

12.05 hrs.

## CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

### Need to Create a Separate and Exclusive Railway Zone for Kerala

Title: Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan called the attention of Minister of Railways to create a separate and exclusive railway zone for Kerala.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of Railways to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The need to create a separate and exclusive Railway Zone for Kerala."

रेल मंत्री (श्री लालू प्रसाद): अध्यक्ष महोदय,  $\hat{A}E!$  (व्यवधान)

प्रो. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा (दक्षिण दिल्ली) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, हमारा प्रोटेस्ट रिकार्ड कर लें।

श्री लालू प्रसाद: अध्यक्ष महोदय, भारतीय रेल के विशाल नेटवर्क के कुशल प्रबंधन के लिए इसे जोनों और डिवीजनों में बांटा गया है। नए जोन बनाने के मानदंड कार्यभार, अभिगम्यता, भौगोलिक फैलाव, यातायात प्रवाह का पैटर्न, आर्थिक व्यवहार्यता और अन्य परिचालनिक/प्रशासनिक अपेक्षाओं पर आधारित हैं। रेलवे के पुनर्गठन के लिए जातीय, भाषायी और/या क्षेत्रीय (राज्य की सीमाएं आदि) मान्यताओं को आधार नहीं बनाया जाता।

हाल ही में, सरकार ने रेलवे सुधार समिति (1984) और सलाहकार समिति (1994) की सिफारिशों के आधार पर भारी कार्यभार वाले जोनों और डिवीजनों से कार्यभार कम करते हुए सात नए जोन और आठ डिवीजनों का निर्माण कर संपूर्ण भारतीय रेल का पुनर्गठन किया है। अर्थव्यवस्था और कार्यकुशलता की आवश्यकताओं के अनुरूप आकार, कार्यभार, अभिगम्यता, यातायात प्रतिमान और अन्य परिचालनिक/प्रशासनिक अपेक्षाओं आदि कारकों को ध्यान में रखते हुए यह सारी कार्रवाई की गई है। क्षेत्रीयता का आधार इस कवायद का हिस्सा नहीं है। जोन बनाने के लिए डिवीजनों के भौगोलिक निकटता; बेहतर नियंत्रण मुहैया कराने के लिए तथा प्रणाली की उन्नत कार्यकुशलता के मद्देनजर यातायात के निर्बाध संचलन को ध्यान में रखते हुए सभी जोनों का अधिकार क्षेत्र निर्धारित किया गया है।

वर्तमान में भारतीय रेल 16 जोनों में विभाजित है। इनमें से कोई भी जोन एक राज्य तक सीमित नहीं है। प्रत्येक जोन कई राज्यों में फैला हुआ है तथा इसी प्रकार विभिन्न राज्य भी विभिन्न रेलवे जोनों द्वारा सेवित हैं। 12 ऐसे राज्य हैं, जहां पर किसी रेलवे का क्षेत्रीय मुख्यालय नहीं है।

यह दलील कि विभिन्न राज्यों की स्थानाकृति और निवास प्रकृति भिन्न-भिन्न है, जिसके लिए परिवहन के विभिन्न प्रकार के साधनों की आवश्यकता होती है तथा एक जोन परिवहन संबंधी इन आवश्यकताओं को पूरा नहीं कर सकता, सही नहीं है। भारतीय रेल एक एकीकृत संगठन है जो समस्त राष्ट्र की आवश्यकताओं को पूरा कर रही है। क्षेत्रीय रेलें राज्य के आधार पर बिना कोई भेदभाव किए अपने अधिकार क्षेत्र की समस्त यातायात आवश्यकताओं को पूरा कर रही हैं। भारतीय रेल को विविधता में एकता बनाए रखने पर गर्व है।

अतः उक्त तथ्यों को ध्यान में रखते हुए विशेष रूप से केरल के लिए एक नया जोन बनाना व्यावहारिक नहीं है।

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : Sir, I attended to the statement made by the Minister with abundant caution.

Kerala is the southernmost State of India. It is described as 'God's Own Country'. However, it has no proper railways. There is no travelling facility at all.

Recently, we had a conference of all the Members of Parliament from Kerala convened by the Chief Minister of Kerala. We had an elaborate discussion and came to the conclusion that we must make a strenuous effort to have a railway zone in Kerala.

Everyday we are experiencing difficulties in railway traffic. Administrative process is in utter failure. Even the recent railway Time-Table issued is not suitable to the conditions obtaining in Kerala. We as Members of Parliament are forced to stage a *dharna* and take to other forms of agitation in railway traffic. Even at my age, I had to sit in *dharna* in railway traffic because of the carelessness and negligence on the part of the railway organisation in restoring the railway traffic to meet the needs of the people.

