

other goods have risen. Farmers are facing huge losses due to it. It remunerative price is not given to farmers keeping in view the production of sugarcane, the farmers will stop cultivating sugarcane. In that situation, all of us will have to bear the brunt. Production of sugar would stop and sugar industry would also be closed down. As a result, many people would be rendered jobless.

Therefore, I request the Central Government to take this matter seriously and take necessary action in this regard.

(vii) Need to ensure payment to Sugarcane Growers in Azamgarh District U.P.

DR. BALIRAM (LALGANJ) : Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the House towards Sathiyaoon sugar mill in district Azamgarh and Ghosi sugar mill in district Mau. Sugarcane is the main cash crop of farmers living in Azamgarh and Mau areas. Today, the farmers of these areas are on the verge of starvation and is thinking in terms of stopping the sugarcane cultivation. The main reason for this is that both the Government sugar mills have stopped the release of payments for the sugarcane. Last year Sathiyaoon mill in Azamgarh purchased sugarcane worth Rs. 5 crores from farmers but made payment of Rs. one crore only and the balance payment of Rs. 4 crore is still outstanding. Similarly, Ghosi sugar mill in Mau purchased sugarcane worth Rs. 6 crores from farmers but made payment of Rs. 1.5 crores only and the payment of remaining amount of Rs. 4.5 crores has not been made till date.

Therefore, through you, I request the Government to ensure immediate payment of dues to farmers by Sathiyaoon and Ghosi Sugar Mills.

[English]

(viii) Need to convert the metre-gauge railway line between Coimbatore and Dindugal into broad-gauge.

DR. C. KRISHNAN (POLLACHI) : Sir, I wish to draw your kind attention to the long-pending demand of my constituency, Pollachi, in Coimbatore District which is the Manchester of South India. Pollachi is also an inter-State marketing centre and well-known for export of coir and coconut products.

Now, Pollachi and Udmalpet are becoming very important towns and there is a long-pending demand for the broad-gauge route. The metre-gauge between Coimbatore to Dindugal via Pollachi should be converted into broad-gauge route. On conversion, it will generate good revenue for Railways and the people of South India will be benefited by getting easy link to travel. The punctuality of

the trains will also be improved. Apart from these, important places like Palani, a pilgrim centre, Tirumoothi dam, Amrawati dam and Top Slip wild life sanctuary will be well connected.

I request the Railway Minister to take up the above proposal at the earliest.

14.56 hrs.

DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS - RAILWAYS

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The House will now discuss Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for 1999-2000. The time allotted for this subject is four hours. The hon. Members are requested to speak on the Demands only and be brief so that the maximum Members may participate in the discussion.

Motion moved :

"That the respective 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, 2000, in respect of the head of Demand entered in the second column thereof against Demand No. 16."

SHRI ALI MOHD. MALIK (ANANTNAG) : I want to make a small submission. This is a money Bill. The demands are in a form of Bill and under the Constitution, it should have been recommended to the House by the hon. President of India. There is no certificate to the effect that these Demands are being recommended by the hon. President under article 110 which gives the definition of Money Bills, and article 117 makes incumbent that it should be recommended by the President of India to the Legislature.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The hon. Member may kindly resume his seat. This is Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways).

SHRI ALI MOHD. NAIK : Let it be Supplementary Demands.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : In case you want to raise any objection, you could have given in writing to me.

SHRI ALI MOHD. NAIK : It is not necessary. I will show the Rule Book. I will show the Constitution. It is not necessary that I should give it in writing.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You should give notice.

SHRI ALI MOHD. NAIK : My point is that the certificate of the Minister that she has written to the hon. President for recommendation is not sufficient under Constitution. There should be an order or a certificate from the Speaker, or from the Secretary-General of this House that the President has consented or recommended it for the consideration of this hon. House. This is what article 117 says. So, my point is that this cannot be considered without the recommendations of the President of India.

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY (CALCUTTA NORTH WEST) : Sir, while placing the Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways), it is very categorically mentioned that the recommendation of the President required under clause 3 of article 113 read with clauses 1(a) and 2 of article 115 of the Constitution for making the Demands has been obtained. It is very much clear that it has been obtained. So, I do not know what is necessity of raising the objection.

15.00 hrs.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : That is why, I was also drawing the attention of the hon. Member. The hon. Member should have taken a little pain. It is already there. She has already obtained the President's recommendation. There is nothing wrong in it.

.....(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You please see it is already obtained and without obtaining the President's recommendation, it cannot come on the floor of the House. You are a new Member. You kindly go through the rules. Unless and until, the hon. President's recommendation is there, it cannot come here. On the face of it, it is printed also. You please go through it. Please do not waste the time of House.

.....(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, I call Shri P.R. DASMUNSI.

.....(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please see on the face of it, it is already printed. You please go through it.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it is my pleasure to initiate the debate today on behalf of my Party before the new hon. Minister of Railways of the Government.

Sir, at the outset, I wish the mission of the Minister of Railways an overall success and I feel proud of West Bengal State that we could produce a leader who could occupy

such an august Chair of the Government and that too in the key position of the Ministry of Railways.

Sir, through you, I would like to highlight a few important issues. normally, in Supplementary Demands for Grants major issues are hardly debated, but in matters of suggestions and initiating a few more new areas, I would like to comment on these Supplementary Demands for Grants.

Sir, First of all, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister, through you, to the matter which concerns everybody today which is the safety and security of the passengers while they travel in train. While assuming office, I understand the hon. Minister of Railways said : The topmost priority of the Government shall be accorded for the security and safety of the railway system to ensure security and safety of the passengers.

Sir, it is not merely a good wish; it should be supported and augmented by the entire Parliament and Ministry of Finance through its budgetary support. I want to know the policy angle of the Government. Do the Government agree that safety and security should be given the top priority; if so, like the Defence, why should not the Ministry of Railways be given the second highest priority in financial allocation and the budgetary support? It is not important who is coming and who is going in the Ministry of Railways. it is important that this Ministry must get the highest priority in terms of safety and security.

Sir, I now come to the main issues. Shri Nitish Kumar, while he was in the Office, did say that priority also should be given to safety and security, but you know finally what had happened. What is the fate of the 150 year's old Ministry of Railways which is yet to go miles and miles in providing safe, accident-free and efficient transport service to nearly 12 million passengers who travel by it every day?

It was the privilege of the present hon. Minister of Railways to preside over the Standing Committee on Railways while the previous Government was functioning, when Shri Nitish Kumar was the Minister of Railways. I find that the Committee headed by the hon. Minister of Railways did recommend and very correctly so. I quote :

"Signalling and Telecommunication System plays a paramount role in ensuring safety of passengers and minimising the impact of human errors on train operations. During the year 1998-99, a sum of Rs. 361 crore was allocated to implement the projects under this Plan Head. However, at the Revised Estimate stage this amount was reduced to Rs. 325 crore. The Committee fail to understand the reasoning of the Ministry that on one hand they announce Signalling and Telecommunication as a thrust/priority area and on the other they prune the allocations made under this Head at the Revised Estimate stage. The

Committee take a very serious view of this indiscriminate cut in the allocation of funds under this head.

Thereafter it says :

"The Committee recommends that funds at the rate of Rs. 500 crore be provided under the head "Railways" to ensure safety."

Sir, through you, I would request the hon. Minister and to the entire Treasury Benches that please do not make any compromise on this issue. The Finance Minister is not here. It is the Finance Minister who is the key instrument in laying the hand on increasing his budgetary support to the Ministry of Railways. If the Ministry of Railways do not get at least Rs. 500 crore for the safety and security department, it will be obvious that in spite of all the pious wishes of the hon. Minister and the Members of this House, the kind of security and safety measures that are required today in our country are impossible. I remember the days of the accident at Gaisal. It was just at the border of the constituency which I represent. I am glad that the then Union Minister of Railways had been there to visit the area at that time. It was a very horrifying scene. It was, of course human error. I am told that one inquiry has been completed and the Minister has announced a CBI inquiry into it. I do not know when the report of the inquiry will come, but we shall discuss it when it comes. But it has been found and felt many times that security and safety measures always face a financial crunch by the Government. I want to know whether the Government is categorical in this matter that in their proposed budget next year or in the allocation so far, they will not make an inch of compromise, so far as Railway's security and safety is concerned. This is my first submission.

Secondly, there is a confusion going on. When we all say that the Railways need resources, we all give a lot of suggestions. One of the suggestion made by the previous Standing Committee headed by Kumari Mamata Banerjee is that the Railways can augment further resources by utilising and exploiting the available surplus land at the disposal of the Railways. I think it is a very good suggestion and it should be done. But, at the same time, I find that there are two contradictory views. While the Railway Minister very rightly says that the days have come when we should think of involvement of the private sector in one way or the other to exploit the Railway property, etc. The *Hindustan Times* dated 18th October, 1999 said : "Safer Journey Mamata wants to involve private sector". Again, *The Observer* said : "Vajpayee rules out privatisation of Railways". I think the statements of Shri Vajpayee and Kumari Mamata Banerjee have no quarrel and clash, but there is an interpretation gap. So far as privatisation of

Railways is concerned, we may have a different view, but as far as private sector's involvement in the railway system to take the property and exploit it is concerned, we have a different view. So, I hope that today, during the course of reply, the hon. Minister would tell us as to what exactly they mean by involvement of the private sector. Is it to take up a few projects and trains or to exploit the Railway's property to the best extent possible to generate resources? That will convince the House and the House will react at the appropriate time when the Railway Budget will come up.

I read out from para 154 on page 103 of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Railways :

"On the issue of augmentation of resources in the railways, one of the most important sources can be optimum utilisation of the railway lands. Huge quanta of land are owned by the railways. Proper land management can fetch huge resources for the railways to invest in development projects which are so much starved of resources. The railway lands may have been under use of some organisations or groups of people for long years. In many cases they are under use by such people for more than 70 years and not put to the best economic use. In such cases, the land-in-question may be optimally utilised after arranging alternative settlement of such people."

Sir, this is a matter where the Railway Ministry will have confrontation with the State Governments. The reason is obvious. They allow the *jhuggi-jhonparis* to be built year after year on the railway land and when the railway officials come, we, the public representatives, irrespective of the political parties we belong to, go and persuade the Governments not to remove them because otherwise where will they go? Is there any policy with the Ministry of Railways now or do they have any comprehensive blueprint in hand that in such cases where eviction or removal of such groups of people who are unauthorised occupants of the Railway Ministry is required, how they will be settled elsewhere.

I think for that reason if a Committee is formed between the Union Railway Ministry and the representatives of the State Government for a collective will (a) to dispose of the land of the railways to augment resources; and (b) to make alternative placement to those people, it will be good. Then, I think, the confrontation will be avoided. Otherwise, I think, if the Railways desire to do something, the State Government will not cooperate. If the State Government and the Railway Ministry are at the same political level, some parties will come and create problems. It is very natural. If I represent a constituency I have an obligation to my people. I cannot keep quiet at that, be it the B.J.P. Government or the C.P.M. Government or the Congress Government.

[Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi]

Therefore, I feel that the hon. Minister can spell out as to what exactly is the policy in this regard.

The Standing Committee further said a very important thing. I think the entire Parliament should take note of the recommendation of the Standing Committee last year, which was headed by Kumari Mamata Banerjee. It said :

"The Committee desire that before chalking out a plan to remove encroachments on Railway land, a rehabilitation package should be provided well in advance by effective coordination with the State authorities. The Railways should also explore exploitation of Railway land and air space particularly in Metro Cities in order to generate more resources for the Railways development plans."

I think this is what I said just now. I think that my suggestion and the recommendation of the Committee are in line with this and I hope that the hon. Minister who is now in the office also, shall try to implement the recommendation of the earlier Committee, in a teamspirit of the Railways with the cooperation of the State Government either through a Committee or through a dialogue.

Now, I want to highlight a few more issues. I will only ask the hon. Minister of Railways one thing. I know her dynamism, sincerity and honesty. Will the hon. Minister take one issue very seriously, come what say, irrespective of the political parties who rule the Railway Ministry? Will she take up the case of all kinds of previous imports and purchases of Railways and probe whether there was any rat smelling? We have imported a large stock from British Railtrack. We have imported a few things from Germany at a very higher rate, ignoring global tender. We have done something in the Railway Ministry in the name of the interest of the people which smell foul. Will the hon. Minister clean the Rail Bhavan from the past tracks, shadows or deals and other cultures through an appropriate investigation Committee, come what may?

If the Congress is to be punished, let the congress be punished. If the BJP is to be punished, let the BJP be punished. But you take that bold step to give a message that there is the Rail Bhavan which does not deal in deals and foul things. Once you establish it, I think the morale of the Railway Ministry will come to the real track and from that day there will be no derailment in your commitment to the people as such from the Railway Ministry.

The Metro railway project in Delhi is on. There are projects which are on in Mumbai. There are projects taken up by earlier Ministers in Bihar and U.P. I wish them good luck. There are projects in the North-East. I wish them good luck. But do not misunderstand me for saying this because being a Member from West Bengal, I think it is a privilege to

me to address the hon. Minister, to remind her a few things. Besides Bihar, U.P., and Maharashtra there are other States. There has been a tradition in this House that whoever may be the Railway Minister, he or she first takes the load of the State from where he or she comes. I do not blame it. There are pressures. But I think I have to place some legitimate things before the hon. Minister of Railways.

In Sunderbans area of Bengal, Lakshmikantpur-Namkhana project is there which is still not seeing the light of the day. The hon. Minister has said outside Parliament about her sincere desire to complete the Eklakhi-Balughat project which has not seen the light of the day till now. What is the progress in it? During the tenure of late Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Barkat da, the then Railway Minister introduced it and plan sanction was done. But there is slow progress. I wish the hon. Minister to provide such resources that this project comes to a decisive line. I came to know from the newspaper that the lands have not yet been taken over by the Railways and the State Government says that the Minister is in a better position to clarify and the Railways have not asked for the land from the State. What is the position and the facts of the project? The hon. Minister may highlight this.

I will be too glad to know it. Though I represent a different constituency in the State, a part of this district is also in my constituency.

So, I have a duty to remind the hon. Railway Minister. Then, I come to Digha-Tumluk. Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it is a belt which made India free from the Britishers, before 15 August, 1947, for 72 consecutive hours. A large number of freedom-fighters who went to gallows, who sacrificed their lives, including Matangiri Hajra, were from this zone. The Salt Satyagraha also took place in Digha and this zone is neglected. Digha-Tumluk railway project is yet to see the light of the day. I am told the Minister is very actively considering it, but I do not know whether she will get enough resources. Therefore, I feel that while we are completing the 50th year of the Republic, let us at least salute this route where the entire country's freedom movement was highlighted and from where came great stalwarts like Shri Satish Sawant. He is no more with us. He was in this House. Shri Sushil Dhara is alive. Shri Ajay Mukherjee is no more. They kept the entire area free from the Britishers and established an example before the whole country. That route is still not completed. It is really a pathetic situation. I hope the hon. Minister will take note of it.

I find a very interesting thing in the recommendation made by the hon. Minister, when she was the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Railways. So, I would like to remind the Minister to fulfil her commitment. The Minister very rightly said in the recommendations :

"New projects should be taken up with proper priori-

tisation keeping in view not only the commercial or economic aspects, but also the social aspects....

I thank the hon. Minister for these words. It further says :

"...but also the social aspects of serving the people, especially of the rural areas, hills and North-Eastern States. There cannot be a set of uniform criteria for every part of the country, whether it is developed or under-developed each of the areas has its own peculiarities and unique features. Those are to be taken into consideration while preparing a new project for under-developed areas. The construction of railways will open up certain hitherto unopened backward areas to commercial economic activities. Committee are of the firm view that Ministry of Railways must keep these points in view."

Now, the then Chairman herself is the Minister and I bring it to her knowledge that an area in Bengal which is highly dominated by the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, erstwhile Bangladeshi refugees and Muslims. Rightly, I am representing that area, Uttar Dinajpur. It has not yet been connected to a broad gauge line which is only about 45 to 50 kilometres between Radhikapur and Barasat, the border of Bangladesh. That is the district which gave shelter to one-fourth of the refugees during Bangladesh revolution times, when Indiraji was the Prime Minister. That is the area which withstood shells of Pakistani Yahya Khan's Army, at that time. That is the area which is not connected to the rest of India and a poor treatment is given to it year after year, by the metre-gauge connection. It could be converted into broad gauge. The Minister herself in the capacity of Chairman of the Standing Committee on Railways had said that not only commercial but social aspects should also be taken into consideration.

Every alternative year, there is flood. The national highway's level is low and get submerged into water. The line from Siliguri to Barsoi is only metre gauge line. So, no broad gauge train or wagon could come to this site to supply food. So, it has to depend only on air-dropping. It is a very small passage. Therefore, I will request the hon. Minister to give priority to this area. This area is dominated by a Scheduled Caste group which is known as Rajbongshi who are the original people of this area. They are long crying as to why we are depriving them to connect themselves to the rest of India and specially Calcutta, with the help of this line. I will request the hon. Minister to consider this project, a gauge conversion of the limited area in the next Railway Budget.

If the railway line between Gunjuria and Gajol - the Minister herself has travelled in that part - is conceived to connect a tribal pocket of Gajol leading to Malda and Bihar

border section of Islampur, 30 kilometres of distance will be reduced. I have the hon. Member from Kishanganj sitting here. Shri Shah Nawaz will agree with me that if a line between Gunjuria and Gajol is linked, then from Bihar to Bengal, 30 kilometres railway route will be reduced. That will also be a boost up for the people.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, umpteen number of accidents take place there. Shri Shah Nawaz will agree with me that in his erstwhile constituency, every year ten to twelve accidents take place. Last week also, one accident took place. Till this date, 680 pregnant ladies had to deliver child on the national highway.

It is because at Dalkhola crossing on the 34-National Highway, there is no railway overbridge; similar is the case at Kishanganj.

[Translation]

I had given protection to a pregnant lady during elections.

[English]

She was a Muslim lady, and she was crying. It was a terrible thing. They cannot go because the mail passenger trains pass one after another, and there is no flyover either in his area or in Dalkhola. It is a pathetic condition to watch, and we cannot do anything. The Minister had sanctioned the project, but I am told that the encroachment of the land and other things have not yet been cleared. I do not know the position, and the Minister may kindly apprise us on this. Women of that area say that we can go late, and that the pregnant women should be allowed to go first to the hospital because they should not stuck up in the middle.

[Translation]

Such a ferocious accident took place at Purnia-Kishanganj-Islampur line which I can not express in words.

[English]

The Railways can send a team to find out whether it can be done in the next year itself.

The annual plan of Railways for the year 1999-2000 has been estimated at Rs. 9,700 crore against the sanctioned amount of Rs. 9,500 crore for the year 1998-99. The allocation for the year 1998-99 was revised to Rs. 8,755 crore. It was further reduced for not generating internal revenue.

I am told, in the past, several passes were issued to social workers and to different categories of people and as a result, the passengers could not get any seat because they were occupied by people who were holding these passes. Will the Minister take some serious steps to stop

[Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi]

the issuance of these passes? If these passes were issued on political considerations, they should be declared invalid because the first priority in getting reservation and accommodation should be given to the deserving passengers. Even if my Party members become a casualty of this step, I will support the Minister for taking such a bold action. Let the Railways be fair and clean. At least, I will not trouble the Minister with cases like this.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please conclude because there are a number of speakers from your party.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I cannot explain how much the people in Bihar and Bengal suffer from lack of proper railway network.

[Translation]

Where is our hon. Member from Katihar. ...*(Interruptions)* You tell us.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please address the Chair, and do not indulge in cross-talks.

[Translation]

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : The people of Katihar and Bengal usually travel to Raiganj, Shamsi or Harishchandrapur. But there is no computer reservation centre at these places. For getting reservation the people have to go to Katihar or Malda. I had urged the hon'ble Minister to set up a reservation centre at Raiganj, Shamsi or Harishchandrapur. It is not a big project. He has told me that she had given a order for setting up a reservation centre there. But the people of these areas say that this centre has not yet been opened there. The General Manager of the zone has not ordered for setting up this centre. Due to this, the people of Bihar and Bengal have to face hardships each day. Hence, I would once again urge the hon'ble Minister to make the Railway Ministry as an honest ministry so that all the frauds and scandals which used to take place earlier, may come to an end. If the Ministry of Railway ask for enhanced budgetary allocation for the railway security and in case the government does not accede to this request, the entire House will back up your demand. So you should stick to your demand and we will support you. With these words, I conclude.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA (MANDASUR) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the discussion on the supplementary demands of railways is going on. This discussion should have been very brief. But taking the advantage of the way, this discussion has been initiated. I would also like to say a few things in this regard. It is true that the railway facilities have been expanded. New services have been introduced, facility

of computerised reservation has been made available and the improved measures have been adopted to provide security to the passengers. But despite all these achievements, the condition of the railways is very much a cause of concern. Railways do not have enough funds to meet their requirements and due to this paucity of funds railway is unable to complete its various projects in its defined terms whether it is the work relating to doubling the Railway lines, electrification or the gauge conversion.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to refer 3-4 points raised in the supplementary demands. It has been mentioned in the demands that arrangements be made for chowkidars on level crossings. It is a very important thing. On several places whether it is Madhya Pradesh or Rajasthan, there is no arrangement for chowkidar etc. on 'no man gates' and if there is somewhat arrangement made on level crossing, it has been made through pointsmen. They follow the instructions received from the station Masters etc. regarding opening or closing the gates. It causes a lot of inconvenience to the travelling people. Hence it is very essential to make provision for the appointment of persons on level crossing by making budgetary allocation. It is a very important thing and I support it.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the issues of renewal and gauge conversion have also been raised in it. As far as gauge conversion is concerned, I would like to draw the attention of our hon'ble Minister. I quote him.

[English]

"Achievements and challenges of the future plans - Gauge conversion".

"Uni-gauge project has been undertaken to develop alternative routes to contact important places with the broad-gauge network, develop backward region and avoid problems. During the Eighth Plan, 6,733 kilometres of metre gauge and narrow gauge track were converted. In the Ninth Plan conversion of another 6,200 kilometre has been planned."

[Translation]

The gauge conversion however has been planned, but the hon. Minister has herself been the Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Railways. The replies given by the Ministry of Railways did not offer any solutions to these problems. I do not want to refer to them right now but a number of times she has expressed this apprehension that in the absence of the adequate funds we will not be able to complete our work in stipulated period. I would like to submit before you that even those important plans are being delayed which have already been sanctioned for gauge conversion. I would also like to draw your attention towards a very

ambitious plan which is very useful for our country. Under this plan it had been decided to have a uniform gauge throughout the country which would facilitate the transport of goods and travelling of people. The slowing down of such an important scheme and gauge conversion scheme in backward areas of the country where this could have been beneficial is not justified. I had given the example of a scheme of gauge conversion linking Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh which has been completed from Kota to Neemuch but it is not being extended from Neemuch to Ratlam. There are four to six cement factories, several fertilizer plants, oil mills and other industries in that area and the Railway can earn a lot of revenue from this area. The cement produced there has to be sent to Mumbai and Chennai via Kota while it is a long route. Had the work of gauge conversion been completed, this cement could have been sent through Ratlam which is a shorter route. So it is not right to slow down the pace of such a good and beneficial scheme. Hence I would urge repeatedly that the adequate funds should be made available for this scheme. This project should have been completed by 1996-99 but it is yet to be completed while the year 1999 is coming to an end. Crores of rupees have been spent over it. Bridges and sub-bridges have been constructed and the extension of line has also been completed. If funds are given in lump-sum for this project, I think that it will definitely prove to be a good project. I would like to make one more submission before you that when a double line is made available between Ratlam and Kota which is at present only a single line from Ratlam to Kota via Nagda, a second parallel line between Ratlam to Kota via Chittorgarh will also be available after the doubling.

This line will be useful not only in connecting Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh but also in directly linking Mumbai and Delhi. Therefore, I request you to pay attention towards demand raised in supplementary budget for providing some new routes and doubling some railway lines.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to make a submission that telecommunication facilities should be provided in trains to enable communication between guards and engine drivers for safety of passengers. So far, not all, but some trains have been provided this facility. Guards of some trains met me and asked to make arrangements for providing this facility because it is essential from the viewpoint of safety of passengers. I do not want to discuss the issue of guards in detail because it is the supplementary budget. The brakevan used for travelling of guards is found so inconvenient that one has to take rest for three days after travelling 8 to 10 hours on it. This system should be improved. The same guards are put on these brakevans the next day also I will not discuss this matter today and wish that hon'ble Minister will pay attention to it.

As I have stated in the beginning itself that hon'ble

Minister is very well aware of these problems and facts as she has been raising these matters time and again in the Standing Committee on Railways and had been all the times stressing the need for providing facilities to members. Reservation facility should be computerised everywhere. Though it had been sanctioned way back for Neemuch and Mandsaur but work on this project is going on at a very slow pace. It should be completed at the earliest. New Railway stations having proper amenities should be set up, all these issues have been raised in supplementary demands for grants. It has also been stated that some railway stations would be developed as model railway stations. Some stations are to be upgraded. Names of some stations have been mentioned here but big and good railway stations like Indore, Neemuch and Mandsaur can also be developed as model railway stations. Ratlam is in central zone and trains going to Delhi, Mumbai or Chennai pass through Ratlam. It is a very big station and is in the proximity of the borders of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh etc. It will not be proper if such stations are not included in this scheme. Some small stations, which are not fully equipped with passenger amenities have also been included in it but their ratio is quite low. I would like to say that these should also be included in it.

