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title : Further discussion on the motion moved by Shri Nitish Kumar on 4th June, 1998 regarding consideration of Status Paper on Railways; Railway Budget-  
General discussion and Demands for Excess Grants (Not Concluded)

MR. CHAIRMAN : There is one announcements make.

As there are many hon. Members to speak on the Railway Budget, if the House agrees, we may sit till 9 p.m. today.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Let us adjourn at 6 p.m. today and take it up again on Monday.

MR. CHAIRMAN : There are a large number of Members, who want to participate in the debate. Those who want to speak today can speak after 6 p.m. and those who want to speak on Monday can speak on Monday. So, today, after Private Members' Business, again the discussion on Railway Budget will be resumed and continued upto 9 p.m.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY (MANDSAUR) : Sir, make it upto 8 p.m.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let us see.

[Translation] . :

Those who stay here, will be given a chance to speak. Those who leave, may speak on Monday, if they wish.

SHRI PRAKASH VISHWANATH PARANJPE ( THANE) : Chairman, Sir, will a chance be given on Monday to such members who could not put forth their views today.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Surely.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) : Chairman, Sir, most of the members are interested in the Railway Budget and they wish to speak on it. It would be better if the time of the House, is extended beyond 6 p.m. after the Private Members' Business is over. It is Friday today and some members wish to put forth their views. It is proposed to hold discussion till late in the night on Monday but I would like to make a request that I would reply immediately after the discussion is over in the night. It is not as if the discussion would be continued throughout the night and till reply the next day. I am prepared to reply the moment the discussion is over.

SHRI AJIT JOGI (RAIGARH) : It means that the Members will have to sit in the House throughout, the night.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Hon'ble Members should sit here. It should not be the case that they leave after making their speech. That is why I have said that I would like to reply immediately. All the Members who speak, should remain present to listen to the reply also.

SHRI AJIT JOGI : Hon'ble Minister, this would be an injustice.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : is it not injustice when the Minister has to sit throughout the night to take notes?

SHRI AJIT JOGI : You are the Minister.

SHRI HIRA LAL ROY (CHHAPRA) : Hon'ble Mr.

Chairman, Sir. I hail from Bihar. Hon'ble Members have spoken at length regarding the position in Bihar. Much has been said ever since the rail budget has been presented by the Minister of Railways and some have gone to the extent of saying that since the Minister of Railways belongs to Bihar, hence this rail budget sounds very much like budget for Bihar, I regret such statements. I would like to submit that when the Railways used to have seven zone, it had an A.C. Zone which was referred to as iron railways. One fourth of the entire rail budget used to be spent on it A.C. Railway was also known as power Railways as it used to supply coal to the power stations and iron factories set up throughout the country and it used to connect all the station, be it Bhilai, Durgapur, Raurkela or Bokaro. I would like to submit that much less expenditure is being incurred on it now in proportion to the expenditure incurred and the provision made earlier in this regard.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, similar in the case of the Eastern Railways. It is not a new Rail network. It starts from Howrah and passes through the eastern part of Bihar. Its position is still the same as it was 10 or 20 years ago. There has been no change all these years. Situation is more or less the same in case of N.E. Railways also. A few new trains have been introduced. Vaishali is considered to be the best train of this Railway it has a capacity of carrying barely 1000 passengers, however, it carries 6000 passengers. This section does not have as many trains as are required.

I would like to congratulate Hon'ble Minister of Railways for having given us a new train, but it is not sufficient. It is a densely populated area. Many labourers travel to Haryana, Punjab and Delhi from Bihar and other parts of the country. This is a delicate issue. Poor people have to travel to some or the other place to seek employment, hence even if six trains are provided, the heavy rush of passengers is not likely to be eased much. I would request the Hon'ble Minister that since you are the follower of Shri Jai Prakash Ji and Chhapra is your birth place, hence I would request that you should introduce a new super fast train " Lokmanya Express " for Chhapra. You are aware that the erstwhile districts of Chhapra fall under Gopalganj and Siwan. The people of that area are now

living in various countries all over the world and are also settled in Arab countries. There won't be any other area in our country from where the people have settled abroad in [Shri Hira Lal Roy] such a large number. Hence I would like to submit that we need more trains and it would be better if a train named after Lokmanya Jai Prakash Narayan Ji is introduced immediately. We'll be highly grateful.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, people say that much work has been done in Bihar as six Ministers of Railways have been from Bihar. Except one or two, all the Railways Ministers so far have been from Bihar. We are fortunate in this respect but the misfortune is that nothing spectacular has been done in Bihar till date. When Shri Rajendra Prasad was the Member of Parliament, he used to raise this issue in the Parliament time and again that Patna should be connected with Sonapur so that North and East remain connected.

About this project hopes were raised at the time, when the, then Minister of Railways and hon. Prime Minister Deve Gowda had gone there on 22nd December, 1996 and Rs. 15 crore .... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH (VAISHALI) : This project was taken up in 1996, 1997 and twice in 1998. Even then why it could not be done.... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH (BANKA) : Foundation stone was laid without conducting any survey.... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI HIRA LAL ROY : No, you cannot give the huge amount of Rs. 15 crore of the country in this way.... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Two years ago, the then Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of the bridge .... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please take your seat. Let him speak.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : The copy of Raghuvansh Prasad Singh's speech at present and during the interim budget should be given to him.

SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : I would like to know as to whether this laying of foundation stone was proper or fake? Hon. Minister can say if it is not proper... *(Interruptions)* The foundation stone was laid by the then Prime Minister in 1996 but the work on this project has not started.... *(Interruptions)* Now he says that inquiry on it may take three years.... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please take your seat.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Alright, please give him the copy of his speech.

SHRI HIRA LAL ROY : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I was surprised to know about this project. Earlier also I had requested the Hon. Minister of Railways to include this project in railway budget, so that a big project of Bihar could be completed. Bihar was in news due to hon. Minister of Railways but during this period nothing spectacular was done in Bihar. I would like to say that survey has been conducted about this railway bridge now but the former Minister of Railways made propaganda about it and former Prime Minister Shri Deve Gowda laid the foundation stone quite earlier. Was it proper? Is it not mockery of public of Bihar? Now you are delaying this project and not taking it seriously. It is our insult, I would like to say to hon. Minister that project to link South and North should be implemented., It is becoming intolerable now.

I would like to say one more thing that the history of Rome is virtually the history of ruin. You are well aware of the destruction which took place there. In childhood we used to study that platform of Sonapur Railway station is the longest platform in the country. It is a religious place and famous in Asia for its fair. Now trouble is being created for this station. There is a washing pit in Sonapur.... *(Interruptions)*

The washing pit for carriage is lying vacant. It is really a mockery that staff is taken to Barauni for this work. I want to tell the hon. Minister of Railway that expenditure is not involved in this work. Washing pit is already there and this work can be done in Sonapur. This problem is before you as it has been ruined recently. No attention is being paid with regard to railways. There is no other station like this especially in North Bihar but injustice has been done to it.

In 1978, the then Minister of Railways, Shri Madhu Dandavate laid the foundation stone of a railway college which is functioning very well. Commerce and Science streams are there and the children of railway employees study there. It is considered a very good college under Jaiprakash University. Recently, hon. Minister and officers in Railway Board have said that this college will be taken over. Papers in this regard are with the Ministry of Railways. I request the hon. Minister to pay attention towards it.

In the same way locos shed is lying vacant in Sonapur. It can be converted into diesel shed without any expenditure, but it is not being done. I would request that this locos shed may be converted into a diesel shed.

A train should be introduced from Sonapur to Misrekh via Teraiya. The people of this area have to go to Chhapra for going to Misrekh and the distance becomes 150 km. whereas by laying a 30-35 km. rail line, the train can go upto Thave and Gopalganj... *(Interruptions)*

Throughout Gorakhpur trains are run on a single track and sometimes trains are delayed for 4-5 hours. I demand that this rail line should be doubled.

Now I would like to raise an important issue which relates to your department and portion of it goes beyond its jurisdiction. Cases of looting are being reported from all over U.P. Suppose a trader of cows goes with a truck load of cows, his truck is looted. Hundreds of such trucks have been looted. In Gorakhpur itself, 43 trucks of jersey cows have been looted. Earlier a goods train with 72 wagons used to go to Calcutta twice a week which benefited traders as well as common man. Due to these incidents of looting, the price of jersey cows has increased from Rs. 7000/- to Rs. 15,000/- or Rs. 20,000/-. I request the hon. Minister of Railways to pay attention towards it. From Punjab improved breeds of cows are sent to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal. These are looted on the way. It is really shameful that 43 such trucks have been looted in Gorakhpur. There is no law and order. I request that attention should be paid towards it and trains should be started from Jalandhar and Amritsar.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now.

SHRI HIRA LAL ROY : I am just concluding. A train runs between Patna and Cochi via Asansol and Kharagpur.

SHRI ADITYANATH : These are stopped under cow slaughter (prohibition) Act. The Hon. Member is misleading the House. You cannot load more cows in a truck than the fixed limit. Old and useless, cows are transported in these trucks, that also as per the capacity of the truck. Sometimes they do not have licence..... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI HIRA LAL ROY : He is blaming me. The cows transported thus are milch-cows and not for slaughtering.

SHRI ADITYANATH : Cows are stopped at Gorakhpur for their protection.

SHRI HIRA LAL ROY : The train running between Patna and Cochi is a weekly train. As you may be aware of the situation that people are facing difficulties

due to heavy rush. I demand that frequency of this train should be increased to thrice a week because it is the only train for this place.... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHANKER PRASAD JAISWAL (VARANASI): Cows are taken to another place without any permit.

SHRI HIRA LAL ROY : Raise the issue of permit later on. You were instrumental in getting 43 trucks looted there.... *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let him speak, you may speak about the permit later on. Shri Hira Lai, please wind up.

SHRI HIRA LAL ROY : Many adivasi labourers from Tata Nagar come to work in tea estates but they have no train to go. I demand that a direct train from Tata Nagar to Jalpaiguri be introduced so that labourers from Chhota Nagpur could go direct to the tea estates. A.C. bogie is not being attached to the train from Chhapra to Tata Nagar. Hon'ble Railway Minister is requested to do the same. Foundation stone for the laying of railway line between Hajipur and Vaishali has been laid. As you are aware that the first republic was born in Vaishali. Therefore, Hajipur-Vaishali should be connected by rail.

With these words, I conclude. my speech and thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH : Mr. Chairman, hon'ble Railway Minister has not listened. Foundation Stone for Hajipur-Vaishali railway line has been laid and even survey has also been conducted.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Shri Raghuvansh Prasad be allowed to speak on railways while Private Members Bill will be discussed in the House.

SHRI PRABHASH CHANDRA TIWARI (BHAGALPUR): Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Railway Budget. I hail from the State of Railway Minister.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Prabhaskh Chandra, you can continue after 6 O'clock, now P.M.B. has started.

*[English]*

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR (BIKANER): When Railway Minister presented the Budget *(Interruptions)*

*[English]*'

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let us hear Shri Balram Jakhar. *(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RANA NAIK) : Sir, the train started in time!

SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR (BIKANER) : Yes. I want the trains to be in time!

[Translation]

Three things are very important for the development of a country... (Interruptions) One is transport, second is communication and the third one is energy. With the help of these three, the development of a country takes place. In absence of transport, it is difficult for the people and goods also to reach different parts of the country. Someone had rightly said that railway tracks and roads are the wheels on which the progress of a country moves. Same is the case of communication also. Telephone plays a major role in trade and business. While sitting at home, you can talk to anyone at any place. This is a mode to connect the whole world. Similarly, no pumpset or factory can run without energy. So, all the three things are the foundation of progress. Among them, railways has a major role to play because it is an old means of transportation and is cheaper also. A common man cannot buy a motor car, therefore, he travels in trains. I myself have seen it. I used to go by a train when I was in third class. It was the means of our movement from one place to another. Since then, a lot of progress has been made in railways. It is good but I would like to progress more. For this purpose, more funds should be allocated in this year's Budget. The need of the hour is that people should have faith and a sense of security towards this facility. Security itself generates

faith. India occupies first place in the matter of rail accidents. Therefore, I would like the Government to provide maximum safety to the passengers travelling in trains so that their confidence is restored in Railways.

Government has to look into the management of railways and to see how passengers can be made more comfortable by providing proper sitting arrangement and waiting rooms etc. Safety is more important as our country is most affected by it.

Late running of trains should be checked, if we visit the developed countries like Japan, we will notice that if a train gets late by only 15 minutes, it creates uproar in the Parliament. We have to opt for time management. Train drivers should be imparted training if needed. To ensure safety, the drivers should not be allowed to work over time. Trains should run on time. Trains are the best means of transport. Wheat, oil and other trade goods can be delivered through trains from one place to another. If the goods are delivered by trucks, it creates more pollution and goods become costlier. Rail transport should be made more comfortable so that people are attracted towards it for their own use and also for transportation of goods.

I would not like to speak much in this regard as you are already aware of it. You are active and experienced. I only want to say that the allocation made should be adequate. It helps to maintain effective and efficient management. You are a symbol of socialism, so kindly put everything on right track.

