

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(English Version)

Seventh Session
(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)



सत्यमेव जयते

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LOK SABHA

Tuesday, March 21, 2006/Phalgun 30, 1927 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

[Translation]

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, A Sting operation is being telecast these days.

... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please sit down. I have to complete some work. First of all, the Papers are to be laid on the Table of the House. Thereafter, I will try my best to accommodate you.

11.01 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS) : On behalf of Shri Ram Vilas Paswan, I beg to lay on the Table—

(1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619 A of the Companies Act, 1956 :—

(i) Review by the Government of the working of the Projects and Development India Limited, Noida, for the year 2004-2005.

(ii) Annual Report of the Projects and Development India Limited, Noida, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4034/06]

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH) : I beg to lay on the Table—

(1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619 A of the Companies Act, 1956 :—

(a) (i) Statement regarding Review by the Government of the working of the North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation Limited, Shillong, for the year 2004-2005.

(ii) Annual Report of the North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation Limited, Shillong, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4035/06]

(b) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.

(ii) Annual Report of the National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at item No. (a) of (1) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4036/06]

(3) A copy of the Performance Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4037/06]

[Shri P.R. Kyndiah]

- (4) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4038/06]

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) : I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4039/06]

- (2) A copy of the Performance Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4040/06]

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH) : I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Rural Development for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4041/06]

[English]

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ) : I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the 195th Report of the Law Commission of India on the Judges (Inquiry) Bill, 2005 (Volumes I and II) (Hindi and English versions) – January, 2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4042/06]

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH) : Sir, on behalf of Shri Māni Shankar Aiyar, I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Rajiv Gandhi

National Institute of Youth Development, Sripurumbudur, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts.

- (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, Sripurumbudur, for the year 2004-2005.

- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4043/06]

- (3) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4044/06]

- (4) A copy of the Performance Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4045/06]

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA) : I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4046/06]

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF COAL (SHRI SHIBU SOREN) : I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy of the outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of coal for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4047/06]

- (2) A copy of the Performance Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of coal for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4048/06]

[English]

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL) : I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4049/06]

- (2) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4050/06]

- (3) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Science and Technology for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4051/06]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI) : I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under article 323 (1) of the Constitution:—

- (i) The 55th Annual Report of the Union Public Commission. New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.
- (ii) Memorandum explaining reasons for Non-Acceptance of the advice of the Union Public Service Commission in respect of cases referred to in chapter 10 of the Report.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4052/06]

- (2) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (2) of section 3 of the All India Services Act, 1951 :—

- (i) The Indian Forest Service (Fixation of Cadre Strength) Second Amendment Regulations, 2004 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 412 in Gazette of India dated the 11th December, 2004.
- (ii) The Indian Forest Service (Pay) Second Amendment Rules, 2004 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 413 in Gazette of India dated the 11th December, 2004.
- (iii) The Indian Police Service (Fixation of Cadre Strength) Amendment Regulations, 2004 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 431 in Gazette of India dated the 18th December, 2004.
- (iv) The Indian Police Service (Pay) Amendment Rules, 2004 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 432 in Gazette of India dated the 18th December, 2004.
- (v) The Indian Forest Service (Fixation of Cadre Strength) Amendment Regulations, 2005 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 592 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 17th September, 2005.
- (vi) The Indian Forest Service (Pay) Amendment Rules, 2005 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 593(E) in Gazette of India dated the 17th September, 2005.

- (3) Six statements (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (2) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4053/06]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMEN-TARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI) : Sir, on behalf of Shri B. K. Handique, I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619 A of the Companies Act, 1956 :—

[Shri Suresh pachouri]

- (i) Review of the Government of the working of the Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Limited, Dibrugarh, for the year 2004-2005.
 - (ii) Annual Report of the Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Limited, Dibrugarh, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.
- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.
- [Placed in Library. See No. LT 4054/06]
- (3) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Krishak Bharti Cooperative Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts.
 - (ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Krishak Bharti Cooperative Limited, New Delhi, for the year 2004-2005.
- (4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.
- [Placed in Library. See No. LT 4055/06]
- (5) A copy of the Performance Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers for the year 2006-2007.
- [Placed in Library. See No. LT 4056/06]
- (6) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4057/06]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI) : I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Institute of Biologicals, Noida, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts.
- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4058/06]

- (3) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, for the year 2003-2004.
 - (ii) A copy of the Annual Accounts (Hindi and English versions) of the Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, for the year 2003-2004, together with Audit Report thereon.
 - (iii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, for the year 2003-2004.
- (4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4059/06]

- (5) A copy of the Dental Council of India (Establishment of New Dental Colleges, Opening of New or Higher Course of Study or Training and Increase of Admission Capacity in Dental Colleges) Regulations, 2006 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. DE-22-2006 in Gazette of India dated the 12th January, 2006 under sub-section (4) of section 20 of the Dentists Act, 1948.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4060/06]

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) : Sir, on behalf of Shri K.H. Muniappa, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Notification No. S.O. 1804 (E) (Hindi and English versions) published in Gazette of India dated the 23rd December, 2005 regarding acquisition of land for public purpose of building, maintenance, management and operation of National Highway No. 5A (Chandikhole-Paradip section) in the State of Orissa, under section 10 of the National Highways Act, 1956.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4061/06]

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table—

(1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956 :—

(a) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the West Bengal Agro Industries Corporation Limited, Kolkata, for the year 2004-2005.

(ii) Annual Report of the West Bengal Agro Industries Corporation Limited, Kolkata, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4062/06]

(b) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Bihar State Agro Industries Development Corporation Limited, Patna, for the year 1984-85.

(ii) Annual Report of the Bihar State Agro Industries Development Corporation Limited, Patna, for the year 1984-1985, alongwith audited Accounts and

comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4063/06]

(c) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Bihar State Agro Industries Development Corporation Limited, Patna, for the year 1985-86.

(ii) Annual Report of the Bihar State Agro Industries Development Corporation Limited, Patna, for the year 1985-1986, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4064/06]

(d) (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Madhya Pradesh State Agro Industries Development Corporation Limited, Bhopal, for the year 2002-2003.

(ii) Annual Report of the Madhya Pradesh State Agro Industries Development Corporation Limited, Bhopal, for the year 2002-2003, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(2) Four statements (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4065/06]

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, Item No. 15, Shri Mohd. Ali Ashraf Fatmi.

MD. SALIM (Calcutta – North East) : Sir, I would like to make a point before the hon. Minister is allowed to lay his papers. It is a very pertinent point.