I have stated in the beginning itself that I will be confined to supplementary demands for grants and will not discuss it in detail. The issues regarding developing model railway stations, safety measures in some trains, providing relief of assistance to victims of super cyclone in Orissa, providing telecommunication and rest house facilities and upgradation of amenities for passengers have been raised here. In your previous report regarding upgradation of amenities it was clearly mentioned that number of Yatri Nivas should be increased. I am to say that Ujjain railway station in Madhya Pradesh a Yatri Nivas with facility of retiring room has been constructed but it is not being used for passengers. It has been given on contract and now a hotel or a sort of that is running there. Why these Yatri Nivas are being constructed. These should be utilized properly. I would like to draw your attention towards Madhya Pradesh which has not been benefited to the desired extent as railway network was not expanded there to the extent it was desired there. I request the hon'ble Minister would pay attention towards it.

I would like to make a submission that Railway require more finance. I also started discussion on it. A news item was published in 'Hindu' newspaper of 28th of last month, which read as under it-

[English]

"The Indian Railways is set to seek a loan of around Rs.1,000 crore from the finance Ministry to bridge the shortfall in financing its annual plan for 1999-2000."

[Dr. Laxminarayan Pandeya]

[Translation]

When there is such a big requirement, how that will be met how we will be able to improve it. Just now Damsunjsi was saying that amenities and safety measures in Railways should be improved. We should cooperate with the hon'ble Minister if she want to take measures in this regard. Recently some railway accidents took place, arrangements should be made to avoid accidents. Adequate facilities should be provided to drivers and guards. It should be told that how these accidents could be avoided. 1209 persons have been killed and 2000 persons hurt during last two-three years. Though these accidents took place due to derailment, old railway lines and some other reasons. The issue regarding renewal of railway lines has been raised because the hon'ble Minister of Railways has stated that the Railways wanted to make rail journey safe and that they also wanted that railway journey are made comfortable and required measures should be taken in this regard.

In the beginning itself I have stated that still there is meter-gauge line in some areas. I have emphasized the need for gauge conversion because now a days the bogies for metergauge lines are not constructed and the existing metergauge bogies are in dilapidated condition people face difficulties in travelling on them. The bogies of first class are worse than second class in metergauge line because new bogies are not being manufactured and those existing are in shambles. A scheme was formulated for taking up gauge conversion we should try to get more funds for its implementation.

It was also discussed widely as to whether like in other industrial fields private sector can be allowed participation in Railways or what is its scope and capacity in this regard.

It is a policy matter and I do not want to raise it. But it has been said by the hon'ble Minister of Railways that we can improve rail passenger amenities and expand our rail network and services if catering and some other services are given to private sector.

I have invited the attention of the House towards some facts. Not going into more details, I would like to impress that railway is a kind of facility which a common man requires. Many trains which remain standing at a place for several hours can be extended. I have requested to extend Bhopal-Kota train upto Nagada. Today the condition of roads is very bad. Roads in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are in a very bad shape. People prefer to avail railway facility. About 6-7 months back, a train was introduced in my parliamentary constituency on metergauge in view of heavy rush of passengers there. The train was found so useful that people demanded for an another train also as a person can cover the distance between Indore and Mandasaur in five hours

while it takes 10 hours to cover the same distance by road. I was submitting that we talk about amenities for passengers. If there is a genuine demand in an area, the demand to provide passenger amenities there should be attended to ... (Interruptions) The train August Kranti Rajdhani should be provided stoppage at Ratlam. Inter-city should be provided stoppage at Meerut.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please conclude now as there is long list of members to speak.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA : I am concluding. I have confined myself to some specific points like - upgradation of railway stations, passenger amenities, reservation, doubling of tracks, gauge conversion. I have not deviated from the subject and I have not mentioned about Budget in detail. I will put forth my points regarding Budget at the appropriate time. I would like to draw the attention of the hon'ble Minister to consider my point regarding gauge conversion of a particular section mentioned by me. I hope she will accept my demand in the social interest and in the interest of development of the area and also to augment railway revenue and will make necessary funds available for this purpose.

With these words, I conclude.

*SHRI P. MOHAN (MADURAI) : Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for the opportunity you have provided me to take part in this discussion on supplementary demands for grants for Railways 1999-2000. I would like to bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Railway Minister certain points pertaining to South of Tamil Nadu and my Madurai constituency in particular. Considering the increased rail-traffic and the ever growing need to augment the rail services to link Chennai with Kanyakumari, laying of double line is necessary. As such double line is there upto Chennai. But there is a definite need to have double line between Chennai and Kanyakumari. Hence I urge upon the Railway Minister to take up the project to ensure double line between Chennai and Kanyakumari. Likewise there is an urgent need to restore many train services that were stopped or withdrawn when gauge conversion work was on. All such trains that were running must be restored. In our constituency Gujarathi, Maratha and Sourashtra people live in sizeable number. When I was speaking to our Railway Minister, she said that there are good number of Bengalis living there. I welcome it. Hence I want to emphasize the need to introduce a train between Kanyakumari and Jodhpur. Likewise the train that runs between Howrah and Tiruchirappalli should be extended upto Madurai. There used to be a train running between Madurai and Tirupathi. Due to gauge conversion that has been withdrawn. Lots of passengers and pilgrims used to depend on that to go to Tirupathi and beyond. Hence I urge upon the Railways to restore this train service between

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

Madurai and Tirupathi now as an express train. There used to be several day express trains between Chennai and Madurai. Some of them are to be restored yet. Kondal Express and Mahel Express rail should have services extended further.

There was a proposal from the Hon. Railway Minister Kum. Mamataji about the unmanned level crossings to involve MPs who may apportion in funds from their local area development funds. I feel it is an appreciable and welcome work. I appreciate the level crossing proposal made by our Hon. Minister Miss Mamataji.

In order to bear the burden that may arise due to the extending of rail services to Madurai city, we may have to take into consideration the load the Madurai railway junction can handle as of now. I understand that it has already been selected to be upgraded. I wish the Railways expedite the same. Some part of the burden on New Delhi Railway Station is now passed on to Nizamuddin Railway Station. Similarly when several train services are extended to Madurai junction, situated in the middle of the city which is not able to bear heavy traffic congestion, an alternative could be thought of. For instance, Kondal Nagar Railway Station can be extended further to accommodate more rail traffic. Boarding and alighting points could be shifted there as an additional terminal. As far as Madurai is concerned it is an important city in the southern Tamil Nadu. It is like a capital city to southern districts. It is in fact a second capital of Tamil Nadu. Hence the extending of several train services to Madurai would benefit people of this region in so many ways.

Now let me come to rail coaches. Our railways have even started manufacturing stainless steel coaches. But what we see as coaches running between Chennai and Madurai and in several other passenger trains running in the southern districts are not good rail coaches. Many of them are new trains most often run with old coaches. In the beginning just a day or two we would find new coaches, but soon after that only old coaches would be there in damaged conditions that would require maintenance and repair. We proudly talk about coaches we make in stainless steel. But we do not find express trains run with matching coaches. Suitable coaches must be fitted suitably in express trains.

There are several problems faced by railway men that call for Government's attention. Several of their demands are pending with the Railways. They are yet to be attended to for several years now. Our trade union DREU, Dakshin Railway Employees Union, has taken up several employees' grievances which are yet to be redressed. Hon. Railway Minister may kindly look into their grievances gearing up the redressal mechanism. DREU is still awaiting a formal recognition from the Railway administration. DREU has a

sterling historical record of its own. It has an enviable record of participating in the freedom struggle. A trade union with such a noble history and tradition is yet to be recognised even after 52 years of independence. It is also a fact that even trade unions that emerged later have been recognised. I have brought these things to your notice now while taking part in this discussion on supplementary demands for grants. I would like to request you to include in your full-fledged Budget the laying of double line between Chennai and Kanyakumari.

With this, I conclude my speech.

*SHRI GUTHA SUKENDER REDDY (NALGONDA) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the first loco took off on 16th April in 1853 from Bombay towards its destination Thane. Since then the Railways in the country have developed tremendously and became a part and parcel of country's social and economic development.

Stretched to a length of 63,000 kms, the Indian Railways have been playing a vital role in transporting both freight and passengers from one part of the country to another. Thus the Railways have become an important wing of our transport system by transporting not less than 1.1 million tonnes of goods everyday. Daily the Railways transport various goods ranging from steel to cement, from fertilizers to fodder and milk, from foodgrain to fruits and vegetables, from small items to gigantic machines.

Railways are serving the nation by linking villages, towns and cities bringing together the people from different life styles and languages making the nation more integrated. They are the lifelines of our society and development.

The Indian Railways have been running 7525 passenger trains carrying nearly 11 million travellers to their respective destinations, linking all the States by passing through mountains, rivers, deserts, valleys and tunnels. It is the only mode of transport which is cheaply and conveniently available to a common man in the country.

But Sir, we need to take many steps to make the Railways which have the glorious history of nearly 150 years to make it safe and sound. During the last 3 years 1289 persons lost their precious lives due to railway accidents. A former Minister in Andhra Pradesh Cabinet had also lost his life due to a Railway accident. 2594 persons were injured. The main reason for these accidents are age-old tracks which have not witnessed any modernisation, absence of technological upgradation and failure on the part of those who are responsible for running the railways safely and efficiently. Accidents continue uninterruptedly even to this day, in spite of the just criticism of its functioning emanating from all sections of the society throughout the country. It is really very strange that the Railways have not taken any

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Telugu.

[Shri Gutha Sukender Reddy]

note of this monumental criticism. Accidents are still taking place. It is time to sit up and tighten the belt and take effective steps to contain the ever increasing accidents.

It is time to put a stop to the policy of blaming earlier Governments for accidents and to take effective steps to avert the accidents in the future.

The absence of cleanliness in Railway attracts almost everyone's attention. 'Green and Clean' is the motto of our State Government headed by our able leader Shri Chandrababu Naidu. I request the Ministry of Railways to emulate the example of our beloved leader Shri Chandrababu Naidu under whose leadership the State is marching ahead to become 'Swarnandhra Pradesh'. The 'Green and Clean' programme is being implemented by all the departments. Railway should also see to it that Railway Stations and their surroundings and railway bogies are made free of dirt and foul smell.

Both the print and electronic media have been criticising the railways saying that the Railways are not clean. Their bogies emanate foul and filthy smell all the time, running without any punctuality on the age old obsolete tracks. But Railways have not at all bothered about this criticism. There is no improvement. The railway stations especially in rural areas in a horrible shape.

Steps should be taken on warfooting to improve the conditions in our railway stations. The railways should at once formulate action programme and implement them in all earnestness in order to achieve all-round cleanliness.

The Railways should be modernised so as to make comparable with the existing system in developed countries. Gauge conversion should be taken. The age old tracks should at once be replaced with new ones. Signalling system should also be computerised. Unmanned level crossings should be converted into manned level crossings. Steps should be taken to maintain punctuality in running the trains. Railway stations should be made neat and clean. Whenever necessary new constructions should also be taken up. It should also be seen that at least minimum facilities are provided in the coaches for passengers. New bogies should be introduced and track checking should be done from time without fail. These are some of the slips on which the Railway Ministry should concentrate in order to improve their image in the public.

We have been competing successfully with the developed world in all spheres. But as far as Railways are concerned we are still lagging behind. We have failed either to satisfy people or to achieve any progress.

We have been increasing the freight and traffic from time to time in order to meet the mounting expenses of the

Railways. But are we providing the amenities at the same level? No. The train journey which was within the reach of a common man has now become a luxury. It is out of reach of the common man already. In spite of going on enhancing the fare we have failed miserably to make available minimum facilities in the trains for a common man. An honest self-introspection is the need of the hour.

After independence how many new railway lines have been constructed? How many of our villages have been connected by railways? How many new lines have been completed and made operational. The answer is 'negligible'. The construction programme of new lines is going on at a snail's pace for want of adequate funds.

Coming to Andhra Pradesh, it is the State which is in second position after Punjab in paddy cultivation. It has been exporting coal to all parts of the country. It occupies a prominent place in cement production. It also occupies an important position in the import export trade of the country. It occupies the first and foremost place in the information technology sector. And yet it is far behind other States in development of Railways in the State. Even 50 years after the country achieved independence in 1947 only a mere 229 route kms were added in the State. It is highly unfortunate. Our State has been meted out stepmotherly treatment even in the matter of gauge conversion. 1015 kms of metre gauge lines are yet to be converted to broadgauge.

Andhra Pradesh, which is surging ahead to become 'Swarnandhra Pradesh', has only, 1628, 1628 kms of double line out of 4250 kms railway lines. 91.5 kms long Nalgonda-Macherla railway line was sanctioned in 1997-98 with an estimated cost of Rs. 125.09 crores. But till March, 1999, no allocations have been made in the successive budgets for this purpose. Similarly in 1996-97 sanctions was accorded to Nandyal-Erraguntla line with an estimated cost of Rs. 164.36 crores. But only Rs 1.17 crores have been spent till March, 1999. It is more than 3 years and I do not know how with this kind of allocation when it is going to be completed. Another railway line namely Peddapalli-Karimnagar-Nizamabad line with a length of 177.49 kms was sanctioned in 1993-94 costing Rs.264 crores. It is more than 6 years now. Only 21.14 crores have been spent on this line till March, 1999, and only Peddapalli-Karimnagar (Phase I) has been completed so far.

Though 45 kms long Kakinada-Kotipalli line was sanctioned way back in 1995-96, no allocation whatsoever was made for this line so far.

In 1997-98, 232.25 kms long Muniraba-Mahbubnagar line with a cost of Rs. 469 crores was sanctioned; in 1998-99, 60 kms long Gadwal-Raichur line with a cost of Rs. 100 crores. In 1999-2000, another line namely Kakinada-Pitha-

puram line with a length of 21 kms and cost of Rs. 41 crores was sanctioned.

For all these lines allocations have been quite negligible and as a result there is no progress at all. I request the Hon. Minister to provide sufficient funds for completion of these lines in time.

Similarly, barring Guntur-Guntakal-Kallur line the gauge conversion of Pakala-Tirupathi, Mudked-Adilabad, Bollaram-Secunderabad-Dronachalan, Secunderabad-Muked, Janakampet-Bodhan, Dharmavaram-Pakala are not progressing at proper speed due to non-availability of funds.

I appeal to the Hon. Minister of Railways to see that required funds are released at once for the early completion of conversion of the above lines.

As far as double lines in the State are concerned, except the Vikarabad-Tandur double line which was sanctioned in 1987-88, there is no progress whatsoever in the already sanctioned Vijayawada-Krishna Canal, Hospet-Guntakal, Gudur-Ranigunta, Bibinagar-Nadikudi double lines achieved so far.

The construction of over bridges has also been neglected in our State. As a part of Swarnandhra Pradesh programme, the State Government has undertaken the construction of bridges, over-bridges and widening of roads, etc., to ease the traffic problem. Many of them have been completed and commissioned by the State Government. But unfortunately the railways are yet to take up Zaheerabad overbridge, Sithaphal mandi over bridge in twin cities, an under bridge near Railway Nilayam in Secunderabad, Guntur-Tenali over bridge for construction. I request the Hon. Minister to release funds for speedy completion of these over bridges.

There has been considerable delay in matters related to traffic facilities, construction of workshops and location of divisions.

The successive Governments at Centre have neglected the State of Andhra Pradesh for all these long years. I hope and trust that justice would be done to the State at least now. I appeal to the Hon. Minister to allocate necessary funds for taking up new lines, and for speedy completion of those on which work is in progress. I also appeal to the Hon. Minister to make special allocations to our State in her forthcoming Budget for the year 2000-2001, so that the work already undertaken in the previous years will at least be completed in near future.

So, Hon. Mamata Banerjee hails from a State which is known for revolutionary zeal. She is a leader known for her revolutionary leadership. We are really fortunate to have her as a Railway Minister. I have every hope that in her able leadership, the Railways would witness an unprecedented

progress and the country's Railways compete with the developed world.

Sir, Shri Bangaru Lakshman is another Minister of State in the Railways. I request him to take personal interest in getting more allocations for the State in the next budget. This would enable us to complete all the pending projects.

I conclude my speech thanking you Sir for giving me an opportunity to participate in this discussion.

Jai Hind - Jai Janmabhoomi.

[English]

SHRI M.O.H. FAROOK (PONDICHERY) : I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak. I am very happy to see my sister Mamataji as the Minister for Railways. In fact, a lot of expectations are there in the country from her. I hope and wish, and also urge her that she should rise to the occasion. I wanted to tell her that I belong to the Union Territory of Pondicherry. Tiruchi-Karaikal line going through Nagore was declared as early as in 1995, in the budget speech of the then Railway Minister, Shri Jaffar Sharief. He said that this will be converted into a broad-gauge line. Till Tanjore, it has already been converted into a broad-gauge. From Tanjore to Karaikal, the conversion is yet to take place. My concern is, from Nagore to Karaikal, the line stretches only six kilometers.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please address the Chair. Why there is this bilateral arrangement?

SHRI M.O.H. FAROOK : I was asking for her personal attention. Personal attention has to be paid because I am coming from a very small State and my requirement of the line is only six kilometers, that too has already been announced by Shri Jaffar Sharief. The survey has also been completed. The Union Territory of Pondicherry has already given its consent to the Railway Ministry to do it. From 1995 onwards, that is, for the last four years I have been going from pillar to post to see that the work on this line is taken up. What has happened is, even though the survey has been done, land acquisition proceedings from Karaikal to Nagore have not been undertaken. The Government of Pondicherry is prepared to do that work but no information has come. I have personally spoken to Shri Kirti Vasan, who is now the Chief of the Southern Railways. He has assured me that this will be done. I have also written letters to the Minister of Railways, who was kind enough to write back to me saying that the work is on progress and she will take it up this year. But, she has also said that this can be done subject to the availability of fund. This is very unfair. We have been fighting for this for the last 10 years and in the last five years we could not only get an announcement in this regard but the work also has been completed up to

[Shri M.O.H. Farook]

Tanjore. From Tanjore to Nagore, it is only a 6 km. railway line. so, it will not be very difficult for the Minister. Other Members are pressing too much for the railway lines of 90 kms., 60 kms. or 50 kms. My only plea is to give us a 6 kms. line. Small States will have to be given special consideration and I hope that by giving special consideration to small States, Mamataji will definitely do it. I would like to tell the hon. Minister that whatever railway stations were there already, it has been taken away. The railway line from Karaikal to Peralam has been taken away. In order to compensate this, line from Karaikal to Nagore was announced, but still this has not been taken up.

The other thing that I wish to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister is, Tamil Nadu Express and Chennai Rajdhani Express are one of the longest trains in South. Tamil Nadu Express goes from New Delhi to Tamil Nadu every day and Rajdhani Express goes to Chennai from Nizamuddin twice a week. I would like to say that the food which is being supplied in the Tamil Nadu Express is horrible.

16.00 hrs.

We are prepared to pay money with the ticket. But my only plea is that please make it on par with Rajdhani Express wherein money is collected with the ticket and the catering is done by the private people. If the catering is done by the Railways, the standard of food is not at all good. Therefore, we would like to see that the standard is improved and catering should be given to private people in Tamil Nadu Express like Rajdhani Express. These two trains are among the longest trains in India. What is happening is that once you enter into these trains, you are cut off from the world. In fact, earlier Railway Ministers have announced that there will be telephone facilities in Rajdhani Express as well as in Tamil Nadu Express. There is no telephone facility in Tamil Nadu Express. We are prepared to pay the money. It is the longest train and we have to be in the train for two days. But the telephone facility is not available. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to see that Tamil Nadu Express as well as Rajdhani Express to Chennai are provided with telephone facilities. This is what I wanted to tell you.

I would request you to see how injustice is being done to us. You please come there as our guest. I will take you personally to show what is happening there. In this Six-kilometre stretch from Nagore to Karaikal, nothing has been done so far. Even the acquisition proceedings have not begun. The Government of Pondicherry has written and I have also written to you. You were also, kind enough to do that. But I do not understand as to why this has not been done. You please take up this matter and do justice to us.

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH (MAHARAJGANJ, BIHAR) :

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is a supplementary demand, it does not require a lengthy speech. I am speaking in support of this demand. Railways is such a department to which 100 crore people of the country look forward with expectations and most of the people are benefited by it. There are very few people who are not availing this facility. This issue involves two important aspects. One is concerned with the safety and the other is related with railway accidents. Hon'ble Kumari Mamata Banerjee had been the Chairperson of Standing Committee where she has been raising these issues regularly. She had also recommended a few points to check train accidents and for the safety of the passengers. No doubt the technical devices like telephones and wireless are being used but the system would be complete only when an element of manual handling is introduced in it. High quality training should be imparted to the railway employees. Hon'ble Minister, security personnels are not discharging their duties with alertness. Sometimes Railway police itself is involved in wrong deeds which disturbs the scheme of things. Government is required to spend a huge amount of funds on petty things. Even then accidents take place. It has also been noticed that in rural areas, there is no railway level crossing on the railway tracks. If there is any crossing, it is unmanned. Absence of gateman at railway level crossing leads to collision between train and buses. Instead of reaching their destinations, passengers land themselves in mortuaries. This matter requires a small expenditure. Construction of railway level crossing and the deployment of gateman on these crossings assume utmost importance in this context. It would help to avoid accidents to some extent. I will not continue for a long as only two minutes have been allotted to me. I would like to submit the problems of my area to hon'ble Mamataji. Digvijay Babu is present in the House but napping. I request him to wake up and listen to my submissions.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You may write a letter to Digvijay Babu mentioning the problems of your area.

SHRI PRABHUNATH SINGH : While presenting the Railway Budget, Shri Nitish Kumar has made a proposal to convert meter gauge line from Chhapra to Kaptanganj into broad gauge. It has been passed in the Budget. The Railway line between Chhapra and Kaptanganj dates back to the period of British Empire. It connects two States namely Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and is not very long. Hon'ble Mamata ji should provide funds for this so that the work could be taken up immediately. I had met her in this connection and she replied that there is shortage of funds. If Minister of Finance were here, I would have requested him on this issue. Through you, I would like to request to enhance the funds allocations for this and get the work started. During the tenure of Shri Ram Vilas as the Minister of Railways, the railway line between Dhuraunda and Maharajganj was sanctioned and funds were also allocated for it. During the

tenure of Shri Nitish Kumar Rs. 2 crores were allocated but the matter was referred to the Planning Commission. The matter was discussed with Digvijay Babu and he stated that Planning Commission is not involved in this matter. Funds will be arranged soon. The delay shatters confidence of the people. People start saying that they are not serious and are merely interested in propaganda through Press and T.V. When Shri Nitish Kumar was the Minister of Railways, the halt at Mehendernath was agreed to be provided but the same was not done. More than half of the work has been done but the rest has not been completed yet. The reason for the delay in work is not known to us. Much expenditure is not involved in it. We would like that an order be issued to G.M. in this connection.

A survey was also conducted for the line from Mush-rakh to Maharajgaj. Survey report concluded that this railway line will not be a beneficial one. Mamataji has also said that it should not be considered from the commercial view point only but the concern of common man and social aspect should also be taken into account. The distance between these two places is only 25-30 kms. A railway line may kindly be laid between these two places. Its foundation stone should be laid for which people will remember you for a long.

Business would be badly affected if the labourers could not move from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to Bengal. Labourers of Bihar should be benefited. People of North Bihar have only two occupations viz. agriculture and service outside. Agriculture is often damaged by floods and drought and the people have to depend upon service only. They earn their livelihood by migrating to 2-3 States and look after their families.

They go to Gujarat and Maharashtra for getting jobs. Labourers of Uttar Pradesh will be greatly benefited if trains from Chhapra to Howrah, Chhapra to Mumbai and from Chhapra to Vadodhara are introduced.

In the end, I would like to repeat the points which I have already stated during Zero Hour. Irregularities are going on in Manjhi in respect of land. The officers are involved in it. In Balia also, Engineers are indulged in corrupt practices. Killings are a common phenomena there and illegal trade of liquor is going on. Permanent consolidation of land holding is going on. Shall such irregularities continue under your regime. Please pay attention in this regard and suspend the officers involved in it. Illegal encroachments at railway land should be removed and the land should be recovered. Railway Ministry should take the possession of its land and no illegal trade must be allowed to flourish there. I want to say this much only.

SHRI CHANDRA BHUSHAN SINGH (FARRUKHABAD) :
Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to put forth my views regarding

the supplementary demands of railways. First of all, I would like to congratulate the dynamic politician of the country and fortunately like her predecessor, she has been able to check railway accidents. However, it is regrettable that the prime trains like Rajdhani Express are running 5 to 8 hours late. It creates problems for the people. I request you to ensure the punctuality at least of the prime trains. I will not miss the opportunity to praise you for not increasing the passenger fares. It has been decided between Chairman, Railway Board and you not to increase the fare. You really deserve our thanks. I also want that the passenger fares should not be increased in this poor country as it would be beneficial for the people.

16.11 hrs.

✻ (DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA *in the Chair*)

As we all are aware of the fact that very few countries in the world have such a big railway network like ours. Unfortunately, less than one per cent has been allocated in the Budget on research and development in railways though we have such a large infrastructure for it.