You have also mentioned the places where new railway line will be laid. In this connection, I had met you and had written a letter also with some suggestions regarding the condition of railways in Rajasthan. I feel that Rajasthan has remained one of the most neglected areas by the Government and God. The state has infertile and barren land. While sitting in the House, sometime I have stated that the people of Rajasthan should be given Paramveer Chakra for fetching the water from 10-20 miles. In spite of this, they are still living there and have not migrated to any other place. It shows their patience, capability and bravery that in spite of all such problems they are living there ... (Interruptions) When a person weeps, tears flow down his eyes. Rajasthan is a state that requires immediate development. A motor car and a brand new truck could breakdown due to the worst condition of the roads. The State Minister of Rajasthan Shri Chaturvedi is my friend. I have written to him many times regarding this condition of the roads. The repair of the existing roads

should be done on priority and later on the construction of new ones may be considered. You can experience the situation only after visiting the state.

I would like to state about transport means in the state. Indira Gandhi Canal was extended upto Bikaner, Suratgarh, Ganganagar and Jaisalmer. Earlier this whole area was barren and no crop used to grow there- You will find the area upto 20-25 km. without any trace of tree or water. However, the places where this canal is passing through, have now become greener. People have started growing crops there and new markets have come up. I have been to those markets where different foodgrains, cotton and all other things are available. But transport means are not available there to carry them. Thus the area has not opened upto other markets. Therefore, I had said on that day that Bikaner is an old capital with a lot of scope for the tourism. But it has remained neglected for the reasons beyond my knowledge.

When I saw the condition there, I felt nervous. Therefore, I have brought this issue to the notice of the House. The metre gauge line between Rewari and Bikaner has not been converted into broad gauge and the same old train is running on the track. There are many mandis flooded with the foodgrains on the way between Suratgarh and Bikaner. On this route you can find big houses and factories. People feel that they would be much prosperous if adequate transport means are made available to them. A new railway track should be laid from Bikaner to Suratgarh and further upto Anupgarh. It is a long standing demand of the people to regularise the train running between Bikaner and Bandra. There is a train upto Anupgarh but there is no direct link from there to Delhi. The introduction of an inter-city train will open up the area for trade and business purpose and will also help the farmers. There are some other mandis like Gharsana, where in absence of a buyer, the farmers are compelled to sell their produce at a cheaper rate in these mandis. All these suggestions if implemented will go in favour of the country, farmer and Government.

You have cancelled some trains. The train between Anupgarh and Bhatinda has also been cancelled. A broadgauge train between Delhi to Bhatinda should be introduced. There is one workshop comprising of a large area for the narrow gauge. Some people are trying to shut down this workshop. Proper use of this workshop should be made. Only the railway track should be converted into broadgauge. Workshop people came to me and said that they have means and work to do but the workshop is going to close and as a result they would be rendered jobless. Therefore, Hon'ble Minister may please pay attention towards it.

I had written you a letter with all my demands in this regard. I also met you and explained all these things.

18.14 hrs.

(DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY in the Chair)

There are three railway level crossings in Bikaner which most of the time remain closed because after every half an hour, a train passes from there. One of the railway level crossing is right in the middle of the city where traffic jam remains for hours which cause inconvenience to people. Either this railway line should be shifted out of the city or an overbridge or under bridge should be constructed there.

[English]

The train between Mumbai and Jodhpur should be extended upto Bikaner.

In the same manner, the train service between Suratgarh and Delhi, which had been discontinued, should be restored,

To facilitate transport without any obstacle in the city of Bikaner, it is necessary to construct an overbridge in the city over the railway lines,

[Translation]

That should also be done. . .

[English]

To ensure security, the railway crossing gates should be manned.

[Translation]

This should also be undertaken. [English]

There should be attachment of an additional sleeper and ordinary coaches to the Bikaner-Howrah Express.

[Translation]

Many ordinary coaches are lying unused which can be attached to the trains.

[English]

A *r.e.v.j* train between Mumbai and Ferozpur *via* Ahmedabad-Jodhpur-Bikaner should be introduced.

A superfast train between Bikaner and Delhi *via* Suratgarh and Hanumangarh on broad-gauge may please be introduced.

[Translation]

It should also be done. I had requested to restart the train between Pili Banga and Jodhpur which was earlier discontinued. It includes the laying of new railway tracks. Barsana and other mandis are also on this track and may also be included in the project of laying railway lines. Conversion of Udaipur railway line into broadgauge is required to be done. Jaisalmer will be opened up and with the introduction of the new trains a new area in the field of agriculture will be developed. Farmers will get more work opportunities which will enhance their income.

Sir, I would also like to say that the local inhabitants are not provided the work in the department but the people from other areas are engaged for this purpose. Representatives of the local people came to me to complain in this regard. I assured them that I would talk to Shri Nitish ji in this regard.

I would also like to mention one more thing. Please take note of whatever I have said. Rajasthan has remained neglected. So kindly take care of this state. If some new developments take place in the area, it will fulfil the expectations of the people from the new young minister to some extent.

With these words I conclude my speech.

SHRI CHINMAYANAND SWAMI (MACHHALISHAHAN): Chairman, Sir, it is for the first time that a Railway Minister has presented a budget with full sincerity and has tried to explain the actual position of the railway network in the country. By bringing out the status Paper in the House, Railway Minister has not only added a new chapter to the history of railways but has also shown his dedication to the work. He has explained the progress of railways in the words of a common man which shows his commitment towards the development of railways. It seems from this Budget that Hon'ble Railway Minister has not only tried to put into it his political will power but has also linked national will power to the Budget.

Sir, we should not forget that the railways is not just a means of public transport but it acts as a bridge between various languages, cultures and customs. Railway acts as life of the nation. It motivates us and is a means of transport. But, unfortunately, even during the last 50 years we have failed to develop the railways as a means of national income. We should have developed the railways in such a manner so that nation would have been prosperous and cultural heritage would have been developed. It should have been developed as a symbol of national integration but we failed to think on these lines. But today we have got a person with a positive line of thinking and, therefore, through you, I would like to express my gratitude and thank him. If the development of Railways takes place with such a pace, the Railway Minister can become an Ironman of the country. I would like to submit that during the 50 years, only nine thousand km. of new lines have been laid and thus the average lines laid per year is less than 200 km. With such a pace, can we hope to march towards 21st century. By increasing 12 hundred crore towards the Planning amount, perhaps the Railway Minister has tried to convey that we have to increase the pace of development. It will help to increase the speed of wheels of progress. It is not that by introducing four express trains in the capital, we can move fast in this country. All the trains pass through some villages and these trains should not decrease their speed there. Just now Jakhari had raised the issue of desert in Rajasthan. We should not only increase the speed of trains but basic amenities should also be provided to facilitate the passengers. Only then achievement would be made in this field. There are several railway stations in this country which do not have drinking water facility. One cannot perform routine chores like easing oneself without water. Proper attention has not been paid towards it. Had proper attention been paid towards providing facilities, the number of railway average of passengers would not have fallen since 1951. Why this number is declining? Why people avoid travelling by trains?

The main reason for it is that proper attention has not been paid towards providing facilities to passengers. It has become a fashion to increase railway fare in every railway budget and sometimes even for compensating the losses incurred due to our own inefficiency and faults. Railway fare has been raised this time also but it is not much. Increase of Rs.35 for a long distance travel from Delhi to Guwahati cannot be considered as considerable. People criticizing it can study the previous railway budgets. In context of exploitation of resources, I would like to say that the hon. Minister of Railways has started that an additional amount of Rs.4400 crore would be raised through internal resources, it shows a resolve on the part of the Railway Minister. I would like to make some suggestions for raising funds. There are several opportunities which could be utilised for the development of Railways. Huge funds are spent on advertisements of various products and railways can be used for it. We can earn more revenue by advertising products and services through railways. Railway stations and coaches can be used for this purpose.

Sir, a large area of land belonging to Railways is lying idle, it is illegally occupied by some people and mafia. This land can be utilized for providing housing facility. It is a coincidence that after discussion on housing, the issue regarding Railways is being debated here. We were discussing the issue of housing just before it so that increasing population of the nation could be given shelter. We should also think of providing transport facility to them. So far we have been unable to increase transport facilities in proportion to growing population of the country. Everytime issues regarding development of particular constituencies are raised here. Several members have said here that like other former Ministers of Railways, Nittsh Kumarji has also given preference to his home state for providing railway facilities. But while looking at the proposed rail map of his state, I noticed that he has proposed to lay rail line in backward and tribal areas of the state where people do not prefer even to go on foot. Now 50 years after independence, those tribals would also get railway facility and reap the fruits of independence. They would get employment through railways and get an opportunity to link themselves with Delhi and developments taking place elsewhere in the country. Therefore it cannot be called development of a particular constituency but the area which has been neglected for years. He cannot be blamed like Others Who were confined to their own constituencies and provided railway facilities in only Bangalore and Banaras. He should be appreciated for his honest efforts of providing rail facility in backward areas which deserve it. I support this rail budget and, praise the hon. Minister for it. I would like to say one more thing. The giant vehicle manufacturing companies like Hindustan motors and Maruti use trains for transportation of their manufactured vehicles. It is good because this reduces pollution on roads. It will benefit us double if in place of transporting these vehicles by trucks through roads, all the **motor manufacturing** companies use trains. On one hand, income of railways would increase by it and on the other hand, country would not face the shortage of diesel. There is a higher risk in transportation of goods via roads, for which compensation is also paid. Compensation is also paid in case of theft of such goods. We have to build godowns for shortage of these goods. A large area of land is provided to be used for siding of the trucks.

All these problems arise when we use our own vehicles for transportation of manufactured goods. We would not require godowns and land for siding of vehicles if freight trains were introduced for it. Our Minister of state comes from a metropolitan city where a large area of land almost 40 square kms. of land is used for siding of vehicles and godowns. Leave aside the issue of development of Railways, we can earn a huge amount of revenue and repay the loan of the country if this land is used commercially. A journalist friend of mine has written a book on this subject and has presented it to the hon. Minister. I would like to say that this system should be

changed. Railways have internal resources also but we have been poor in this field due to lack of will power. We should not have lamented for paucity of funds and resources if government had tried to do so with strong will power. , â€¢

Now a days, we raise the issue of providing facilities to passengers. It is correct also but how can we spend beyond our means. Therefore, we should think of increasing the means and resources for railways. It is our duty but so far required attention has not been paid towards it,

I had seen that during the last two years, several advertisements regarding railways were published in various newspapers. There was hardly any day when such advertisement did not appear in newspapers. But for the last three-four months, I did not find any such advertisement. I do not know as to why Nitish ji does not want to get his photograph published in newspapers. I saw his photograph with the news of inauguration of Konkan railways only. We have seen almost daily the photograph of the previous minister of Railways in newspapers who took charge of this ministry for just 1/2 or 1 3/4 years. Why so much funds are spent on advertisements? Is it for publicity of achievements or of a person? What were special achievements during those two years? We would have felt proud of Railways if these advertisement had contained figures regarding achievements of Railways. In the name of inauguration or laying foundation stone, they kept on

rolling stones. In the afternoon, one of my friends was saying that he performed a 'shilanyas' (laying of a foundation stone) which was actually 'nash of a shila' which means mere wastage of stone slate. What is the propriety of inauguration of a project for which we do not have adequate resources and will power. Some of my friends may complain that there is no proposal for laying new railway lines or conducting survey in their respective constituencies. But here, the question arises as to whether we would be able to develop railways by inauguration or laying foundation stones. As Jakhar ji was also expressing his concern over this issue. I would like to say as to what is the use of adding a few kilometer of new rail lines in every rail budget if adequate facilities are not provided to passengers.

He was saying that such a situation had arisen a few days ago that those travelling by trains would leave after telling their family members that if they make it to their destination safely, they will make a call from there otherwise preparation should be made for their last rites. What is required is that one should feel safe while travelling by train. One should have this feeling that so long as he is travelling by train, he is safe from all dangers, be it the danger of accident, robbery or any other mishap. A feeling of safety should be generated amongst the passengers. I feel that hon'ble Minister has shown his concern in the status paper and has clarified that he is concerned about it. Where there is a will, there is a way. Hence this concern is very much desirable.

When we discuss the position regarding transportation of goods, it is seen that 60% of goods earlier transported by train are being transported by road because people do not want to transport goods by train anymore. The reason being that entire consignment does not reach the destination. It is pilfered on way and also it takes too much time. I would not like to dwell on the position of the availability of wagons. Now so many rakes are available that nobody is interested whereas earlier the position was quite bad. Whether it is the case of amenities for passengers or transportation of goods, when a concern is shown regarding all these amenities, a resolve to bring reforms in Railways is very much noticeable. If we feel the need to bring reforms in Railways, we should pay attention towards this aspect also as to how we can generate and mobilise resources.

Hon'ble Minister of Railways has paid ample attention in this regard and we would like to make the suggestion that surplus land should be utilised. If the

Railways work in collaboration with the transport company transporting goods by road using trucks, the responsibility of paying compensation will be that of the transport company. That company will then be responsible for loading and unloading the goods at various points and it will be responsible for any damage caused. Thus the Railways will earn freight very safely. If there are no constraints in implementing the scheme, it should be taken up on experimental basis and expanded later on.