[Translation]

If you look at point 7 of the item no. 15, you will find that it is about the Aligarh Muslim University. It is its Annual

[Md. Salim]

Report. The hon'ble Minister has come here to lay it on the Table. Either it is Annual Report of Audit Report, if there is delay in laying the above statement reasons are explained for not laying it. However, for the first time I am seeing that the hon'ble Minister has come to inform that he cannot lay the report.

[English]

Will you allow him to lay it? Sir, kindly see item 15(7). It states that :

"A copy of the Statement (Hindi and English versions) explaining reasons for not laying the Annual Report . . . within the stipulated period of nine months after the close of the accounting year"

[Translation]

I am bringing it to your notice as to how the matter concerning Aligarh Muslim University is being proceeded. The Government will have to take some decision in this regard.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Thank you, Please sit down. Now, Item No. 15 Shri Mohd. Ali Ashraf Fatmi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M.A.A. FATMI) : I beg to lay on the Table—

(1) A copy of the Annual Accounts (Hindi and English versions) of the National Institute of Open Schooling, New Delhi, for the year 2002-2003, together with Audit Report thereon.

(2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4066/06]

(3) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow, for the year 2004-2005.

(4) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (3) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4067/06]

(5) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the All India Council for Technical Education, New Delhi, for the year 2003-2004, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the All India Council for Technical Education, New Delhi, for the year 2003-2004.

(6) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (5) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4068/06]

(7) A copy of the Statement (Hindi and English versions) explaining reasons for not laying the Annual Report and Audited Accounts of the Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, for the year 2004-2005 within the stipulated period of nine months after the close of the accounting year.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4069/06]

(8) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, for the year 2003-2004.

(ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, for the year 2003-2004.

- (9) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (8) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4070/06]

- (10) A copy of the Annual Account (Hindi and English versions) of the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, for the year 2002-2003, together with Audit Report thereon.

- (11) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (10) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4071/06]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : On behalf of Shri S.S. Palanimanickam, I beg to lay on the Table :

- (1) A copy each of the following Notifications (Hindi and English versions) issued under proviso to article 309 of the Constitution :-

- (i) The Central Board of Direct Taxes (Chairman and Members) Recruitment Rules, 2006 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 44 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 3rd February, 2006 together with an explanatory memorandum.
- (ii) The Central Board of Excise and Customs (Chairman and Members) Recruitment Rules, 2006 published in Notification No. G.S.R. 45 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 3rd February, 2006 together with an explanatory memorandum.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4072/06]

- (2) A copy of the Indian Bank (Employees') Pension (Amendment) Regulations, 2004 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. PENSION 01/2004 in weekly Gazette of India dated the 23rd October, 2004 under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970.

- (3) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (2) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4073/06]

- (4) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under article 151 (1) of the Constitution:-

- (i) Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India – Union Government (No. 1 of 2006) – Accounts of the Union Government for the year ended the March, 2005.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4074/06]

- (ii) Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India – Union Government (Civil) (No. 2 of 2006) – Transaction Audit Observations for the year ended the March, 2005.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4075/06]

- (iii) Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India – Union Government (Civil) (No. 3 of 2006) – Autonomous bodies for the year ended the March, 2005.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4076/06]

- (iv) Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India – Union Government (Defence Services) (No. 4 of 2006) – Army and Ordnance Factories for the year ended the March, 2005.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4077/06]

- (v) Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India – Union Government (Defence Services) (No. 5 of 2006) – Air Force and Navy for the year ended the March, 2005.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4078/06]

[Shri P. Chidambaram]

- (5) A copy of the Union Government – Finance Account for the year 2004-2005 (Hindi and English versions).

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4079/06]

- (6) A copy of the Union Government – Appropriation Accounts (Civil) for the year 2004-2005 (Hindi and English versions).

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4080/06]

- (7) A copy of the Union Government – Appropriation Accounts (Postal Services) for the year 2004-2005 (Hindi and English versions).

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4081/06]

- (8) A copy of the Union Government – Appropriation Accounts (Defence Services) for the year 2004-2005 (Hindi and English versions).

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4082/06]

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEAVY INDUSTRY, MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of section 619 A of the Companies Act, 1956 :—

- (i) Review by the Government of the working of the Bharat Yantra Nigam Limited and its subsidiaries, for the year 2004-2005.
- (ii) Annual Report of the Bharat Yantra Nigam Limited and its subsidiaries, for the year 2004-2005, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

- (2) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4083/06]

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED) : On behalf of Shri Anand Sharma. I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4084/06]

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA) : On behalf of Shri Dinsha J. Patel. I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Performance Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4085/06]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS) : I beg to lay on the Table :

- (1) A copy of the Outcome Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Steel for the year 2006-2007.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4086/06]

- (2) A copy of the Performance Budget (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Steel for the year 2005-2006.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4087/06]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH) : I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Statement (Hindi and English versions) explaining reasons for not laying the Annual Report and Audited Accounts of the Tea Board for the year 2004-2005 within the stipulated period of nine months after the close of the accounting year.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4088/06]

11.07 hrs.

MESSAGE FROM RAJYA SABHA

[English]

SECRETARY-GENERAL : Sir, I have to report the

following message received from the Secretary-General of Rajya Sabha :

"In accordance with the provisions of sub-rule (6) of rule 186 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I am directed to return herewith the Appropriation (No. 3) Bill, 2006, which was passed by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 17th March, 2006 and transmitted to the Rajya Sabha for its recommendations and to state that this House has no recommendations to make to the Lok Sabha in regard to the said Bill."

11.07½ hrs.

INDIAN PARLIAMENTARY PARTICIPATION AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Reports

[English]

SECRETARY-GENERAL : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table Hindi and English versions of the following Reports :-

- (1) Report on Indian Parliamentary participation at the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments at New York in September, 2005; and
- (2) Report on Indian Parliamentary participation at the 113th Assembly of the Inter Parliamentary Union at Geneva in October, 2005.

11.08 hrs.

COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Action Taken Reports

[English]

SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI (Madras North) : I beg to present the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) of Estimates Committee on :

- (1) Action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Sixth Report of Estimates Committee (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic

Affairs – Banking Division) – 'Public Sector Banks – Non Performing Assets'

- (2) Action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Seventh Report of Estimates Committee (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) – 'Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART)'.

11.8½ hrs

COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Statement

[English]

SHRI C. KUPPUSAMI (Madras North) : I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the statement (Hindi and English versions) of action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in Chapter I and final replies in respect of recommendations contained in Chapter V on the Second Report of Estimates Committee (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs – Banking Division) – 'Regional Rural Banks'.