I would like to submit to the Hon'ble Minister of Railways that improvement is required in regard to research and development. More funds should be allocated under this head so as to make arrangements to provide new bogies, engines and signals. The Members who have spoken before me have mentioned about the lack of security arrangement in railways. I hail from district Farrukhabad where both meter gauge and broad gauge railway lines are present. Passenger trains are running on these tracks. However, first class bogies are not attached with these trains. The train Kalindi Express is running between Delhi and Farrukhabad for the last so many years. Earlier half a coach of the first class compartment was used to be attached with this train but due to unknown reasons this half coach was withdrawn. I request that if not a full compartment, atleast half a coach with first class facility should be provided in it.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, yesterday, I was travelling in a second class sleeper. I noticed that after the seats occupied by the passengers getting reservation facility, T.T. or the concerned officials allowed more than 10 persons to sit on each vacant reserved seat and it caused security problem. I request you to look into the matter. Hardly any day passes when the incidents of loot do not take place on Shikohabad - Farrukhabad section. It takes place in connivance with the railway employees. I do not know whether it is our fortune or misfortune that after late Shri Kamalapati Tripathi, there has been no Railway Minister from U.P. The result is that neither a single train was added nor the new railway lines were laid in Uttar Pradesh. We are all aware of the fact that when the Railway Minister was from Karnataka, he allocated huge funds from the Budget for his State. Similarly, the

[Shri Chandra Bhusan Singh]

previous Railway Minister was from Bihar and he too allocated a large amount of the budgetary funds for Bihar. What I am saying is absolutely right. There is nothing new in it as every person looks for his own interests. There is no bad intention in it. In my view, Uttar Pradesh with the population of 14 crore should definitely get its due share.

I would like to request you in this regard. Earlier, when I was member of Parliament, a railway line between Farrukhabad and Hathras was approved. A budget allocation of Rs.330 crores was sanctioned to convert it from meter gauge to broad gauge. Out of this allocation, an amount of Rs. 30 crore was released during the same year. Arrangements are being made for gauge conversion and the work is smoothly under progress. I would like to request that the railway line between Kanpur and Farrukhabad is going to be converted into broad gauge, I hope the conversion will also take place between Farrukhabad and Hathras. It will take time, however, the railway line between Farrukhabad and Shikohabad which connects Delhi-Kanpur main line, is already a broad gauge line, but unfortunately that line is 100 years old and low weight rail tracks have been laid there. The train covers a distance of 300 km. between Delhi and Shikohabad in 3½-4 hours but the same train takes 3 hours to cover a distance of only 100 km. On that track, trains can move only with the speed of 40-50 km. per hour. My submission is that with the strengthening of this track, express trains can easily be introduced for Delhi via Farrukhabad which would help in easing out the traffic congestion on Kanpur to Delhi route and it will also facilitate the loading of goods.

I would like to draw your attention towards one more point. I have noticed that quality of the food stuff supplied in the trains has been deteriorated. I would like to request you that this quality should be improved. Proper sanitation facilities should be provided in trains. Besides, sitting arrangements and drinking water facilities at small stations is not upto the mark. I would like to request you to provide drinking water facility at the small stations on branch lines so that the passengers may get drinking facilities during summer season. Moreover, Medical facilities in the prime trains like Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express are not adequate. Only general medicines are available in the name of first aid but if a person gets heart attack during the journey no proper arrangement is there, so the proper medical facilities should be made available. I know that such facilities can not be provided in all the trains but these should be provided in the prime trains in which distinguished people of our country travels. Medical facilities in the trains will facilitate the people. Railways provide 8 hours time for taking delivery of the goods as soon as the goods are unloaded from the trains at the Railway stations. In case the delivery of the goods is not taken within 8 hours, Demurrage charges are levied on the businessman. My submission is that the platforms at Delhi

and Kanpur railway stations are very busy and transportation facilities are also available there. Traders, here can easily pick up the goods. However, platforms at small stations are not very busy and there is lack of labour facility also. Therefore, I would like to request you to extend the time from 8 hours to 12 hours so that Demurrage charges paid by the businessmen could be avoided.

With these words, I conclude.

SHRI SANSUMA KHUNGGUR BWISWMUTHIARY : I should also be given the opportunity to speak.

[English]

I come from a far-off place in the North-East.

SHRI TRILOCHAN KANUNGO (JAGATSINGHPUR) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support the Supplementary Demands for Railways and I know the limitation of a Supplementary Budget. Still, I feel it is imperative and I feel it is my responsibility to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister, through you, certain problems, my own feelings and the feelings of the people of Orissa, here, in the august House.

At the outset, let me congratulate and express my gratitude on behalf of the people of Orissa that after the super-cyclone, the hon. Minister of Railways restored the railway in a record time. At the same time, I remind her and this august House that a perpetual negligence has been done to this part of the country in several sectors including railways. Not only after the Independence but even during the British Raj, Orissa had been neglected so far as railway development was concerned. A part of Orissa was tied to the tail end of Bengal and it did not get any timely attention. A part of it was attached to the Central Province at that time. Another part was attached to the Madras Presidency. In 1853, when the first 120 miles long rail line was laid between Raniganj and Calcutta, Orissa had to wait for 50 years to see the laying of a railway line. In 1900, Orissa saw the first railway line after 50 long years of railway development in India. However, from 1900 to 1942, 1,300 kilometres of route was laid in that part of Orissa. During the last 52 years, only 700 kilometres of railway line has been laid. The result is that per thousand square kilometre of geographical area, Orissa has only 14 kilometres of route length whereas the neighbouring State, West Bengal, has 43 kilometres. In Bihar, it is more than 30 kilometres. In Andhra Pradesh, it is 20 kilometres. In other places, like Gujrat, it is 27.15 kilometres per thousand square kilometre. Haryana has 33 kilometre per square kilometre and so on and so forth.

What is the demand of the people of Orissa? I know that it is a Supplementary Budget. I am reminding the hon. Minister to take care of it in the ensuing Budget. What is our

grievance? Our grievance is : please bring us to the level of national average. The national average is 19 kilometres per thousand square kilometre of area and it is just not a demand of share. It is commercially urgent and socially necessary. This has not been done so far.

Since a sister of Orissa is occupying the Chair of this august office, I hope that the Orissa will get its due share.

I want to remind this House that from 1980-1994, that is, for 15 years, a length of only 20 kilometres of railway line was laid in Orissa. The percentage change is only 1.6 in 15 years, whereas in West Bengal, the percentage of increase was 8.1. The absolute increase over these 15 years was 100 kilometres. Similarly, in Andhra Pradesh, the change is 22.9 per cent or an increase of 282 kilometres and so on and so forth.

My point is that we - the people of Orissa - have been tolerating it. In the words of Lord Curzon, the people of Orissa are a docile class and an innocent class. We have not revolted. We have not agitated nor we have placed our Demands rightly in this House because of which we have been neglected.

I hope that thereafter and in the 21st century, Orissa would not be neglected.

Sir, I have a few suggestions to make. Firstly, in 1996, a new Zone known as 'East Coast Railway zone' was created. Now, four years have elapsed but nothing has happened, no progress has been made. The people of Orissa want that within three years' time, there should be a full-fledged zone. I hope that the hon. Railway Minister will look into this matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Kanungo, we are not debating the whole Railway Budget. We are debating only the Supplementary Railway Budget.

SHRI TRILOCHAN KANUNGO : Sir, I would mention another two or three points. Within a minute, I will conclude.

Secondly, there should be a plan with a time bound programme to bring Orissa to the level of national average so far as railway route per thousand square kilometre of area is concerned. It should be done within a period of seven years from now.

Thirdly, the Government should take up the land acquisition and construction work of Khurda Road-Bolangir Railway route in right earnest so as to complete the work within a period of five years.

Lanjigarh Road-Junagarh Rail route project of 54 kilometres is in the most backward districts of Orissa. Adequate funds should be provided in the ensuing budget for the completion of the project within two years' time.

Daitari-Banspani Railway route has been demanded since 1950s and the people of Orissa have been hearing sympathetic sweet words from the Centre since the year 1964, but of no avail. We demand that Daitari-Banspani Railway route should be taken up and completed as quickly as possible.

Angul-Sukinda Rail route deserves immediate attention of the Railway Ministry. At least a sum of Rs. 100 crore should be provided in the ensuing Railway Budget.

Haridaspur-Paradeep Railway route of 78 kilometres of length is another priority area which should be looked at in right earnest.

Last but not the least is the conversion of narrow gauge to broad gauge. During the last 52 years of Independence, nearly 8,000 kilometres of gauge conversion was effected in India but not a single kilometre of gauge conversion from narrow to broad gauge was done in Orissa. I would request the hon. Railway Minister, through you, Sir, to convert the narrow gauge lines, Rupsa-Bangiriposhi and Naupada to Gunupur via parala Khemundi to broad gauge lines. These two narrow gauge lines should be converted to broad gauge line quickly.

These are all our just and reasonable demands. I hope that the hon. Railway Minister will take care of these demands in the ensuing Budget.

[Translation]

SHRI RASHID ALVI (AMROHA) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, on behalf of Bahujan Samaj Party, I rise to speak on the Supplementary Demands for Grants.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please speak in brief so that more and more members can participate in the discussion.

SHRI RASHID ALVI : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I always speak in brief.

I rise to speak on the Supplementary Demands for Grants and I would like to say that there is need to pay special attention to railways in Uttar Pradesh particularly to the western U.P. area which is most neglected in respect of railway services. There is no such provision in the entire demands for grants covering the Western U.P. area. Especially I would like to mention about Gajraula which is 100-125 kms. away from here. There is a railway crossing in Gajraula which is often over crowded and it links entire hilly areas with the Western U.P.

The issue of construction of a bridge has been raised many times but it has not yet been constructed. Alongwith that Amroha from where I have contested election, also

[Shri Rashid Alvi]

have a railway crossing where the people have to face many difficulties. I would like that an overbridge should be constructed between Amroha and Gajraula. There is a provision for upgrading some stations. But inspite of that provision very few cities of Uttar Pradesh are being upgraded. There should be a provision to upgrade Amroha, Gajraula, Bijnore, Chandpur and Najibabad should be included in it.

I would like to tell one more thing to the Hon'ble Minister that a provision of amount of Rs. 11 lakh has been made for construction of Sealdah railway station. I do not feel that it is justified to spend such a huge amount on the construction of a single station. That station can be repaired also and the rest of the amount should be spent for providing passenger amenities in other areas of the country.

Besides, through you, I would also like to say that there are cases of theft and robberies in the trains running through Western U.P. Railway Police Personnels are not deployed in those trains. The trains which run during night...*(Interruptions)* You call her by name. I feel very happy when you call Mayawati by name ...*(Interruptions)* Windows of such trains remain open and the passengers can be easily robbed of their valuables. Many such incidents have taken place in which the necklaces of the women were snatched from outside through the open windows. Therefore, I would like that there should be a proper provision for deployment of police in these trains. Only one or two trains running between Delhi and Lucknow stop at Amroha and Gujraula. Non stoppage of other trains cause a lot of hardships to the people of the area. My request is that stoppage of other trains should also be provided at these stations.

Finally, my request is that the trains which run from Masoori, Dehradun to Delhi and Lucknow do not pass via Bijnore and Chandpur. Therefore, I would also request that arrangements should be made to ensure that the trains pass through Bijnore and Chandpur too.

[English]

SHRI ANNASHEB M.K. PATIL (ERANDOL) : I rise here to support the Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for the year 1999-2000. It has been observed that because of the negligence on the part of Railways, the problem of pollution has come up. You will see that for the last 50 years, only 10 per cent to 15 per cent of railways development, either in the way of new one or modified one or constructed one, has come up. But if it had come in a planned way as it has done in other sections, I think this problem of pollution would have been reduced or much more avoided.

There are about 12 million passengers travelling in the railways. The problem of pollution in the city of Mumbai where daily, about five million people travel through trains. There will be much less of pollution problem compared to the problem in cities like Delhi and other places.

Sir, these demands are for various new developments, particularly manning of unmanned level crossings. It is so meagre. Out of 24,313 unmanned level crossing, only 469 are going to be manned. The amount is very meagre and less. It cannot cope up to the required aim which would certainly avoid the loss of human lives in particular as a safety and Security measure.

Sir, there are three unmanned crossings in my constituency which should also be looked into.

Sir, again, some of the new developmental activities, such as internet based enquiry systems have to be incorporated in this Budget and this would be helpful to the Railways also. As far as upgradation of passenger amenities to the 48 stations is concerned, I think, it is very less compared to the requirement of the country. Actually, it should have been much more than what it is. So, on behalf of the people from my constituency and through you, Sir, I request the hon. Minister to consider these amenities particularly in my constituency at Dharangaon and other stations where there is not even provision for drinking water to the passengers. During the sunny days, it is very hot and it is difficult for them to stand over there.

Similarly, as far as providing the mobile communication between the driver, guard and station master is concerned, this would certainly provide a better service. You might have read in the newspapers that there were earlier two accidents occurred in my constituency because of miscommunication or lack of communication.

Sir, there are a large number of things which have already been taken into account in this Budget. One of the items is about the upgradation of stations. Only 67 stations are going to be upgraded in which there is no station from my constituency. Sir, through you, I would request the hon. Minister to include at least one station out of four stations, that is, either at Chalisgaon, Pachora, Dharangaon or Amalner. The hon. Minister has already planned for 40 stations to be upgraded. Therefore, my humble request to the hon. Minister is that at least one of the stations should be included in this upgradation programme.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

SHRI ANNASHEB M.K. PATIL : Sir, as you said that the time is short, I can give in writing to the hon. Minister about some of the issues particularly in my area.

SHRI P.H. PANDIYAN (TIRUNELVELI) : Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to participate in the discussion on Supplementary Demands for Grant of the Ministry of Railways. I support the Demands and I need your support for my constituency, for my district and also for the State.

In Tirunelveli and Tuticorin Districts, there are certain

demands in Supplementary Demands for Grant of the Railways. In the Tuticorin V.O.C. District, there are three railway gates.

For the last 40-50 years, the whole traffic comes to a standstill during peak hours and the people are not able to pass through that gate for about three hours. Tuticorin is a pearl city. It is a place for import and export. There is a harbour and there is a Port Trust. So, I would request the Minister to sanction three pedestrian overbridges at gates number 1, 2 and 3 in V.O. Chidambarnar district. Similarly, near Tirunelveli Junction, there is a gate. That also remains closed for three to four hours daily. The whole city has come to a standstill. So, I appeal to the hon. Minister to sanction a pedestrian over-bridge at Tachanallur and also at Palayankottai-Kulavanigarpuram. The most important demand is that there is no Maintenance Division in Tirunelveli and, as such, all the trains have been enrouted to Trivandrum for the fit-line. So, a Fit line Division must be sanctioned by the hon. Minister. Also, there is no Service Station and there is no Maintenance Division. So, also in Tirunelveli district. From Tirunelveli to Chenkottai, the metre gauge should be converted into broad gauge. Generally, there is no two-line system from Villupuram to Tirunelveli or Tuticorin. From Villupuram to Tuticorin-Tirunelveli, it is about 450 kilometres. There is no two-line system. If there is another line, one train could come to Chennai from Tuticorin within eight hours. Now it takes fourteen hours. So also from Villupuram to Tirunelveli. It takes 14 hours. So, to minimise the time, the hon. Minister should sanction another line from Villupuram to Tuticorin and Tirunelveli. It will be of great help to both the districts. It will cover both Tuticorin and Tirunelveli. I, on behalf of my district and my constituency, appeal to the Minister to sanction some new trains, such as, Tuticorin to Dindigul-Karur-Salem-Bangalore, Tuticorin to Mumbai and Tuticorin to Chennai.

AN HON. MEMBER : Tuticorin to Calcutta also.

SHRI P.H. PANDIYAN : Yes, Tuticorin to Calcutta also. If the hon. Minister sanctions a train from Tirunelveli to Calcutta, we welcome that. We also want to go to Calcutta direct. In all the districts, there is only one ticket counter. People are not able to get the tickets quickly. In Tuticorin also, there is only one counter. The Minister can see this photograph published in a vernacular daily. Same is the case from Nagerscoil to Guruvayur. There is already a train running from Madurai to Guruvayur. It is on the time-table of the Railways but it is not running. There are Christians and Muslims in Malapalayam which is near Tirunelveli Junction. During Haj pilgrimage, lots of people have to enter the train from Malapalayam. So, the train may be allowed to stop at Malapalayam to take the pilgrims. So also from Kanyakumari to Tirupati if a new train is allowed to run, people will go to that sacred place. So, they need a train from Kanyakumari to Tirupati.

I now come to the general points. The tickets are sold through travel agents. All the tickets are being purchased by the travel agents. People have to go to the travel agents and they are charging more money. There are umpteen number of travel agents throughout the State and throughout India. All the travel agents purchase A.C. class tickets, first class tickets and they purchase even the sleeper class tickets. All the passengers have to purchase tickets only through the travel agents and they have to pay more. Instead of it, you can increase the trains and you can directly sell the tickets to the people.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Pandiyan, please conclude now.

SHRI P.H. PANDIYAN : Sir, we are ten Members and I am speaking on behalf of all.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I know that. Your time has already exhausted.

SHRI P.H. PANDIYAN : Sir, there is one request from the Deputy Leader of the our Party.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Your party is given four minutes. You have taken more than ten minutes.

SHRI P.H. PANDIYAN : For four minutes, I have obtained 13 lakh votes. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : The time allotted for the discussion for Supplementary Demands for Grants for Railways is only four hours. According to the time limitation, we have to conclude it.

SHRI P.H. PANDIYAN : Sir, while the Railway authorities are keen in the process of converting metre-gauge lines in to broad-gauge lines, I am unable to understand why an important link from Tiruchirapalli to Manamadurai enabling passengers to reach Rameshwaram is not considered. It is a most important request to the hon. Minister. The people prefer Railways. It is a one-way train track and there is no likelihood of accidents. People do not prefer bus travel. Now there are no buses in Tamil Nadu. All the buses are in the sheds. They are under repair. I appeal to the hon. Minister to sanction more trains to cater to the needs of the public. ...*(Interruptions)* The private omnibuses and private vans are plying. To cater to the needs of the public, the hon. Minister may sanction more trains.

I would appeal to the hon. Minister to upgrade certain district stations. I am very happy to see the hon. Minister has upgraded Madurai, Chennai and Tiruchirapalli stations. I would appeal to the hon. Minister to upgrade the Tuticorin station as a model station because it is a port city and ancient city where the freedom fighter, V.O. Chidambarnar was born and where *Swadeshi* ship was driven by V.O. Chidambarnar. There is no broad-gauge platform in Tuticorin.

[Shri P.H. Pandiyan]

You have proposed upgradation of passenger amenities in 48 new stations. I would appeal to the hon. Minister to include Tirunelveli in that. It is also round the corner. It is an important place. It connects all the pilgrimage places. I appeal to the hon. Minister to sanction all these schemes because people are expecting more from the Railway Ministry.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now.

SHRI P.H. PANDIYAN : From Kollam to Madurai there is a metre-gauge line. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : I am now calling Shri Suresh Jadhav. Shri Pandiyan, please cooperate.

SHRI P.H. PANDIYAN : I thank the Chair for giving me this opportunity. I appeal to the hon. Minister to please sanction the pedestrian-crossing overbridges at palayamkottai, Tachanallur, Tirunelveli and other places.

[Translation]

SHRI SURESH RAMRAO JADHAV (PARBHANI) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the discussion regarding Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) 1999-2000 is going on in the House. Through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister of Railways towards my constituency. The Marathwada region of Maharashtra is a very backward one and no attention has so far been paid towards this region by the Ministry of Railways. The Vidarbha region adjoining Marathwada region is also a very backward region. The Ministry of Railways has not paid attention towards this region also. I hail from Marathwada region. In this connection we five people i.e. myself, Shivaji Mahane, Sister Bhavana Gauli and Shivaji Kamble had requested the Minister of Railways. I do not know as to what consideration has taken place over that letter. Through you, I would only like to say that the Hon'ble Minister of Railways Kumari Mamata Banerjee is a very sensitive Minister and I hope she will do justice with this very backward region and will definitely consider our demand.

As far as the question of gauge conversion is concerned, the distance between Purna and Akola is 175 km. and the work is going on at a very slow speed. I know that the Ministry of Railways does not have sufficient funds but the funds have to be provided for essential things. The conversion of Purna-Akola rail line from meter gauge to broad gauge is very essential. Two wagons are received at Parli Thermal Power Station in Marathwada region everyday. If these wagons are brought via Vardha then it will reduce the distance by 300 kms and this will benefit the Ministry of Railways. Similarly, if gauge conversion of Pavada-Calcutta rail line is undertaken it will save time of the people who want to go to either to Mumbai or Calcutta. The gauge

conversion of Mukhed-Adilabad is being done at Snail's pace. It should be expedited. Thirdly, at Mukhed-Secunderabad line, the work has taken place upto Balram, but there is no broad gauge from Mukhed to Balram. If this is not done then it will not benefit in anyway. My fourth demand is that a new railway line should be laid from Latur to Bodhan. My fifth demand is that the work regarding Jalana-Khamgaon-Vijapur-Kopargaon to Punthamba is also very essential. If this work is done then the distance between Marathwada and Vidarbha will be reduced and it will also be very beneficial.

My sixth demand is regarding the gauge conversion of new railway line Parli-Vajinath via Ahmednagar and Kalyan. My seventh demand is that Latur-Kurudwadi rail line should also be undertaken for gauge conversion. It is one of our oldest meter gauge line, hence it is very essential to convert it into broadgauge.

I have one more small request. I know that the Ministry of Railways does not have funds. But some political decisions were taken during 1994 when Rao's government was in power. At that time in Marathwada there was one Purna Railway Division. Even today the building, employees and officers are there. A political decision was taken for them and consequently Purna division was transferred to Nanded. This Nanded division exists only on paper and no concrete action has so far been taken in this regard. Even today, there is no building, employees and officers. I would like to request the Ministry of Railways that the political decision regarding the transfer of Purna Division which was taken in 1994 should be cancelled and Purna division should be allowed to continue. Our Satellite Diesel shed is in Purna. It is essential to convert that shed into Diesel Homeshed. Everything is available in Purna i.e. Employees, building and officers. However the repair work related to Nanded railway are undertaken at Purna Division. Our railway engines are sent to Gutli, which is 736 km. away from here, for repairing. Similarly railway repairing is also done at Gutkal, Katni, Krishnapuram, Purne and Kajipeth.

Though Purna has all facilities even then repairing work is done at 700-800 kms away from here. Through you, I would request that it should be stopped. Our satellite Diesel shed at Purna should be converted into Diesel homeshed. It is very essential to convert CNW workshop into carriage wagon workshop. My another request is that the Tapovan Express which runs between Nanded and Mumbai should halt at Partur because it is a Taluk. It is the demand of the public. I have written to the Minister of Railways. ...*(Interruptions)* The bogies of Devgiri Express should be increased ...*(Interruptions)* I thank you for giving me time to speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, whatever you speak will not go on record.

*(Interruptions)**

*Not recorded.

[English]

SHRI S. BANGARAPPA (SHIMOQA) : When a Member is speaking, if another Member's name is called immediately, then it is very difficult for that Member to speak.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): Sir, out of the total number of Members of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, at least, I met 600 Members of Parliament. Everyday, the Members of Parliament are coming in a delegation. So, I do not know why the hon. Member feels shocked. Please understand that I am also a human being ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : I am not allowing you. The Minister wants to say something.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : When they said that I have to clear this project right at that time, I reminded them that there are some norms.

[Translation]

SHRI ALI MOHD. NAIK (ANANTNAG) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Central Government had formulated a Railway Project 15 years ago under which a 90 kilometers stretch of railway line was to be laid from Jammu to Udhampur ...*(Interruptions)* but even after 15 years only 10 kilometers stretch of rail line has been laid. Thereafter Government took a further decision of laying a 300 kilometers line from Udhampur to Baramula.

17.00 hrs.

When Mamataji replies, I would like to know from her the reasons due to which work relating to laying of railway track between Jammu & Udhampur remains incomplete.

Secondly, what are the reasons for not laying Udhampur-Baramula railway line. Everyone is aware of the political, social, economic and commercial importance of Jammu and Kashmir. What are the reasons for not implementing the projects formulated as far back as 15 years? On the one hand we assure the people about the completion of a project but nothing comes out of it expect laying the foundation stone for it. When hon'ble Mamataji replies she must tell as to how much amount was earmarked for this project and out of that how much has been spent till now and what is the yearly allocation for this project? The present allocation is so inadequate that the project can not be expected to be complete even in 60 years. It is common knowledge that during the Kargil war much inconvenience was faced by the Government as only a single road exists between Jammu and Srinagar. Hence I feel that in view of the special importance of this project and this being border State provision for special funding should be made for this project.