Catering should be improved. I have a different viewpoint regarding improvement. Improvement should be brought not to make the food more tasty but healthy. One is surprised to see that items served. Items are covered in silver foil. I am not aware as to how toxic it can be and to what extent, it affects the food? One should take into account all such factors. We are forgetting our old traditions. Water is now served in plastic and paper glasses. It is not a good practice. It is not good for health. It should be changed. I had written to Hon'ble Minister in this regard. Employment opportunities will be created by reviving the old traditions. People of those areas will be gainfully employed where new rail lines are proposed to be laid. Much better leaf-bowls and leaf plates are available now-a-days. Even Five Star Hotels are introducing them. If food is served in the leaf-plates and bowls, it will have three advantages. One advantage would be that it is bio-degradable unlike plastic and it will not affect the environment. It does not give rise to the problem of pile up of garbage as it disintegrates easily. Similarly Kulhars (earthen pots) should be provided for serving water. They will also disintegrate easily and dissolve in the soil. They won't give rise to any problem either. The second advantage would be that people growing leaves will be employed. The potters making earthen pots will be employed. These are the people for whom we do not have any job left. We have progressed so much that WQ have no job left to employ these people. Job opportunity will be created for such people at least by going ahead with this decision and several persons will be gainfully employed. Along with creation of job opportunity, food will be served to people in more hygienic and healthy manner and it will be beneficial for the environment as well. It won't be too

costly. Shri Ram Babu might perhaps not be able to understand it as he belongs to Mumbai where 'pattals' (leaf plates) are not available. Nitishji might be aware of it.

SHRI RAM NAIK : Please don't say like that today itself, while replying in the Rajya Sabha, I said that this was a very good suggestion and it will be implemented.

SHRI CHINMAYANAND SWAMI : Thank you as trying to point it out only because the reply will be given right now. We must change this system, it will be beneficial. It is good that unemployed youth are being given the facility of travelling free of cost in case they are appearing for an interview. An unemployed person is an unwanted fellow in his own house and at times he is hungry and thirsty also. It becomes difficult for him to arrange the train fare. Our Railway Minister is an experienced man and he has lived amongst such people. He is aware of the hardships faced by them. I would like to thank him and pray for his well-being on behalf of all the unemployed people. The unemployed have been given the facility of travelling free of cost upon producing their call-letters. This is not just another ordinary programme, rather, it is a pious deed. This is a gesture of goodwill towards the impoverished. It should not be viewed as any other routine programme. It indicates that we are concerned about such persons also who have no support system. Several times, I have had such experience also that the ticket is bought at a particular station and if one decides to suspend the journey of the train is cancelled, one has to go back to the same station to return the ticket where it was purchased. This involved an additional expenditure of buying yet another ticket. One had to spend as much on ticket money as was expected as refund and only then he would get the refund. We are thankful to you that now we can get the refund from the station where we return the ticket. This denotes an understanding of the problems. It is only an indication, not a full fledged programme as yet. It shows that the government is aware of the problems and the Minister of Railways has been kind enough to understand such a problem.

Besides, I would like to request that more benefits should have been given to the senior citizens. Most of the Members are senior citizens and they are required to travel to and from their constituency. More facilities should be given and such facilities should be given in second class coaches also, if some discount can be given, it should be given ... (Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR) : 30% in all the classes of the trains including Rajdhani and Shatabdi trains. Right now, it is 25% to 30% and with your support, it may be increased further.

SHRI CHINMAYANAND SWAMI : Thank you. Similarly, the hawkers operating in trains and on stations, have their own problems. The Minister of Railways is also concerned about their plight and in the budget this concern is very much visible regarding the coolies who earn their livelihood by carrying heavy loads and Hon'ble Minister of Railways deserves our gratitude for this.

With this, I would like to make a point regarding my constituency. Eastern U.P. upto Varanasi has been benefited but the area falling west of Varanasi has not been benefited to that extent and we are not having high expectations either. Just as the intercity train runs from Lucknow to Allahabad which leaves in the morning and returns in the evening, a train should be introduced between Varanasi and Lucknow via Raebareilly because as many people travel to Lucknow from that area as travel to Allahabad. Trains like Intercity trains have been withdrawn and I would urge upon Hon'ble Minister to reintroduce them.

So far as the issue of doubling of rail line is concerned, new routes are being taken up. The rail track from Delhi to Lucknow via Moradabad, Bareilly and Shahjahanpur is an old track. The rail track from Lucknow to Varanasi has a double line at some places and at some place it still has single line. The completion of these double lines will help in the transportation of goods. Varanasi is not only famous as a religious place but also known as a centre of art and production. It will be beneficial if Varanasi is connected like this. Electrification done on this line is also commendable, however, some gaps have been left on this track. It should be given priority. I hope, Hon'ble Minister will pay attention towards it.

There is a small railway station in my area from where people used to go to Ayodhya and Prayag. Earlier a train Saryu Express used to halt at Kohanaur station but now that train no longer halts at this station. Due to this people who used to go to Ayodhya and Prayag in the morning are facing difficulties. I have written to hon'ble Minister in this regard and I hope that he will consider the matter. It will facilitate the pilgrims.

It has also been mentioned in this year's Budget to lay double line between Lucknow and Sultanpur. However, a short distance between Sultanpur and Jaunpur has been left. Railway line from Lucknow to Varanasi via Jaunpur will become a double line if the distance between Sultanpur and Jaunpur is included in it. If possible it should be done.

With the implementation of all these suggestions, I would like the railways not to remain only as a Government undertaking but it should become a

cultural movement. It should be developed as a means to promote the cultural and national unity and to attract the foreign tourists. It should be promoted and protected in such a manner so that it could help in the national prosperity. Keeping in view his determination, I hope that hon'ble Minister is aware of all these things and during the ensuing time he will take care of all these proposals. Mr. Chairman, Sir, while paying my best wishes to the hon'ble Railway Minister through you. I thank you and conclude my speech with these words.

[English]

SHRI M. SELVARASU (NAGAPPATTINAM) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to participate in the Railway Budget for the year 1998-99.

Railways are a national symbol and a statue of national integration. All over India, we have different people. Our people's culture is different. They speak different languages. Railways are utilized by all of them. Railways do the unifying job.

Sir, I am sorry to say that the Railways go far away from the downtrodden people because the Budget has proposed a fairly high increase in the fares. This increase in fare is going to kick the common man. The increase is very high. But you have left the freight rates practically untouched. The poor people invariably prefer to travel by railways. It is the cheapest mode of transport. Even a small increase in fares is going to affect them.

In the case of passenger trains, you have proposed to increase the fare by one rupee to 50 kilometres; an increase of Rs.2 has been proposed beyond 51 to 100 kilometres; Rs.3 from 101 to 300 kilometres and Rs.5 after that. Passenger trains are mostly used by the poor and downtrodden people. The poor people are mostly affected by this Budget. That is why, I said that the Budget is kicking the common man.

The Railway Budget has not mentioned any significant measures to improve the safety, security and efficiency of the railways. The Minister has paid only a lip-service to the need for greater safety.

The fare of the season tickets has been increased steeply. I suggest to the hon. Minister that the students' season tickets may be exempted from this increase. Students mean even those who have no pocket money. When I was a student, I went to the school and to the college without anything in my pocket. I was

always depending on my father and mother for money, therefore. I would request that exemption must be given to students.

The price of platform ticket has also been increased. It is very bad. Who purchases the platform tickets? If some guests come from the South, they request their relatives or friends to come to the platform to receive them. So this should also be considered by the Ministry of Railways. The Minister has, at his disposal, an amount of Rs. 1,782 crore as a result of increase in the retirement age from 50 to 60.

This extra amount should have been used for completing the long overdue projects. But the Minister has promised only to open new lines. He has proposed 12 new lines only, in the Budget. I would like to point out this with a painful heart. Not on this Budget, even the last Budget had completely ignored the southern parts of the India, particularly Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Last time when the Railway Minister presented the Budget we had shouted and expressed our views as the poor people were completely ignored. The Railway Budget has left the southern parts untouched. The hon. Minister may consider the case of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

If we see Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the map we have only one line, for conversion into broad gauge. Now another is being constructed making it two lines. One line is from Chennai-Katpadi-Salem-Erode-Coimbatore and recently to Kerala. It is the border of Karnataka and Kerala. Now the broad gauge line covers parts of Tamil Nadu. Even after 50 years of independence some people in Tamil Nadu have not seen a broad gauge train. If those poor people want to see a broad gauge train they have to go to Chennai. Otherwise they do not see any broad gauge line. That is our problem.\*\*

The hon. Minister has allocated meagre amounts for pending projects. It is the prerogative of each Railway Minister to introduce new projects without paying any attention to the pending projects.

I have seen the keynote in the Railway Minister's speech. Tiruchirapally-Tanjore-Nagore-Karaikal gauge conversion project is there. Tiruchirapally to Tanjore has already been done. Tanjore-Nagore-Karaikal is a pending project. It is a long pending project. The former Railway Minister, Shri Jaffer Sharief had proposed a Budget allocation of Rs.120 crore in 1993 for this project but in 1998 still there is no progress. All the

materials are lying on the railway track. Gravel, steel, everything is stored up in the Railway Stations. One office is opened but there is no progress. The Railway Minister should consider that the people are very poor wedded to agriculture and production of food grains and allocate more funds. This is my humble request.

I request the hon. Minister to clear all the pending lines. Time-bound action should be taken to complete all pending lines.

I would request the hon. Minister of Railways to set the time-limit for completion of each pending proposals in the Railway Budget. The delay will hamper

the plan because of the cost escalation. The hon. Minister should use the surplus amount of Rs. 1,782 crore for long-awaited proposals. I have already men-

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The hon. Minister has increased the frequency of 11 trains. Here, I would like to mention that from the Southern part of Tamil Nadu, the frequency of train service to Chennai is less.

In my constituency, I have only one Express train, the Kamban Express connecting Karaikkudi, Thiruthuraiipoondy, Thiruvarur and Chennai. That train comes from Karaikkudi only in the evening and arrives in the morning in Chennai. We have only one train in night hours and nobody can travel by the train during day time. They have to wait for the train in the station throughout the whole day. So, please consider this point. It is my humble request to the hon. Minister ...*(interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

SHRI M. SELVARASU : I am the only speaker from my party.

Nagore is a major tourist spot in Tamil Nadu because of Velangkanni Church and Dargah. It is a very important national level pilgrimage centre. It attracts many foreign tourists also. The frequency of the train service between Nagore and Trichy, which is nearest to the airport city, may be increased.

My another important point is that instead of proposing new lines, the hon. Minister should have formulated the plan to revive the closed lines. On the one hand there is a new line, and on the other hand there is an abolition of the other lines. In my constituency, the line between Thiruthuraiipoondi and Vedharanyam

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was closed. Vedharanyam is a very famous place. Gandhiji started *Satyagraha* movement there. It is a famous tourist centre. There the production of salt is more. In this section, Railways used to earn rupees two crore annually by transporting salt and lishes. On the one hand you are closing the lines and on the other hand, there is a proposal for new lines. This point should be considered by the hon. Minister.

A lot of waste land belonging to railways have been illegally occupied by public. Through many NQOs and other social organisations have approached the Railways to purchase the surplus land, but the authorities have failed to respond. So, the Ministry of Railways should help the social service organisations by giving them surplus land for social and educational purposes which will be very useful for the society.

There are so many organisations including the Department of Revenue approaching the Railways to give *pattas* to the downtrodden people. It is also a very valuable point. It will increase the revenue of the Ministry of Railways.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please wind up now.

SHRI M. SELVARASU : Yes, Sir, I am concluding.

My next point is about the superfast transport system in metropolitan cities where lakhs of people travel everyday. The increase in fare is going to affect the daily commuters badly. Most of the persons using superfast transport system are salaried class people, working class people, poor and merchants. The train fare should be less than the bus fare otherwise the commuters may prefer to travel by bus which will result in lesser revenue for the Railways. So, the increase in fare is not justified.

My last point is about wagons. The availability of wagons for transport of items like paddy and salt is not sufficient. Foodgrains and other perishable goods should be transported on a priority basis.

Lastly, Sir, my humble submission is that last time the hon. Railway Minister had met all the Members of Parliament Statewise and discussed with them their problems. We, the M.Ps., got an opportunity to express our grievances to the Railway Minister. So, my humble request to Shri Nitish Kumar is that this time as well as in future also, that practice should be continued so that we can place our views and grievances before him. If

he can take further steps to remove our grievances,

That will be very good.

*[Translation]*

SHRI SHA. NT1 LAL CHAPLOT (UDAIPUR) : Hon'ble Chairman Sir, I welcome Hon'ble Minister of Railways and also thank him for presenting a very good railway budget by giving various facilities. In this country, 450 million tonnes of goods are transported through railway. Almost 11 million passengers travel by trains daily. Railway is the biggest means of transport and it serves as a link also.

Railways have contributed a lot in bringing about national unity. It has contributed the most in emotional unity and in propagating Hindi. I would like to congratulate the hon. Railway Minister for giving many facilities. I do not want to mention all those facilities. In nutshell, I would like to congratulate him.

I have seen the budget of previous years. I have also gone through this railway budget. I have also heard the speech of Hon'ble Ram Naikji and read the speech of Shri Nitish Kumar which he delivered on 11th March, 1997. In his speech, he demanded from Paswanji to extend the railway line in his constituency. On 24th July, 1997 Shri Ram Naik had demanded that while the hon. Minister has extended railway line in Calcutta, it should be extended in his constituency Mumbai which is a metropolitan city because there is huge traffic over there. I want to know the criteria being followed for allocation of funds by Railways. Rajasthan is second in number as far as area is concerned. Not only this, the share of Rajasthan will be 1/10th i.e. if you are allocating Rs 9500 crore for railway for improving traffic and laying broad-gauge line, Rajasthan should get Rs. 1000 crore. First I had appreciated him but I am surprised to see that no M.P. from Rajasthan has been made Railway Minister so far.