11.09 hrs

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC UNDERTAKINGS

Twelfth and Thirteenth Reports

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly) : I beg to present the following Reports (Hindi and English Versions) of the Committee on Public Undertakings :-

- (1) 12th Report on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 3rd Report of Committee on Public Undertakings (14th Lok Sabha) pertaining to Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. – Extra expenditure in construction of Kishenpur Moga Transmission System – Additional expenditure of Rs. 433.81 crore; and

[Shri Rupchand Pal]

- (2) 13th Report on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the 8th Report of Committee on Public Undertakings (14th Lok Sabha) pertaining to Airports Authority of India – Loss of revenue due to delay in award of licences to operate money exchange counters.

11.09½ hrs

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS

Eighth Report

[Translation]

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly) : I beg to present a copy of the Eighth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Petroleum and Natural Gas (2005-06) on Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Fifth Report (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on 'Demands for Grants (2005-06) of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas'.

11.10 hrs

STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT,
TOURISM AND CULTURE

(i) Ninety-eighth to Hundred and first Reports

[English]

SHRI RAVINDER NAIK DHARAVATH (Warangal) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture :-

- (1) 98th Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations of the Committee contained in its Eighty-third Report on the 'Functioning of the Commission of Railway Safety';
- (2) 99th Report on the Admiralty Bill, 2005;
- (3) 100th Report on the Inland Vessels (Amendment) Bill, 2005; and

- (4) 101st Report on the Carriage by Road Bill, 2005.

(ii) Evidence

SHRI RAVINDER NAIK DHARAVATH (Warangal) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the Evidence tendered before the Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture on :

- (1) The Admiralty Bill, 2005;
- (2) The Inland Vessels (Amendment) Bill, 2005; and
- (3) The Carriage by Road Bill, 2005

11.12 hrs

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

(i) Re: Scorpene Submarine Project

[English]

*THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I beg to make a *suo-moto* statement.

A section of the Press had published certain reports *inter alia* alleging the involvement of middlemen and payment of commission in the Scorpene Contract stating that a Rs. 16,000 crore contract was signed with France and that an extra amount of Rs. 4,500 crore was paid to the French firms than what was earlier negotiated. Appropriate rejoinders were sent to the magazine on 14th February, 2006. An unstarred question No. 1689 was replied to in Rajya Sabha on 08.03.2006 on the subject of "Purchase of Submarines".

The allegations have been repeated on 20th March, 2006 by the Leaders of Opposition of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and a former Defence Minister.

The facts of the case are contrary to these allegations.

No contract or contracts were signed with the French firms for Rs. 16,000 crore for the Scorpene project. The total cost of the two contracts signed with the two French firms, M/s. ARMARIS and MBDA, for the project is Rs. 7,197 crore.

*Placed in Library. See No. LT 4089/06

The Government did not pay an extra amount of Rs. 4,500 crore than what was negotiated earlier. On the contrary, after the present Government came to power, it re-examined the project even though all negotiations had been completed in 2002 and the Ministry of Finance had accorded approval to the project in 2003. The present Government held negotiations and was able to achieve a reduction of Rs. 313 crore in the contracts with the two French firms from the negotiated position in 2002. In addition, the signing of Integrity Pacts with the French firms was made mandatory and the first two Integrity Pacts ever to be signed by the Ministry of Defence were signed along with contracts.

As a result of the negotiations, the Government was also able to achieve several long-term concessions. These included the revision of the escalation formulae to the advantage of the Indian side by adjusting the fixed element in the ARMARIS contract and placing a cap on escalation in the MBDA contract. A cap was also placed on the Exchange Rate Variation (ERV) for calculation of profit for the Public Sector Undertaking. Mazagon Docks Limited (MDL).

Besides the contract with the two French firms, the only other contract that was signed was with the Defence Public Sector Undertaking. Mazagon Docks Limited (MDL), for Rs. 5,888 crore for the indigenous construction of the submarines. Therefore, even taking into account the value of contract signed with MDL, the total value of all contracts signed for the Scorpene project is Rs. 13,085 crore out of the sanction accorded for Rs. 18,798 crore towards the project. Out of the balance amount of Rs. 5,713 crore, Rs. 3,553 crore is for payments towards taxes and Rs. 2,160 crore towards other items to be acquired during the project period for which only preliminary steps have been taken. No contract or contracts have been signed for the items under this head. A Technical Agreement was also signed between India and France to ensure the continued support of the French Government to the project.

The Integrity Pacts signed to ensure transparency of the project, contain severe penalties in case of breach of any of its provisions. The safeguards include cancellation of the contract, recovery of all advances with interest at a rate of two per cent higher than the European Inter Bank

Offered Rate of EURIBOR, non-payment by the buyer of any dues on any other contract to make such recoveries, imposition of Liquidated Damages and the recovery of all sums paid to any middleman or agent. In addition, the French Government has also informed that it is a signatory to Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions and that the French laws have been made more stringent to combat corruption.

The French company that has been accused of committing to pay commission to the alleged middleman has denied all the allegations and has stated that all the emails published in the articles in a journal that carried this story are fake and fabricated. The French Embassy in India has also, in a Press communique, termed these article as slanderous and noted that the French company is filing a complaint against the journal. The French company has since been reported to have filed a case in the Delhi High Court on 24th February, 2006 against the journal which first made the allegations. The Court when it heard the matter on 27th February, 2006, is also reported to have given 30 days to the journal to respond to the submission made by the company.

Some Press reports also sought to establish a link between the Scorpene project and the breach of security that had occurred in the Directorate of Naval Operations in the Naval Headquarters. On the issue of breach of security, during the course of a Court of Inquiry held in May, 2005 by the Air Headquarters, it was established that a pen drive recovered from Lt. (Retd.) Kulbhusan Parashar, a former Indian Navy Officer, contained classified information pertaining to the Directorate of Naval Operations. A Board of Inquiry was convened to hold a full investigation into the matter. The Board established that there had been a leakage of information, primarily of commercial value, to unauthorised persons. However, the leaked information did not pertain to the Scorpene project.

The Board severely indicted three Naval Officers, namely, Captain Kashyap Kumar, Commander Vinod Kumar Jha and Commander Vijayendra Rana. It also showed the involvement of some retired officers and civilians. The three Naval Officers severely indicated by the

[Shri Pranab Mukherjee]

Naval Board of Inquiry were dismissed from the Navy on 26th October, 2005, in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 15 of the Navy Act, 1957 read in conjunction with Regulation 216 of the Regulations of the Navy Part II (Statutory). One of the dismissed officers, Captain Kashyap Kumar has filed a writ petition in the Delhi High Court in November, 2005 challenging his dismissal from Service.

On 18th February, 2006, the Ministry of Defence referred the matter relating to the leakage of information from the Directorate of Naval Operations in the Naval Headquarters to the Central Bureau of Investigation for further investigation and filing of criminal proceedings against the dismissed officers as well as the civilians and retired officers involved in the leak of information.