Secondly, the ten years of emergency in the State also ruined it. At present, a huge number of unemployed exists there. I would like to make a submission to the hon. Mamataji to make such a provision for the recruitment of the unemployed youth of Jammu and Kashmir in the Railways so that these people who are being misused by undesirable elements may be recruited in the Railways and thus they could be brought up to the mainstream of the country. A special train should be introduced between Jammu and Bangalore as a large number of students of Jammu & Kashmir go to various cities of Karnatka for appearing in Engineering, medical and various other examinations. Many many thanks.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Chairman, Sir, much can not be said in supplementary demands, I would like to point out to only a few things in order to remind the House of some facts. It is being claimed here that 1 crore people travel on trains and 1 crore and 10 lakh ton of freight is carried by the Railway everyday on an average. All are aware that Vaishali is the mother of democracy and the city had the first even republic of the world, the "Lichhavi Republic". Lord Mahavira had once observed that the rule of law prevailed there. It is also the birth place of Lord Mahavira. Vaishali has repeatedly been designated as Budhist circuit. It has been demanded time and again that Vaishali should be connected with Railways. The then Railway Minister had also laid the foundation stone for it on 17th February, 1999. But now the survey is being conducted. It is said that.

[English]

Where there is no will, there is survey and where there is will, there is Railway.

[Translation]

It is a formula. More than two years have since passed. Whether you intend to connect Vaishali with Railways? Nitishji had also said that he will make a wholehearted effort to bring Vaishali on the Railway map. He had said that Bihar is facing a major crisis. If we do not do so then it will bring a lot of defame to us. It will give a bad name to them because the Railway Minister whether presented the Railway Budget hails from Bihar. We do not know whether or not any weightage is given to the opinion of the Railway Minister?

Hon. Minister of Railways who used to make tall claims regarding linking Vaishali to Railway, should clarify the situation. Budhists pilgrims and the tourists from all over the world flank Vaishali. There was an issue of the conversion of Sitamarhi-Narkatiaganj line into broad-gauge. All these matters are lying pending. There is no rail linkage between Muzzafarpur to Sitamarhi. There was one hon. Transport Minister. There are no transport facilities in hazipur, Muzzafarpur and Sitamarhi ...*(Interruptions)*. The National Highway Authority had taken up construction at these places.

[Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh]

The State Government is doing nothing in this regard on the pretext that this matter is not under their jurisdiction, now National Highways Authority is enjoying its own share of profit. While travelling from Muzzafarpur to Sitamarhi, one finds that he has reached a place totally devoid of facilities. He can not return back even if he wishes. There is no other mode of transport there. All the people there are of the opinion that the city should be linked with the railway. I do not know what hindrance is there in doing so? The foundation stone for constructing railway bridge at Patna was laid on February or March 1997, i.e. more than two years back but what is its present status? Nitishji used to say that the foundation stone of this project was laid without getting the project approved. It is being rumoured that the model of this bridge is being prepared in Pune but these things only mislead the masses. The people ask why was not a bridge constructed once its foundation stone had been laid? ...*(Interruptions)* The road from Hazipur to Muzzafarpur is the life line of North Bihar. There are two railway crossings in Hazipur, one at Ikehari and other at Dighi. Due to the absence of an overbridge, traffic remains disrupted for several hours together there. The vehicles remain jamlogged there, at 1 kilometre stretch of the road. Hence an overbridge should be constructed there.

The labourers of Bihar migrate to Calcutta, Delhi and Punjab to earn their livelihood. When they come back with their earning, they face a lot of problems in getting ticket reservation for journey. Railway T.T.E. also proves a nuisance to them. On one or the other pretext he tries to extract money from them. This tendency should also be curbed. As far as security in railways is concerned, sometimes back the Gaisal rail tragedy took place, so in view of such incidents, stern security measures should be taken so that the life and property of railway passengers could be provided protection.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for giving me time to speak.

[English]

SHRI V. VETRISELVAN (KRISHNAGIRI) : Respected Chairman, Sir, my dear senior Members, and new Members, I express my sincere thanks for giving me the opportunity to make the maiden speech in this august House. On this occasion, I am thrilled and overjoyed to be here as a Member of Parliament, because our NDA has been given a clear mandate by the people of this country. All the credit goes to the leader of the NDA, the hon. Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee-ji and to my leader Dr. Kalam, who have worked tirelessly for the victory of the NDA in Tamil Nadu. I also express my sincere thanks to the people of my constituency Krishnagiri for having given me the opportunity to serve them as their Member of Parliament.

Sir, I am very happy to be a Member of this august

House where our unparalleled, great leader of Dravidian renaissance, Arignar Anna has made history in the annals of Indian Parliamentary democracy. I assure, Sir, as a disciplined soldier of my DMK party, I will stand committed to democracy, secularism and socialism.

Following the footsteps of our great leader Anna, Dr. Kalam and the hon. Union Minister of Industries and Commerce, Anna Murasoli Maran are shouldering the onerous responsibilities for which Anna stood. We always uphold the democratic spirit of Indian Constitution.

On behalf of DMK party, I support the Supplementary Demands for Grants, Railways.

Now, I would like to say a few words for the consideration of our hon. Railway Minister Miss Mamata Banerjee.

Let me straightaway come to my constituency and later to my State Tamil Nadu.

After the preliminary engineering-cum-traffic survey of Hosur-Jolarpettai, the new broadgauge line is on. I would request the hon. Railway Minister about the things to be done in my constituency, Krishnagiri. My constituency consists of six segments, of which Burgur is one segment. I think Burgur, is a famous place in our constituency. The former Chief Minister Ms. Jallalitha contested from this segment and was defeated. That is why, Burgur is famous. The other five segments of my constituency are, Krishnagiri, Palacodu, Hosur, Tali, Cauveripattam. There are about 15 lakh voters living in my constituency. Therefore, I request the hon. Railway Minister that the long dream of our people to have a new line from Jolarpettai via Krishnagiri to Hosur should be made true. This is hardly 100 kilometres line. This should be expedited, and the work of laying of line should be started as early as possible. This line goes via Krishnagiri, which is my constituency.

My area contains today a lot of granite reserves. Our granite units are producing a huge amount of granite which are being exported also, whereby we are also earning a considerable amount of foreign exchange.

Granite is emerging as important as diamond exports. So, a number of business people come to or go from Krishnagiri, either from Chennai or to Chennai or from Bangalore or to Bangalore, or from Hosur or to Hosur. Therefore, the work of laying this broad gauge line should be done as early as possible.

Previously, the Tirunelveli-Madras train was going via Jolarpettai and Tiruppattur. Although the train is running now between Tirunelveli and Madras, it is not running via Jolarpettai and Tiruppattur. so, I request the hon. Railway Minister to restore this train. This will facilitate the people of

my Constituency and other business people going to Chennai.

My Constituency, because of granite, is gradually turning into an Industrial belt. Therefore, a railway link to Krishnagiri either from Jolarpettai or from Tirupattur will go a long way in attracting new entrepreneurs to this area. It will also provide cheap transport facility to the poor people of my constituency. Further it will also enable the movement of raw materials and furnished goods in this area.

Further there are four railway crossings on the busiest national highways in my Constituency. One is national highway 46. This is from Madras to Bangalore. Another one is national highway 7 from Kanyakumari to Kashmir. These two national highways go through my constituency. They are at Pachalkuppam, Vaniampadi and Pachur, the most important places of level crossings. Due to the frequent traffic jam, there is a need for constructing overbridges at all these railway crossings. They are on the national highways. I take this opportunity to request the Railway Minister to address the Ministry of Surface Transport for carrying out overbridge construction at these four busiest crossings. Fortunately, the Railway Minister and the Surface Transport Minister, both of them are here. I request them to fulfil my ambition and the ambition of the people of my Constituency.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Don't make your speech so elaborate. If you have some important points, you can give them to the hon. Minister.

SHRI V. VETRISILVAN : This is my maiden speech. I will conclude within a short time.

Further, the platform of Jolarpettai Railway Station does not have a roof over its head. So, proper roofing should be constructed. In view of the industrial business, we need computerised reservation facility at this station. There is no TV on the platforms. So, sufficient number of TV sets should be made available to the Jolarpettai Railway Station for the convenience of the passengers. At the Jolarpettai Railway Station, there is no facility to accommodate VIPs like Chief Minister, Minister, MPs and MLAs. The existing retiring room is not adequate. So, necessary arrangement should be made so that accommodation is available for at least four VIPs at a time to stay whenever they travel via Jolarpettai.

In long train journeys, sufficient security arrangements should be made for the travelling public. I understand in the train if any accident happens, the reason for the same can be ascertained immediately. For that, as in flights a black box is kept.

In the same way, certain devices should be installed in the trains. The ICF is a renowned coach-building factory which is fetching a huge amount of foreign exchange. It has

got global contracts and we are getting orders for building coaches from all over the globe. I would request the hon. Minister to modernize the factory and expand it to suit global needs with regard to coach-building.

The Golden Rock Workshop is a renowned and prestigious workshop of the Southern Railway. It has got a historical background.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now.

SHRI V. VETRISILVAN : Since this is the discussion on the Supplementary Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Railways, I have not made all the demands. I have touched only upon the oft-repeated demands of the people of Tamil Nadu. I hope, the young and energetic Minister of Railways, with her motherly attitude, generosity and broad-mindedness, will take suitable action to meet our demands.

With these words, I thank the House for the patient hearing. I conclude my speech now.

Long live Tamil ! Long live Dr. Kalaignar !!

[Translation]

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI (KHAJURAHU) : Mr Chairman, Sir, while expressing views on Demands for Supplementary Grants of Railways, it is quite natural to recall that an aware, conscious strong-willed woman having tough fighting spirit who at present is holding the portfolio of Minister for Railways, once used to sit on this side as a Member. I am confident that as Minister of Railways she will definitely be able to provide good leadership and will carry out reforms in the working of Department of Railways. When I studied these Demands for Supplementary Grants, I found that these demands have been presented before the House for appointment of watchmen at Railway crossings, to install reservation system based on Internet, to increase passengers facilities at 48 railway stations, restoration of railway property damage in cyclone in Orissa to provide medical facilities to cyclone affected people and to provide security to the passengers. It is quite obvious that nobody could raise objection on such demands and all of us would like that the House should give approval to the demands made by Department of Railways.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there are many other demands which have been raised by other hon'ble Members and in view of those I feel that in view of the economic condition of the Railways, the Department of Railways is unable to meet these expectations. Therefore, through you I would like to tell particularly to Mamataji that you should remember it and it is my firm opinion that rights are not given as alms. Strong will, and sincere efforts are required to secure rights. I am confident that on the basis of these points you would be able to fight for these demands in the Cabinet Meeting.

[Shri Satyavrat Chaturvedi]

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support all these demands, but I would like to draw the attention of Mamataji towards Madhya Pradesh. She had mentioned in her speech that the amount spent by the Railway Department during last years in Madhya Pradesh is negligible or nominal. The amount has not been spent there according to the need, I would like to talk about my constituency, Khajuraho, which is a world famous tourist spot. The foundation stone for rail line from Lalitpur to Singrauli was laid on 20 September, 1998. The foundation stone was laid not by an ordinary man, but by the hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Mr. Chairman, Sir, at that time foundation stone was laid in the presence of the then Minister of Railways, Shri Nitish Kumar and the then and present Union Minister, Uma Bharati, and it was said in the public meeting that during the next 5-7 years, the scheme of Rs. 925 crore would be completed on priority basis. I would like to draw the attention of the Minister of Railways towards the fact that last year's budget was passed without discussion due to circumstantial reasons. In that budget, the provision of only Rs. one crore was made for this scheme of Rs. 925 crore to 950 crore. I am afraid that if provision continues to be made this way only, then probably after 1000 years, our 10th or 15th generation would be able to get the benefit of this line.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA (GUNA) : In The millennium.

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI : If the provision of funds is continued to be made in this way, probably millennium may also pass.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to make the submission only because if this was a political stunt to draw the people's attention towards their party during election, then I do not have to say anything in particular, but this will blemish the reputation of the Prime Minister. If this rail line is not taken seriously, it will put a question mark on the Prime Minister's credibility and therefore, I would like to say that the credibility of the Prime Minister of this country should not be affected. Our political differences should not figure into this, as this is a separate issue.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I agree with the points mentioned by the Railway Department in regard to making provisions for the security of the passengers. Mamataji you should formulate a comprehensive plan in this regard and on behalf of Railway Department should make demand to constitute a special force. I was reading in today's newspaper only, you might also have read it, the news is published in today's newspaper that G.R.P. personnels have robbed the passengers of their belongings and cash. It is being done by those people, who have been assigned the duty to protect the passengers. All this has been happening because Railway Department is not having control over them. If

Mamataji, would have been controlling them then definitely they would not have dared to take such liberty. Therefore, I would request you to take initiative in this direction.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, "Tulsi Express" which runs from Allahabad to Mumbai passes through my constituency. It runs only three days a week. If it is made a daily train and arrangements are made to give it a stoppage at Nibadi station, it will benefit the passengers of Bundelkhand region. Similarly, "Qutab Express", which is known as "Mahakaushal Express" runs between Nizamuddin and Jabalpur. There is railway station named Harpalpur on this line where passengers from and to Khajuraho change train. There is no reservation quota for A.C. class there. Now you can well imagine, that the place where foreigners visit in large numbers, is not having any reservation facility for A.C. class. Therefore, attention should be given in this regard and proper arrangement for it should be made.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon'ble Minister has prepared the list of model stations - I do not have any objection, to it. This time you have not included stations falling in my parliamentary constituency - I do not have any objection in this regard also. You may include them next time, at the time of introduction of bill in the budget session, but you should increase facilities at Harpalpur and Bibadi railway stations. You spend crores of rupees on the maintenance of big stations, I do not have any objection in this regard, but you should spend at least some lakhs of rupees on these stations because there also passengers board the trains and alight.

In the end, Mr. Chairman, Sir, due to the time constraint I would not like to speak much, but I would definitely like to say that Mamataji should make a provision for adequate funds for Lalitpur-Singrauli rail line which is proposed to pass through Khajuraho and the foundation stone of which was laid by the Prime Minister, and this rail line should be laid within a definite time frame. Therefore, it is essential that Khajuraho which has been declared as world heritage should be linked with railway. It will help in the development of industry in that area and the transportation facility will also increase.

Earlier you used to fight for this. When struggled, you understood the agony of the Member. If the hon'ble Minister of Railways understands my position, then she should get this job done in my constituency. That is all I want to say.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (GOPALGANJ) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the demands for Supplementary Grants presented in the House. I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak. The hon'ble Minister is running the department in dynamic way. I hail from Bihar and the State of Bihar have been providing

leadership to the country. But the State of Bihar is backward. If we compare Bihar with other States we shall find that in the case of Railways, Bihar has not been given its due share. I would like to congratulate two former Ministers of Railways Shri Ram Vilas Paswan and Shri Nitish Kumar who have done the job of laying new railway lines and gauge conversion in the backward areas of Bihar. These projects were approved in the budget. But I would like to say that these works are pending for quite sometime now. The points mentioned by Raghuvansh Babu are historical facts. Till date, nothing has been done on that line. The Ganga divide the State of Bihar in two parts. There is only one rail bridge over Ganga in Bihar which is situated at Mokama. Two years ago, the then hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Deve Gowda had laid the foundation stone of railway bridge to link Patna with areas across Ganga. The foundation stone of that bridge was laid after completion of survey work but the work is being badly delayed. We, the people of Bihar want that this work should be accomplished as soon as possible. You have given approval for gauge conversion from Jainagar, Darbhanga, Sitamarhi to Narkatiyaganj and you have made provisions for it in the budget.

Then comes the issue of laying new rail line in Sitamarhi and Muzaffarpur. We have been told that funds have been allocated for it, but why the acquisition of land has not been made for that rail line. We demand that work in this regard should be started by acquiring land at the earliest. Shri Ram Vilas Paswan and Shri Nitish Kumar had made public announcement to carry out survey of rail line to link Sheohar, Sitamarhi and Motihari. The Railway Department officials have also supervised the survey work over there. We would like to request Mamataji and Digvijay to link Sheohar, Sitamarhi and Motihari with railway line.

As mentioned by Shri Prabhunath Singhji that gauge conversion should be done of the railway line from Chhapara to Captanganj via Kathave. There is a proposal to lay broad gauge railway line over there because that place is having metre-gauge railway line. The people of that area are facing difficulties. Kathave is a historic place, it is the place of Goddess Durga. Every year lakhs of people from every corner of the country visit that place to worship the Goddess. The station over there is in bad shape. That station should be developed because Gopalganj is the district headquarter. It is a very small station and gives an appearance of a village station. We demand to develop that station.

It has been said that security arrangements should be provided in railways. I would like to tell you that the problems of security in railways is created by security personnel themselves. There is nothing to hide about theft, pick-pocketing or robbery in trains. I would like to tell you especially about Bihar that Railway police has contributed a lot to such incidents. All such incidents take place within

their knowledge. We want that the Government should take strong measures to control it. We hope that you will pay attention to farlung Adivasi areas from Deodhar to Dumka, hilly areas and Hazaribagh rail line. Similarly, Ordnance factory is being set up in Rajgir. There is a metre gauge railway line there, the work to convert it into broad gauge has not yet begun. I would like to say that all these works should be taken up by the Ministry of Railways. With these words, I conclude my speech.

[English]

SHRI AJOY CHAKRABORTY (BASIRHAT) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Railway is the symbol of national integration. It carries bogies from the different parts of the country. It carries bogies from South to North and from East to West. I think for proper, effective and efficient functioning of the Railways, more budgetary financial assistance should be provided to the Railways. The Railways is not only the commercial institution but it is the welfare and social organisation also.

It appeared in the different newspapers that our hon. Railway Minister demanded more financial assistance for the Railways. We support that demand. It is not possible for the Railways to meet all the demands which have been advanced by the hon. Members including myself.

Sir, safety and security is the paramount problem of the Railways. More budgetary assistance should be provided for the safety and security of the Railways. Another problem is the signalling. The old signalling system should be changed and modern signalling system should be introduced to avoid accidents. It is also the main task of the Railways to save the commuters as also the Railways from accidents. We cannot forget the tragic accident of Gaisal. Another problem is of Railway tracks. These tracks were laid during the British regime. Therefore, most of the tracks need to be changed. The tracks should be renewed and changed. Then, the condition of Railway compartments is very much pathetic. The toilets are not in good condition and there is no lighting system. The windows of the trains are broken and it is very much difficult for the commuters to travel during winter season.

Now, I want to draw the attention of the Minister of Railways as well as the Minister of State for Railways to the punctuality of the trains. The earlier Railway Minister assured the House that they would try to improve the punctuality of the trains. But the trains are not running on time, barring the old trains. Even the Rajdhani Express is running two hours to three hours late. Same is the case with Shatabdi Express.

Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the condition of the Metro Rail of Calcutta. That is the pride of our country and we are proud of our Metro Rail in Calcutta. But people are now afraid to travel in the Metro Rail because fire takes place almost everyday in the Metro Rail. So, I urge upon the firebrand hon. Railway Minister to

[Shri Ajoy Chakraborty]

look into it so that the passengers of the Metro Rail could be saved from the fire.

Now, I want to draw the attention of this House to the two projects of West Bengal, namely, Degah-Tumluk and Eklakhi-Balurghat. It appeared in the newspaper that the hon. Railway Minister accused the West Bengal Government that it is not taking steps to acquire land. But I have enquired into the matter and I found that excepting two kilometers. All the lands have been acquired by the West Bengal Government. But where is the financial arrangement for completion of the work?

Same is the case with Eklakhi-Balurghat.

Sir, North Bengal in our State is the most backward and remote area. The North-east is the backward region of our country. In the regime of the United Front Government, the then Railway Minister Shri Ram Vilas Paswan declared some packages and took some measures for the development of the North-eastern region in so far as railway is concerned. I urge upon the present hon. Railway Minister to look into the matter, to take recourse to that matter and take up some projects for the development of the North-east in so far as railway is concerned, so that those people can come to the mainstream of our country.

Before Kumari Mamata Banerjee became the hon. Railway Minister, in the Twelfth Lok Sabha, she had submitted a package called Bengal Package. She is very famous for that package. I would like to remind the hon. Railway Minister to remember some of the projects which were incorporated in that Bengal Package and take certain positive measures and suitable recourse, so that those projects are implemented and executed as early as possible.

Lastly, I wish success for the hon. Railway Minister as well as the hon. Minister of States for Railways.

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (JAIPUR) : Hon'ble Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am making my submission with great expectations from the present Minister of Railways, Kumari Mamataji that she will definitely accept my request and help in removing the problems facing Rajasthan.

My first point is that Hon'ble Deve Gowda ji had laid a foundation stone for setting up a zonal office in Jaipur city in October, 1996. He merely laid the foundation stone, but the zonal office has still not been set up in Jaipur city. This is my foremost demand and I hope that Mamataji will accept my request and make arrangements for setting up zonal office in Jaipur city at the earliest and thus the promise made by former Prime Minister will also be fulfilled.

Secondly, I would like to submit that Bandikui-Agra track had not been converted into broad gauge line. Kalmadi ji has inaugurated this work. I am not aware as to which work was inaugurated. Navinji inaugurated it and which work was inaugurated is not known. Rajesh ji had gone there to address the gathering and I was also present there. At that time, it was said that the paucity of funds will not be allowed to come in the way, however the work of conversion of Bandikui-Agra track is at a standstill today. One cannot reach Jaipur directly from Agra. A diversion of 150 kms via Swai Madhopur has to be taken to reach Agra. I believe that the Bandikui-Agra project will also be revived. The Department of Railways is incurring losses due to this. If that track is completed, the Department of Railways can earn revenue. The Department is incurring losses of 60 lakh rupees daily due to non-completion of Agra-Bandikui track.

I have one more minor demand. Durgapur is a sub-station of Jaipur itself, hence a stoppage of trains bound for Howrah, Bangalore, Indore and Mumbai is required to be provided there. This station is a part of Jaipur itself. It is not far away from there. It is located at a distance of 15 kilometers from Jaipur and is a part of Jaipur. Similarly, the trains from Jaipur to Jammu Tawi, Jodhpur to Delhi, Delhi-Ahmedabad Mail, Ahmedabad-Delhi Ashram Express trains should have a stoppage at Gandhinagar station. The train passes by their locality, still the passengers have to go to Jaipur Railway Station to catch the train and while coming back to their residence from Jaipur railway station, they have to spend 200 rupees towards fare for autorickshaw or taxi, even when it is a part of Jaipur itself. The trains halt at Delhi and the neighbouring areas and other stations as well but the trains do not halt at Durgapur which is close to Jaipur and from where these trains used to originate, which is a matter of regret. I would like to submit to the hon'ble Minister that though I am bound by the conventions of my party, the people from my neighbouring area are very agitated and are ready to launch an agitation and then it will be very difficult to restrain them.

Hence stoppage should be provided to trains at Durgapur and Gandhinagar stations. More funds should be allocated for the development of Jaipur station. No train leaves from Jaipur city to Delhi after six in the morning till night. You should reconsider the decision of discontinuing some of the trains. The people of Jaipur city have a demand that a train should be introduced from Jaipur to Haridwar. Trains should be also be introduced from Jaipur to Chandigarh, Guwahati, Trivendrum (Kerala). When there is a train from Jodhpur to Haridwar, why a train cannot be introduced from Jaipur to Haridwar. Hence this train should also be introduced.

17.46 hrs.

(DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH *in the Chair*)

Narayana Station has a meter gauge line. That place is the holy land of Dau Dayal ji Maharaj. A stoppage to Delhi bound trains should be provided there. This is also an industrial area. Labourers travel to and from Kishangarh and they will be benefited by it. An Intercity Express train should be run between Ajmer and Kota via Jaipur which may leave Ajmer at 6 a.m. and reach Kota via Jaipur. The same train may leave Kota at 3 p.m. and reach Ajmer at 10 p.m. Shri Rasa Singh has also made a similar demand. This train should have a stoppage at Kishangarh, Narayana, Phulera, Hassanpur and it should be routed via Chaksu and Swaimadhopur. There is a need to introduce a shuttle train between Jaipur and Phulera. 807 Dn. which leaves at 8.00 p.m. should be extended upto Ajmer. A train should be introduced from Delhi to Ajmer. Khairyal station is the major station of Alwar. A stoppage to trains should be provided there. When the hon'ble Minister of Railways visited Mangalore alongwith of the Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, she had stated that a train would be introduced from Jaipur to Mangalore via Ajmer. I think that the above mentioned train has not been introduced as yet. When I met Mamataji, she gave me an assurance in this respect which should be fulfilled.

The population of Jaipur city has increased manifold. A ring Railway project was formulated and expenditure of lakhs of rupees has been increased thereupon and the map is ready. I demand that the said project should commence at the earliest. A shuttle train should be run between Bandikui and Ringus which would benefit the milkmen coming to Jaipur and they would be able to sell milk easily. The Railway tracks removed from Todarai Singh Nagar should be laid again. Five industrial areas fall enroute from Delhi to Jaipur. If a railway track is laid, the entrepreneurs of these areas will get the facility of goods train to transport their wares. The work of construction of three bridges at Malviya Nagar, Bhopalpura and Jhotwara has been going on for quite some time now. This work cannot be completed without the help of the Department of Railways. Due to this, the people of Jaipur city are facing a lot of inconvenience. The bridges should also have been constructed at Mansarovar, Khatipura, Civil lines as well as Dadi Ka Phatak. You might recall that a bus had collided with a train there and many children were killed. I had raised the issue in the Parliament also. At that time, a suggestion was made to deploy a watchman and also provide cellular phone facility at unmanned level crossings.