Geographically and for effective railway traffic, there must be a Railway Zone. Now, we have two Zones spread over three neighbouring States, that is, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In the two neighbouring States, the position is entirely different. Kerala is a land stretched in the Western Ghats or on the Western side. The land is such a strip that it is highly essential that we should have a Railway Zone. Not only that, I have mentioned in my statement about this facility.

MR. SPEAKER: You send a copy to the hon. Minister. Tell the House as to what is there in the statement. You can summarise it. Can any other hon. Member from Kerala help him?

...(Interruptions)

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (MUVATTUPUZHA): There are assurances from the Government, which are pending with regard to the Zone. All those assurances may be honoured.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Thomas, your interruption has not been recorded. I will allow everybody according to rules.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : The size of the geographical area is not the only criterion for carving a Railway Zone. The State of Kerala is, at present, covered by two Railway Divisions, namely, Palaghat and Thiruvananthapuram. These two Railway Divisions are spread over three States, namely, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. There are fundamental differences in the topographical and inhabitation pattern of these States. Therefore, the travelling and transportation needs of Kerala and the neighbouring States of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are vastly different. Clubbing of these totally dissimilar areas in the Railway Zone causes conflict in priorities and resultant administrative and operational problems. Under these circumstances, a separate Zone of Railway is very necessary to serve the legitimate interests of rail users in Kerala. However, our demand for the formation of a separate Zone for Kerala is pending for long. Even before the present re-division of Railways, our demand was pending before the Railway Board. But they did not consider it. They have treated the Kerala people as second-class citizens. So, I request the hon. Minister to form a new Railway Zone for Kerala as it is highly essential to prevent the difficulties of everyday travelling.

MR. SPEAKER: You have made your point.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : We, the people of Kerala, are put to much hardship. I request the hon. Minister of Railways, who is a man of the masses, to consider this matter in all its seriousness for carving a Railway Zone for Kerala without delay. This is highly essential for your success even in Bihar elections. If you want to succeed in Kerala, if you want the blessings of the people of Kerala, I again request you to carve a Railway Zone in Kerala. Otherwise your difficulties will be greater when you face the Bihar elections.

MR. SPEAKER: The last portion is unnecessary.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please cooperate.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Radhakrishnan, will you please take your seat?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Member, I have not called you.

Ordinarily, it is not allowed. Only one hon. Member had given notice for the Calling Attention. Therefore, his name has come. But there is a provision that for seeking clarification, one question can be put without any speech. I will call some hon. Members, who have requested for seeking clarifications. But if the hon. Members make speeches, it will be disallowed.

SHRI C.K. CHANDRAPPAN (TRICHUR): Sir, hon. Minister has said that there are certain criteria based on which Railway zones are allowed. In view of the answer given by the hon. Minister, will he state what are the criteria based on which recently zones were formed including the zone formed in his own State of Bihar? Considering those criteria, I would like to know whether it is not possible to give a new Railway zone for Kerala.

SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR (CALICUT): I just want to supplement what the hon. Member Shri Chandrappan has said about the criteria to grant a Railway zone. What are the criteria under which Kerala does not have a zone? By our assessment and of the studies we have made, Kerala needs a Railway zone. Kerala is totally neglected. I do not want to give a sordid story of all the areas including Malabar etc. We need a zone. It is a necessity under any parameter. As regards our State, Kerala deserves to be given a Railway zone. I want to know what are the parameters under which you are negating it to us.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): Kerala is the land where we can see a number of tourist centres, temples etc. Even, I am sure that almost all the MPs have visited Kerala. There are strategic reasons also. There is a Naval

Academy in Kerala. There is the Bekal Fort in Kerala. Persons, not only from outside the State but also from foreign countries, come to Kerala. Because of these reasons, I think, the hon. Minister may be kind enough to consider creation of this new zone.

SHRI P.K. VASUDEVAN NAIR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): While lending my strong support to Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan and other hon. Members of Kerala, I should like to request the Minister whether he has received a memorandum from the Kerala Chief minister when he visited Kerala. I would like to know whether the need for a zone was being requested by the Kerala Chief Minister. While he described the criteria, is it not necessary to consider the traditional and historical imbalance in railway development? And when the development aspect is taken into consideration, rectification of that imbalance is a necessity. I would like to know whether the Minister would consider this matter also.