**19.00 hrs. '**

Rajasthan has been grossly neglected. I would like to tell you that no M.P. belonging to Rajasthan has been made Railway Minister so far. Shri Sharif Saheb nurtured his area, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan served his area and at times some other person nurtured his area but Rajasthan could not be a part of this exercise. There is no state like Rajasthan which is facing 1300 km. of border area. There is no means near Pakistan border. Even if we walk 20 kms. there is no water facility and no shelter or shadow because there is not even a single tree. You have neglected such places.

Rajasthan is a mineral based area and rock phosphate is found here. It is found in Udaipur Division. An

amount of Rs. 6 crores is being earned from a small station called Umereda for handling of goods. What is the condition of Udaipur? A scheme was made for providing broad-gauge line on Udaipur, Ajmer, Bhilwara section costing Rs. 262 crores but in the first year, an amount of Rs. 50 lakhs only was spent as against the sanctioned amount of Rs. 5 crores.

*[English]*

Drop in the ocean. Water water everywhere, but  
not a drop to drink. ,

*[Translation]*

It rains everywhere and people require water also. Still they are unable to utilise that water. Such is the situation in Rajasthan. Against the provision of Rs. 262 crores, you have given only Rs. 45 lakh last year and this year you have not even given Rs. 20 crores. Now how that project of Rs. 262 crores will be completed?

Today, I would like to ask you, had this House forgotten Maharana Pratap who fought for the freedom of the country. It was he who kept this country free for 1000 years. What sort of treatment is being meted out towards the land of Maharana Pratap? In Mewar there is not even a single house, whether it is the house of a farmer, a tribal, a person belonging to scheduled caste or schedule tribe, a Muslim or a Hindu, where at least one person is not killed in the war. That Rajasthan is being neglected today. That Mewar is being neglected today.

I want to mention many things but it seems to me that you would not give me more time to speak. I request that allocations for broad-gauge line of Udaipur should be increased. If Udaipur broad-gauge line is completed early, Udaipur will have direct link with Mumbai via Ahmedabad. Announcements have been made to close many stations between Marwar junction and Chittor via Udaipur when Shanti Lai Chaplot who belongs to Bharatiya Janata Party became M.P., officers reached there and they told that these are flag stations, therefore they are being closed. How people will trust their representatives and what would be our importance when such things are being done. I would like to know this from you. If that line is joined upto Jodhpur, then it will link Marwar Junction. Marwar should be linked with Udaipur as pilgrim place Srinathji falls on this line. People from all over the world visit this place. Here trains are running on narrow gauge line, as a result people have to face difficulty. Chetak Express runs on

Udaipur-Chittor section and it takes approximately four hours in covering 105 kms distance. It starts from there at 6 O'clock and reaches at 9.30. This train runs very slowly. Through its name is Chetak Express but it takes 20 hours to reach Delhi. From there it leaves at 6 o'clock in the evening and reaches Delhi at 2.00 p.m. next day. though the total distance is 700 km. My request is that this line should be converted into broad-gauge line. In Rajasthan, North-Western Zone Office was to be constructed. Its inauguration was done in which Hon'ble Minister was also present. Earlier Rs. 95 lakh were allocated for this purpose but this time substantial amount has not been provided for its construction. In that an expenditure of Rs. 16 to 18 crores is likely to be incurred. Even that is also not shown in the budget. Similarly, gauge conversion of Phulera and other lines like Luni, Barmer, Munanabad, Veergaon, Sambhli,

Jodhpur and Luni-Marwar is also to be undertaken. As a whole, the total cost of this project is Rs. 183 crore. At some places, 10 lakh rupees have been provided for this work and at some other places Rs. 15 or 20 lakh rupees were given for this work. I don't think that with this amount this will be completed in this century. "

Udaipur has cultural and religious importance also. Besides this, it has biggest market of marble after Makrana as of today. There are marble works in Dungarpur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Rajsamand, Bhilwara, Makrana, Kishanganj, some areas of Alwar and Jaipur. But no arrangements are there for the movement of goods in these areas. As there is no wide-spread board gauge line in the area, transportation of goods become difficult.

One train called "Palace on Wheels" is running there. It is a very good train. People travel in that train by paying Rs. 20,000-22,000 per day. People are craving to see Udaipur but you have neglected such an area. In that train, one has to travel upto Chittor first and from there he is required to catch bus for Udaipur. Such is the condition of that train. Railway line goes

from Manwli to Bari Sandri. The train running on this line is so slow that I can catch that train easily or if I get down, I can again catch that train. My request is that respecting my sentiments, you should extend that train upto Neemach. If it is extended upto 45 km., Neemach will be connected with the network. According to you, narrow gauge line is not economically viable, so this line will become viable for you. Similarly, Badi Sandri should be linked with Banswara via Hariawad. Banswara is one of the tribal regions. Rajasthan has a total population of 5 crore 72 lakh out of which 65 lakh people are tribals which comes to 12.5%. In that tribal region, there is no railway facility whether it is Durgapur.

[Shri Shantilal Chaplot]

Banswara, Pindwara or tribal region of Udaipur or Pratapgarh region. Its survey should be conducted. Tribal areas of the state which did not have even the metre gauge line should also be provided rail link on priority basis.

Only Rs. 95 lakhs have been given for the construction of North-Western railway Zonal office in Jaipur which is a meagre amount. Not a small piece of work regarding setting up of this office can be completed with such an amount. Instead of Rs. 16-18 crores only Rs. ODG crore has been given which is insufficient to construct an office. Therefore, I request you to consider this matter.

Out of all railway tracks in Rajasthan, only 21.12% are broad gauge lines. 1/4 of the total lines are not broad gauge lines. Rajasthan is a border state but broad-gauge lines have not been laid in this area. Keeping in view the heavy rush of tourists in Udaipur city of Rajasthan, attention should be paid towards the development of this area. At the time of unrest and riots in the country and Kashmir, tourists prefer to visit Udaipur than Delhi. However, because of inadequate railway facilities, tourists have to face difficulties. After getting elected from that area, I came to know that an officer from Railway Department had visited that place and a news published in the newspaper that the conversion of narrow-gauge lines into broad-gauge is going to be stopped. Later it has been reported that a small amount has been granted. I hope that keeping in view the Udaipur city, more money will be granted and the same will be mentioned in your reply. Out of the total 3 lakh square km. area of Rajasthan 1.5 lakh square km. is desert. A small amount has been granted for Agra fort-Bandikui and Fulera-Marwar-Ahmedabad railway lines. No grant has been given for Luni-Barmer-Munabav, Shrigangapur-Kurupsar and Luni-Marwar, Jodhpur, Alwar and Mathura railway lines.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : You have read the budget. Give such speeches in your own area, you are saying that grant has not been given, then for which project, a sum of Rs. 38 crores has been given. You must know that 38 crores is a huge amount for a year. You are continuously saying that the grant has not been given. You should be thankful for the amount being allocated for your area.

SHRI SHANTILAL CHAPLOT : I had thanked in the beginning of my speech and will remain thankful to you. I hope you will deliver goods also. I mean to say that at least 1/10 of the total allocations should be granted to my area.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Speak about the areas where it has been given.

SHRI SHANTILAL CHAPLOT : I am submitting that instead of Rs. 700 crores, Rs. 600 crores has been allocated. Therefore, I request..

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please wind up now.

SHRI SHANTILAL CHAPLOT : Sir, hon'ble Minister has provided less amount than 240 crores for Luni-Marwar railway line.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Do not go into the details.

SHRI SHANTILAL CHAPLOT : I mean to say that you can well understand the problems of the people of Rajasthan. Broad gauge lines are not there. Therefore, I strongly request you to pay attention towards the welfare and development of Rajasthan.

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

[English]

SHRI A. SIDDARAJU (CHAMARAJANAGAR) : Sir, thank you for giving me an opportunity to participate in the discussion on the Railway Budget. The present Railway Budget completely affects the poor and the middle class. This is a pro-rich Railway Budget. This Railway Budget completely neglects the student community.

As far as my constituency is concerned, the Railway Ministry has completely neglected the railway projects pertaining to Karnataka. The previous Government had sanctioned two new railway projects for my constituency. The first project was the gauge conversion work from Mysore to Chamarajanagar linking Mettupalayam which is of about 220 kilometres. This project was there in the last year's Railway Budget. This time, our Railway Minister has neglected this project. He has not provided funds to this project.

Another project relates to a new line from Bangalore to Satyamangala via Kahakapura, Bannur and Chamarajanagar which is of about 210 kilometres.

As you know, in Karnataka, railway projects have been completely neglected since the time of the then Railway Minister, Shri Kengal Hanumanthiah. As far as

my constituency is concerned, it is situated in the South end of the State. My constituency is linked to both Kerala and Tamil Nadu. These two projects link Karnataka with Tamil Nadu. Almost all the people here are backward and poor. Most of the people are agriculturists. Agriculture is the main occupation. I would request the hon. Railway Minister to provide more funds to these two projects. I should not forget the previous Government in this regard. These two projects were sanctioned because of the former Prime Minister Shri H.D. Deve Gowda and Shri Ram Vilas Paswan. These are economically viable and economically potential projects. Kindly look into this matter and take up this work.

SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR (MANGALORE) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I stand here to thank the hon. Railway Minister, Shri Nitish Kumar who is my esteemed friend, for presenting a very balanced Budget in the backdrop of difficulties being faced by the Indian Railways.

Indian Railways have a vast network, the second largest in the world under a single management. We learn that Indian Railways are operating 11,000 trains daily out of which 7,500 are passenger trains. Railways are employing about 16 lakh employees. It is the biggest management in the whole of the country employing a large number of employees. Indian Railways have also played a vital role as a prime mover of the national economy. They have become a symbol of national integration by integrating the fragmented markets, by connecting the industrial and agricultural production centres with the distant markets as also with the resource centres for raw materials and most importantly by enabling large scale and rapid movement of large number of passengers at a low cost across the length and breadth of the country.

With this background, the hon. Railway Minister

has posed certain questions before the Parliament and also before the nation through the Status Paper, which he has presented. He has done a commendable job in presenting this Status Paper giving enormous information to the Parliamentarians and also to the citizens of this country. In fact, for our developing nation consisting of a society with 35 per cent of the people living below the poverty line, it is an uphill task to find a satisfactory answer to the questions posed by the hon. Railway Minister. Also, it is very difficult to find out solutions for the problems.

Sir, with this, I am sure, the Railway Minister will

not feel offended while I mentioned about the total neglect of Karnataka as was being mentioned by my esteemed friend, Shri Raju a little while ago in the matter of allocation of funds for the on-going works. It is true that the Railways are facing a financial crunch. But, Sir, the on-going works, at least, should not suffer. The gauge conversion work between Mangalore and Hassan is going on at a very slow pace. This is one of the important railway lines which would connect the only major port in the whole of the State of Karnataka with the State Capital as also other hinterland places in the State.

Sir, the total estimated cost for the gauge conversion between Mangalore- Hassan- Arasikere was around Rs. 190 crore. So far, in the last two to three years, the Railways have spent about Rs. 90 crore. This time, no doubt, the Railway Minister is pleased to allocate Rs. 20 crore for the gauge conversion works, I do not dispute that. But we were all hoping that he would announce about the fixing of target for the completion of this work by the end of this financial year, i.e., by the end of 1998-99, by providing the remaining amount which comes to about Rs. 80 crore. After he fixes up the target, the work can go on smoothly and could be completed with his gracious order that could be passed. He could adjust finances with the available resources. In that also, I would make a suggestion that the gauge conversion between Mangalore and Subramanya Road should be taken up first, that is, to a length of 60 kilometres, so that that sector could become operative.

Sir, I mentioned that there is a total neglect of Karnataka. There are reasons for that... (interruptions)... The hon. Railway Minister is

trying to remind me that compared to the amount spent last year, this time, it is much more. For that I thank him and congratulate him. But I am trying to coax him by saying that he could agree by fixing a target for completion of the work so that the funds could be readjusted within the resources available.

Now, I come to another important line between Shimoga and Talaguppa. About it, not even a single paisa is provided in the Railway Budget this year.

Similarly, about the opening of the Konkan Railways, the already announced line between Hubli and Ankola has become all the more important. That would connect the entire hinterland to the Konkan Railway line. There, sufficient money should be provided.

Sir, as was mentioned by the grace of our former Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Devegowda, work for a new line was announced between Hassan and Bangalore via Shravanabelagola. That work is also an on-going work. So, sufficient fund will have to be provided for this work also.

Now, I come to the Shoranur-Mangalore existing line which is one of the oldest lines. Just the other day also, during the Question Hour, there was a discussion about this. This line has become very old and requires track renewal. Side by side, the doubling work is also going on, but it is going on at a very slow pace. This will have to be speeded up so that the through movement of trains down South from Mumbai along this line is speeded up.

The Mangalore station has become a very important station with the opening of the Konkan Railway line. So, there is a very strong case for setting up a divisional headquarters at Mangalore. For the entire area, the divisional headquarters is at Palghat. It is at a very distant place. With the formation of South Western Zone, we are requesting you to shift the headquarters from Bangalore to Hubli. In this regard, I am sure, requests will be made by my other colleagues also. All along, we have been pleading for that. I do not know, for what reason, the previous Government decided to have the headquarters at Bangalore. Sir, Bangalore is already overcrowded and it cannot bear this burden anymore. In fact, the headquarters should be shifted to Hubli. This Mangalore should be segregated from the Palghat division and it should be joined with the South Western zone by setting up a divisional headquarters at Mangalore. Sir, even the hon. Railway Minister agreed with me privately that this is a genuine requirement and this will have to be considered, but I do not know whether he will be able to make an announcement in this regard on the floor of this House. Anyway, I would make an earnest appeal to him that this must be considered on priority.