Gangapur station falls on Mumbai - Delhi rail route. There are 1200 houses and a training institute in this area and an electric locoshed is located here as well, hence a stoppage to trains should be provided there to avail of this facility. Similarly, the work relating to the new rail route sanctioned from Dausa to Ganganagar should be started at the earliest. Work should be started taking Gangapur station

as a central point so that the employees and the officers may utilise the facilities available there.

Important trains remain stationed at various stations of Rajasthan for eight to ten hours. You should take it into consideration. Mamataji is a very kind and considerate lady. The work related to Agra-Bandikui railway line should be got completed. The people of Durgapur and Gandhinagar are agitated, hence a stoppage to trains should be provided there.

[English]

SHRI S. AJAYA KUMAR (OTTAPALAM) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, Railways is the synonym for national integration in the whole country. It should not be let to be taken over by the traders who sell the nation into the hands of the multinational elements for greed and thirst for money. In this context, let me tell you that the development of the Indian Railways has to begin keeping in mind the most difficult commuters of this country and a provision has to be made in this regard in our General Budget.

Sir, the establishment of a Zonal Office in Kerala for the Indian Railways is very important in this direction that can be taken up by the Railway Minister who comes from the West Bengal which has also suffered due to discriminatory policies of the Central Governments of this country myriad number of times. The laws framed by the British authorities should not hold its way in independent India. This has been pathetically forgotten by the champions of *Swadeshi* in the present Government.

I demand resolution to various problems crippling railway development in my home State Kerala. Doubling work from Shorannur to Mangalapuram and construction of 15 overbridges in this sector should be immediately undertaken for easing of hardship being faced by the passengers of both railways and roadways. This means that completion of the projects taken up by the Centre has to be speeded up. More than that, the Centre has to take up completion of the work of overbridges in Wadakkancherry and Ottapalam-Mayannur and include them in the agenda of the Railway Ministry.

The electrification work in the Ernakulam-Thiruvananthapuram section also should be taken up by the Centre, given the fact that the State Government has promised long ago that it would provide electricity for the implementation of this work. Above all, I would request the hon. Railway Minister, Kumari Banerjee to please include Kuttippuram-Guruvayoor subline in the list in her hand for immediate implementation. I would also request the hon. Railway Minister to help materialise the completion of the Tellicherry-Mysore line for the benefit of hundreds of thousands of commuters in the Malabar area of my State.

Sir, I hope that the hon. Minister is aware of the

[Shri S. Ajaya Kumar]

demands that we have been raising with regard to the extension of the train routes. Specifically, we would demand extension of the Kurla-Coimbatore Express route to Shorannur Junction. I would also like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister towards a very serious matter. There was a direct reserve coach from Coimbatore to Thiruvananthapuram for the last 20 years. That was FN1/513/6348, but recently this service has been cancelled. Actually, it was very convenient for the people, especially for the ailing and women. So, I would request the hon. Minister to take necessary steps to restore this service. Again, I would request the Centre to start Railway related industries in Shorannur which comes under my constituency and has all the infrastructure for such a venture.

I conclude my speech hoping that the hon. Minister would take into account my reasonable suggestions.

SHRI P.S. GADHAVI (KUTCH) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Supplementary Demands for Railways put forth by the hon. Railway Minister.

Sir, there is a long-standing demand for an additional Railway Zone in Gujarat. When 55 per cent of the total route kilometers of Western Railway pass through the State of Gujarat and when Western Railway has most of its earning and traffic from Gujarat, it is of paramount importance that an additional Railway Zone be created with headquarters at Ahmedabad or Gandhinagar.

In these Supplementary Demands, the hon. Minister of Railways has selected about 67 model stations for upgradation. I would request the hon. Minister to include Bhuj railway station in it because the broad-gauge railway line is to be completed by March, 2000. I also earnestly request the hon. Minister to come and inaugurate this long broad gauge railway line at Bhuj.

The Kandla Port is situated near Gandhidham railway station. That port is a very important port for the whole northern India. It is also very important for the Capital. Our long-outstanding demand at Gandhidham railway station is for augmentation of terminal facility. If terminal facility is augmented there, many long-route trains can come there. So, my request is for extension of Howrah-Ahmedabad train to Gandhidham, and Cochin train to Ahmedabad. There will be no additional cost. The only thing is that Kandla Port can be connected with Calcutta and Cochin Ports. So, if these trains are extended and additional terminal facilities are made available there, then this could happen.

Bhuj Railway line is to be connected by broad-gauge. As you know, Kutch is on the western end of the country. It is situated near the Pakistani border. In that area, the potentiality of development is abundant for its rich mineral wealth. The Bhuj line to be connected with broad-gauge which is going to be completed by March.

But one thing is lacking there. The pit line facility has not been provided. Due to lack of pit line facility, all long-route trains cannot come. So, my request is that a provision requires to be made for the pit line at Bhuj station.

Now, I talk about the frequency of trains between Gandhidham and Delhi. In the last Budget, it was said that they are going to make a provision. In a week, two trains are running on an experimental basis. But these trains have not yet been made regular. So, my request is that these trains require to be made regular and frequency between Delhi and Gandhidham requires to be increased. These trains also require to be connected Hardwar. It could be Hardwar via Delhi, Gandhidham and Kutch. Then, it will be most useful for the people of Kutch.

Gauge conversion work between Palanpur and Samkhiyali will be very important from our national point of view because it can connect the Capital directly to Kandla. The whole of north India would be connected with Kandla by broad-gauge if a section of Palanpur-Samkhiyali is made Broad-gauge. The Kandla Port Trust has come forward to be a partner in joint venture. So, the Railways will not have to bear more burden on this conversion work. The only thing is that this requires to be expedited.

Similarly, the gauge conversion is going on between Maliya-Miyana and Wankaner. It also requires to be speeded up. Then, Kandla Port can be connected with the whole of Saurashtra.

Some time back, I requested the Minister of Railways for better use of the unused land and surplus land at Bhuj. According to a letter given to me by the Railways, there is surplus land extent of 16 hectares. At the market price, it would fetch not less than Rs. 2.50 crore to Rs. 3 crore per hectare. So, I would re-request the Railways to make use of this land. Otherwise, all this land will be encroached upon. My humble request is that the surplus land can be made use of.

Our long-outstanding demand for one extra Superfast train between Mumbai and Gandhidham is there. The Railways are running about 170 trains every year. When they are running so many trains, it should be made biweekly or triweekly train regularly. The Railways have not to incur any more expenditure. They are already running the trains. The only thing requires to be done is that the train is to be run 'daily'.

The gauge conversion between Naliya and Bhuj is very important from the Defence point of view.

18.00 hrs.

Our Air Force headquarters is situated in Naliya.

Whenever any emergency comes, at that time Naliya Air Force requires to be connected with the capital and that work requires to be expedited.

There is long-standing demand for having export promotion facility at Kandla and Bhuj.

These are all my few suggestions which may kindly be considered.

[Translation]

SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA (ALIPURDUARS) : Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on Supplementary Demands for grants of Railways. Sir, through you I would like to draw the attention of the hon'ble Minister of Railways Ms. Mamata Banerjee to the proposals pertaining to Cooch Bihar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling region of West Bengal. I would like to refer the project cleared by the then Government. The proposal to convert the meter gauge line from New Jalpaiguri to New Bongaigaon via Alipurduars junction and Siliguri be passed as early as possible. Sir, through you I would request the hon'ble Minister of Railways to do the needful in this regard.

Second thing which I want to say is that the funds allocated for gauge conversion be made available as early as possible so that gauge conversion work of this rail line could be accelerated and work could be started on this early.

Thirdly, there is a demand since long that the people of Assam, Bengal, Jalpaiguri, Coochbihar, Gwadhra....

MR. CHAIRMAN : There are several hon'ble members to speak, therefore, is it the sense of the house to extend the time of the House upto 8 o'clock.

SEVERAL HON'BLE MEMBERS : Yes, Sir.

SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA : The people of these districts are demanding that a new rail line should be constructed from New Mainaguri to Jogighopa via Changrabandha, Bastighat and Toofanganj. If a new train is introduced on this section, rail service would be made available for the people of backward areas of Coochbihar and Jalpaiguri. Therefore, I would like to request the hon'ble Minister that orders have been issued for conducting survey for this line and we shall be very happy if construction of this new rail line is taken up as early as possible.

Besides this, I would like to say one thing that Eklakhi Balurghat project is being mentioned in every budget but I do not know as to why so much time is being taken to start construction work on this project.

Sir, through you, I would like to ask the Minister of

Railways that by what time the construction of Eklakhi Balurghat project will be completed. Some trains have been cancelled due to Kargil conflict. I would like to request through you that these trains should be restored.

Efforts should be made to improve the condition of the Teesta-Tursha which is in bad shape.

Sunderban is a backward region and for which some proposals have been submitted and on which orders have been issued to conduct survey. The proposal regarding double line from Sonarpur to Kaning, Baruipur to Laxmikantpur be approved as early as possible. Sir, through you, I would also like to request the hon'ble Minister of Railways to start work early on the Saldah-Kaning rail which is proposed to be constructed upto Sonakhali.

The historical train which ply in Darjeeling should be modernised. The steam engine of this train should be changed by a diesel engine so that more tourists could visit Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri. It is very pleasant sight to see the lush green tea gardens. Arrangements should be made to attract more and more tourists to that region. Efforts should be made to improve the train service. With these few words, I thank you and conclude my points.

[English]

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO (DHENKANAL) : Sir, first of all I would like to congratulate the hon. Minister for the first Demands in this Parliament. Secondly, I would like to compliment her through this debate on Supplementary Demands because she has shown concern for the safety and security of the passengers, the travelling public, system improvement, amenities and the services. Sir, I would also like to compliment her for the concern she has shown to the cyclone-affected area of Orissa where 10 stations, all falling in the Cyclone-affected belt, are being taken up for development into model stations, including Dhenkanal which is my home-town. I am extremely grateful for that. Then, she has also tried to do rehabilitation of these cyclone-affected assets and I give her full marks for that. I would like to compliment the Railways in the cyclone-affected area. They did a magnificent job by moving 18,000 tons of relief materials. How did they move it? They moved it by a new line which was the Cuttack-Sambalpur railway line because that was the only line which was operational as the Cuttack Howrah-Madras railway line was breached near Soro. In the last Budget, Shri Nitish Kumar, your distinguished predecessor, had announced that the Hirakud Express which goes up from Nizamuddin to Sambalpur would be extended to Cuttack and Bhubaneswar via Angul and Dhenkanal. Although for eight months, it has been in the time-table, the train has not been extended. I hope the hon. Minister will see to it that it is extended and it should be a daily one. At the moment, it is thrice a week to Sambalpur.

[Shri K.P. Singh Deo]

Sir, nine State Governments have adopted nine districts which are the worst affected districts in the entire coastal belt of Orissa due to this super cyclone which is a national calamity but we have not been able to call it a national calamity. But there are two districts which have been left out. One is Angul and another is Dhenkanal. Since Shri Nitish Kumar who is heading another Ministry has asked his Public Sector Undertaking to adopt certain areas, and Shri George Fernandes, the Defence Minister, has also asked the Defence PSUs to adopt certain areas, the Railways being the largest Public Sector in the world, could very kindly adopt these 15 or 16 Panchayats of Angul and Dhenkanal districts which are bordering the old Cuttack district, in which case the psyche, the sentiment of the people in rebuilding and reconstruction does not pose a problem.

When we are discussing the issue of cyclone, I had occasion to mention here that during the 1967 cyclone which was one of the very severe cyclones, hon. Shri Surendra Nath Diwedi and my senior colleague, Shri P.K. Deo, at that time had demanded the Cuttack-Paradip rail link which would give gainful employment to the affected areas. And, that is how, the Cuttack-Paradip rail link came up. So, I had suggested Angul to Paradip railway line via Budhapark, Kamakhya Nagar, Bhuban, Sukinda Road which earns the highest Internal Rate of Revenue (IRR) of the Railways in the whole world, coming to 29.83 per cent.

In fact, the former Minister of Railways, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan has laid the foundation stone. The preliminary survey is over, but while the final location survey is going on, there was no budgetary allocation last year. So, when the budgetary allocations are made during the Railway Budget in the month of February, I will request the hon. Minister to consider this request.

Sir, I have one more point and that is about the Angul-Gopalpur line. Gopalpur is a port which has been damaged in the cyclone. So, if Angul-Paradip line as well as Angul-Gopalpur line via Hindol-Narsinghpur is taken up, then gainful employment plus rehabilitation of the cyclone affected people can take place.

Sir, with these few words, I thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to speak.

SHRI CHADA SURESH REDDY (HANAMKONDA) :
Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to participate in the discussion.

I appeal to the hon. Minister of Railways kindly to take personal interest and pass orders to the General Manager, South-Central Railway, to take interest in getting the new lines in the backward Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh cleared and executed as early as possible. Incidentally, the Chief Administrative Officer, who is next to the General

Manager, South Central Railway has not been given any power to execute any job on behalf of South-Central Railway. Then, what is the use of posting such an officer there?

I would, therefore, appeal that a person with clean record may be posted as Chief Administrative Officer and powers given to him to execute minor jobs for new railway lines/new railway projects in the backward region of Telengana so that the region is developed and saved from the clutches of naxalites who are active in that region because of lack of communication and railway facilities.

Sir, I am sorry to point out that in view of vigilance interference, no tangible progress has been made in the works undertaken by South-Central Railway during the last two years. The sanctioned allocation of the fund of almost Rs. 200 crore in 1998-99 and Rs. 100 crore in 1999-2000 lapsed as it could not be utilised on account of non-finalisation due to various reasons primarily interference of the auditors of the vigilance department. The projects suffered in this regard are Peddapalli-Karimnagar, Munirabad new line, Munirabad-Mehboob Nagar, Macherla-Nalgonda and Mudikhed-Adilabad sections. These works are all interrupted in phases.

However, I am grateful to the hon. Minister of Railways for taking interest in the railway work of South-Central Railways. She has already agreed to a number of our proposals. We would be extremely grateful if she takes up work of the development of Telengana railway projects at a sputnik speed so that the region is saved from the clutches of the naxalite movement.

SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN (COOCHBEWAR) : Sir, this is a supplementary Budget, yet I am lending my full support to the Supplementary Demands for Grants with the hope that ultimately the hon. Minister of Railways will do good to the North Bengal and the North-Eastern Region in her regular Budget when it comes up in the month of February.

Sir, in support of this Budget, definitely at page 14, I welcome the decision for the safety as well as security of rail passengers.

As far as item number two, namely, New Jalpaiguri-Bongaigaon-Guwahati-Mobile communication, Northeast Frontier Railway is concerned, these facilities should be extended up to Barsoi.

We have got the experience of Gaisal. Between Jalpaiguri and Barsoi, there is the Kishanganj-Gaisal sector. So, I think it should be done.

Sir, we all should be happy that according to the list of her heritage items that have been announced by the UNO and the UNESCO, in India, there are only nine items which

are the heritage items and the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway is one of them. We all should be proud of that. But this Railway is in a very dilapidated condition. In this supplementary Budget, there are about 48 railway stations which are proposed to be upgraded as model stations. I have no grievance that there is not a single station from West Bengal, but at this juncture, when the Darjeeling railway line has been announced as the heritage items, the Darjeeling railway station should also be taken up in this year. This is my second request to the hon. Railway Minister.

Now let me come to the other points. There is a long-standing demand for a new railway line from New Maynaguri to Jogigopa via Changrabandha, Coach Behar, Boxirhat, Dhubri, Bilasipara and then to Jogigopa because of the fact that this part is the most neglected one and in this area there are only two railway link lines. One is metre-gauge and other is broad-gauge. Even these also have not been doubled. It is a fact that there is not a single double line, there is no electrification, nothing of the sort. It is the most neglected railway line on the railway map of India. But one thing the hon. Minister knows that one has to cross this North Bengal island, otherwise one cannot go to the North-Eastern region. When it is so, then why are the Railways not giving it adequate importance? The North-Eastern region cannot be improved without improving the condition of the railways in the North Bengal. So, at this stage, this is my request that another railway line should be provided in this region. For this, the line survey has already been completed. Now it is for the Railway Minister to do it because it will be a third railway line. We are not asking for doubling the line or for electrification. Just to save the North-Eastern region, we would like to place before you this demand of the local people.

My next demand is that there should be a stoppage of the Rajdhani Express and the Saraighat Express at New Cooch Behar. These are the only two trains which are moving as superfast trains in that region. Dr. Sengupta is here. He was once the D.M. of Cooch Behar. He knows what is the importance of Cooch Behar. But there is no stoppage of these two superfast trains at Cooch Behar. So, I request you to provide for the stoppage of these two trains at New Cooch Behar.

There should be a shuttle train between New Jalpaiguri and New Cooch Behar at least twice in a day.

The North Bengal Express is running three days a week. It should be run daily.

I hope, in the next Railway Budget, the North Bengal and the North-Eastern region, which are the most neglected and backward regions, will get priority. With these words, I thank you, Sir.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM PRASAD SINGH (ARRAH) : Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak. I support the supplementary Demands for grants pertaining to railways. Railways need funds for its betterment, development, punctuality, reliability and efficient operation and it should be provided to railways. But I would like to request the hon'ble Minister of Railways that these funds should be utilised properly. The base of the railway is dependability but these days that dependability is eroding gradually. We are unable to assure the railway passengers that they will reach to their destinations safely. We are unable to assure the people that the goods being sent by them through railway will reach destinations safely.

Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, after this I would like to say something about catering. On the one hand we are increasing fare and on the other hand the quality of catering is deteriorating. Hon'ble Minister you have also been the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Railways. You have provided funds to railways several times and you have yourself experienced the need of funds required by railways. I am very happy that an experienced and dynamic leader like you is at the helm of affairs of the Ministry of Railways. Poor people have many hopes and expectations from you. The Indian Railways is the largest railway of the world. The number of passengers using railways as mode of transportation is maximum in our country barring one or two country of the world. The railway is an inexpensive and easy mode of transport. But the rail lines which have been laid years ago after gauge conversion are not being changed due to which incidents of accidents are increasing which are affecting the punctuality of trains. Trains are not reaching in time. Therefore, I would like that the hon'ble Minister of Railways should pay attention towards this.

I want to say that there have been so many Ministers in the Central Government from Bihar but they were so generous that they did not take care of their own State. I hail from your neighboring State Bihar. The amount of rupees ten crores provided for Arrah-Sasaram light railways by the former Minister of Railways hon'ble Shri Ram Vilas Paswanji and Shri Nitish Kumarji is a very meagre. This rail line is 90 kilometer long.

You will be surprised to know that Shri Ram Lakhan Babu laid the foundation stone of it, Ram Vilasji, K.C. Lankaji and Nitishji too laid its foundation stone but nothing has come out of it even after laying down the foundation stone by so many Ministers. Not even the survey work is being completed. The land which should have been acquired for it... (Interruptions)

SHRI BRAHMA NAND MANDAL (MONGHYR) : Foundation stone for one project has been laid for four times.

SHRI RAM PRASAD SINGH : It is astonishing that the foundation stone was laid four times. I am not lying. The hon. Minister can get this fact verified. The foundation stone was laid once from Arrah and thrice from Sasaram. But the people are aware of your style of functioning. You will fulfil whatever you say. The credibility of the Ministers and the Railways Department is being eroded due to the fact that the foundation stone has been laid so many times. You must try to improve this situation.

Mr. Chairman, now, I want to say something about my constituency. I have been elected from Arrah. Arrah is a very old city and it was also a junction of Arrah Sasaram railway line. The station there was constructed many years back and it has not been renovated once. It is a matter of regret that though in Buxar which is a sub-division of Arrah, in Dehri, in Sasaram the computerisation has taken place but it has not been done in Arrah. I would like that the condition of the station should be improved after computerising it.

Mr. Chairman, I would like that the station should be computerised and its condition should be improved. As you have written about upgrading the station. I would like to request you that Arrah which is the birthplace of the great freedom fighter Kunwar Singh and has a university after his name, a famous trade centre of Bhojpur, a pilgrimage for the Jains, has many beautiful temples, its station should be provided the facility for computerised reservation and its condition improved.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, one more thing which I would like to say is that the Railway Protection force, I do not say with any malafide intention, extort the money from poor people. I myself have seen that at the Mughalsarai Railway Station, sometimes I ride from Patna railway station, the personnels of R.P.F. misbehave and threaten the poor people and the labourers and even snatch their tickets. They are poor labourers who have neither money nor the courage to report the matter to the police. The people from well to do section of the society travel ticketless and the railway staff never check them for they have the hands of powerfults over their heads. They are the sons and daughters of the influential persons of the society, therefore, they are allowed to get scotfree and we are not working with humanitarian and judicious approach and in the welfare of the poorer section of the society.

Minister Madam, it is being expected that you will fulfil the needs of the public. I would like to thank you for whatever you have achieved in this short span of time and keeping that in view I am sure that you will certainly pay attention towards Arrah.

[English]

SHRI SHRINIVAS PATIL (KARAD) : Sir, I appreciate

the gesture of the hon. Chairman for giving me the opportunity to speak. I would draw kind attention of hon. Railway Minister to some of the problems. I will not take much time of the august House. I come from Karad which is near Pune. We are hearing for the last so many years that Pune-Miraj section of the South-Central Railway headquarters will be detached from Hubli and it will come under Pune only. But in the last so many years, there has been no progress. As such, we are waiting for the movement that it is detached from Hubli and comes under Pune.

My second request would be that Pune, Satara, Kolhapur and Sangli districts are the centres of cooperative movement. There are so many sugar factories. Floriculture, horticulture milk and spinning mills are there in much more numbers and as such, there is too much of traffic-human as well as goods. At Koyna, there is a centre for hydro-electricity generation which provides electricity to the whole of Maharashtra. Therefore, I seek the kind attention of the Railway Minister to have Pune-Miraj-Kolhapur broad-gauge line electrified so that there is speedy traffic. I am sure that it will be commercially viable also if a study is done by the experts. I am sure the Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara and Pune districts will definitely be benefited in having this project electrified.

As on today, there is one computerised reservation centre at Miraj and one at Pune as people, especially the people of Satara and Karad have to go about 60 kilometers in South or about 80 kilometers in North to have computerised reservation. So, I seek the kind attention of the authorities over there to start at Karad and Satara computerised reservation centres. The second platform at Karad is very much needed because there are about 30 sugar factories nearby Karad, but there is only one platform and that is too low in height. So, I would request the kind attention of the authorities, specially the construction authorities in the Railways, to increase the height of the platform for the convenience of the traffic. At the same time, opposite to the existing low-level platforms, one new platform should be constructed, and both the platform be connected by railway over-bridge.

From Nagpur to Pune, and Kolhapur, there is only one train, that is, Maharashtra Express. It is a very slow train. So, one express train may be started from Kolhapur to Nagpur because it will connect Vidarbha totally, part of Marathwada, and the Southern parts of Maharashtra up to Kolhapur and further in Ratnagiri district by road.

In my constituency the manned gates are very few and less in number. From sunrise to sunset, there is a man at the gate, but after sunset, there is nobody. So serious patients have to wait for going to the cities for treatment till the morning as there is no other loop line.

In my area, there are lift irrigation societies for lifting

water from the river and they have to provide water to the dry areas. In-between there is a railway line. The railway authorities are not allowing the water pipeline to cross the railway line. So, wherever there is a possibility of coordination, the sugar factories are coming forward. They are ready to cooperate.

They are ready to contribute, they are ready to give money to the railway construction authorities so that the construction of the pipeline which carries water beyond the railway station can be completed. This would also result in increase in the area under horticulture and sugarcane cultivation.

I also request the Railway Minister to take up some renovation work at Karad Railway Station, which is the birth place and *Karma bhoomi* of late Y.B. Chavan, former Deputy Prime Minister of India. It is the only central place for the surrounding four districts where there is too much traffic, both goods as well as passenger traffic. Therefore, I request the hon. Minister to look into these problems. Thank you very much.

[Translation]

SHRI BRAHMA NAND MANDAL (MONGHYR) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, thank you very much for giving me time to speak. I rise to support the supplementary demands of grants for the year 1999-2000. But I would like to draw the attention of the madam Minister towards two more things. Firstly, I would like to say something about my constituency Monghyr. For the constriction of rail-cum-road bridge over Ganga river a provision of Rs. 600 crore was made in the budget of 1997-98 and Rs. 2 crore were sanctioned out of the budget of 1998-99 to carry out the survey. Survey work was completed. Railway Department and Railway Board have probably assigned the job of model testing and designing to Roorki Institute of Engineering. The work was going on at rapid place there but it has slowed down in the past 6 to 7 months. Why has this happened, I am not aware of the reasons for it. I would like to request her to pay attention towards this.

Monghyr rail line was laid by the Britishers 145 years ago. At that time too, Britishers wanted that factory only at Jamalpur. Rail facilities is available on both the sides of river Ganga, hence a bridge should be constructed over it but this bridge has not been constructed even after independence. A continuous struggle has been going on for this bridge. The Britishers were aware as how to take advantage of the railway and expand it, where to invest their money and where not but I am very sorry to say that we are not able to do so.

I would like to say that the work of doubling only 17 kilometers stretch of rail line is pending between Kajara to

Keol. The doubling of rail line between Jamalpur to Kajara, of main rail line from Keol to New Delhi and Hawrah to Keol has already been done then why the doubling of only 17 kilometer stretch of rail line has not taken place? One feel surprised to listen the rationale behind this delay. It is said that most of the freight carriage and passenger traffic takes place between Jamalpur to Kajra and then Kajra is neither a city nor a metropolitan city, every thing comes to an end after going to Keol from there. All these kind of arguments are given by the department.