[English]

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI (Garhwal) : Sir, I want to seek a clarification. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : No. This is not proper stage.

(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI) : Sir, whenever a statement is made in the Lok Sabha, there is no provision to raise questions or to have a discussion. If anybody wants to raise a discussion, he could give a notice and it would be welcome. Otherwise, it is not allowed here. . . . (Interruptions)

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B. C. KHANDURI : Has the Government got any objection? . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : This is not proper stage.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, he could give a notice for a discussion. He is at liberty to give a notice for a discussion. . . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

As you know that it is not the practice to seek clarification on the Minister's statement in the House. So, if the hon'ble Member wants to hold discussion on it, I am ready for that. However, first of all he will have to duly give notice to the hon'ble Speaker in this regard. . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, today a sting operation involving a Minister is being telecast on a television channel. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Santosh Gangwar ji, 'Zero Hour' has not yet started. You should speak on this matter when the 'Zero Hour' starts.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You can raise it during 'Zero Hour' and not now.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please sit down. We will have to take up other items.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, there is a reference of a lady in this matter. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shailendra Kumar ji, just now I have said that such issues should be raised in 'Zero Hour'. Presently 'Zero Hour' has not yet started. You please sit down.

[English]

SHRI VIJAYENDRA PAL SINGH (Bhilwara) : Sir, it is a very serious matter. We should have a Joint Parliamentary Committee on this. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Let us go to item no. 31. Dr. Akhilesh Prasad Singh.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, nobody should suffer from brain fever here! If any hon. Member gives a notice, we will be prepared to have a discussion on that. I can understand that there is bird flu in Maharashtra, but there is no brain fever in the House! . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, we will go to item no. 31. Dr. Akhilesh Prasad Singh.

11.20 hrs

(ii) Statement correcting reply given to Starred Question No. 123 dated 27.2.2006 by Sarvashri Asaduddin Owaisi and Nikhil Kumar, MPs
Re: (i) Diversion Of Foodgrains and
(ii) Giving reasons for delay in
correcting the rely

*THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH) : In the reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 123 on 27.02.2006 regarding 'Diversion of Foodgrains', a few typographical errors have crept in inadvertently.

In the Annexure referred to in reply to Part (h) of the Question the existing words and figures at Sl. No. 1 Col. 3 and Sl. No. 9 Col. 4 in the Statement for the period January-December, 2004 and at Sl. No. 1 Col. 3 in the statement for the period January-December, 2005, may be amended to read as under :-

Statement for the period January-December, 2004

Sl. No. 1 Col. 3 for Rs. 35,81,500 read Rs. 35,815

Sl. No. 9 Col. 4 for Rs. 32,76,537.94 read Rs. 3,76,537.94

Statement for the period January-December, 2005

Sl. No. 1 Col. 3 for (Rs. In lakh - 56,979) read Rs. 56,979

The corrected reply could not be laid on the Table of the House within the prescribed period due to rush of work

*Not recorded.

because of on-going Parliament Sessions and delay in coming, of the mistake, to the notice of the Department.

11.23 hrs

FORWARD CONTRACTS (REGULATION)
AMENDMENT BILL, 2006*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH) : On behalf of Shri Sharad Pawar, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1952.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Forward Contracts (Regulation) Act, 1952."

The motion was adopted.

DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH : I introduce** the Bill.

11.25 hrs

SUBMISSIONS BY MEMBERS

(i) Re: Telecast of Sting Operations
by the TV Channels

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, we will take up 'Zero Hour'.

[Translation]

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, before we start the next item of the business is taken up, through you, I would like to bring it to the notice of the Government that a sting operation involving an hon'ble Minister has been telecast on a T.V. Channel. It is

*Published in the Gazettee of India, Extraordinary, Part-II, Section-2, dated 21.3.2006

**Introduced with the Recommendation of the President.

[Shri Santosh Gangwar]

very serious issue as the dignity of the Members of Parliament is linked with to it. I would like to request the Government that it should immediately take action against this channel and make a statement in this regard.

Sir, whatever happened before this and the opinion that has evolved about us in the society on account of this is not good and it has lowered our prestige. So far no action has been taken by the Government against that T.V. channel on which the sting operation about a Minister is being telecast. So, I would like to state that it what has been telecast on T.V. channel about the Minister is true, action should be taken. If it is wrong the Government should ponder on this issue and if such sting operation is conducted and telecast in future without seeking prior permission of the Government then it should be treated as a serious crime. The hon'ble Minister is also present here. I would like that he should also be given an opportunity to offer his clarification in this regard.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI) : The issue that has been raised by Santosh Gangwar ji is not related to any particular party. Rather it is concerned with the dignity of the entire House and the country. I am observing for last few days that our T.V. channels are telecasting sensational programmes to get immediate rise in their T.R.P. I have noted 2-3 things in this regard, particularly what happened yesterday. I will take action today itself in the afternoon after serving so cause notice to the channel and looking into the matter. I would like to submit that journalists may write and telecast on television whatever is true, however, I will take action against those who are involved in false sting operations by way of luring people into bringing sensational news for financial gain. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI LONAPPAN NAMBADAN (Mukundapuram) : Sir, I rise to bring to the notice of the Central Government the matter regarding grant of 100 per cent travel concession in trains to the blind, deaf and dumb persons and also to the handicapped persons who are having 50 per cent

or more disability. The persons who accompany them as escorts should also be allowed such concessions.

Similarly, all the senior citizens should be allowed the travel concession to the extent at 75 per cent and besides, the senior citizens above 70 years of age should also be allowed to take a help or escort with them at 75 per cent rate.

It is not possible for all the people to afford to take dead bodies of the relatives by aeroplane from the place of work of their hometown. Transit of dead bodies by train should be allowed free of cost, along with at least two persons who accompany the body. The concession now being allowed to poor patients from the downtrodden categories and economically poor segments of the population should be increased to 100 per cent.

I urge upon the Government to take necessary steps to ensure that the above mentioned concessions are granted at the earliest.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Basu Deb Acharia, you have given notice for two issues but you are allowed to raise only one issue.

[Translation]

It depends upon you as to what matter is to be raised.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : I will raise two issues in short period.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : No, please raise one issue.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : I will raise in short time, I will not take much time.

[English]

Sir, yesterday the matter regarding convertability of capital in the case of Reserve Bank of India was raised because the Prime Minister had announced it. This is nothing but to minimise the importance of Reserve Bank of India. But the most ominous thing is what is happening today in the case of the Reserve Bank of India. The outsourcing of the jobs and rapid shrinking of RBI is taking place. There is a danger of RBI withdrawing itself from all areas of its activities which will have enormous national implication. Besides that, it will adversely affect the staff strength.