With this, I would again commend the efforts made by my esteemed friend, the hon. Railway Minister in bringing a very balanced Budget in the midst of all the difficulties being faced by the Indian Railways. I would also request the friends sitting across to lend their full support to the hon. Minister of Railways in implementing sincerely all the projects which he has proposed in his Budget. The efforts which he has made for completion of the on-going works require their wholehearted support.

With these few words, I conclude. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, for giving me this opportunity.

SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK (BERHAMPUR): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, The Railways are the major infrastructure that play a dominant role in the entire scenario of the country. The Railways have double role to play, one is supposed to play for the commercial purposes, and the other is to look into the social and developmental responsibilities.

Sir, In this process, the regional imbalances should be removed to a great extent. But this is not seen in this Railway Budget. The Railway Budget and the Status Paper that confirm that a massive injection of funds is required for new lines, completion of projects, maintenance and new rolling stocks, etc.

I must say, the present Railway Budget seems to get worse before they get better.

The Ninth Plan has said that it intends to infuse 'vigour and direction' in Railway investment. The Railways are naturally pressing for higher budgetary support and for direct Government investment in new infrastructure. I know, with limited resources, the Railways are not in a position to meet any of them adequately. This gives a grim picture. I would request the Government and the hon. Minister of Railways that considering all these aspects, we should have a comprehensive view of this.

Of course, the hon. Minister has tried to raise the resources by increasing the train fares which will definitely affect all classes of people including the common people. He has not increased the freight rates. I must say that "and this is what we see" the share of the Railways in handling goods traffic has been coming down over the years. This is not because that it had been out of the market but the limitation is its capacity to handle goods traffic, demanding better management procedure.

The Explanatory Memorandum on the Railway Budget puts the total earnings from goods traffic at 21,686 crore. This revenue is expected to be received from a total Rs. 308,180 million tonnes km. This comes to the average freight rate of Rs. 70.37 paise per tonne-kilometre. In '1997-98, as per the Revised Estimates, the total freight carried moved to 288,095 million tonnes. The earning from this goods traffic was Rs. 19,885.94 crore. At an average, it works out to Rs. 69.03 paise per tonne-kilometre.

As compared to last year, the hon. Minister of Railways expects the freight revenue to go up by 1.9 per cent or nearly two per cent.

But the hon. Minister has issued various statements that there will be no increase in the freight tariffs. He has also said that the freight tariffs have come to such a level that any increase would be a severe burden on the economy. His contradictory statements will burdened the economy further with an increase in the average freight tariffs, are confusing the House on this score.

The Status Paper has pointed out that the passenger traffic vis-a-vis the freight traffic in terms of the number of trains running is in the ratio of 60:40. What is the revenue contribution? The revenue contributed is in the ratio of 28:72. This, according to the Status Paper, reflects the expenditure on cross-subsidies that takes place in financial terms.

**19.34 hrs.**

(SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH *in the Chair*)

The expenditure was Rs. 2,800 crore in 1997-98. The argument advanced is that the freight rates have been kept high to cope up with the lower passenger fares.

So, the cross subsidy cannot be wiped out. If we want to wipe out the cross subsidy, passenger fares must be hiked by 35 per cent which is impossible and highly undesirable. So, the cross subsidy takes away the surplus of the Railways which could have otherwise gone for investment. On the assessment that freight rates are high, the Railway Budget has reduced the tariffs by one to two per cent for coal, cement, iron and steel which are carried to long distances. The Railway Budget has given discounts on special offer of additional traffic. The Railways hope to get more traffic on the core sector. But the question is whether the freight rates *per se* are a deterrent or the slow pace of transportation by the Railways is responsible for this. The hon. Minister has to answer this.

Now, I will mention about my State, Orissa. I have already remarked about the regional imbalance. Infrastructure-wise, Orissa is a backward State. First of all, I would like to mention about the gauge conversion of the Nawapada-Gunpur narrow gauge line. People of that part of the State have been demanding for this for long and it must be taken up urgently. We are very disappointed to know that no allocation has been made for this, though the Centre has said that it was committed to this project.

Yesterday, when an hon. Member from the treasury benches was talking about this, he said that Rs. 1000 have been provided for this. I interrupted and asked her "Is it an allocation for a backward State like Orissa?" How can you go along

with this kind of financing? The people of that part of the State are highly disappointed. So, I urge upon the Government and the hon. Minister to take into consideration the backwardness of the State. So also the gauge conversion of Rupsa-Bangriposi line. We have been demanding this for quite a long time. This time also it has not been taken up.

Next, I would like to mention about Talcher-Sambalpur Rail Link Project. Linking of rail has almost come to an end, but some residual work is there to be expeditiously completed. A sum of Rs. 14 crore has been provided for this and another Rs. 16 crore are required to complete this work. I urge upon the Government to immediately provide the required funds for this so that the trains assured by the hon. Minister of Railways can be introduced.

My another request is that the Hirakud Express originating from Sambalpur should start from Bhubaneswar to New Delhi as a daily train. Now, I would like to mention about the Daitari-Banspari B.G. Rail Link. This was sanctioned in the year 1992-93 with a meagre allocation of Rs. 49 crore. This is the most important line from the point of industries, how can the Railways complete this line within three years' time? If it is not completed, the steel plants will be jeopardised and in turn the State's growth will also be jeopardised. I urge upon the Government that, all important line should be taken up immediately and more funds should be provided.

For the Lanjigarh Rail Link, 80 per cent of the land has been handed over to the Railways, but with the meagre allocation, they are not able to acquire the remaining land. We require an amount of Rs. 100 crore for that project, but till now, an amount of Rs. 1.47 crore has only been sanctioned and the work is not in progress.

Khurda Road-Bolangir new Broad Gauge Rail Link is also an important project; but an amount of only Rs. 2 crore has been sanctioned. The hon. Member from the Treasury bench has demanded for only Rs. 4 crore. Till now we have got Rs. 5.49 crore and last year we got Rs. 2.49 crore. But this year, we have got a reduced amount. How was it possible? Actually, the allocation should have gone up. But that hon. Member was satisfied with demanding only Rs. 4 crore. I am very much disappointed with this sort of an allocation.

The same is the case with Haridaspur-Paradeep new Broad Gauge Rail Link. Angul-Sukinda Road Rail Link would be economically very viable and it has to be taken up immediately. The rate of return is expected to be 29.83 per cent. Can one believe that when it requires an amount of Rs. 245 crore, but we are getting only Rs. 2 crore for this line.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Will you kindly see what in the total outlay for this year for Orissa?

SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : I do not know what. You have given enough funds for ongoing projects. I am disappointed you have totally neglected Orissa.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : The total outlay for this year for Orissa is Rs. 226.58 crore out of roughly about Rs. 2000 crore of the kitty. You have got around Rs. 226 crore. Kindly do not forget it.

SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : But backlog is more. The hon. Minister should understand that there is a backlog.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Percentage-wise, Orissa got the maximum.

SHRI SIS RAM OLA (JHUNJHUNU) : Kindly do not disturb her.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR ; I am not disturbing. I am just pointing out what it is.

SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : The Minister should consider all these things. I just urge upon you, since there is a backlog.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR ; You can see the documents.

SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK : I know that, I have mentioned the relevant figures also and I am not hiding anything from you.

East Coast Railway is a newly created Zone carved out of South Eastern Railway. The new Zone was inaugurated in the year 1996. The three divisions namely Waltair, Khurda Road and Sambalpur which are to constitute East Coast Railway, are yet to be taken over by the newly created Zone for which immediate issue of a Gazette Notification is a must. It has not

been done so far; please look into it also. For this, an amount of only Rs. 4 crore has been given, which is very disappointing.

About the new trains, I would say that consequent upon commissioning of the Koraput-Rayagada new rail link, the then Railway Minister has announced the introduction of an Express Train from Bhubaneswar to Koraput. It is a long distance route and there is no communication facility in-between. So, a new train should be introduced in the name of 'Sabari Express'. It should have been introduced already.

The then Minister had assured of a Shatabdi Express Train from Bhubaneswar to Howrah. It should be done immediately. Our demand for an intercity Express Train between Bhubaneswar and Howrah, leaving Bhubaneswar in the early morning is still pending with the Railways.

Our demand for another Intercity Express Train \* between Bhubaneswar and Visakhapatnam, leaving Bhubaneswar at night is still pending with the Railways.

I am coming from the Southern part of Orissa; and Berhampur is an important place culture-wise and commercially also. But Berhampur is not touched by any of the trains which come to Delhi. So, I urge upon the Minister that a new train be introduced up to Delhi via. Khurda, Berhampur, Vizianagaram, Raygada, Raipur and Nagpur.

And this train has been suggested as Berhampur is an important city, of Southern Orissa and it will be a link with New Delhi. We have been demanding an increase in, the frequency of the Rajdhani Express which is presently running twice a week. It should at least run four times a week. It seems that the Railways do not have the conception or do not know what backwardness is. There has been a demand for a special sub-plan for the hilly, backward and remote areas in States like Orissa. I would like to request the hon. Railway Minister to discuss with the Planning Commission to have a special sub-plan for the backward areas which are very backward infrastructurally.

[ Translation ]

DR. LAXMINARAYANI PANDEY (MANDSAUR) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to congratulate Hon'ble Minister of Railways for having presented a practical and balanced budget. He has also presented a status paper in the House before presenting the Rail Budget. I feel that the account given in the status paper clarifies the present position of the Railways, its future plans and goals. Some such issues have been raised which may jolt the people so that they may understand the position of Railways and find some answers for themselves after introspection. I would like to quote from it :

"Indian Railways serving as the life-line of the nation, is passing through trying times. The financial aid from general exchequer is declining and loan from the market is also not forthcoming. There are expectations regarding introducing additional rail services, improving the existing services, laying new rail lines and taking up gauge conversion along with the Railways have a commercial as well as social responsibility to discharge."

The term social responsibility appears to have the secondary position. However, in my opinion, the budget is primarily concerned about fulfilling the social obligation of the Railways whereas the commercial obligation comes later and I would like to thank him once again for this. I have seen the rail budgets of previous years since 1971 till date and if all these rail budgets are compared, the present rail budget would emerge as the one which has put the least burden on the people and strives to provide more and more amenities for the people. Whether it is the southern, the Eastern, the North-Eastern of the Central Zone, provision has been made for various Railway Divisions and also an attempt has been made to remove the imbalances and I believe that this will help in removing the regional imbalance. It is quite possible that some Hon'ble Member might object to it and they might feel that this will not help in

removing Regional imbalance. They may have certain complaints. Bihar is a backward state, I can also say that Madhya Pradesh is also a backward state and more than 33% of the population of this state comprises of tribals. They too have been neglected and there are other areas which are backward. Some parts of Uttar Pradesh are also backward. This backwardness can be found in Orissa as well. Hence leaving aside the criteria of backwardness of the area or the extent of development that may have taken place in a particular area, a system has been evolved keeping in view the present position of Railways or the performance of Railways and I feel that this is a quite effective system. From this very point of view, a decision has been taken regarding laying new lines, gauge conversion, electrification or doubling of rail lines and I would like to express my gratefulness in this regard.

Everybody is aware of the fact that Railway is such an undertaking which provides maximum employment opportunities in the country. Most of the job

opportunities are provided in our country by the agricultural sector or the Railways. Hence its responsibility increases in the same proportion. Our expectations are also rising. It is true that many a times, the rail accidents are discussed in the House. Hon'ble Minister of Railways while replying to a question two days ago has revealed that if the data is compared to ascertain as to whether the number of rail accidents has dropped or risen, there has been a definite improvement in this regard. The trains are faster and the number of trains has also gone up. New trains have been introduced. There has been a significant improvement in the Railways in terms of safety and infrastructure. New trains have been introduced. There are suburban trains and Metro Rail. The speed has increased. There have been some changes but there is scope for more improvement.

I would like to submit that our population is rising and consequently more pressure is being exerted on the available facilities and the volume of traffic has also gone up. All of us expect to travel safely. If we took around for safe means of transport, we find that travelling by trains is the safest way of travelling. Along with the increase in the speed of Railways, people have begun to feel that travelling by trains is the safest. Also that it is faster and much better. Realising the importance of Railways, practical steps are being taken and there is a need to consider them in that very light. There could be some shortcomings and an effort is being made to remove them. Hon'ble Minister of Railways has indicated in the budget that these shortcomings will be removed. It is true that wherever new trains are proposed to be introduced, more passenger trains are proposed to be run. There is a heavy demand for such trains. In order to provide more facilities for the passengers and to accommodate more passengers, Hon'ble Minister announced in his budget speech that 23 or 24 coaches will be attached to the trains in place

of 17 or 18 coaches being attached at present so as to accommodate more passengers. Hence we will have to speed up the pace of manufacturing coaches in the coach factories. These factories have the capacity but it is not being fully utilised so far. I would like to draw the attention of Hon'ble Minister in this regard. I have seen such coach factories at many places where the full capacity is not being utilised. They say that if they get the orders, they are prepared to complete them. They have the capacity and they are looking for orders. I would like to state that this capacity should be utilised. As for increasing the number of the coaches to enable the passengers to travel in comfort, that is also possible. I would like to draw the attention of Hon'ble Minister in this regard that although I know that we have limited resources however when the number of coaches is increased, we will have to increase the length of the platforms on all the Railway stations. In case the length of the platform is not increased- I can recall that earlier when the number of coaches attached to a train was raised from 12 to 18 and the length of the platform was not increased in the same proportion, people used to fall down and faced many difficulties. The hawkers were unable to reach the passengers. This should be taken into account and there is a need to consider this with a view to provide facilities for the passengers. Ratlam is a major station falling under the western Railways, still it lacks amenities.