Recently orders are issued for conducting survey in this regard but nothing is being done there. I would like to make a submission that this work should be taken up at the earliest.

Secondly, just now my colleagues were saying that Railway should be provided funds but from where we would get that. Railway earns revenue by transportation of goods, passenger fare and the funds provided by the Government of India. I would like to say to the hon'ble Minister that around 5 lakh hawkers are operating in trains from eastern part to northern part of the country. They serve passengers. You are unable to check them then how the ever increasing population would be checked. They are operating there with help of someone. They are earning their livelihood...*(Interruptions)* I am raising a very important issue. Please allow me to speak for five minutes...*(Interruptions)* I am raising all these issues so that attention could be paid towards these in the forthcoming budget in March...*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now. Discussion on this subject has concluded.

SHRI BRAHMA NAND MANDAL (MONGHYR) : I am concluding. Each hawker has to bribe Rs. 30 to Rs.100 to someone or the other for operating there. Railways can earn Rs. 360 crore if this amount is calculated at the rate of Rs. 20 per day. They are prepared to pay, who is pocketing that money. Such things also create problems for Railways. The issue of G.R.P. was being discussed here. The Union Government pays 50 per cent expenditure of GRP and rest is paid by the State Government. You can save even that 50 per cent. The issue of F.I.R. and maintaining law and order by State Government is raised here. You can solve that. A meeting of Chief Ministers and hon'ble Prime Minister should be convened to discuss the issue for making a statutory amendment. The 50 per cent funds given by the Union Government for GRP is wasted. The funds spent on amenities of passengers is also usurped by GRP and does not provide any help to passengers. You can save that money and increase the income of Railways by collecting Rs. 360 crore annually from hawkers....*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : You can give the remaining information in writing. Now please conclude.

SHRI BRAHMA NAND MANDAL : I am concluding now. It will also help in controlling crime in Railway. Several incidents like, theft and chain puling could be stopped by providing passes to the limited number of hawkers because then you would be able to identify them and get information from them.

The most important point is that about 5 lakh persons, who earn their livelihood through Railways are being exploited. I can say that every sensitive person will complaint against the behaviour of GRP. They extort money from hawkers, beat them and put them behind bars and leave them only after taking bribe. These hawkers have no other means to earn their livelihood so they again have to go to the same railway stations to earn their livelihood. Attention is not being paid towards their condition and they are compelled to commit such crimes. I would like to make an appeal that through this proposal not only revenue of Railway is increased and incidents of crime are curtailed but it will also help in providing justice to the people of weaker section engaged in this industry. I hope that you will consider these points. With these words I thank you for allowing me to speak.

SHRI DHARM RAJ SINGH PATEL (PHULPUR) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you I would like to say to hon'ble Minister of Railways that generally there are only two or three general bogies in a train and people face a lot of difficulties in boarding the train. They are compelled to travel like cattle in these bogies due to heavy rush. I request you that the number of general bogies should be increased to 5 to 7 so that people could travel in trains comfortably.

My second submission is regarding reservation in railways. Some people get their tickets but their berth is not confirmed. They face lot of difficulties at the time of boarding trains. They do not get the full amount paid by them. Some arrangements should be made for them.

Thirdly, I would like to raise the issue regarding Allahabad. I come from Allahabad. It is a religious city and a city of intellectuals. Several Prime Ministers of our country belonged to Allahabad but this city yet lacks railway facilities. It seems that all our Prime Ministers who belonged to this constituency believed in socialist ideology and worked for welfare of whole the country and not favoured Allahabad like other Prime Ministers. I, therefore, request the hon'ble Minister of Railway to provide proper railway facilities for Allahabad. There is only one train from Allahabad to Delhi and a large number of people from Jaunpur, Pratapgarh, Rewa, Fatehpur, Banda districts surrounding Allahabad travel to Delhi. There is only one train i.e. pryagraj Express which starts at 9.30 and reaches here at 6 o'clock in the morning. People of this area try to travel by this train. It is the biggest train of India and I have heard that Pryagraj Express is the biggest train of Asia. Another train should be introduced from Allahabad to Delhi so that people of this area could use another train for travelling to Delhi.

Sir, now I would like to make a submission regarding Phulpur constituency. Phulpur was constituency of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of the country. There is a railway line in Phulpur town and due to heavy traffic often traffic jam occurs there. I request the hon'ble Minister of Railways that a rail overbridge should be constructed for convenience of the commuters. If phulpur station is renovated and proper arrangements are made there, then people of neighbouring districts would be able to travel to Mumbai and other places from Phulpur itself. On behalf of people of my constituency I would request the hon'ble Minister of Railways to provide stoppage for Mumbai bound trains at this station.

With these words I conclude.

SARDAR BUTA SINGH (JALORE) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I will not make a lengthy speech, rather I will resume my seat after raising only five issues.

First of all I would like to congratulate the hon'ble Minister of Railways for giving priority to safety and security. She has given an opportunity to Members of Parliament to spend some amount from our discretionary grant for level railway crossings. I have submitted to her that survey has been conducted in my area. Now all the railway level crossings in my constituency will be constructed as per your scheme by spending money from my discretionary fund. Secondly, I have a request regarding the last para of the last demand in which you have mentioned to develop 48 stations as model stations. I congratulate you for this. However, Ajmer Sharief should top the list of model stations as devotees of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Garib Nawaz visit here from all parts of the world. This station should be developed as model station. I would be grateful to you if one more station is added in this list ... (Interruptions) More facilities should be provided there.

My third point is that there are large number of SC and ST employees in the Railways. I want to submit that today a big rally was held in Delhi.

[English]

Nearly half a million people had come from all over the country to protest against the interference in the implementation of reservation policy.

[Translation]

My request is that you need not say anything to anyone in this regard. You are empowered to fill the backlog, you need not issue any order in this regard.

In the end, I would like to submit one more point that my constituency lies on the mainstream of western Rajasthan. A project regarding the broad gauge conversion of

Jodhpur, Pali, Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jalore and Sirohi railway line which was to pass from Jodhpur to Ahmedabad via Samdari, Bhilari and Jalore was approved a long back. All the Railway Ministers had approved it but funds were not made available for it. My submission is that the already approved work to connect the whole of Western Rajasthan with Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Mumbai should be started as early as possible. I would like to make one more request. I have come to know that Safai Karamcharis are being provided on contract basis at many railway stations. By doing so, they are being duped. It affects their career. Contractor pays them a very meagre amount although they have been working there for 20 years. My request is that this system should be scrapped. I congratulate you for promoting sports. Railways encourage our sports and sports persons the most. My request is that more attention should be paid to them. Railway had played a major role during Kargil war. Railways helped to a great extent in the transit of goods and other materials for our brave soldiers. I would like to thank all the railway officials right from the Chairman, Railway Board to peon for accomplishing this task. I would like to say that we won this war with the help of railways.

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA (DAMOH) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support the demands for grants presented in the House. I would like to draw the attention of the hon'ble Minister towards some important issues relating to my area. First of all I would like to draw the attention towards those facilities which are not being provided to the people of my area anymore though earlier they were getting these facilities. There was a railway godown in Damoh in my area which was used for booking the goods of nearby areas but now it has been closed down. On enquiring the matter I was told that as it was not earning the income upto rupees five lakhs, that is why it was closed down. However, the fact is that wagons are not being made available here rather they are sent to Katni and other places. I want this facility to be revived.

Earlier, we had the facility to travel from Katni to Gujarat. One bogie was available which used to be attached with other bogies in Bhopal. However, at present there is no train to go to Gujarat. Rajkot Express remains stationed at Bhopal station for 15-20 hrs. People of this area will get facility if this train is extended upto Katni and Jabalpur. It will provide to and for train facility to the Gujarati people living in Beena, Damoh, Sagar and Katni. Earlier reservation facility was available for Mahamaya Express but now that facility has been withdrawn. Reservation facility for Sambhalpur down is not available at Damoh which causes inconvenience to the people of our area. Moreover, some trains ply only for 3 days or 4 days a week. Sambhalpur Express and Kshipra Express should be converted into daily trains which would solve the problem of the people of this area.

Now I would like to mention about the stoppages of one or two important trains which will not cost any extra financial burden on the Government. Only giving stoppage to train will give the facility to the people. Mahamaya and Sambhalpur Express trains should be provided stoppage at Patharia for the convenience of the people living there. Habibganj - Nizamuddin Express train running from Bhopal and another train running from Karnataka should be given stoppage at Beena. An additional platform should be constructed at Beena. Last year the hon'ble Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for laying Lalitpur-Singrauli railway line. If the work starts on this railway line in full swing, the promise made to the people of backward area of Bundelkhand will turn into a reality. A survey for laying railway line between Jabalpur and Panna via Damoh, Hata Simira and Amanganj has been approved but the progress of this work is very slow. I request to complete this task as early as possible so that the same could be included in the ensuing budget. It will help in removing the backwardness of Bundelkhand.

With these words, I would like to make one more point. Pune-Itarsi Passenger train should be provided stoppage in this area. It would benefit the people of this area.

SHRI HARIBHAU SHANKAR MAHALE (MALEGAON): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I support the supplementary demands for grants presented by the hon'ble Minister. It is not a supplementary budget but I would like to draw the attention of the hon'ble Minister towards some problems being faced by my constituency.

Nasik is an industrial city. It is a place for pilgrimage also. Fairs are also organised there. A mint press is also operating there. In spite of all this, long distance trains do not have stoppage here. Three special trains have been introduced for Poona but not a single train has been provided for Nasik. I request the hon'ble Minister to provide atleast two trains for this area. Earlier four A.C. coaches of Punjab Mail were having the reservation facility but now that facility has been withdrawn. I request you that this facility should be restored. Nasik is famous for grapes also. However, adequate railway facilities are not available here. Through you, I would like to request the Railway Minister to reintroduce this facility.

Secondly, an approval was given to construct a railway bridge in Nandgaon Shaher, but the work has not been started there till now. In Manmad, Malegaon, Dhunia and Nandana areas, the work regarding the survey for railway lines have been completed. The survey work has been conducted from Poona to Nasik also. Emphasis should be given to lay this railway line immediately. It is like a mini budget, please try to fulfil these requirements at the time of presenting the supplementary budget in the House.

[Shri Haribhau Shankar Mahale]

With these words, I thank you for providing me an opportunity to speak.

SHRI SANSUMA KHUNGGUR BWISWMUTHIARY : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak. I am not going to make a lengthy speech. I would like to raise the problems being faced by the people of Bodoland and Arunachal Pradesh in respect of railway services. Shri Nitish Kumar was the Railway Minister during the regime of previous Government. We have given him a memorandum. One of our demand included in that memorandum was accepted and as a result thereof an arrangement has been made to provide a stoppage of Rajdhani Express at Kokrajhar. Now our Didi Ms. Mamata Banerjee has become the Minister of Railways. We are requesting her to accept some of our other demands.

Trivendrum Express, Dadar Express, Guwahati Chennai Express, Lohit Express, Bangalore Express, Saraighat Express, etc. are not having any stoppage in my area. All the trains which run from East to West do not have any stoppage in my area. All these trains should be given stoppage here.

[English]

It is great discrimination. So, through your honour, I would like to strongly appeal and urge upon the hon. Minister of Railways to take concrete action pain to stop all these trains at Kokrajhar Railway Station to. This has been a very very sentimental matter for the people of Bodoland.

[Translation]

They will get the opportunity to get in to the train only when this stoppage is provided here.

[English]

This does not mean that the people of that area will use the train service without purchasing tickets. So all these trains should have a stoppage there immediately.

[Translation]

Sir, there is one more point of worry. People of our country worship Lord Krishna. The most loving thing to Lord Krishna is his 'Bansuri' which is known as 'shipung' in Bodo language. The same name was given to the train running between Guwahati and Fakiragram which has now been discontinued. It should be restored.

[English]

Why has this local train been stopped? This is my question. It has been a sentimental matter for the Bodo people. This train should be allowed to run again between Fakiragram and Guwahati.

[Translation]

I have to raise one more serious issue.

[English]

Dhubri is the Western most bordering district of Assam and is adjacent to West Bengal and Bangladesh.

[Translation]

The train running between Dhubri and Guwahati which was stopped earlier should be allowed to run again. Not a single train stops there, therefore, this should be restarted. North-East Express and Kamroop Express trains should halt at Barbeta road station and Bizani railway station. Avadh-Assam Express and North-East Express trains should be given stoppage at Fakiragram Railway junction. Kamroop Express train and North-East Express trains should also have a stoppage at Gosaingaon Hat railway station. A local train from N.G.P. to Guwahati should also be introduced to facilitate the large population of this area. A superfast train with the name of Bodoland Arunachal Express should be introduced from Murkhongselek to New Delhi.

[English]

This is required for the benefit of the people of Arunachal Pradesh, for the benefit of the people of Bodoland and for the benefit of the Bhutan Kingdom.

[Translation]

The metergauge line between Murkhongselek and Rangia should be converted in Broad-gauge. An overbridge is required to be constructed on Gosaingaon Hat, Fakiragram junction, Bongaigaon town, railway crossing of 31 C National highway in Chhaparkantha, Kokrajhar town, Bizani town, Barpeta road town, railway crossing at 31 C National highway near Pathshala, railway crossing of Tangia, Goreswar railway station, tongla, udalguri and Rata railway stations, and railway crossing at Baihata near Saraighat bridge because in the absence of overbridge many accidents are being taken place in these areas. Therefore, I request the Railway Minister to get constructed a railway overbridge in these areas.

19.00 hrs.

The frequency of Rajdhani Express should be increased. It should run for six days in a week. In all the trains running from North-East to Delhi.

[English]

ethnic tribal food of better quality should be provided.

[Translation]

for our tribal people. The railway force has encroached the waiting room at Kokrajhar railway station. At present no waiting room is available there for the people. No one else expect Mamataji can get vacated the waiting room from their possession....(Interruptions)

[English]

Shri Prafulla Kumar Mahanta is not the Railway Minister. It is you who is the Railway Minister. It is the duty of the Government of India to ensure regular running of the trains on the NF Railway. The Assam Government has been taking crores and crores of money in the name of security related expenditure from the Government of India. This is my duty to bring it to your notice and it is your duty to ensure that action is taken for ensuring safety and security measures for getting trains run punctually.

[Translation]

You have to setup a rail-coach manufacturing factory at Bongaingaon. Besides 80 per cent of the class-III and class IV posts will have to be reserved for our youths.

[English]

Eighty per cent reservation in jobs of Grade-III and Grade-IV categories of employment in NF Railway should be kept reserved for the youth of the North-Eastern Region.

I would like to appeal very earnestly to the hon. Railway Minister to take some concrete steps regarding policy measures and action plans to get all the things done which I have just now mentioned. Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (MUMBAI SOUTH CENTRAL): First of all I would like to congratulate Mamata Deedi for taking over the charge as Railway Minister. S/Sh. Dasmunsji and Buta Singhji too had raised the issue of sports. I had met Mamataji on 17th November and had said that Kho-Kho is played throughout India and recruitment should also be done in railways on the basis of Kho-Kho too. I have been fighting for this cause for the last 8 years. This suggestion was accepted by the previous Minister. Recruitment has not been taking place for the last two years. But today itself I have got a letter from Mamata Deedi in which it is written.

[English]

"The Railways are free to recruit Kho-Kho players depending on their recruitment. As a minimum of 12 players are required to form a full team, the formation of kho-kho teams on the Indian Railways may take some more time."

[Translation]

I am grateful that you took the step in this direction very early but you must also direct them to make recruitment also. This game is played throughout the country. I would like to congratulate you again for your decision. I would like to say one more thing. On 13th October, 1993, tragedy took

place in a train exclusively for women in Mumbai city. One bogie of the train had caught fire and more than 37 women had died due to jumping out from the burning bogie. But no compensation has been paid to any of the families of the deceased. First of all, ladies special train had been started in Mumbai. We had met the then Railway Minister Shri Jaffer Sharief Saheb and also the then Prime Minister Shri Narsimha Rao ji and had raised this issue before them.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : You might not have made any complaint?

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Shri Ram Naikji himself had complained.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : You please give it in writing to me.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : About Bandra, you have written that your department is going to spend more than three lakhs rupees on it. There is a harbour line in our area. The worst train of India runs there. You can get the matter investigated. More than 60 lakhs passengers travel through sub-urban trains. It causes a lot of problems. The booking window at the railway station always remains closed and no staff is normally available there. If the staff is available, only then that window opens otherwise it remains closed. There are lot of complaints in this regard. Many accidents take place at Shivari station. If the rail bridge is constructed on the gate number seven then the accidents can be avoided. Many a people have lost their lives in the accidents. There is a need to construct a bridge at Chinnapugli. Dela road in my constituency. You should get it completed at the earliest. People have to take a long route to reach their destination. I have been asking for the construction of Mahalakshmi railway bridge for the last seven years. You come along with me to Mumbai. Those who are of the opinion that trains are running smoothly in Mumbai, I would like to tell them as to what is the condition of trains there. There are no proper arrangement for lights, fans and sanitation in trains. If someone is having some kind of disease, others are also likely to be affected with it. Even the windows of the bogies are broken. My constituency has a majority of factory and mill workers. During the elections, an issue of recruiting apprentices in railways was raised. The Chairman, Railway Board had also given us a lot of co-operation. Earlier Shri Ravindran and after him Shri Aggarwal ji was the Chairman of the Railway Board. With the co-operation of those two, seven hundred fifty people were recruited in Railways. 7-8 years before, it was directed that some people should be given apprenticeship in Mahalakshmi Printing Press but till now they have not been kept as apprentices. We had launched an agitation in this regard. After that the people who did not get jobs for the last 8 to 10 years, got the jobs in railways. Recently 103 people were about to be recruited. But the

[Shri Mohan Rawale]

rules were violated to serve that purpose. It is a serious matter. Name of the candidates should have been asked from the employment exchange. But the employment exchange does not exist there. I had met the additional G.M. of the employment exchange. He said that the Employment exchange has been sending the names of the candidates for the last five years but it is not in existence for the last five years. What is being done by the Railways?

MR. CHIRMAN : You must write a letter in this regard.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : It is a serious matter. Gujaratis in Gujarat. Bengali in Bengal, Malayali in Kerala and Tamils in Tamilnadu should get priority. There was a clause in the recruitment rules that the candidates can write their answers in examination in regional languages. When the answer was written in Marathi, no priority was given to the candidates. Call letters were sent to the candidates at the care of addresses. They have violated the rules.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the last issue which I want to raise is that the Marathi people have been subjected to injustice and the parameters fixed for recruitment have also been violated. Inquiry should be held in all these matters. Five thousand workers in Parel Workshop had gone on a tool down strike. This caused a lot of problems for these workers and their two days wages were deducted from their salary. I would like to urge the Railway Minister to regularise their two day's salary. Alongwith it, Marathi language too should be given priority. Priority should be given to the Marathi languages which is a regional language in Maharashtra as the other states languages are being given in respective states like Malayalam in Kerala and Bangla in Bengal.

Mr. Chairman, lastly one more thing I would like to say to the Railway Minister that a directive should be issued to the General Manager of that area to call a meeting of the employees there and if the stand of the employees is justified then this matter should be resolved once for all. The same thing is being said by us for the last 7 years. I thank you for giving me the time to speak.

[English]

PROF. A.K. PREMAJAM (BADAGARA) : Respected Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you very much for this opportunity. At the very outset, I would like to say that this is the last of the supplementary Demands for Grants for Railways of this century as well as the millennium and we are just going to the new millennium.

My first request to the hon. Minister is to convene a Conference of Kerala MPs to discuss the problems as also to discuss the projects which should be envisaged for Kerala in the coming General Railway Budget. I am sure the authorities must be preparing the General Budget for

Railways. Though the Railways' revenue from Kerala is very high as compared to many other States, we are still getting a very step-motherly treatment from the Railway authorities. Shri Sridharan, the architect of Konkan Railway is, in fact, a contribution of Kerala to the Indian Railways. But what is the contribution of the Indian Railways to the State of Kerala? The Railways are earning a lot of foreign exchange for the Central Government exchequer. In this connection, I would like to be very brief and just point out a few important points which are related to my State as well as my constituency.

In erstwhile Malabar region where in my Badagara constituency falls, there are nine RoBs and the Kerala State has made a very firm commitment in respect of these RoBs and has provided funds in the last budget. So, I think from the Railways and also from the Ministry of Surface Transport, the initiatives should come forth and steps should be taken complete these RoBs.

I have mentioned the Konkan project. When the Konkan project was envisaged, we all were very happy and we contributed our might to get it implemented in anticipation that the Konkan Railway would open up many avenues of progress as far as Kerala is concerned. But in fact, we are thoroughly disappointed because doubling has not taken place at the speed which we anticipated it to take place. A very limited funds had so far been given. I urge upon the hon. Minister to have a new vision for the new millennium for the Indian Railways and give equal funds to the different States of India because Indian Railways is actually the nerve system of the country as far as national integration is concerned.

Badagara is a very important growing city which is in the heart of my constituency. There are Malayalees from that constituency in different parts of the country who are also adding to the revenue of the Railways. But, Gandhidham Express and Rajkot Express are not halting at Badagara. There are several passengers who have to go either kannur or Kozhikode which is a very tedious and strenuous journey for persons with families travelling from the Badagara region. I would request that this should be examined and some positive steps must be taken to have halting for these two Express trains which carry a large number of Malayalees to Gujarat as well as Rajasthan.

Now we are talking about the new information technology in the new millennium. One important station in my constituency is Tellicherry which has been started in 1904. We are at the end of this century. That means this station is about one century old. On my persistence some computers are just recently installed there. But they are not being operated because they say that there is shortage of staff. What is the purpose in installing computers if there is no one to operate them? This is a very pitiable situation in

my constituency. This is a century old station. Now some new buildings are coming up. When this is being done, computerisation is absolutely necessary in these days. Here also travellers have to go either to Kannur or Calicut to get reservation. This is a very pitiable condition at the end of this millennium. We always say that we are entering the new millennium which is supposed to be of high information technology and information network. So, I appeal to the Minister through you to see that this point is examined and some positive measure is taken.

While our respected comrade Shri A.K. Gopalan was here as an opposition leader, he had actually envisaged for Kerala a very important line, namely Tellicherry-Mysore railway line. It is now decades old. Some survey has been taken up. As a Member of the Twelfth Lok Sabha I appealed that this should be taken up and again now I am appealing that this has to be taken up because it opens up new revenue for the Railways and it opens up new projects for the Tourism Department and it connects two important States, namely Karnataka and Kerala.

I also request that a new division should be opened either at Tellicherry or Kannur as far as North Malabar is concerned. About the safety measures I very sincerely congratulate the Railway Minister, Kumari Mamata Banerjee for taking a great account of the safety side of the Railways, that is, manning the unmanned level crossings. It is seen in the Supplementary Demands for Grants that fifty unmanned level crossings in Southern Railways will be manned. This is the project.

19.18 hrs.

(MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

But through you I appeal that some equitable distribution should be given to Kerala also. Southern Railway should not restrict itself to a particular State. There should be some equitable distribution in respect of Kerala also.

Regarding Class III and Class IV employees, there are a number of problems. No new recruitment has taken place in these services for quite sometime. So, this has caused a lot of difficulties as far as the service side of the Railway is concerned, which is both commercial and service oriented. But the service side is being neglected more and more over years. So, I appeal that recruitment in the Class III and Class IV services should take place, so that we can improve the service conditions of the Railways.

Lastly, very many dilapidated, good for nothing bogies are being pushed to Kerala.

Whenever a new train is started or when old trains are running, very old and dilapidated coaches are being given

to Kerala. I wish that I could take our Railway Minister to our side and show for herself in what bad conditions these coaches are. I would request that this also may be given importance while the new Railway Budget is being prepared.

With these words, I conclude. I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

[Translation]

SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT (NANDURBAR) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, through you, I would like to congratulate hon'ble Minister of Railways for presenting Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) in the House. Due to shortage of time, I will not go in detail but would like to speak only about my constituency. My constituency is Nandurbar, which comes under Adivasi and backward area of Maharashtra.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Surat-Bhuswal rail line comes under Western Railway. This is a single line. Since year 1981, I have been continuously demanding that it should be converted into a double line. At present the electrification work on this line is going on at a very slow pace. I would like to demand that it should be completed in a definite time limit. Nandurbar railway junction is on Surat-Bhuswal rail line, where there is only one railway gate and 18 up and down passenger trains run on this line. In addition to it 14 goods trains run on this line. Nandurbar is a district headquarter. The people of Shahda, Akrani Akklura and Taloda tehsils visit Nandurbar very frequently. They include Handicapped, injured, very ill and pregnant women. At the time of passing of every train, the railway crossing remains closed for more than 15 minutes. 32 trains pass in 24 hours. Therefore, it is very essential to construct an overbridge over Nandurbar railway station. Therefore, I demand from the Minister of Railway to construct an overbridge over there at the earliest.