There has already been a substantial reduction in the staff strength in respect of Group C employees. The main objective is to reduce the staff strength in the Group C category. The hidden agenda is to curb trade union activities in the Reserve Bank of India.

A few years back when there was a successful strike by the employees of the Reserve Bank of India, during the regime of the NDA Government, the then Finance Minister made a statement saying that to allow trade union activities in a sensitive institution like the Reserve Bank of India would be a dangerous thing. The total staff strength in RBI has come down from 36,000 in 1900 to 20,000 now. There was a further reduction of 4500 staff in the year 2003. Such a reduction in staff strength in respect of Class III employees is being continued in such a rapid scale with a view to curbing trade union activities. It is a dangerous and ominous sign.

I would like to urge upon the Government not to minimise the importance of the Reserve Bank of India by reducing the staff, and the activities of the premier institution should not be reduced.

Sir, another important issue. . . *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Give notice for this tomorrow. It is not a good practice to raise two issues with one notice.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, the Ministry of Labour has issued. . . *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You may give notice for this tomorrow. Nothing will go on record.

*(Interruptions)**

[Translation]

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR (Chimur) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, what will be done with those parts of his speech that has gone on record? . . . *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : When it has been decided that he will speak on one issue only, then nothing of what he spoke thereafter has gone on record.

(Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

SHRI AVINASH RAI KHANNA (Hoshiarpur) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards those districts of Punjab where drought like situation has arisen because of an untimely and insufficient rainfall for the last four-five years. There are many such districts in Punjab where tubewells are required to be installed. However, the people there are not in a position to install tubewell. It is on account of non-availability of water that today a drought like situation has been prevailing there.

Through you, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the problems of the farmers. The people had applied for electricity connections, as ago as 1992, however, till now they do not have electricity connections for their tubewells. Today there is no water for irrigation. So, I would like to request that instructions should be issued to undertake special 'Girdawari' in Hoshiarpur, Anandpur and Ropar district of Kandi areas. Alongwith that I would also like to request the Central Government that it should send a team there, particularly in view of the fact that in reply to our repeatedly questions on Punjab, it is stated that they have not received any feedback from Punjab. So, the Central Government should send its team there to know about the plight of the farmers and find out the reasons which are compelling them to commit suicide.

I would like that the Central Government send a team to Punjab to take stock of the situation there and should issue orders for special "Girdawari."

[English]

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL (Vijayawada) : Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to raise an important issue, especially relating to the women folk. There is a large-scale exploitation of self-help groups by the private and micro finance companies. It has come to light in various districts, especially in the State of Andhra Pradesh but practically it is going on in other parts of the country as well.

The institutions that have found existence in the name of micro finance companies are availing of loan facilities from the banks. The banks are lending to these companies

[Shri L. Rajagopal]

at 12 per cent interest rate and, in turn, these companies are lending to vulnerable self-help groups, particularly the women folk, at exorbitant rates ranging from 36 per cent to 60 per cent.

I had a personal discussion with the bankers in this regard and I asked them as to why they are funding these intermediaries instead of funding directly to the self-help groups. In the State of Andhra Pradesh alone Government funding directly to self-help groups is to the tune of Rs. 1500 crore and funding through these intermediaries is to the tune of Rs. 3,500 crore. It means that funding through regular banking institutions is only one-third of the amount actually being funded through these micro-finance companies.

Sir, at times of dire need and requirement, helpless women, mostly rural uneducated and even women living in urban slums, take money from these companies and utilise it for various purposes. These companies are forcibly recovering these loan amounts from them. This is not only causing heartburn but there are also many instances of women having committed suicide on account of this. In the State of Andhra Pradesh alone 100 such cases have come of light.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : What is your demand?

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL : Sir, I raised this issue a year back. I urged upon the Government to put restrictions on the banks so that they did not lend money to these micro-finance companies and the RBI should also come out with strict guidelines saying that this should not be treated as priority lending. . . .(Interruptions) Such a thing is happening in many other parts of the country as well. I want the entire country to be aware of this and I want the hon. Prime Minister to. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record.

(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

PROF. MAHADEORAO SHIWANKAR : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Nagpur division of South-East railway has a

*Not recorded.

station namely Aamgaon. The work pertaining to modernization of railway station and laying of new railway line has been going on since last year. On 23.10.2005, Tehsildar of Aamgaon ordered to stop land filling work and asked to deposit royalty and a fine of Rs. 3,42,000 on royalty of Rs. 57,000. Railway department approached the Nagpur High Court. The court also gave stay and the work was held up for 6 months. Work was started again but again an officer of Maharashtra Government Tehsildar, Aamgaon seized a private truck on 20.3.2006 from railway land in lieu of royalty. Owing to the conflict between officers of Maharashtra Government and Railway officers of Nagpur division work was held up for 60 days. If this work had been completed 60 days ago then at least 60 racks could have been found there and railway could have got Rs. 4 crore 80 lakh. The contractor engaged has also demanded compensation at the rate of Rs. 10,000 per day. Thus, railway is suffering heavy losses due to officers of Maharashtra Government and Railway officers. Hence, I would like to request the Railway department specially hon. Minister of Railways that he should look into this matter at the earliest, because this incident which took place in Maharashtra, will hinder all developmental work. Both center and state have same party Governments, but this is an example how this Government is running at two places – center and state and what kind of conflicts are taking place. Hence, I request the railway department that kindly look into it and punish those who are found guilty.

DR. KARAN SINGH YADAV (Alwar) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, though every level railway crossing and railway crossing causes inconvenience to public but in my Parliamentary constituency Khairthal town situated on North-East railway's Delhi-Jaipur-Rewari broadgauge line is having traffic inconvenience due to railway crossing. Khairthal town is a big agricultural market, where there is heavy movement of trucks and tractors, due to closure of railway crossing time and again there is miles of traffic jam. Public of Khairthal has been demanding for a long time that an under-bridge should be constructed at a distance of 300 meters from this railway crossing so that at least light four wheelers – two wheelers and pedestrians could use the same. On the demand of Khairthal Vikas Manch railway administration has sent an estimate of approximately Rs. 37 lakh to public, Khairthal Vikas Manch is a voluntary

organization and it has no source of income to deposit such a big amount. Hence, I request the hon. Minister of Railways that considering the problems of local people kindly permit construction of an under-bridge in Khairthal.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH BISHNOI (Jodhpur) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, through you I would like to draw the attention of the Minister of Road Transport that four years back National Highway numbers 112 and National Highway number 114 from Bar to Barmer and Bar to Jaisalmer via Jodhpur were sanctioned. It has been four years since this sanction was accorded, but even till now the work has not been started. These two National Highways are very important from strategic point of view, where country is army vehicles passes through. Hence, through you, I would like to request the Minister of Road Transport that work pertaining to these two roads should be started at the earliest.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, besides I would also like to request that proposals from Rajasthan Government have been sent to Central Government demanding money from Central Road Fund, but till now these proposals have not been sanctioned. Hence, I would like to request the Minister of Road Transport to sanction money from Central Road Fund for Rajasthan roads.

SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHALE (Bilaspur) : Sir, in the whole country today lakhs-crores of posts of all categories of Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes have not been filled. Nearly for 20 years no attention has been paid to it in the whole country. This is a shameful thing. The Government claims that it is well-wisher of Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribe people. Hence I request the government that a special drive or scheme should be launched for filling up the vacant posts of Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes, Many a time this type of drive or scheme is proposed to be started but this special drive remains only on paper. Only a few posts are filled and for few posts it is stated that applications do not come, such lame excuses are given. At some places, applications are demanded from them and advertisements are made but they do not get such information. Such type of hurdles are put in their way. I would like to request the government that a national level drive should be launched for all categories of posts and all those officers-employees who

do not become part of it should be fined and provision of punishment should be made for them so that they work in their decorum and discipline. In this regard I demand that the vacant posts for Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes should be filled up this year only by launching a time-bound programme.

SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VARMA (Dhandhuka) : Sir, I would like to associate myself with it.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Mr. Verma may also be associated with him.

SHRI RATILAL KALIDAS VERMA : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I associate myself with it.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Ok.

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly) : Sir, Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceuticals Limited is a public sector undertakings. Apart from chemicals and fertilizers business, it has diversified into pharmaceuticals and some home products. For quite some time it has been ailing because of mismanagement. It was referred to the BIFR and it came out with a new package, which ultimately resulted in a modified revival package in 2004.

There was no need for making this reference to BRPSE. Still it was insisted that it should be done although the Ministry wanted that it is not required at all after the final package was approved by the BIFR. It has been pending for quite some time. On 14th January 2004 the modified revival package was okayed. In this connection, we have made a request to the Ministry and all others concerned to expedite the matter. The Unions, Shri Basu Deb Acharia, myself and many other Members we them. An assurance was given that it is being expedited. But till today it is lying there after the Cabinet note was circulated for Cabinet approval. In the meanwhile, mismanagement is taking place. Property is being mortgaged and skilled professionals are being transferred from one place to another. Chaos is being created.

In such a situation. I draw the attention of this Government and make a request that the Government should intervene immediately, stop the mismanagement

[Shri Rupchand Pal]

and expedite the matter through the Cabinet approval so that such a prestigious Company in the public sector can be revived properly. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Sir, I associate with what Shri Rupchand Pal has mentioned just now. . . .(Interruptions)

MD. SALIM (Calcutta – North East) : Sir, I also associate with the matter raised by Shri Rupchand Pal. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (Durgapur) : Sir, I also associate with the issued raised by Shri Rupchand Pal. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Hon. Members, I will try my best to accommodate all of you. I would request all of you to be brief so that I can accomodate all of you. I think you will cooperate with me.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, my name is Shailendra Kumar not Shailendraa Kumar.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It doesn't matter.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR : I am sorry, sir.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The paper with me have your name spelling as Shailendraa Kumar, then what should I do. Otherwise also I have not reduced the spelling of your name.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, you have given me an opportunity to speak on the issues of public importance. I thank you for the same. Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra P adesh and other states have been included in first place for infrastructural development of states under Jawaharlal Nehru City Reclamation Scheme for strengthening basic infrastructure of 650 cities in the whole country. The name of cities identified from these states include Bhopal, Rajkot, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Nagpur. I have no objection if i, these

cities under this scheme many works are done like construction of bridges, construction of flyovers; construction of railway over bridges, arrangements of cleanliness, construction of roads, arrangements of sewerage and removing encroachments. I am not opposing these states and these cities.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You are repeating the same thing.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR : I am coming to that point but please allow me to make some background, otherwise everything will be disturbed. That's why I mentioned them.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : That's right but repetition should not be there. I have nearly 60 Members' list. If we do like this then everyone will not get chance, hence I will not allow this.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR : I had requested yesterday also that Uttar Pradesh is heart of India and is the biggest state according to population. However it is not developing. Had Uttar Pradesh been included in the first phase then there "KAVAL towns" like Kanpur, Allahabad, Agra, Bareilly, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Lucknow etc. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please do not interrupt.

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR : If development work takes place in above mentioned "KAVAL towns", of Uttar Pradesh in the first phase then I feel this will be reflected on India's map that Jawaharlal Nehru Reclamation Scheme is being implemented.

I would like to tell the Urban Development Minister towards my constituency that a sewage treatment plant has been set up at Sulem Sarai and Mundera on G.T. Road, by Japan Industrial Company Limited, which is situated adjoining an airport and all VIPs used to come there. I demand that out of 20 proposals of four states, at least the KAVAl towns of Uttar Pradesh must be taken in the first phase.

SHRI GANESH SINGH (Satna) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there has already been a discussion on a very important issue but because of negligent attitude of the Central Government. I have to raise this issue here once again. Whenever there is a natural calamity in other states, then the Central Government provide financial assistance but keeping in view the losses suffered by the farmers in Madhya Pradesh due to natural calamity taking place there for the last 15-20 days, the Central Government have not taken any action in this regard. I want to raise this matter for discussion.

During the first fortnight of March, heavy hailstorm and rains caused excessive damage to 44 districts, whereby large scale damage was caused to the crops of farmers and lives and property. During the first two survey reports a loss of Rs. 672 crore was reported and it is estimated that after the full assessment is done, the losses would rise to more than one thousand crore of rupees.

After amending the R.B. Act, the State administration has started providing relief to the farmers on a war footing by doubling the financial assistance. Now we would be able to provide a relief of Rs. 500 to 20,000 per hectare to the farmers.

We all members had demanded the Prime Minister in this very House that as the Central Government provides relief to other states during the time of natural calamity likewise, the farmers of Madhya Pradesh also must be provided relief. We demanded that a central study group should be sent there and the state should be provided with a financial assistance of Rs. 1000 crores immediately. But it is unfortunate that till now neither a study group has been sent there nor any kind of financial assistance has been provided by the Central Government whereas Chief Minister of our state is providing help and relief of the farmers affected by hailstorm by personally visiting their fields. The State Government has sent a proposal to the Hon'ble Agriculture Minister, the National Crop Insurance Scheme should be amended and the field of the farmers should be counted as a unit instead of the existing unit. My demand is that the proposal sent by the State Government should be accepted by the Central Government and in this kind of natural calamity, the farmers should

get the benefits of Crop Insurance Scheme from this year itself. Such provisions should be made.