Hon'ble Minister of Railways also stated in his budget speech that he was hopeful about transportation of more and more goods by trains. However the present situation is that more goods are being transported by trucks. Hon'ble Minister also spoke about introducing the container service for this purpose. The container service is definitely performing well but there are certain problems. Full load is not available at the same time. That is why we are unable to meet the expectations even when we want to. Hence a fresh attempt will have to be made with regard to the issue of transportation of goods from this point of view.

So far as the present structure of Rail management is concerned, I feel that it is heavy at the top and light at the bottom, i.e. the number of officers is more in proportion to the number of employees working at lower level. This proportion needs to be set right so as to facilitate smooth functioning.

I had raised the matter of re-organisation of the Railway Board twice or thrice. It should be re-organised to enable it to cope with increasing volume of work so that its output may increase otherwise there is such a heavy workload that it is difficult to cope with it despite having the best of intentions.

A few days ago, the issue of setting up new zones was discussed. Previous committee proposed setting up of four zones. The proposal was approved by the committee. Later on, it was proposed to have six zones and accordingly six zones were set up. Thereafter when this matter was discussed here and Hon'ble Minister of Railways might recall that Paswanji was the Minister of Railways at that time and the issue of setting up UD Railway zone at Bilaspur in Madhya Pradesh was also raised. It was raised quite strongly. I

feel that Bilaspur meets the requirements laid for setting up a zone. Hence the proposal of setting up Bilaspur zone should be considered. I would quote from the Fifth Report of the Standing Committee on Railways:

[English]

"New Zones and Divisions are set up keeping in view the factors like size, workload, acceptability, traffic patterns and other operating and administrative requirements consistent with the needs of economy and efficiency".

[Translation] .. ;

I believe that all the requirements mentioned with regard to setting up of Railway Zone at Bilaspur are met and the Report of the committee also confirms it. An assurance has also been given in the House regarding setting up this zone and I believe that you'll try your best to fulfil this assurance. As I said that we have some very good workshops where coaches and the Diesel Locomotives are manufactured. I have stated earlier also that the available capacity should be fully utilised.

I would like to quote again and this time from the 14th Report of the Standing Committee on Railways:

[English]

"The Committee also finds that besides maintaining workshops, there are some other type of workshops in the Railways such as Civil Engineering workshop at Allahabad, Jhansi etc., signalling workshop at Gorakhpur, Akola etc. The Committee desires that complete details of these workshops including the targets and achievements for the last three years should be furnished to them".

[Translation]

The report further says that there is a need to improve the present conditions in these workshops.

[English]

"The Committee also found that the working condition in some of the workshops are very pathetic and hazardous to the health of the workers. The Committee strongly recommends that consistent efforts should be made to improve the prevailing conditions".

[Translation]

I would like to draw the attention of hon. Minister towards it because it pertains to interests of the employees. I request you to pay attention towards it.

I would like to draw your attention towards another important issue which has been raised here earlier also. It has been stated in the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Railways that several posts are lying vacant and the procedure followed by the Recruitment Boards for recruitment was not appropriate. Though certain decisions have been taken regarding these Recruitment Boards, I feel that these posts should be filled at the earliest.

Before concluding I would like to raise two or three points regarding my area. As I have already stated that Madhya Pradesh is a backward state and neglected from the viewpoint of Railways. However in this budget a mention has been made for laying some new rail lines and completing the ongoing railway projects. The issue of Guna-Etawah rail line was taken up here. I thank the hon. Minister for taking up the issue of survey of Ujjain-Ramganj mandi line. Recently the hon. Minister of Railways has visited Indore and given assurance for conducting a survey of Indore-Khandwa route. I would like to make a submission that work of gauge conversion is going on Neemach-Ratlam Section. The gauge conversion project on Kota-Neemach section has been completed. During the discussion on railway budget the former Minister of Railways had given assurance that gauge conversion work on Neemach-Ratlam section would be completed by 1996-97. Now 1997-98 has also passed and I request you that it should be completed during the next year. I requested the hon. Minister of Railways for it through the Minister of State. Though allocation has been made for this project in this budget, but it is a meagre amount. I would like to say that at least Rs. 50 crore should be allocated for this project ... (Interruptions)

SHRI RAM NAIK : For which section?

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : For Neemach-Ratlam Section. This allocation would enable the project to complete to an extent. As hon. Shantilalji has said just not that after completing the work of gauge-conversion on Kota-Ratlam rail line, it could be linked with Udaipur or Chittor. Then it would be a parallel rail line from Kota to Ratlam. This would facilitate the passengers. I emphasize the need for completion of this project because Rs. 20 or 25 crore have already been spent on this section. Work on this project is still going on. Culverts have been widened. No new scheme has been sanctioned in this area. But I would like to say that work on this project is going on a very slow pace. I

thank you for allocating funds for this project. This could be completed at the earliest if more funds are allocated for it.

Along with this, I would like to draw your attention towards two or three general suggestions.

20.00 hrs.

At present Bhopal is the capital of our State but from Ratlam there is no direct train for Bhopal. Earlier there was a direct train Number 111-112 which has been withdrawn. I demand that it should be restored in public interest. There is a broad gauge line between Narmada and Kota. The shuttle train running between Narmada and Chittor should be extended upto Kota. There is a train from Narmada to Agra via Kota. It should be extended upto Delhi or Haridwar if it is feasible, so that people could go to Haridwar via Ratlam, Mandasaur and Kota. At present the train is running from there can be extended upto Haridwar or Dehradun. This will benefit common man and Railway can also earn revenue from it.

I have asked the hon. Minister that Meenakshi Express and Chetak Express are running on metre gauge line so a shuttle train should be introduced between Mau and Chittor till gauge conversion work is completed on this route. There is heavy traffic on this route and thus additional coaches should be added in other trains so that people could be benefited. In the same way attention should be paid to construction of overbridges at Javara, Narmada, Mandasaur and Nimbolada. This time attention has been paid towards development of Railways in Madhya Pradesh which was neglected earlier. I have drawn your attention towards it because something more is required to be done there. I have requested you time and again for gauge conversion of Narmada-Ratlam Rail line. The people of this area will be benefited by this. Shamgarh railway station in my constituency comes under Western Railways. It is a trade centre. Jaipur-Chennai train should be provided stoppage there. In the same way August Kranti Rajdhani Express should be given stoppage at Ratlam,

Several hon. Members have raised the issues of gauge conversion and payment of compensation in case of railway accidents. I do not want to go into them but attention should be paid towards these issues. Railways is certainly encouraging sports persons but more attention should be paid towards them. There are several other problems and I would like to convey them to the hon. Minister through a letter. I thank the hon. Minister of Railways for presenting this good budget.

'SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH (INNER MANIPUR) Thank you, Chairman Sir, I will speak in Manipuri. Hon'ble Railway Minister has presented in the House the Railway Budget for the year 1998-99 and the total financial allocation in this Budget is Rs. 9500 crores. Sir, my observation is that there is regional imbalance in the disbursement of fund. For instance the backward seven north-east States which are under the aegis of NEC get a meagre amount out of this 9500 crores of rupees. Perhaps they receive less than 1 or 2% of it.

Sir, the previous Governments had given the assurance that 10% of the Budget allocation would be earmarked for the north-eastern region. This was the promise made by Shri Deve Gowdaji and by Gujralji. Keeping in view the present Railway Budget of the Hon'ble Railway Minister it is very disappointing for us. Sir, 1 or 2% share means nothing, it will certainly annoy the people of the region.

Sir, once again Manipur has been completely neglected, in 50 years we have established 9000 km of railway lines in the country but not a single line in Manipur. Is Manipur not a "part of India"?

In 1853 railway line was introduced by the Britishers from Bombay to Thane. It was introduced not only from the commercial point of view but also from the security point of view. Today, Sir, Indian Railways stand for national security and national unity that is in addition to its commercial utility.

In his speech the Hon'ble Railway Minister proposed 12 new passenger train services. All are meant for UP, Bihar and other States and not a single for my region. Sir, out of these 12 new services one could have been introduced between Dimapur and Guwahati. If a train like Shatabdi Express is introduced here that could be a blessing for the people living in Manipur and Nagaland.

Sir, Manipur is a land where there are no good roads, no railway lines and very limited number of flights. And it is a sensitive border State sharing its border with Burma. What is very alarming is that about 60% of our youths have gone underground because of the prolonged negligence.

Due to the unwise policy of our officials and bureaucrats, in 50 years we still unable to link the region with the rail lines. Sir, what is this Status Report<sup>9</sup> For north-east it is almost nil and for Manipur it is absolutely nil. Such an attitude will encourage separatist tendency and anti-Indian feeling in the region. Sir, I am a nationalist and I strongly believe in the cause of the nation, it is a fact that my wife and my son had been shot dead by the extremists.

Sir, the bureaucrats who formulated last year's Railway Budget proposed a railway line between Diphu and Karong. The then Railway Minister Paswanji had endorsed the proposal. Now, in this year's Budget nothing has been mentioned about this line. Sir, this line was already there on the Railway map of India published in 1996-97. And funds had been allocated for this proposed line in the Railway Budget of 1997. In the present Budget there is no trace of this said line. This is really amazing but this is correct.

Sir, as I mentioned earlier we need fast trains like Shatabdi in between Guwahati and Dimapur. Delhi is still far, it is thousands of kms away. Fare has been hiked but we do not mind. But we want more train services in the region. Rajdhani Express between Delhi and Guwahati runs only twice a week. Frequency of this train may be increased to 6 or 7 times a week for the convenience of the people residing in this part of the country.

Sir, the overall approach towards the north-east is not encouraging. New railway lines have been proposed but not a single line is allotted to the region. Hon'ble Railway Minister said that the new projects had been taken up according to the wishes of the Hon'ble

Members. Sir, when I supported this Government and when my party supported this Government we had given a memorandum. One of the conditions was to establish the rail line between Diphu to Karong and from Karong to Imphal. We expect at least some benefit for my State from the BJP Government as we are supporting it. Unfortunately nothing has been done. My request and my party's request has been ignored.

Sir, we have only two MPs in the Lok Sabha and only one in the Rajya Sabha. Last time also I made a request to the then Railway Minister Paswanji to introduce the line from Dephu to Karong and from Karong to Imphal and then to Morch (Myanmar). Sir, it is a very important line. We are not demanding for broad gauge lines but for metre gauge lines. And for this, financial implication is not much. Everytime our bureaucrats are talking in terms of economic viability of the railway lines. That might be the reason why in 50 years not a single line is laid in my State, Manipur. Sir, If we started constructing two kms of rail line every year a full fledged line could have been laid by now. Then we could have been connected with Dimapur which is just 130 kms away from Imphal.

Sir, the Diphu-Karong line was in the work programme of the last year Budget. This year nothing is mentioned about this line. Virtually this line has vanished. In this connection I want to listen to the reply of the Hon'ble Minister. Sir what should I reply to my people regarding this vanished line.

Why the on going project has been deleted? Sir, this is the height of negligence towards the region in general and towards Manipur in particular. When nearly 60% of the youths had gone underground such irresponsible attitude of the Government of India is really very unfortunate.

Sir, not a single rupee has been allocated for my State in this Railway Budget. I request the Hon'ble Minister to reconsider our case and continue the on going project, i.e. the Diphu-Karong line.

Sir, lakhs of people in my State have not seen a train or a rail line and most of them had died without seeing a railway line or a train. This is the condition that prevails in my State.

Sir, I am concluding. In his speech the Hon'ble Railway Minister had stated that our Railway is the symbol of national integration. Manipur is a sensitive border State. But this symbol of national integration is still missing in Manipur.

Sir, we have exploded nuclear bombs at Pokhran and we all know the cost of manufacturing nuclear bombs. For the national security we are spending crores of rupees. We don't even bother the economic sanctions. Sir, spending a few crores of rupees and extending the railway line upto Manipur will certainly strengthen national security and national integration. This must be done in the national interest.

Sir, my appeal to the Hon'ble Railway Minister is to take up some concrete measures for the people living in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur etc. The famine will also be a burden for the people of the north-east. But the budget provision for this region is almost nil.

Sir, the Indo-Myanmar border trade has been opened. What is the meaning of opening this trade without the backing of an efficient and cheap means of transport? Without the support of Railway transport system this trade will not be as fruitful as we expect. Therefore, Sir, railway lines in Manipur is not important from the commercial angle too. Railway line upto Imphal and then upto Moreh has become extremely necessary.

Sir, last point, food grains, consumer items, building materials, fertilizers, etc. are imported from outside. In the absence of the railway services we are paying a higher price for transportation as we have to depend

on the trucks.

Sir, how to deal with the insurgency problem? And how to maintain law and order in the region? Sir, we are spending crores of rupees to curb the insurgency movement and also to maintain law and order. Suppression by the security forces and army will not prove to be a lasting solution. A lasting solution lies in the development of the region - employment should be given and transport and communication must be developed in the region.

