MFL has constituted an enquiry committee to ascertain the cause of the accident and fix the responsibility for the failure of the equipment. An external expert has been included in the Committee, which is expected to submit its findings within a fortnight.

[Translation]

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (Kota) : Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, two accidents took place in a single day. You are narrating the accident of 8th this month. The second accident took place between Hawra-Tikiya-para railway stations of South Eastern railways.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : From where the issue of railway station has cropped up here ?

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : It is alright that no one has been killed in this accident. It was a local train. Local train. . . (Interruptions).

AN HON. MEMBER : This is not a statement pertaining to the railway accident. This is related with other department, not the Railways.

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : I know that it is related to other department. The hon. Minister of Railways has issued a statement today morning. Is it not the duty of the hon. Minister of Railways to issue suo-motto statement on the rail accident, as was issued by the hon. Minister. One Minister is issuing the statement and the other Minister has not issued any statement. Not even a single day passes without any accident. . . (Interruptions).

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now the discussion is going on railways only.