SHRI P. RAJENDRAN (QUILON): I associate myself with Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan. I would like to know whether the Government would consider constituting a zone in each State of India. There are 28 States and there should be 28 zones. There must be a railway zone for each State. Considering the distance from Delhi to Kerala, the necessity for having a zone in Kerala is inevitable for the purpose of surveillance. Will the Government consider this?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please cooperate. I have allowed five or six hon. Members.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded except what the hon. Minister says.

(Interruptions)\*

MR. SPEAKER: I am following the rules. Please cooperate. I will not allow this.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded.

(Interruptions)\*

MR. SPEAKER: I am only following the rules. Let it be restricted. Kindly cooperate.

...(Interruptions)

\*Not Recorded.

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded.

(Interruptions)\*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Kurup, I seek your cooperation. You can talk to the hon. Minister later on. It will not go on record.

(Interruptions)\*

**रेल मंत्री (श्री लालू प्रसाद) :** अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं केरल के सभी माननीय सांसदों की भावनाओं और मांग का आदर करते हुये उन्हें बताना चाहता हूँ कि मधुमक्खी का छत्ता होता है। जिस तरह बिहार और बंगाल के मामले में जोन या डिवीजन बनाते समय जो हाल देखा गया, वे सब जानते हैं। मैं केरल की महान जनता का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले सांसदों का आदर करते हुये बताना चाहता हूँ कि मेरे लिये, रेल विभाग के लिये और देश के लिये केरल राज्य के साथ किसी प्रकार का कोई भेदभाव करने का उद्देश्य नहीं रहा है। कोई नया जोन या डिवीजन बनाने से पहले हम लोग जरूर विचार करते हैं। माननीय सदस्य ने जोन या डिवीजन बनाये जाने के लिये क्राइटीरिया पूछा है। मैं उस क्राइटीरिया को पढ़कर सुनाऊंगा। जब जब केरल के माननीय सांसद संयुक्त रूप से या व्यक्तिगत रूप से या श्री राधाकृष्णन् जी रेल भवन में आकर हमें डराते रहे हैं कि हम लोग स्ट्राइक पर चले जायेंगे तो उनकी स्ट्राइक एक क्षण में तुड़वा देता हूँ और उनकी मांग पूरी कर देता हूँ। ऐसा नहीं है कि केरल के लोगों के साथ भेदभाव किया जाता है। माननीय सदस्यों ने उस क्राइटीरिया के बारे में पूछा है। मैं उसे पढ़कर सुनाता हूँ --

"For effective management of the vast network of Indian Railways, it is divided into zones and divisions. The criteria

for creation of a new zone are on the basis of the workload accessibility, geographical sprawl, pattern of traffic flows, economic viability and other operative administrative requirements, Ethnicâ€¦"(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : Luluji, it is economically viable...(Interruptions)

\*Not Recorded.

SHRI LALU PRASAD: I am reading the criteria....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please. This is too much.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI LALU PRASAD: I am answering as to what the criteria are...(Interruptions) Who is pulling or not pulling, that is another thing...(Interruptions) Please listen to me.

The criteria include ethnic, linguistic and other territorial boundaries etc. consideration do not form the basis of evaluating issues pertaining to the Railway reorganisation.

मैं सभी माननीय सांसदों को और खासकर श्री राधाकृष्णन जी को बताना चाहता हूँ कि यह पूरे मुल्क का सवाल है। जिस राज्य में भी इस तरह की कोई मांग उठती है, वहाँ झगड़ा और झंझट शुरू हो जाता है। केरल की महान जनता के लिये जो भी संभव हो सकता है, नई रेल लाइन बिछाने या दूसरे मामलों में, हम लोग काम कर रहे हैं। अभी रेल विभाग के सामने नये जोन बनाने का कोई इरादा नहीं है। भविष्य में भी कोई इरादा नहीं है। लेकिन जब भविष्य में कोई बात होगी, तो हम देखेंगे और उस पर विचार करेंगे।

श्री तरित बरण तोपदार (बैरकपुर) : क्या क्राइटीरिया चेंज होगा?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मंत्री जी, आप केरल के एम.पीज़ को बुलाकर बात कीजिये।

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You did not bother to give a notice of Calling Attention even. Only one hon. Member did. But I have given chance to five to six hon. Members to put questions. And, you want to go on indefinitely! No, I would not allow.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: According to rules, I have gone much beyond that because it is a question of sentiments of the people of Kerala.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the Report of the Business Advisory Committee : Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, if you are denying me the opportunity to speak, I am walking out ...(Interruptions) Sir, you have completely denied me the opportunity. So, in protest, I am walking out.

**12.23 ½ hrs**

**(At this stage, Shri P.C. Thomas left the House.)**

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