SHRI RAGHURAJ SINGH SHAKYA (Etawah) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak. I, through you, would like to submit to the Hon'ble Tourism Minister that in my constituency, Etawah there is a Kaleswar temple and pilgrims in large numbers arrive there to visit the holy temple and there also lies a place called 'Panchnad', which is the meeting point of five rivers. A 'Brahmani' temple is also situated there which is quite ancient adjoining to it is Chambal area. There is also a Pilua Maharaj Mandir. I, through you, would request the hon'ble Minister to provide a package for these places and Chambal area as the Uttar Pradesh Government is already providing assistance to these areas so that these areas can be developed. These places should be declared as tourist spots.

[English]

SHRI MADHU GOUD YASKHI (Nizamabad) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I thank you for allowing me to raise an important issue of National Service Volunteers.

This is an excellent programme conducted by the Ministry of Youth Affairs covering each block. It actually means that it covers an Assembly Segment. That way, it covers entire India because about 5000 National Service Volunteers are working in all the districts of the country. The biggest problem about this programme is regarding the condition. To work as a National Service Volunteer, the minimum educational qualification required is graduation for the OC, BC, OBC, Minorities, and, for the Scheduled Tribes students, it is Plus-II. Further, the emolument paid for these volunteers is only just Rs. 1000 – Rs. 700 which is the fixed stipend and Rs. 300 for the travel expenses. The point is that these volunteers travel the districts and the villages to motivate the youth club members. They guide the youth in developing a programme of national integration and in various other activities which will motivate the youth to organise themselves in having constructive programmes.

So, Sir, through you, I would like to request the hon. Minister of Youth Affairs to take steps to restrict the educational qualification to Plus-II or SSC Pass level

[Shri Madhu Goud Yaskhi]

instead of a degree which is prevailing now; increase the emolument from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 2000. I have my personal experience in the Nizamabad district where the youth organisation is working very well. The volunteers work very effectively to motivate more effective and committed youth to participate in this programme to work as National Service Volunteers. Hence, the payment should be increased so that at least it would cover their basic expenses.

So, once again, through you, I would request the hon. Minister to consider the issue of increasing their emolument from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 2000 so that more committed youth will be participating in this programme and it would help the youth.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It is most essential.

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID (Periyakulam) : I would associate with it.

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Mr. Jha is speaking, please listen to him, do not interrupt while someone is speaking.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah) : Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, when late Shri Rajiv Gandhiji was the Prime Minister of India, then he visited Bihar and after seeing the abject poverty and helplessness, he made an announcement that a special package would be given to Bihar for the development of its infrastructure. I am happy that this time, when the present Government assumed the power than they included the promise made by the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi in their Common Minimum Programme but two years have passed since the Government assumed the power and it has taken to initiative in this direction, not even an step has been taken by them in this regard. . . (Interruptions). Therefore, I demand from the hon'ble Prime Minister that the promise made but the late Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi and made by you in the capacity of a Prime Minister you should fulfill that promise. You should take initiative in this matter. If you just make promises and the people do not get benefit out it it, then the people would develop a different kind of feeling for you.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna) : I also associate myself to Shri Raghunath Jha.

SHRI ALOK KUMAR MEHTA (Samastipur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Hon'ble Members have already raised issue regarding the backwardness of Bihar. Through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to a special scheme. The planning Commission had recommended an amount of Rs. 134 Crore for districts of Bihar—Samastipur, Darbhanga, Madhubani and Muzaffarpur, under a special scheme to set up spices, Margo, Makhana and Lichi crop production, training and price promotion units, respectively. It was to be completed by NABARD within the period of three years. Almost a period of one year and nine months has passed and the work is going on at a snail's pace. I have come to know that it is proposed to surrender this amount. If it happens, then it would be gross injustice with the poor farmers and unemployed youths of Bihar especially the flood affected Mithalanchal as their future is associated with this scheme. Therefore, I would like to request the Government that keeping in view the public interest this scheme must be completed by NABARD or some other efficient agency within a fixed time limit so that development can be done in the flood affected and most backward areas. The unemployed youths may get an opportunity to make progress.

CHAUDHARY BIJENDRA SINGH (Aligarh) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards an important issue. Ours is a country having democratic values. Uttar Pradesh covers a large area of the country. I want to draw the attention of the Government towards an incident which took place in Uttar Pradesh yesterday. Yesterday few criminal elements in 3-4 vans assassinated the ex-MLA, Chaudhary Maikan Singh in broad day light at 5 o'clock which terrorized the whole district and MLAs and MP also got terrorized due to this act. A 'Jungle Raj' is prevailing in Uttar Pradesh. Yesterday or day before yesterday Shri Krishna Rai who also killed. Yesterday 'Block Pramukh' was killed in Meerut. Yesterday one MLA was killed. Each and every district of Uttar Pradesh is terrorized with the frequent incidents of killing and assassinations. Dr. Rajesh Mishra is sitting beside me. He had a hair-breadth escape from death. . . (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing should be recorded except the speech of Chaudhary Bijendra Singh.

*(Interruptions)**

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Nothing will no record except for the speech of Chaudhary Bijendra Singh.

*(Interruptions)**

CHAUDHARY BIJENDRA SINGH : Please have patience. Please listen to me. . . .*(Interruptions)* Killings are taking place in Uttar Pradesh in broad daylight. Sh. Rajesh Mishra is the Member of this House. He was almost killed and had a narrow escape. What else can stand a testimony to this fact? The sub inspectors and constables of police are being killed in broad daylight but the Government is taking no cognizance. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : What do you want to demand?

CHAUDHARY BIJENDRA SINGH : The Central Government should ask the Governor to submit a report in this regard and take action to curb the dictatorship of the State Government. The Centre should endeavour to dismiss the State Government. . . .*(Interruptions)* The State Government is misusing the funds. . . .*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record now.

*(Interruptions)**

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Now, Shri Manvendra Singh will raise a very serious matter.

KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH (Mathura) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to associate myself with the views

expressed by the honourable Member just now and state that. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You can state whatever you want to speak.

DR. RAJESH MISHRA (Varanasi) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to associate myself with the views expressed by Chaudhary Bijendra Singh.

KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the problem of drinking water in Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh has not been solved even after 59 years of Independence. Even today women in rural areas have to walk three-four kilometers to fetch water. In 1984, when I was also a Member of Parliament, Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi had launched drinking water project to get rid off this problem, but water corporation responsible for supply of drinking water is itself in very pitiable condition. This department is known as Water Corporation but it has not got money even to pay regular salaries to its employees on time. This department had constructed water tanks to supply drinking water to three-four villages. But today 90 per cent water tanks operated by this department are damaged and useless and they are not being used for supply of. . . .*(Interruptions)* Why is he taking ill of it? Is portable water available in his area. . . .*(Interruptions)* The Central Government is providing funds to them. But they are not using that money. The honourable Minister has said that they have given hundred crore rupees to that Department. . . .*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Kunwar Manvendra Singh, please address the Chair.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Nothing should be recorded except the statement of Kunwar Manvendra Singh.