Without railways the pace of development will be slow. How to develop the region without the network of railway lines is a question. Sir, I would like to request the Hon'ble Railway Minister to review the budget and include the already proposed Diphu-Karong line. Please don't yield to the bureaucratic argument of economic viability or otherwise of this proposed railway line. The entire nation must be connected by railway lines. It must be done for the sake of national integration and national security. Sir, because of prolonged negligence if our youths want to secede and join other countries - what will be the fate of this nation?

Lastly, I once again request the Railway Minister to include the Diphu-Karong line in this year's work programme, as a special case.

SHRIMATI REENA CHOUDHARY (MOHANLALGANJ) would like to tell the Hon'ble Minister of Railways through you that the increase in the fares of different classes has put an additional burden on the people. The fares which hon. Minister has increased will be meaningful only when the facilities are also increased accordingly. In trains, there is no electricity, there is no water facility,

bathrooms are not clean and besides, many other facilities are also not there. If these facilities are provided, then people would bear the hike in rail fares also. I would also like to tell you that fare of Shatabdi Express has *been* increase. That train fare includes cost of meals also but the quality of food served in the train is deteriorating day by day. On one

hand, you are increasing the fare and on the other hand the quality of food is deteriorating. If you are increasing the fare, then you should improve the quality also. After that we will accept this fare.

As I mentioned yesterday also, one train should be introduced from Lucknow to Dehradun which should run on time. The Howrah-Dehradun runs 3-4 hours late daily. If it is a matter of a day or two, then perhaps I would have not mentioned this. The train which should reach Dehradun at 7.00 a.m., reaches there at 1.00 or 2.00 p.m. due to which the whole day is wasted and we are not able to do the work in time for which we are going. The second train is Janata train. A.C. coaches should be attached to it. The condition in that train is so bad that it is difficult to describe it. There is no light in those coaches. Once I was forced to travel by that train because Dehradun train was late by 4-5 hours. The coach in which I was sitting in was not incident free. Someone snatched the purse of a lady and ran away but none could catch him due to darkness. Besides paying attention to the issue of increases in fare, if we spare a little thought for the routine problems also, perhaps it will come as a relief to the passengers. Very few people use ordinary first class in Janata train. My suggestion is that this class should be abolished and the number of AC 2 tier and AC 3 tier compartments should be increased.

SHRI RAM NAIK : I would like to tell you for your information that we have not *Qd* down your request. However, it was decided to attach first class bogies for the benefit of some people because those suffering from bronchitis cannot travel by AC. There are a large number of people who cannot travel by A.C, They are facing health problems. That is why we have decided to attach first class bogies again but there will be only G or 8 such compartments. I have said this thing so that all members should know as to why we have restarted first class.

SHRIMATI REENA CHOUDHARY : The competition in transport market during 1950-51 was 80%. Today it is only 40 to 20%. This is not a good sign.

When Shri Paswanji was Railway Minister and when we used to write letters for reservation, we got reservation. I am telling my own experience, it is quite possible that reservation facility is not provided against all the letters sent in this regard. People are saying that they are not getting reservation on such letters.

AN HON. MEMBER : It is an important question.

SHRI SANSUMA KHUNGGUR BWISWMUTHIARY (KOKRAJHAR) : It is very vital.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI REENA CHOUDHARY : Previously there was good arrangement that rail reservation was provided on the recommendation of Members of Parliament but these days reservation is not provided on such letters. I, therefore, demand that if we write a letter to provide reservation for any individual, reservation should be provided.

I would like to say something about recruitment in railways. Only suitable candidate should be selected in railways. Railway Recruitment Control Board or some other agency should be appointed to ensure that an incompetent person is not appointed and only deserving candidate is appointed.

I would like to mention one thing about my constituency, in my constituency Mohanlalganj there are two districts-Lucknow and Unnao. In Unnao there are two Assembly segments—Purva and Hasanganj, Purva Assembly segment is very backward. Even the roadways buses are not available there as government had stopped those buses which were running previously. There is no railway line or railway station in this area, so if railway line is laid in this area it will be convenient for people to travel.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you and thank the Hon'ble Minister with the hope that he will take some action on what I have said.

[English]

SHRI K.A..SANGTAM (NAGALAND) : Mr. Speaker, I am astonished to see that not a word was mentioned about Nagaland in the Railway Budget and it appears that the Government of India is adopting a step motherly treatment. It can be seen that the Cabinet Minister who was there to listen to the problems of other States problems, has gone. Now he is coming back. I would like to request him to lend his ears because it is a very vital and important issue for the people of Nagaland.

Today we have come here before the booming of guns. The extremists have been trying to oppose the elections and in spite of that we have been able to come to this august House to represent the people. We have not just come here to voice and disappear. But we want to tell the Government of India that we have come with a list of business which the Government of India should look into. And unfortunately this time when the election was boycotted, or the call was given, our BJP friends also joined to boycott the election. That was very unfortunate. But anyway, our understanding is that since we have been put in the mainstream we have taken this option

and filed our nomination, got elected and we want to voice here in this august House.

When I say that not a word was mentioned in the Railway Budget I had in mind a small rail link from Amguri to Tull, a distance of 17 Kilometres which was taken up about a decade ago. This was bogged down for reasons better known to them. They started it and stopped at 10 kilometres; it is a metre gauge line and they could not complete the remaining seven kilometres. So, I would like to request the Railway Ministry to look into this matter because this connects a very important paper mill and whatever railway line we have, it took the Government of India to convert from metre gauge to broad gauge over 50 years. So, the way the things are in the North-East, you can imagine. What is the attitude? It sounds very big. Every Prime Minister who came to the North-East announced packages after packages. But when it comes to execution, when you go to the various Ministries there is no allocation of funds.

So, I think the matter has to be viewed from a very serious point of view, because we have one railhead at Dimapur. Now, Dimapur covers about five kilometres of Nagaland, a strip of it. Only the other day when I was telling the Chief Whip to put my name in this list he was smiling as he was unaware that there was a Railway Link in Nagaland. But I may tell you that it is important. This Dimapur railhead covers Manipur, a bit of Assam and the whole of Nagaland.

Then there is a problem. There are two booking counters one in Dimapur and another in Kohima. Because of the extortion, the booking counter opens from nine o'clock to 12 noon. Then after that the booking clerks go to put the money into the Treasury. Now unfortunately this booking office is connected to Guwahati and then Calcutta. Generally the Calcutta Microwave system starts working only after the Dimapur booking counter had shut down. The people of Nagaland are forced to buy rail tickets in black from the Guwahati booking Centres and it causes a lot of inconvenience to public. Those people who want to travel to Delhi by Rajdhani Express are the worst sufferers as they have to take the night super bus to Guwahati and in the morning, they have to search for some travel agents for tickets in black. They spend the whole one day and one night to catch the Rajdhani train next morning.

North-East particularly Nagaland is economically backward. If we have to appreciate and give some sort of concession to these people, then why do we do not increase the Rajdhani service from Dimapur to Delhi three times a week instead of once a week. There is a heavy military concentration in the North-East especially in and around Dimapur and Nagaland. Most of these Jawans when they go on leave, occupy all the seats. So, most of these seats are not available to the common people. Therefore, the public is helpless. All the bookings are done in advance since their leaves are regulated well in advance. The booking offices are regulated from Calcutta microwave. They regulate in such a way that they get their own quota extra. They have a link with the Guwahati Office and when the Guwahati Office blocks it, they cannot show it in the computer. I am also one of the witnesses to it. I went to the counter and I asked the booking clerk for a ticket. I had to wait for many days to get a single ticket. The booking clerk explained to me that the system which is regulated from Calcutta does not come to the line while Kohima booking counter is kept open. So, the people are at the mercy of the travel agents and they have to pay double the amount of money of the ticket fare. I think, it is high time that the Government of India should look into this problem seriously.

I would like to make one more request to the hon. Minister of Railways. There is a foothill area between Assam and Nagaland which covers about one-fifth of the area within Nagaland. I would like to request the hon. Minister to make a broad gauge line from Dimapur to Tizit in Mon District. This will help to transport the coal which is extracted from Borjan colliery at Longk. The people on the foothills are agriculturists and they will be able to sell their products to other parts of the country.

There was a rail track from Simulguri in Assam to Brojan in Nagaland which is about 20 kms. This was neglected and it has been abandoned. I think, it should be revived. The colliery is there. According to the Geological Survey of India, the quality of coal there is very good. Besides, if the Government of India is trying to negotiate with the insurgent groups and if the peace comes, then this will be a big economic boost.

I would like to substantiate what my friend from Manipur has said about the negligence of the North-East. I think, what he has said is correct. These two States are prone with underground activities and things should be looked from different angles. Once we put the rail-road in these two States, more people can get jobs and more people can transport their goods from one place to another place.

Lastly, if the Government of India and Ministry of Railways are serious about looking to the problems of the North-East, then, I think, the ticket fare from Siliguri Tinsukhia should be brought down to the normal rate instead of imposing on us extra fare in this Railway Budget. Our income is very low and if we have to help the low-income group people, then the Ministry of Railways should look into this problem seriously.

My last point is that the railway station at Dimapur is being used as a dormitory for passengers. All along the platform, you will find thousands of passengers sleeping. Many a time, when enquired about the reasons for sleeping there, and they say that as the trains are not running on time, so they have decided to sleep on the platform. If the ministry can take up the matter and make some proper waiting rooms, that will be very good. They should make the railway station more human-friendly and nose-friendly because it stinks so much that it is a big nuisance. So, I think there should be proper sanitation and proper waiting rooms at the railway station.

With these few words, I conclude my speech.

[Translation]

SHRI ANUP LAL YADAV (SAHARSA) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not want to take much time of this House because house will sit upto 9.00 p.m. and already much time has passed. Many of our hon'ble Members are already tired. Today, I am in a dilemma because Hon'ble Minister of Railways hails from Bihar. Besides this, he was our colleague. We were in the same party. We have worked together for progress of Bihar, myself and people of Bihar were expecting much from him. Mr. Chairman, Sir, Shri Nitish Kumar is very hard working, intelligent and he has concern for India and especially for Bihar. It was expected that people of Bihar will be benefited by the budget which he has presented but it was not to be.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, there is not much time, I will only mention about Bihar because already much has been discussed about India. It is a good thing that in the Railway also, we are celebrating Golden Jubilee on the occasion of 50th anniversary of our independence. Whom should I blame or not to blame, I do not want to go into that.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You please come straight to the subject of railways.

SHRI ANUP LAL YADAV : I am coming to railway only I am just giving the introduction of the subject. We are newly elected members of Lok Sabha. However we were in the Legislative Assembly for many years. I want to give one suggestion about Bihar. Our Railway Minister has visited North Bihar and has seen it. Our region is extended upto Nepal Border. The border of Nepal and Bihar extends upto Birpur. Our Minister of Railways knows that Kosi river plays havoc in the areas from Saharsa to Purnea commissionary i.e. Northern to Eastern regions. During British period, there was rail line from Mansi to Sahara upto Forbesganj. Similarly, there was rail line from Mansi to Katihar via Saharsa. That line goes upto Nepal border via Jogbani and along with that, it goes upto Mahiyahi via Darbhanga. Mahiyahi was earlier called Saraighat. All these railway lines were there earlier. Not an inch of new rail line has been added in the existing rail lines in this region. It is right that the Hon'ble Minister has increased only Rs. 1 upto 50 kms. in the second class passenger fare, but by increasing the freight charges and by increasing passenger fares in long distance trains, has put burden on the poor people. However you have burdened people by increasing the freight and the fares of long distance passengers.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, Hon'ble Minister has visited that area. We leave from Patna by Rajdhani Express. Ever since I have been elected M.P., I spent a lot of capital. When I reach Patna Junction, I feel a train for these areas in the night. This train is known as the 'capital' and it runs from Danapur to Katihar. It is scheduled to leave at 10.40 p.m., however it never leaves before 12 p.m. There is no fixed time for its arrival at Manasi. It is an Express train and fare is charged accordingly, still it moves at snail's pace and has erratic timings. I met Hon'ble Minister and requested him to get a proper time table drawn up for this train.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, when one reaches Manasi or Khagaria in the morning, there is no connecting train to travel upto Forbesganj, Katihar and Saharsa. You can well imagine our plight, hence this point should be considered seriously. Hon'ble Minister has surely done us a favour also, for which I thank him, though not whole heartedly because from Manasi to Saharsa ... (Interruptions)

SHRI RAM NAIK : You are an elderly person, hence you should do it whole-heartedly.