Mr. Chariman, Sir, it is regretful that a sanction of converting Surat Bhuswal single line into double line is not being given. The survey of the line is about complete. I would like to request the hon'ble Minister of Railways that in the next budget the sanction to convert this single line into double line should be granted. The net income (balance sheet) of Ukai Songarh on Surat-Bhuswal railway line is at least Rs.155 to 160 crore. On this very line, the Railways earn a monthly revenue of Rs.500 to 600 crore from coal of Dhanuroad TPH and iron and coal of Sabarmati and Vanakbori. It means this line gives a handsome income. This rail line is not incurring loss. The hon'ble Minister should also keep in mind that this line passes through tribal areas of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Madam, day before yesterday, I handed over a letter to you. The five trains named Tapti-Ganga 9045-9046 up and down, Surat-Patna 9047-9048 up and down, Navjeevan

[Shri Manikrao Hodiya Gavit]

Express 6045-6046 up and down, Okhapuri 8401-8402 up and down and Ahmedabad-Puri 8403-8404 up and down run on Surat-Bhuswal railway line. I demand from the hon'ble Minister that an arrangement for a stoppage of these passenger trains should be made at two stations of Nawapur and Dhondaicha of my parliamentary constituency. The distance between this Nawapur railway station and Surat is 108 km. and from Dhondiacha railway station to Surat is 200 kilometers. Therefore, I would like to make a humble request, there is a Nandurbar railway junction at Surat-Bhuswal rail line from where 18 passenger trains and 14 goods trains in total 32 trains pass.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to submit that people are facing great inconvenience, I am aware that to construct an overbridge half the money is provided by Railway and the remaining half is given by the State Government but being a tribal area, the Railway Department have to allocate 100% funds for the construction of this overbridge. Only then this overbridge could be constructed, otherwise this overbridge can not be constructed and the people of that area will continue to face inconvenience.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I have said that Nandurbar being the district headquarter, the people from four Tehsils visit this place, sick, injured and pregnant women face heavy inconvenience in the absence of an overbridge. Therefore, I would request the hon'ble Minister of Railways to make provision for this overbridge in the next budget.

DR. M.P. JAISWAL (BETIAH) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to speak in support of the Demands for Supplementary Grants of Railways for the year 2000. I express my gratitude to Mamataji and would like to congratulate her for being an efficient Minister and working tirelessly for the cause of Railways. I would like it to bring to her notice that during the last budget announcement for introducing the new trains was made but since then a year is going to be completed but so far only one train has been introduced and that too has started running from 25th November. The train which was announced to be started from the month of February, started in February itself. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had visited my district Champaran and he undertook Satyagrah under his original name and only after this movement, he was bestowed the title of Mahatma Gandhi by Shri Rabindranath Tagore. I had urged Mamataji to name the train which runs between Raxaul and Delhi as 'Satyagrah Express' on that basis and she took prompt action in this regard and when it started to run from 25th November, the name plate of the train was carrying the name 'Satyagrah Express' and I would like to thank and express my gratitude to Mamataji for naming this train as Satyagrah Express after the Satyagrah movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi in Champaran. The second train is 'Janseva Express' which

was scheduled to run between Amritsar and Darbhanga via Narkatiaganj. It too was announced during the previous budget. The number of this train is 5211 and 5212 but till date this Janseva Express has not been introduced.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the officials of the Railways especially the Members (Traffic) perhaps are not paying any attention as to how to implement the announcements made by the Ministers. It is my allegation against these officers that they are not paying any heed to the announcements made by the Ministers and despite the provisions having been made in the budget, and are trying to run the administration on British lines. If the orders of Ministers are not implemented then we will be forced to oppose them. Till date that train has not started to run. I would like to urge all the three Ministers who are present to start the train 5211-5212 and this month now that the budget has been presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is a train which runs from Gorakhpur to Mumbai via Avadh. The number of this train is 5063 and 5064. This train remains stationed in the yard at Gorakhpur for 30 hours. It is my submission that this train should be extended upto Muzzaffarpur in order to provide facility to the people of our area, it will also open a route for our people to Agra, Kota, Ratlam, Vadodra and Mumbai. As this train has a halt of thirty hours there hence it should be extended upto Muzzaffarpur. There is another train called Chouri Choura Express which runs from Kanpur to Gorakhpur and reaches Gorakhpur at 6 o'clock in the morning and starts from there at 10 o'clock in the night. This train also remains stationed for 16 hours in the yard.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Jaiswalji, these are the supplementary demands, not the full budget.

DR. M.P. JAISWAL : I am concluding in two minutes. Chouri-Choura Express should be extended upto Raxaul. Raxaul is the gateway to Nepal and is a route to reach Kathmandu which is a famous pilgrim place for the worship of lord Pashupatinath. This train goes to Banaras (Vishwanath Dham) and also to Prayagraj. That train will link all these pilgrimage centres. If the Chouri-Choura Express is extended upto Raxaul, I would surely express my gratitude to the hon. Minister.

In the Demands of Supplementary Grants, renovation of railway stations has been mentioned. On page No.17 the name of the district Champaran which is my district is also mentioned. There is no railway station at present but here it is mentioned that it will be upgraded as a model station. When there does not exist any station by the name of Champaran, then will you convert all the railway stations of Champaran into model stations?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now, you conclude.

DR. M.P. JAISWAL : It's headquarter is at Bettiah ...*(Interruptions)* I would insist that there is no station by the name of Champaran. Bettiah and Motihari both fall in Champaran...*(Interruptions)* Both are district headquarters...*(Interruptions)* One is the headquarter of East Champaran and the other is the headquarter of West Champaran.. *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : He will clear all confusions. Now you conclude.

DR. M.P. JAISWAL : I had submitted to the Railway Minister that all the honest and sincere people in the Railway Recruitment Board during the reign of Shri Nitish ji have been removed from their posts and the Government and railway officials have been appointed as Chairman and members. I would request the hon. Minister to remove them as they are adding to fraud and scandals. At the same time I would request that only the efficient, honest people should be appointed as Chairman, Railway Recruitment Board and the railway officials should be removed from these posts ..*(Interruptions)*

(English)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ) : Wrong people are placed and those wrong people should be removed. That is what he has said.

(Translation)

DR. M.P. JAISWAL : One more thing, I would like to say is that the simultaneous construction of railway line and road bridge was to take place in Bagh Chhitaunipur. The railway line became operational in 1996 but till date road bridge has not been constructed there. The tender for the construction of this road bridge was given to IRCON, a concern of the railways. IRCON has not completed the construction till date. I would like to submit to pass a order to IRCON for the construction of the road bridge at the earliest. Similarly the Kochin Express which runs upto Gorakhpur, should be extended upto Raxaul. When Shri Ram Vilas Paswanji was the Minister, he had promised to start that train.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You have spoken for six minutes.. *(Interruptions)* It is not the Railway Budget.

DR. M.P. JAISWAL : I would like to say that this train should be extended upto Raxaul.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have spoken for three minutes only. I express my gratitude to you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You started speaking at 19.25 hrs. and now it is 19.32 hrs.

DR. M.P. JAISWAL : I would also like to convey to the hon. Minister that you have not provided the facility of

computerised reservation there.. *(Interruptions)* She should make provision for computerised reservation there from her own quota.

(English)

SHRI A.C. JOS (TRICHUR) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for having given me this opportunity. Through you, Sir I have to congratulate my sister, Kumari Mamata Banerjee. She was our erstwhile colleague in our party. Even now, her heart is with us. She is now presiding over one of the largest enterprises in the world. Last year, she had the additional advantage of looking into the whole department of the Railways as Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Railways.

Now, I would like to point out one general thing to her. The Standing Committee submitted its Report last year. On page 103, it is mentioned in that Report about the land property belonging to the Railways as under :

"On the issue of augmentation of resources in the railways, one of the most important sources can be optimum utilisation of the railway lands. Huge quantities of land are owned by the railways. Proper land management can fetch huge resources for the railways to invest in development projects which are so much starved of resources."

I would request the Minister to form a separate authority in the Railways itself to utilise this land either by selling it or by utilising it for more remunerative purposes.

During Shri Jafar Sharief's time, you had identified that you have got land. But that land has not been utilised till date. I would request the Minister of Railways to have a separate mechanism by which that land can be utilised and additional revenue can be earned by the Railways.

As you know, Kerala is the most populous State. Every fifth man from Kerala is out of Kerala. They are everywhere - from Coimbatore to Kashmir or from Coimbatore to Punjab. You can see Keralites everywhere. They all travel by trains. One additional thing is that they all pay to the Railways. They buy tickets and travel. In most of the other places, the people do not pay for tickets.

The investments made by the Railways when compared to the utilisation of the Railway by the Kerala people is absolutely minimal. It is a criminal neglect that is being meted out to Kerala. That is what my colleague, Prof. Premajam has mentioned.

I would request the hon. Minister, through you, Sir, to take the statistics of the revenue earned by all the States, relatively compared with its population and the percentage. I can very confidently mention here that Kerala contributes more than what any other State contributes to it.

[Shri A.C. Jos]

Sir, I would make a request to the Railway Minister, through you, Sir, that Kerala should get proper consideration from the Railways. The Railways started one hundred years back in Kerala but it is remaining standstill except one or two railway lines which have been added. The Konkan Railway has come up to Mangalore but doubling work has not been done. I am thankful to Shri Nitish Kumar for having provided some money for this purpose. Now, the doubling work has to be speeded up and it should be completed. Then only, the people of Kerala will be enjoying the benefit of the Konkan Railway.

My constituency is Trichur. The electrification work from Trichur to Cochin is almost complete. I understand that it can be commissioned by March. My request to the hon. Minister, through you, Sir, is that an electric train can be started from Trichur to Ernakulam — it can be one or two trips — because it is a central part of Kerala. It is a highly and densely populated part. Trichur is the cultural Capital of Kerala. Cochin is the business Capital of Kerala. So, one or two trips of the electric train from Trichur to Ernakulam will ease the road traffic. It will be highly economical to the Railways as well as to the nation.

Madam, you are aware about the situation in Kerala. In the next Budget you should announce about the two, three trips of electric train. It is only 80 kms. It can be covered within one-and-a-half hours to two hours. A lot of women are travelling. They are going to office. So, the most beneficial people will be women and poor persons.

Secondly, everybody has repeatedly said about it and we have been craving for a Zone for Kerala. I am told that Kerala is the only State where the Railway Zone is not in existence. I do not know as to what is the difficulty in having that. We should have a Zone for Kerala. The Chief Engineer's Office is not in Kerala. Anybody whether he is a contractor or a common man, for any work, he has to travel to Chennai to meet the Chief Engineer. I do not understand as to why the Chief Engineer's Office cannot be provided in Kerala. I am told that the Railways, once upon a time, declared that the Chief Engineer's Office would be stationed there but the person who was posted at that time could not leave Chennai because he was not interested. So, the post itself was shifted to Chennai. My request to the Railway Authorities today is to provide at least the Chief Engineer's Office for Kerala. We have also been craving and demanding for a Zonal Office but nobody is heading to it. The same is the case with the Chief Engineer's Office also.

Now, I come to cleaning of the railway coaches. Partially it may be our defect also. The supervision work of cleaning of the railway coaches is so bad that most of the coaches, which are used on the previous day, are running on the next day. So, contractors can be employed for cleaning

of the railway coaches and it has to be supervised by the Railways.

Another thing which has been mentioned here about the railway coaches is that they are all in a dilapidated condition. The Coach Factory supplies new coaches only to North India. When it comes to South from the North India, most of the seats will not be there. The condition of the toilets is absolutely bad....(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : You are getting at least something. East is not getting anything. It is zero. North and South are getting it....(Interruptions)

SHRI A.C. JOS : We are not getting anything in the South. So, at least for the sake of it, to show that new coaches are built in India, and there are new coaches available with the Railways, you send some new coaches to Kerala. The people of Kerala have not seen a new coach till date. So, that can be given. My friend has mentioned about a train from Gorakhpur up to Cochin which was declared in the Budget. That has not been implemented. So, I would request you, Madam, that it should be implemented, as it is. Thank you.

.....(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : That is why, you have not included Lakshdweep!

[Translation]

SHRI KIRIT SOMAIYA (MUMBAI NORTH-EAST) : Hon. Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister towards demands No. 15 of the supplementary demands.

I welcome the mention which she has made about the enhancement of facilities at the Bandra terminal and also the scheme evolved by the Railway to improve the condition of terminal. This renovation of Bandra terminal is included in the M.U.T.P.-11 of Mumbai Railway Development Corporation with an estimated cost of rupee 6000 crore. The announcement of constituting Mumbai Railway Development Corporation was made by the N.D.A. Government. Its inauguration has been laid but its implementation is yet to start. Its Managing Director and Chairman were to be appointed before the elections. The entire procedure about the implementation of the scheme has been completed. 49 per cent of its equity was to be contributed by Maharashtra Government and the rest 51 per cent was to be contributed by the centre. Provision in this regard has also been made by the Maharashtra Government. I would like to submit only this much before the hon. Minister that formation of Mumbai Railway Development Board should be completed early and it should start at the earliest. The work relating to the laying of the two additional railway lines at Kurla-Thane section.

These sections of Central Railway has started. This project should be completed early by making additional provision in the budget.

My last suggestion is about the provision of use of funds under the M.P. LADS for the railway level crossings. I have adopted 10 sub-urban stations for renovation in my Constituency. Some Social organisations including my own N.G.O. donate for this cause.

[English]

For beautification, cleanliness and providing passenger amenities and facilities.

[Translation]

This is the concept behind it. We have completed this work at Mulund Railway station by spending 12 lakh rupees I have submitted a proposal involving Rs.1 crore from M.P. fund for the renovation of 10 stations which will require an expenditure of 10 lakhs each but the department has rejected it by saying that.

[English]

You cannot utilize M.P.L.A.D. fund to provide passenger amenities and facilities to the passenger in the Railway station.

[Translation]

I would like to submit to the hon. Minister that you should make such a provision that a M.P. should be empowered to use his M.P.L.A.D fund for providing passenger amenities on the same lines as you have approved the utilisation of fund for the unmanned crossings.

[English]

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA (KOLAR) : Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will not take more time. Since our people have asked me to speak in Kannada, I will speak in Kannada.

* Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to speak on the supplementary demands for grants pertaining to Railway Ministry, 1999-2000.

First of all I would like to congratulate the Hon. Minister of Railways, Miss Mamata Banerjee for her hard work and speedy decisions. The Government of India has a revolutionary Railway Minister. I wish her and Shri Bangaru Laxman, the Hon'ble Minister of State for Railways, all the best in their future endeavours.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please stick to your constituency only.

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : O.K. Sir, Sir, the routes of Kurla Express and Island Express have been changed two years ago. I have sent many representations to the Railway Ministry. But so far no action has been taken by the Ministry. Now, in the new route Bangarpet has been avoided. This is a serious lapse on the part of the Railways. Bangarpet is a very large railway junction and it is a very important centre in the State of Karnataka. Employees of BGML, BEL, businessmen, traders and many farmers are mainly depending upon these two trains. They have to reach many important centres like Kanyakumari, Trivendrum, Cochin, etc. in Kerala State and Tamil Nadu. Lalbagh Express was stopped at Kuppam at the request of Shri Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. It is O.K. But it should stop at Bangarpet also as many people are very eager to utilise the facility of this train.

It is unfortunate that these trains are not touching this railway junction despite our repeated requests. I therefore urge upon Mamatajee to change the route of these two trains without any further loss of time. The original route of, Island Express and Kurla Express should be retained.

Sir, Rajdhani Express runs only thrice a week between Bangalore and New Delhi. There is a long pending demand from the people of Karnataka to make this rail to run all the 7 days of a week. It must be made a daily train with immediate effect.

Yelahanka-Bangarpet narrow gauge railway line is almost 100 years old. Shri Jaffer Sharief, the then Railway Minister gave clearance for gauge conversion in the year 1994-95. The distance is only 147 kms. Half of the work has already been completed. About 75 crores of rupees have been spent already. This investment will go waste if you do not complete this gauge conversion work.

Two Governments have come and gone but unfortunately this work has not been completed till today. I have raised this issue in the august House at least half a dozen times. This route links south with north and eastern parts of our country. About 1/3 of Karnataka's mango production is from Kolar district. Other fruits, vegetables like potato, tomato, etc., have to go to different places like Nagpur, Tirupati, Mumbai, Chennai, Assam, Delhi, etc. In fact some fruits and vegetables are to be exported to countries like Singapur, Hong kong, etc. All these activities will get great impetus if this gauge conversion work is completed at the earliest.

I humbly request the Hon. Minister to allocate more funds for Bangarpet-Yelahanka conversion work, doubling of railway line between Bangalore and Jolarpet.

In my constituency there is a 50 years old dilapidated Pudkula railway station and it should be reopened

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Kannada.

[Shri K.H. Muniyappa]

immediately. There is urgent need to set up a couple of railway level gates in my constituency.

Sir, I thank you for allowing me to speak with these words, I conclude my speech.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (KALAHANDI) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak.

Sir, I would like to apologize that when my name was called, I was not here because I was not in my seat, I had to go out.

Sir, I whole-heartedly support the Supplementary Demands for Grants which have been placed by the hon. Minister, Mamata Banerjee. Besides, I come from an area where the railways has not seen light of the day. I come from KVK District of Orissa which is one of the most backward districts of the country and to go to see a railway engine, a man has to travel nearly 400 kilometers.

Sir, hundred years have passed since the inception of the railways and benefits of the railways have not been enjoyed by the people of Orissa.

Kumari Mamata Banerjee comes from the neighbouring State of West Bengal and she clearly knows that Orissa has been completely neglected in the field of railways. If you see the railway map of Orissa today, you will see that the Central Orissa is completely devoid of any railway network. Therefore, I hope that under her ministership when the main budget is brought before this House, adequate funds will be provided for the same. Also, I would like to thank the previous Railway Minister, Shri Nitish Kumar, who had given an allocation to the tune of Rs.200 and odd crores to Orissa in the Twelfth Lok Sabha, which Orissa had never got previously.

Secondly, I would like to stress upon the East Coast Zone Railway. This Zone was created but till today the control of Garden Reach still persists and powers are not given completely to the newly created East Coast Zone Railway in Orissa. Today, you will see that the Division which are under the East Coast Zone Railway are the Khurda Division, the Waltair Divisions and the Sambalpur Division. The Waltair Division does not want to join the East Coast Railway Zone. They want to be with the South-Central Railway. Therefore, a new Division should be created by taking the area of Raigara, which is on the border of the Waltair Division. Then only this Zone can be activated. Today, the Railway land between Raigara, Sambalpur and Raipur virtually has become no man's land. There are no officers posted. All the works on that railway line are pending and the progress of the doubling work and various other activities in these three Divisions is in very slow.

I know, Sir, that you will ask me to hurry up, but it is very difficult to do so. If you give me another five minutes, I shall be able to highlight the problems of my constituency.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Shri Deo, these are Supplementary Demands. Let us wait for her full budget. Now you just point out some of the problems of your constituency and conclude.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO : Sir, one of the main problems which are troubling my constituency is with regard to Samata Express. It is running only thrice a week. I would like the hon. Minister to make it daily.

Then there is a demand for a road-cum-rail bridge.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : Samata Express can be given by the Minister from the Samata Party! ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ) : Do you want the Samata Express to become a J.D. Express!

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Any way, I am interested that you conclude now.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO : Therefore, Sir, the bridge between Lanjigadh Road and Titlagarh, which is part of doubling project, Rs.113 crore are being spent, may be made into a rail-cum-road bridge so that people between Kesinga Town and Titlagarh can commute and it can develop as a good industrial centre.

Besides, it has been seen that the Government of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee has taken all steps to improve the KBK districts. We see various programmes going on there but the Railway Department's programme in this area is not felt. The demands for this Lanjigadh to Junagarh railway line is still pending and we require adequate funds for that. It is learnt that about Rs.10 crore had been sanctioned last time, but I am very sorry to say that the Sambalpur Division is completely inactive in executing this project. The Money is lying there, the land has been acquired. We have given 665 acres of land – but no progress is being made. Therefore, I request the hon. Minister to kindly take a note of it so that this work can be progressed.

Besides, a further survey from Junagarh to K.K. line is very important. The survey work for this project was started in 1965. So, I request the hon. Minister to kindly provide adequate funds for the same because if this railway line is developed, it will open up a vast expanse of mining area, which is the second largest Bauxite deposits of the world. Which is one of the second largest bauxites deposits area in the world. This bauxite zone can be opened up if this railway line is joined with K.K. line which comes from Bailadila to Visakhapatnam. Therefore, this is a very vital link, and will boost the economy of the area.

If this link is provided, it will also shorten the distance between the South and the East by nearly 450 kilometers and thereby helping the Railways and the country as a whole in materials and men movement.

Lastly I would like to say that there is a train, Hirakud Express, running from Bhubaneswar to Delhi. I request that this train should run from Bhubaneswar-Berhampore-Waltair-Vizag-Kalinga and then to Delhi so that the Koraput-Bolangir-Kalahandi (K.B.K.) area can be connected properly with Delhi and other industrial towns of the country.

I would like to say a few words about smuggling of Forest Products because of which the environment is also completely damaged. The Railway Protection Force between Titlagarh and Sambalpur and Khurda divisions is very lax. The entire forest of Kalahandi has been completely stripped. Every day the passenger trains are running as goods train for carrying the firewood and timber, thereby stripping the jungles. Some action should be taken by the Railways to stop this. I know that it does not come within the ambit of the Railway Protection Force and it is a State subject. The R.P.F. Act should be reviewed and should be amended to benefit and save the environment.

Lastly I would like to thank the hon. Minister for helping the victims of the super cyclone that devastated Orissa recently. The mishap has badly affected and devastated Orissa. The services provided by the Railways to help the people of Orissa have been great and I thank the hon. Minister Kumari Mamata Banerjee and both the Ministers of State who have taken up the relief work on a war-footing to save the people of Orissa.

With these few words I conclude and thank the hon. Deputy Speaker for giving me the opportunity.

SHRI LAKSHMAN SETH (TAMLUK) : Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me the opportunity. The time is short.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Very short.

SHRI LAKSHMAN SETH : I am pinpointing to some important issues which deserve immediate attention of our hon. Minister.

You know that thousands and thousands of hawkers are running their livelihood in the trains, stations and also on platforms. They are being seriously beaten up by the Railway police. Serious harassment is inflicted on them. There are also severe atrocities committed on the hawkers. I would request the hon. Minister to stop these atrocities. I also request the hon. Minister to draw a package of rehabilitation for them because they are maintaining their livelihood by this way. That is why I would request the hon. Minister to look into this matter.

Secondly, there are many unemployed youths running their business in the land of the Railways, though unauthorised. However, I would request the hon. Minister to develop commercial complexes on this land so that they can manage their livelihood by doing this business.

Thirdly, there are millions of contract-labourers who are working and in the job of perennial nature. I would request the hon. Minister to give priority to them in the matter of recruitment. When new vacancies arise, they should be given priority. I am not saying that all should be absorbed. But when vacancies arise, they should be given priority in the matter of recruitment because they are working with scanty pittance and they are not given actual wages and other benefits. They are working years after years. It is a very important issue. I am pressing hard with the hon. Minister, through you, on this issue.

Regarding all other important issues, the South-Eastern Railway is getting 60 per cent of its revenue from Haldia which is one of the important industrial centres of our country. But there is only a single line. There is heavy traffic and the traffic is going up. Immediate doubling of this railway line is necessary.

Hon. Minister has introduced one train which is an Intercity Express between Shalimar and Haldia. Because of the single line, the speed of this train is not upto the mark and it will not be viable. Not only that but the revenue will increase much more if this line is doubled. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to take up the doubling of the line between Panskura and Haldia to cater to the heavy traffic needs. It will give more revenue to the South-Eastern Railway.

I am thankful and convey my salutation to the hon. Minister for taking up the scheme of upgradation and taking up model stations. Mechada is a very important station. So many express train runs through this station. It is also located in close proximity to Haldia which has emerged as one of the important hub centres in the area.

20.00 hrs.

So, I would request to upgrade the Mechada station as a model station. Last but not least, but most important point is that in my constituency, also in the constituency of hon. Member Dr. Nitish Sengupta, there are thousands and thousands of growers of betel leaves, but they are facing a problem due to non-availability of the PUs, parcel vans. Last time, at the time of Budget, the then Railway Minister announced remanufacture of the parcel vans. So, I would request for remanufacture of the parcel vans so that the growers can get parcel vans there, for transportation of betel leaves.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now, the hon. Minister will reply.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (MUWATTUPUZHA) : Sir, I shall be very brief.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You came very late. You can ask any clarification after her reply.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, my train happened to be late.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Your train is late. You will have to suffer now.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, I shall raise only two or three points.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : If you have any clarification, you can seek it after the reply, but not now. This is the punishment for your being late.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, it so happened that my vehicle got late. I shall be very short and raise only two points.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : No, please. By this time, she should start. This is eight o'clock. I will call you for clarification, but not now.

Now, the hon. Minister will reply.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE) : Sir, Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni from the opposition benches initiated the discussion on supplementary demands for the year 1999-2000... (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI A.C. JOS (TRICHUR) : Please speak in English.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Let her speak in Hindi or any language. Now, I will request the hon. Members not to interrupt her. Otherwise, we may have to sit late here.

You take your time. If there is any clarification and if it is necessary, I will allow it.

SHRI A.C. JOS : She may speak in English.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : No, please.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Yes, I will do it.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You leave it to her. You can go ahead.