SHRI ANUP LAL YADAV : I have requested that the laying of broad gauge line from Manasi to Saharsa be completed in a time bound manner. Some experts having very good knowledge of Railways visited our area. I asked them to consult the budget proposal. He was an expert. Now we don't read it ourselves and ask others to note it down. He said that there was no provision for our area in the budget. I have requested Nitish Ji to pay attention towards North Bihar also. He has travelled by that train himself and he might be well aware of the condition of that train. If one happens to use the toilet in that train, he won't be able to come out dry because water keeps on dripping from the roof. At times, A.C. coach is attached to the trains running from Danapur to Katihar and Patna to Katihar but the condition of the coach is so bad that one prefers to travel in second class or three tier coach instead of that coach. Hence I request Hon'ble Minister to pay attention to it. Besides, I would like to emphasise that the route from Manasi to Saharsa should be covered in time-bound manner. Otherwise you'll say "after four-five years that it will be completed soon but that may take too long. This distance is not more than 50-60 kilometers which is not much. It is an old railway line and now it is being converted into broad gauge line. I would also like to request you to take up the conversion of Saharsa-Forbesganj and Saharsa-Madhepura-Katihar line into broad gauge line. It won't take much time. A survey should be conducted in this regard. We had also requested for getting a survey conducted. I don't know if he has received my letter or not. As I said that Nirmali is a station and you also know that it is a sub-division. It is a part of Supaul-Saharsa. At least, a survey should be got conducted to connect Nirmali station with Bhavtahi covering a distance of mere 15 kms. I would like to inform the Hon'ble Minister... (interruptions) Some officials from the Department visited Nirmali station for the survey, it would have been better if Hon'ble Member, Shri Ram Vias Paswan had been present here. However he is not present. He made an announcement... (Interruptions)

Mr. Chairman, Sir, please ask the Hon'ble Minister to note down my points. A team had visited that area. You should listen to it

attentively. You are well aware about the position of Nirmali station. It falls under District Supaul. It is a sub-divisional Headquarter of that district. It has a Railway station and our Hon'ble Minister and yourself might have visited that station. I won't say anything about its condition. A team had gone there for conducting the survey. Shri Paswan had announced that due to paucity of funds, a survey is

being conducted. Bhavtihar has an old rail line which was damaged by the Kosi. I won't suggest you to extend it even by a single inch, however the old line should be connected at least. When he assumed the charge of the Ministry of Railways, 25-26 lakh people of my area were overjoyed. They say that he has been a very good friend of mine and that we have served in the same party for years together. He has been a follower of a great leader, Late Shri Karpuri Thakur. The people of Northern Bihar have great expectations from you. If the survey work is started and rail line is laid, you will have done a pious deed and there would be no need for you to go to Amamath then. Nirmali-Bhavtihar line is an old rail line. A survey should be conducted because there is a dam in between span 13-14 kilometers. It will be known after investigation as to what would be the length of the bridge required to be constructed. A long distance will not have to be covered. The engineers will go there, make an advanced planning and survey will be conducted. I would urge upon you to get a survey conducted and make it time bound.

I would like to make one more request regarding Saharasa. You have been to Saharasa and so has he. There is not over bridge at the railway crossing over there. At present overbridge has been provided only at the station. However the railway crossing at the road remains closed for more than half an hour at times to allow the movement of trains. I feel that if a need arises to take a sick person to the hospital immediately, he might die there waiting. Hence I would say that Lalit Babu was the Railway Minister. Hon'ble Minister used to be his opponent. I was also his opponent. *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : You might be aware that the State Government has to contribute upto 50% for the construction of road over-bridge. The land has to be provided and approach road has to be constructed by the State Government. The over-bridge above the rail line has to be constructed by the Railways. If you manage to get the funds released by the State Government and a proposal is forwarded by the State, we will definitely take appropriate action immediately.

SHRI ANUP LAL YADAV : I am aware of it. I had inaugurated the over-bridge at Samastipur. I was the P.W.D. Minister at that time and also aware of it. So you need not tell me that half the contribution is to be made by the State Government and the other half by the Union Government. You are in the Government and you may talk to them. I will also lend my support. He has been your friend and he has been Chief Minister. Please consider it seriously.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR ■ The present Chief Minister is not my friend.

SHRI ANUP LAL YADAV ■. You should do such work as may draw praise from the public. You will be amply praised and appreciated for your efforts and you believe in doing concrete work also...*...(Interruptions)* You are requested to throw some light in this regard while replying to the discussion on the rail budget.

I would like to make one more point, I took the name of Lalit Babu. Late Shri Lalit Babu was the Minister of Railways. I had written to him and he replied to my letter. I wrote to him that Madhepura-Sinheshwar is a religious place. He is also aware that a rail route runs from Sinheshwar to Lalitgram via Triveniganj and Pratapganj. He had given order for conducting a survey for the purpose of laying a rail line. It might be there in the record. The line was approved to be laid upto Sinheshwar. However, the route spans only five kilometers and the Railways did not find it financially viable. Lalit Babu was a religious person and our present Minister also belongs to the same category and that is why he has presented such a rail budget. I urge upon him to complete this work. Shri Lalit Babu has already left for his heavenly abode. ■ From Madhepura to Sinheshwar and from Sinheshwar to Triveniganj onwards...*...(Interruptions)* What are you saying? Yes, I am surely talking about my area. The survey work should be undertaken once again and it should be connected with a new rail line. That is all I want. One of our main tasks was that only. Mr. Chariman, Sir, you should also insist on this as the Chair enjoys certain powers. I am insisting again and again to conduct survey from Nirmali to Bhatiyahi which is a distance of about 15 kms. There is no railway-line there, and, therefore, if this railway line is laid then it will be convenient for people to travel. You know that at present we have to go to Nirmali via Nepal.

Let me speak for a few more minutes. Why are you interrupting, the House will sit upto 9.00 P.M.

MR. CHAIRMAN : There are many members who want to speak so please give only concrete suggestions.

SHRI ANUP LAL YADAV : Nitishji also knows that we have to go to Nirmali via Birpur in Nepal. At times when we have strained relations with Nepal, we cannot go there after 10.00 P.M. because gates of the barrage constructed by the Government of India are closed. The House should ponder over this issue, I request

Nitishji through you that survey should be conducted from Nirmali to Bhatiyahi and secondly railway line should be laid from Madhepura to Sinheshwar and from Sinheshwar to Triveniganj and also from Sinheshwar to Pratapganj. The people of North Bihar are demanding that the broad-gauge line from Saharsa should be connected with Forbisganj and Katihar. Nitishji has been a good friend of yours and you have been in the same party together. Therefore, he will agree to your request. With these words, I thank you.

The Government has done a good job by converting Manasi to Saharsa line into a broad-gauge, it should be further extended.

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

SHRI KISHAN LAL DILER (HATHRAS) : Mr. Chairman, Minister of Railways is from Bihar, you also belong to Bihar and the time has also exhausted while discussing the position of Bihar.

SHRI LAL BIHARI TIWARI (EAST DELHI) : Chairman, Sir, people appreciated the nuclear test which was conducted in our country on 11th and 13th May but some members of opposition tried to spread rumour that the next budget will put more burden on common man. But I would like to congratulate Nitish Kumarji and I am very happy that general budget was also presented on 1st June.

20.55 hrs.

(SHRI P.M. SAYEED *in the Chair*)

Both these budgets have belied the presumptions of our colleagues in the opposition. The railway budget which Nitish Kumarji has presented before the country is a very balanced one. In his budget due attention has been paid to ensure that it will not put burden on poor people. This is for the first time that such a provision has been made. Only that person can think about this who has himself experienced all this. In this budget Nitishji has looked after the interests of poor people of society. It is for the first time that licenced porters have been provided medical facilities. This shows that this government cares for the poor people and it is determined to work for their welfare. Earlier, if we missed the train we had to go to a far away place to take refund. Now the procedure of refund has been made simple. Even this is also appreciable. The budget that has been presented is a balanced one. But I would like to mention something about platform ticket. Delhi is the capital of India. Lakhs of people who have migrated from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are residing here. You might have seen that if one person is leaving his village then at least 15-20 people accompany him upto the station. If the price of platform ticket is increased then these people will be affected. I request that hike in the price of platform tickets should be reviewed. An attempt has been made to introduce more than a dozen trains to improve the rail traffic. Even after 50 years of independence, we find that there is heavy crowd in general compartments. People do not get even space to sit. Since the Hon'ble Minister of Railways has taken charge in his hands and increased the budgetary allocation also, I hope that now people will get sitting space in general compartments. In 1960, the population of national capital, Delhi was around 20 lakh, but today it is more than 1 crore. The population of my Lok Sabha Constituency is around 36 lakh. There are only two railway stations, Shahdara and Anand Vihar. I request the Hon'ble Minister of Railways that three more railway stations be constructed at Seelampur-Gandhinagar, Nandnagri-Shakarpur and Preet Vihar. I am thankful that he has given me an assurance that special attention will be paid towards this. I am hopeful that the people of these areas will get some benefit. Construction of one small bridge from Swatantra Nagar to Narela has been sanctioned but the work has not yet started. I request you to get that work started and complete that bridge as early as possible. There is one colony near Badli Railway Station, pipes have to be laid for providing drinking water there. The funds are to be released by the State of Delhi. However, NOC has not been issued in this regard. The matter is pending for years. The hon. Minister has said that State Government is ready to incur expenditure then it will not take much time in giving N.O.C. If this is done, the pipes will be laid and water will be provided to the people living there. In my constituency one train called 2 K.D.M. is running. It has been said that four additional bogies will be attached to it. If that train is started from Panipat instead of Kurukshetra then people will get more benefit. A stoppage should be provided for Bhatinda Express at Narela station. If this is done then people won't have to face any difficulty.

Narela Station is very old and it is not fully constructed. Water logging takes place there during rainy season. Therefore, your cooperation is required in its construction. I hope attention will be paid towards this.

The provision which you have made to control Railway Recruitment Board is praiseworthy. I feel that no other government could do it earlier. You have done appreciable work by bringing this good concept before people of this country. It will bring transparency and people will not get opportunity to complain.

21.00 hrs.

There is no way to reach Azadpur Mandi Station. There are many jhuggies on the way. The Railway Booking office is in Shalimar Bagh. If an over bridge is constructed there or if that office is shifted to this side, it will facilitate people. I would like to tell that the trains which go to Punjab from Old Delhi Railway Station stop only at Old Subzi Mandi Roshanara Road. These trains do not have any stoppage at Azadpur Mandi due to which people do not get the benefit. I hope that Hon'ble Minister will pay attention towards this.

Sir, there are thousands of jhuggies around railway stations in Delhi where fire breaks out every now and then which causes pollution. Therefore, my request is that these jhuggies should be removed to some other safe places. Provision for second class full concessional ticket to the unemployed youths appearing for interviews is a praiseworthy step. This will benefit unemployed people. Considering the population of Delhi, it has been said that Technical Department of Metro Railway Corporation will be set up. But the Hon'ble Minister has not mentioned anything as to how much amount Central Government will contribute for this so that this work can progress. I would like to tell that State Government has given more contribution for this work. It has given Rs. 102.81 crore for

acquiring land and Rs. 86.9 lakh for the project. The total amount is Rs. 236.20 crore. Therefore, I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister as to how much contribution has been given by the Central Government?

'Tatkal' booking facility for 20 Shatabdi Express and Superfast trains, plying between four Metropolis is an appreciable step. The passengers, who suddenly plan to go, would be able to avail of this facility within 24 hours by showing their identity cards, it is definitely going to prove beneficial. In budget, freight charges of foodgrains, salt, edible oil and gas etc. have not been increased. This shows hon. Minister's concern for the poor. This will definitely benefit the poor. Rail bridges are required at many places in the country. In the absence of these, people have to wait for hours at railway level crossings. State Governments are ready to give money for the construction of over-bridges. I feel that if the process of giving NOC is expedited that will facilitate the early solution of this problem.

In the end, I would like to state that in our country, a good Government has been formed under the leadership of Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee which will work according to the expectations of everyone. On this occasion, I would like to conclude by saying—

"Him meghon ne ravi-karya mein vighn nahin kya-Kay Kiye

Kintu aap hi mar mite, unKa kya Kucch kar liye." *[English]*

MR. CHAIRMAN : If the House has to sit further, we have to extend the time. Then, two or three Members, who are sitting, can speak.

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAM NAIK : Sir, it would be better if hon. Members, who are present here, are allowed to speak first on Monday. I think, it will be beneficial to these Members.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I had told earlier also I would like to say that if we sit after 9 p.m. then dinner will be arranged not only for the Members but for the staff also. But this time, it has not been done, especially for staff. Anyway, on Monday, we have to sit up to late hours.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : On Monday, we are going to sit upto late hours.

SHRI RAM NAIK : Sir, it would be good if Members who are present here are allowed to speak first on Monday because today they have stayed for so long. They will be benefited that way and I feel that those members who have heard speeches will also be benefited,

MR. CHAIRMAN : If House sits after 9 p.m. then dinner is arranged for the Members and the staff, but this time it has not been done. I am talking particularly about the staff. In any case on Monday, we have to sit upto late hours.

SHRI RAM NAIK : First, we were told that House will be adjourned, by 8 p.m. but, now on Monday, we have to sit for whole night.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : No, not for whole night, but upto late hours.

SHRI RAM NAIK : On that **day**, the House is going to sit for whole night, that you will see.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Don't worry, when all the members insist on speaking, then you will have to agree.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Sir, if the House sits for whole night, then I would be allowed to reply the night itself.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Nitish, you are not a new member. You are a very senior member. Shri P.C. Chacko had created a record by sitting up to 8.00 a.m. It all depends on the mood of the Members.

*[English]*

Let us see if we can dispose of the item during the night itself.

*[Translation]* -

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : I will be ready with the reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I will see if the reply could be given that night itself.

SHRI RAM NAIK : For today, dinner will be provided on Monday.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Sir, dinner should be arranged for the members and staff both.

*[English]*

Those Members who are present here now, will have priority to speak first on Monday. Please take note of that.

*[Translation]*

Transport should be arranged for staff.

Kindly take note of these Members who are present now. The House stands adjourned to meet on Monday, the 8th of June at 11.00

a.m.