[Translation]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, I was saying that Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni from the opposition benches

initiated the debate on supplementary demands for which I would like to thank all the members of Parliament.

[English]

We have received good suggestions and so much of constructive criticism also. I think, through this criticism, the Railway will, of course, improve.

Before I say something regarding Railway, I quote the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhiji. He said :

"A customer is the most important visitor on our premises. He is not dependent on us, we are dependent on him. He is not an interruption to work, he is the purpose of it. He is not an outsider in our business, he is a part of it. We are not doing him a favour by serving him, he is doing a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so."

I would like to make this the guiding principle for each of the railway employee and each of the Railway Board member.

[Translation]

Sir, I have took over the charge of Ministry of Railways hardly two months ago. First of all I would like to ensure the safety and security in the Railways. Sir, I also visited the site of Gaisal accident. A demand was made to carry out the funeral there. Accordingly, it was undertaken and last rites were conducted. Dalkhola Kishanganj constituency is adjacent to Gaisal.

[English]

I have seen their pathetic conditions. After that, this was my target and this was the target of our Department and both my Ministers of State for Railways that we have to see first the safety and security of the people. But I am sorry to say that after the Gaisal incident, even before that, the Khanna Committee, which was constituted to look into the safety aspects of the Railways, recommended that Railways, at least, need Rs. 15,000 crore for the safety purposes. In our country, after 50 years of our Independence, you cannot imagine that out of 40,445 level-crossings, 24,313 level-crossings are unmanned and only few are manned. I do not know how the train is running. If we go just like a goods train, we cannot survive.

I agree and I appreciate what the hon. Members of Parliament and the leaders of Opposition parties have said. It is a fact that several projects are pending for the last 20 years.

[Translation]

Have we ever thought as to which is the take of the projects we want to start and for which we have laid the

foundation stones. Supplementary demands are small demands. After this the budget will be presented. I have received so many requests to lay the foundation stones of so many projects. However, I have refused to do so. I will not proceed without planning. There should be a policy decision in this regard. To keep the railway functional first of all the existing railway facilities should be maintained. Passengers make payment for their journey but adequate medical and drinking water facilities are not available at railway stations. One can well notice the condition of the railway tracks. Old railway tracks should be replaced with the new one.

[English]

All the rail tracks are old, all the coaches or the bogies are old, and we do not know how the trains are running. It is a sensitive matter and we are concerned about the safety and the security of the passengers. Out of 40,445 level-crossings, 24,313 level-crossings are unmanned. There are so many places where even the signals are not working. In this connection, the Khanna Commission made certain recommendations. I do not want to blame anybody, and I have regard for all my predecessors.

Immediately after the Gaisal train accident, there was a train accident in Britain. Though the Railways are in the private sector there, the British Government, keeping the passengers safety in view, gave money to the Railways amounting to Rs. 21,000 crore equivalent to our India currency. But I am sorry to say that after the Gaisal accident, we have not received even a single paisa. This type of thing is going on and I feel it is very unfortunate. The situation is very grave. That is why, we started the work on 469 level-crossings. Let us start with these small things.

In any State, people would have been very happy if I had given a new train to them. Instead of giving a new train, I said that we should spend 75 per cent of the money on safety. That is why, we kept this provision for the passenger safety. For this purpose, we have the RPF, but their number is less. Their work is very limited; they only look after the railway property; if anything happens inside a train.

[Translation]

Common man does not know about what is going on in the department.

[English]

It is the duty of the railways, but they are not providing any security. The RPF cannot lodge an FIR.

[Translation]

The Railway Police actually belong to the State

Governments. I have no objection if anyone speaks against me.

[English]

It is a fact that our attitude should be modern. We have to see the interests of the passengers, and not any individual's interest. We do not want to intervene in the law and order situation in a State.

[Translation]

If a passenger is looted or killed or if someone forcibly occupies the reserved seat, the Railway police fail to do anything. However, we pay 50% to the R.P.F. for the safety and security of the passengers.

[English]

Every year, we pay Rs. 160 crore, which is equal to 50 per cent, to the Railway Police, though they come under the State Government. Before the next Budget, if the leaders call a meeting at their convenience, then I can explain the situation to them. Let us take some policy decisions regarding the safety and the security of the passengers.

Hon. Members of the Parliament deserve such small facilities like small stations, small computer reservation centre, some new lines etc.

[Translation]

When the on going work requiring an amount of Rs. 19000 crores is still pending, we are not prepared to undertake the new work regarding laying of new lines. However, number of old railway lines are in bad condition.

[English]

Sir, sometimes the railway lines are not in good condition and also there is no track renewal. There are only old coaches and old wagons. Indian Railways is the second largest railway network in the world. But I do not know whether any priority is attached to the Railways or not.

Sir, I would like to tell the truth here because I would like to take the hon. Members of this House into confidence so that if anything happens, then they should not blame me. I am working overtime and we are trying our best.

Sir, I feel that money is needed. But there has been a severe cut in the Railway Budget. We have a social obligation to fulfil. After the Kargil war, there were contributions from almost every institution of this country for those who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of the country. Similarly, the Railways is a department where we provide services for the social sector — the sports persons travel from one part of the country to the other, they would have to be given

[Kumari Mamata Banerjee]

concessions; the *kisans* to go to attend some rally and the Railways would have to give concessions to them; women organise a function and they would go from one place to another, the Railway would have to give them concessions. The Railways would have to provide for concessions to so many categories of people and apart from all these, the Railways also would have to implement certain desirable projects.

Sir, the Railways need Budgetary support to fulfil its social obligations. What happens if we do not get that? The Railways is not an industry. It is an institution; it is an institution with a traditional outlook.

[Translation]

When a person travels in a passenger train, he may be Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian, he may belong to Gujarat, Haryana, Delhi, Bihar, U.P., Rajasthan or from Bengal — there is no difference as railway is a symbol of unity. We have seen that passengers belong to different parts of the country but railway makes no difference among them as Railways is a symbol of unity. However, the most important aspect in Railways is the safety and security of the passengers.

[English]

Sir, safety never sleeps; the Railways also never sleeps. We provide service for 24 hours. Therefore, we started with this slogan. Out of the 24 heads that are included in this Supplementary Demands for Grants, 15 are devoted towards enhancing the safety of the Railways. In terms money, this accounts for Rs. 141 crore out of the total demand for Rs. 189 crore. Sir, you would appreciate that Rs. 141 crore have been earmarked for enhancement of safety measures in the Railways.

Sir, you would be happy to know after the Gaisal train accident we thought that there should be some system in place so that this type of head on collision of trains is stopped and the passengers get relief. I am happy to announce that to prevent worst accidents due to head on collision of trains we should like to take all necessary steps and, therefore, I have proposed a project for design and development of a Digital Axle Counter which would help in preventing collision.

Sir, in regard to the Konkan Railways, I would like to submit that we have to give money for this line this year and also an account of Rs. 265 crore would have to be given to this project in the next year. Very good work is being done by the Konkan Railways and we are giving them total support. This message should go to the people.

Sir, the Konkan Railway Corporation is organising a live demonstration of Anti-Collision Device (ACD) fitted with locomotives on December 18, 1999 at Mazgaon, Goa. This

Anti-Collision Device is a very important instrument to avoid accidents of train. The demonstration of the device would, *inter-alia* show the following features.

1. In the event of any derailment of wagons in a double line section, which obstructs the second line on which another train approaches, the ACD will bring the speeding train to a complete halt.

2. When there is an operational failure due to which train is moving on wrong line where train is already allowed to go, the ACD will control the speed of the approaching train under 25 per kilometer and the train would be brought to an automatic stop if they are likely to collide.

Thirdly, at an unmanned level crossing that is not properly closed, or at a closed gate, if any road vehicle comes on to the track, the device could be activated by the gate man at the level crossing which will bring the approaching train to a halt. Fourthly, at the unmanned level crossing the device will detect any approaching train from a distance of one or two kilometers by initiating hooter and light.

In the second stage of development the device at the unmanned level crossing will be activated even when any road vehicle is stuck on the track at that crossing. The device also acts as a driver alert device. After every fifteen minutes, the driver gets a signal and if he does not acknowledge it by pressing a button, the device will warn that audio signal is not received and then automatically applies brakes and brings the train to a halt. This is very useful device. Konkan Railway is already using it. We are supporting them now because they are doing very good work. We are trying our best, but ultimately they will stand on their own.

Regarding the unmanned level crossing, if we want to cover all the 24,000 and odd of them we would need an amount of Rs. 200 crore. That is why we requested the Members of Parliament that they should take up the work of at least one level crossing. If they take up the work of one level crossing, the Railways will be prepared to take up the work of another level crossing in their constituency. We have decided that Members of Parliament can help build one level crossing in their constituencies after which the Railway will provide them with another level crossing. By this the constituency will ultimately stand to gain.

Somaiyaji emphasised the need for passenger amenities. Dr. Laxminarayan Pandeya and Shri K.P. Singh Deo also spoke about it. Many of our friends have spoken about it. They were correct when they said that we have to utilise our land for commercial purposes. I appreciate the concern of all Members of Parliament. Sir, after becoming the Minister of Railways I had set up a task force with the representatives

of CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM and all other Chambers of Commerce as members in it. In this area we want to go in for joint ventures. No employees will be disturbed. I do not want that any employee be disturbed. If we want additional funds we have to mobilise our own resources. How do we do that? To do that, we have to go in for commercial utilisation of land. With that purpose in view I constituted a task force. Our Member (Traffic) is the Chairman of that Task Force. The task force will submit its report within a few days. We will allow joint ventures in the areas of model stations, wagon advertisements, inside stations and trains for passenger amenities and even in track renewals.

Sir, before the end of this millennium, on experimental basis we are starting a project which deals with innovative financing package for funding of gauge conversion project in Gujarat linking Pipavav port with Surendranagar station of Western Railway. An MOU between the port of Pipavav and Indian Railways will be signed to implement this project jointly which will form the basis for getting Governmental approval. We are going through this process because many people are asking us for gauge conversions and laying of new tracks. If we do not have enough money to do all those projects, we have to at least allow people who want to invest their money in those projects. They can invest their money in a joint venture with Railways. That is why we have decided to give this opportunity to the private sector and the public sector for the betterment of the Railways. If our condition is not good, we cannot fulfil the requirements of the people.

Shri Madhav Rao Scindia did a good work when he was the Railway Minister. When I talked with him one day, he pointed out to me that this was a very crucial year for Railways from economic, security and safety point of view. He cautioned me to go about the job in a proper manner and that this is a very risky year. I know, Sir, that this is a rough and tough job. Regarding what Priya-da has said, yes, we stopped all the passes. I have stopped utilising my MOR discretion also in this regard. I have only allowed continuance of two complimentary passes for the Mother Teresa Organisation and two Bharat Scouts and Guides Organisation. That is only a continuation. I gave nothing new.

As far as Upgradation quota is concerned, we have stopped this because we do not want it to be misused.

Regarding super cyclone in orissa, after the super cyclone, all the railway stations have been damaged, and the railways will repair them. We will also repair the stations of three major areas, especially Paradeep, Puri and Khurda areas. Shri K.P. Singh Deo and the other hon. Members had requested to do something for their State. We will definitely take care of all that can be done.

Similarly, for model villages, whatever the hon. Members have suggested to adopt areas, of course, we will try to consider that.

We think, the provision of medical facilities also is a major factor there. We are preparing a plan to send our medical train or medical van which will go from village to village. We will also send our doctors, nurses and sisters to look after the people there.

Regarding security, I have already said that we have to set up our own intelligence branch and network. For the safety and security point of view, we have already started taking training from the Home Ministry. We have found out that there are some vulnerable areas. Sir, you will appreciate that there are some dangerous areas as well as isolated areas. Take the case of Gaisal. It is an isolated area. Similarly take the case of Guwahati. It is dangerous area. My friend from Kokrajhar is not present here. He asked me that they want more trains there. But our point is that how will the trains run punctually there, if in the whole North-East, we cannot run trains in the night? About six month ago, the State Government said that they would not like any train to run in the night time. Now, the law and order situation is very bad in the North-East. Day before yesterday, one engineer from the Railways went for some enquiry but he has been kidnapped. One person has been murdered also. They say 'do not come.' So, if railway people are being stopped to work, it will be very difficult for them to examine and undertake the work there.

Sir, about Kargil Relief, you will be surprised to know that the Railway employees have given more than Rs. 20 crore.

Similarly, about the Super Cyclone also we have decided and we have asked our employees to donate one day salary for the affected people, and they will be doing so. It is a continuous process and we will, of course, give it to the Orissa Government.

About the provision of mobile radio communication, it has been included in the Supplementary Budget that the drivers, guards conductors of all the trains, all the station masters, controllers, GRP and RPF will be provided with this facility because there should not be any communication gap. That is why we have started it.

Sir, because all the Members are waiting to go, I will not take much time of the House. Regarding, Gaisal incident, the Khanna Committee has inquired, and even a Supreme Court judge, Mr. Roy is inquiring into it. But since they said that more investigation should be done, we have given it to the CBI. The CBI is inquiring into the matter and after getting the enquiry completed, we will lay all the details on the table of the House.

[Kumari Mamata Banerjee]

Regarding Model Stations, of course, we have included some stations but there are some stations which have been left out. Now, it is only the Supplementary Demands for Grants that we have been able to do this much. Our proposal is that when the full Railway Budget comes, we will try to see that every important junction, station gets priority. I want to assure the House that for the modernization of junction stations and other stations, we will help them.

Regarding the resource mobilization, I have already said that within a few weeks' time, we will prepare our Resource Mobilization policy.

The Freight Policy is also under process. Although last year, the situation was very bad, but now, this month, the situation is comfortable. We are trying to do our best.

Regarding new line and gauge conversions, I have already said that Rs.90,000 has been given. But we want more. My hon. colleague, Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni asked about our financial performance this year. Well, in earnings, we are performing better than the last year. But still there is a shortfall of about Rs. 150 crore in freight and about Rs. 50 crore in passenger traffic to end of November, 1999.

The post budgetary increase is around Rs.900 crore. There were diesel hike, revision updates, incentives and bonus to staff, increase of kilometres allowance, hike in electricity tariff. But can you imagine, Sir, the Railway is not getting its due of Rs. 1,000 crore approximately from the Badar Pur Power station?

Can you imagine that the railways have to get only Rs.1,000 crore from the Badarpur thermal power station alone? We are pursuing this matter with the power Ministry and we are asking them to give us money. Railway gives dividend to the Government of about Rs.1,900 crore. Railways have to take Rs. 1000 crore from Badarpur thermal power station of power Ministry alone. Even the power tariff rate, we give the maximum. Why? Railway has the social obligation. The House should decide this policy. I leave it to the House that we should get power at least on uniform basis on tariff rate. Why is it 3 times, 4 times or 5 times more somewhere? It is because we are giving it as a social obligation to the people. Because of the Fifth Pay Commission, Railways have to bear Rs. 5,000 crore extra and, that is why, we are having Rs. 180 crore in our funds. But I started austerity measures from the beginning and the House would be happy to know that it is our calculation that within these three or four months, we would be able to save Rs. 735 crore because of these austerity measures.

Shri Sardar Buta Singh has mentioned about SC and ST backlog. Of course, this is moral obligation to fulfil. Somebody raised the point regarding RRBs. We will look into it.

Somebody has mentioned about corruption. We will do whatever we can to eliminate corruption because we do not want to have corrupt people in the railways on account of whom the railways should suffer. I am very rough and tough regarding this because I do not have any vested interest. My interest is to see that railway should run just like a super fast train. It should not run slowly like lethargic goods train. Sometimes money is needed. Sometimes will is also needed. We do not have the will. I am sorry to say that the will is also lacking. We need to boost up our people. As family members of the railway, we have to work together.

Lastly, I want to inform the House of three concessions which we want to give for this millennium. We want to give other things also. I am not prepared to inform the House those things right now. But I will let you know them later on. The poor people want to purchase the ticket. But they are very poor. Sometimes they earn only Rs.100 and sometimes Rs.60. But if they purchase their tickets Rs.100 in a month, they are not able to fulfil their commitment or to go their service. Ticketless travel is an age-old problem. But there are people below the poverty line. I would like to offer them a concession hoping that they buy tickets. This will also create a sense of shame in those who avoid buying tickets even though they can afford it. My scheme will cover people of unrecognised sectors like vegetable vendors, domestic helpers, agricultural labourers and construction workers etc. having a monthly income of not less than Rs.400. For them I intend to offer a monthly ticket of about Rs.15. I think the House will be happy about this concession.

I want to assure one more concession also. There are some good students. They are very good. But they cannot afford to pay train fare to go to their schools or to appear in their examinations. That is why, it is a millennium gift for children. There are a large number of poor children going to schools for whom the expense of travel is a burden. I have decided to offer them a millennium gift of free travel from their home to school. It is up to 10th Class.

This is an international year for citizens. Sometimes we have seen that when the couple travel, if the age of husband is 65 years, he gets the concession, but the wife is 60 years old and she will not get the concession. At present, senior citizen concession is given to those who are about the age of 65 years.

In many cases of couples travelling together, the husband gets the concession but not wife. I have decided to reduce the age limit to 60 in the case of women to be eligible for this concession. Now, this concession will apply to all the women in that age. This is a socially desirable scheme in our country.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (MUMBAI SOUTH CENTRAL):
Why do we not make it 55 years of the age?

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : No, the age of sixty years is all right.

For the new millennium, people are expecting something to be done. Of course, I will do something for other States also. We have already planned a few things and we are planning a few more. I now want to announce what we have already planned because the House is in session. I have decided to introduce Weekly Superfast Millennium Express services on the following routes : (i) Sealdah-Ajmer Millennium Express; (ii) Howrah-Dehradun Millennium Express; (iii) Nizamuddin-Coimbatore Millennium Express; (iv) Bi-weekly Darbangha-Amritsir Millennium Express; and (v) Jaipur-Agra Fort Holiday Millennium Express. I have announced these five trains and regarding the demand for other trains, I will have to study them. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (MUVATTUPEZZA) : What about a train for Kerala?

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I have already announced a train for the south.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : That is the train to Coimbatore. It can be extended up to Kerala. ...*(Interruptions)*

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I will certainly do something....*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : She is prepared to give something to you.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I have something on my mind for you. I have announced today only what I have already decided.

SHRI A.C. JOS : Why should that decision stop at Coimbatore?

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I want to do something for Kerala. Please realise that I want to do something for you. But let us prepare the plan. If we want to start a new train, we have to look at the route, the traffic obtaining there and the work that it involves. That is why I said that I will announce more trains later.

SHRI A.C. JOS : But this train to Coimbatore can be extended up to Kerala.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Do you want it to go to Cochin?

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Yes.

SHRI A.C. JOS : Yes.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : It is done.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Thank you.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO (DHENKANAL) : What about the extension of the Nizamuddin-Sambhalpur Express to Bhubaneswar, which was declared eight months ago? ...*(Interruptions)*

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Shri Singh Deo, I think, you are asking about the Khurda-Bolangir Express.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : I am asking about the Nizamuddin-Sambhalpur Express to be extended up to Bhubaneswar via Angul and Dhenkanal.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I can assure you that I will look into the matter. I can assure you that I will try my level best to sort out this problem.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : It is already there in the timetable....*(Interruptions)*

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, let me complete. In order to complete my reply, I will now run on just like a Rajdhani Express train. ...*(Interruptions)*

We intend to give high priority to old pending projects. However even to take up completion of all the old projects within a reasonable time frame, the Railways would annually needs Rs. 2000 crore for new lines and Rs. 1,000 crore for gauge conversions....*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please allow her to complete.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : This year, we want your support for the Supplementary Demands because we have to meet the demands that arise out of the Fifth Pay Commission recommendations. Our internal generation of resources is very poor. I am optimistic that with the help of the public sector, the private sector, all our MP friends and other friends from the States, we will be able to mobilize more resources. I am told that it is almost not possible to prepare a comprehensive action plan. So, I need your support for the socially desirable plans of the Railways. If hon. Members want the Railways to reach all over the country, we are prepared to help from our side. We have nothing to lose because that is the demand of the Members of Parliament who are the representatives of the people. The only problem is of money. So, please help us.

With these words, I commend, the Supplementary Demands for Grants 1999-2000 for the consideration of the House. ...*(Interruptions)*

Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni and Shri Amar Roy Pradhan raised some points about particular zones like North Bengal, North Eastern Region, etc.

SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN (COOCHBEHAR) :
Mainly I asked about Darjeeling.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Yes, I am telling you.
...(Interruptions) The UNESCO has already announced that Darjeeling Train is a 'Heritage Train'.

I am going to North Bengal in the month of January. I can assure you that the points raised by hon. Members about North Bengal will get the top priority because I know that North Bengal is the Gateway to the North-Eastern Region. Let me also examine all the points which were raised by other hon. Members. I can assure you that whatever best we can do we will do.

With these words, I conclude. I thank you very much.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, while thanking the hon. Railway Minister I would say that she has brought a very important issue to the attention of the House. She has expressed in her speech, a horrifying situation of safety and security aspects related to track renewal, old bogies, etc. where she demanded our support.

I will address through you, Sir, to the hon. Minister and I hope that the whole House will join me. It is not the simple matter; it is a horrifying tale that she has narrated. It seems anything may happen any moment in the old track renewal process. Therefore, I feel that — with all sincerity on behalf of our party and as the principal Opposition party — this matter should be seriously taken up before the Cabinet by the hon. Prime Minister; and the Finance Minister should come forward along with the Railway Minister to give a comprehensive package, to support the security and safety measures so that in future we are not threatened because of uncertainty of accidents. This is my only point.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri P.C. Thomas may seek only one clarification. I promised to him that I would give him a chance.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : I will ask only one clarification. We all applaud the stern steps being taken by the hon. Minister regarding safety of the passengers. I just want to mention that the new millennium is coming and there may be Y2K menace, which is a menace regarding computers in the whole world which includes Indian Railways also. I would like to just mention it and bring it to the notice of the hon. Minister.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : The Railways are very safe and there is going to be no problem.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Railways have signalling and computer system.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : He says that the Railways are safe and there is no difficulty.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : I want to know the steps taken in this regard to fight out the Y2K menace in the Railways which is the largest network in the whole of India.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : He says that the Railways are safe

SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA (KOLAR) : May I know one information from the hon. Minister? Earlier two trains were going through Bangarapet junction; now those two trains have been shifted to Salem line. For the last 35 years, business people, workmen were using it and now they are suffering. These two trains were going up to Kanyakumari and now no train is going on that line. New trains were introduced, but they were also shifted to some other line. I want to have a clarification on this.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : All right. She will take note and she will reply to you.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : Sir, I will examine it and I will let him know.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : Sir, I would like to say something which will help the Minister.

Sir, the Standing Committee on Railways of the Eleventh Lok Sabha and the Committee on Railway Finance have recommended that the Planning Commission and the Government of India should pay for the social obligations of the Railways as is being paid in other countries of the world. There is already a unanimous recommendation of the Standing Committee on Railways. As Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi said, we should ask the Government to implement it.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : All right, it is only a suggestion.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (MUMBAI NORTH-CENTRAL) : My colleague Shri Kirit Somaiya mentioned about the announcement of Swatantra Board. That is not being implemented.

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : My hon. friend has said something about the two trains which have stopped. I will investigate the matter and I will let him know.

Regarding what Shri K.P. Singh Deo said, I am grateful to him. He said that many Committees including the Railway Convention Committee have recommended that the Railways should get the socially desirable part of it; and I am grateful to him. Regarding another point of his, I would inform him that the train that he has mentioned....(Interruptions)

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : I mentioned about Hirakund, that is, Nizamuddin to Sambhalpur train.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : It is extended up to Bhubneshwar and it will start from 26th January 2000.

SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO : Thank you very much.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : The other five trains that I mentioned, would start from the 1st of January, the new millennium. Regarding Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation, the implementation is starting.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : No. All those details have already been given.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : We are starting the implementation also. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Madam, the House should be made aware of the concept of joint venture. It would be better if you will tell us about the joint venture. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : As far as the working of RRB is concerned, we are investigating it. We will take the opinion of all the Political Parties and accept whatever is feasible.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I shall now put the Supplementary Demand for Grant (Railways) for 1999-2000 to the vote of the House.

The question is :

"That the respective supplementary sums of 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, 2000, in respect of the head of Demand entered in the second column thereof against Demand No.16."

Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for 1999-2000 submitted to the vote of the House

No. of Demand	Name of Demand	Amount of Demand submitted to the Vote of the House
		Rs.
16	Assets-Acquisition, Construction and Replacement	
	<i>Other Expenditure</i>	
	Capital	5,000
	Railway Funds	25,000
	Total	30,000

The motion was adopted.

20.41 hrs.

APPROPRIATION (RAILWAYS) NO.4 BILL *

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The House will now take up Appropriation (Railways) Bill. THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 1999-2000 for the purposes of Railways.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 1999-2000 for the purposes of Railways."

The motion was adopted.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I introduce** the Bill.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The Minister may now move that the Bill be taken into consideration.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE : I beg to move:

"That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 1999-2000 for the purposes of Railways, be taken into consideration."

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 1999-2000 for the purposes of Railways, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The House shall now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

The question is:

"That the clauses 2 and 3 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 and 3 were added to the Bill.

The Schedule was added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill

* Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II Section-2, dated 13.12.99

** Introduced with the recommendation of President.