*(Interruptions)**

[Translation]

KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH : 90 per cent water tanks are damaged and useless there and water is not

[Kunwar Manvendra Singh]

being supplied from them. This problem would assume serious proportions when there will be tremendous heat. Crores of pilgrims and tourists visit my district every year. They have to face great difficulty due to this problem. The Honourable President and Honourable Prime Minister have also expressed concern regarding this problem and the President of UPA Government Shrimati Sonia Gandhiji. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : What is your demand?

[Translation]

KUNWAR MANVENDRA SINGH : Our party has raised this issue repeatedly so as to solve this problem. The honourable. Minister of Rural Development has informed that a hundred crore rupees have been given to the State Government to solve this problem in Uttar Pradesh. . . . (Interruptions) The hon. Minister has said this. . . . (Interruptions) I have written several letters to Director, Water Corporation of Uttar Pradesh Government to solve this problem of drinking water in the district but he has not taken any effective action. So, I would request you to issue suitable effective directions to Uttar Pradesh Government to provide basic necessity i.e. water in district Mathura and other rural areas of Uttar Pradesh. Sir, through you, I would request the Central Government to provide additional funds to solve this serious problem quickly. . . .(Interruptions) what has happened to hundred crore rupees? . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please listen to me.

[Translation]

60 Members are still waiting for their turn. If you will continue your speech like this then it would be difficult for me to accommodate all the 60 members. The other way out is that the remaining Members should be given the chance to speak after six O'clock. First you listen to me. If you want to speak before 1.00 O'clock then I would request you to please conclude in two minutes. If you want

to speak and also want to attack others in your speech then it would not be possible for me to give you time now. If you can conclude in two minutes then I could give you a chance otherwise you can speak in zero hour and I will take other business right now.

(Interruptions)

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Alright, two minutes time is sufficient.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Please put your demand and do not attack others.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : You will get a chance.

(Interruptions)

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY (Mandsour) : A company named Jayant Vitamins was set up under the Companies Act. in Ratlam Nagar, Madhya Pradesh which used to manufacture Sorbitrate and Vitamin C. This company illegally formed another bogus company i.e., Ruwis Company by forgery and listed its shares in the share market. Workers of this company are forced to buy its share and they have to buy its share. This company collected crores of rupees by manipulation and later the business of this company was closed. As a result hundreds of workers of this company have been deprived of their livelihood. I would request the Government to take stringent action against the company which has been constituted under the Companies Act and by manipulation it has forced its workers to buy shares and presented fake affidavit in the court when workers lodged a complaint against them. I would request the Government to refund the money of workers. In addition to this, if any arrangements could be made for its revival, the Government should make efforts in this direction. With these words I would against request you to take stringent action against this company.

[English]

SHRIMATI JAYABEN B. THAKKAR (Vadodara) : Sir, my submission is about the reduction of import duty on ships coming to India for breaking. The major issue for the State

Governments is that the import duty on ships, which are coming to India for ship breaking, is five per cent whereas on steel scrap and metal scrap, it is zero per cent. It has affected the ship breaking industry negatively since the production cost of the product made from the raw material of ship goes up to that extent. As a result of that the product becomes less competitive.

The hon. Chief Minister of Gujarat has written a detailed letter to the hon. Finance Minister in this regard on 8.12.2004. So, I urge upon the Central Government to review the issue and to reduce the import duty on ships coming to India for breaking.

[*Translation*]

SHRI KRISHNA MURARI MOGHE (Khargone) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of this House to the very burning problem being faced by Madhya Pradesh. There is 1 per cent forest area out of the entire land area of the state. But the data which reflect such forest land do not have forest coverage in deed. The tribals who live there constitute 22 per cent of total population are our brothers and are facing the problem of their livelihood. Malwa and Nimad, which used to call the placed enriched with food and water at every step are now in the grip of severe drought due to cutting down the forests. This thing can nowhere be seen that afforestation of that area has been very effective through the Forest Department. Therefore, I make a demand from the Government, that if any project is made with the help of public participation for afforestation and wherein a provision of paying minimum wages at the rate of Rs. 59 per capita is made, if Rs. 35 are paid him in cash therein and the remaining amount is kept as a share money towards the afforestation, it will definitely. . . .

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : What is your demand?

[*Translation*]

SHRI KRISHNA MURARI MOGHE : My demand is that the Central and State Government should prepare a project for forest in Madhya Pradesh on the basis of public participation and the share specially of these tribals should

be fixed therein. Thus, we will be able to project them and tackle the problem of degrading environment in that area.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : The name of Shri Ganesh Singh be associated in this regard.

12.15 hrs

(ii) Re: Observation of Forest Day in the country on the 21st March, 2006 and strict implementation of the Forest (Conservation) Act as well as the Wild Life Protection Act.

[*English*]

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil) : Sir, today we observe the Forest Day throughout the country. Unfortunately, the hon. Minister is not present.

[*Translation*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : Minister is sitting. He is on duty.

[*English*]

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : It becomes important not because it is a day to be observed throughout the country, but it becomes important when we take into consideration the environmental circumstances that we are facing.

It is the basic policy of the Government to keep one-third of the land as forest land. What is the present position? Encroachment is the order of the day. People are encroaching the forest land. They remain there for a long time. Subsequently, they will draw the attention that we have made improvements, and large assignments will be made in their favour. This is the practice throughout India. The net result is that the forest land is getting dwindled and reduced. As a result, we face severe environmental crisis. It will effect the human race as a whole. It will affect not only human race but it will also affect animals. We have revised the Forest Act. We have got 'tiger' as our national animal. What is the result? Tiger is getting extinct from the universe. Everyday, tigers are being killed indiscriminately. Nobody cares about the implementation of the Wildlife

[Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan]

Protection Act and nobody is serious about the Forest (Conservation) Act. The net result is that we always encroach the forest land and nobody cares. There is deforestation and planting is not done. It is a very important thing; you and I will not exist; our generation will extinct from the Universe. . . .(Interruptions) Our successors, our future generation will not be in the Universe if things go on like this.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : What is your demand? Please put your demand.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : Everyday people are getting into the forest land. The forest land is getting encroached and nobody tries to evict them. So, I would like to request the Central Government whether they are serious about implementation of the Forest Act and keeping the universe as it is. They must do something so that these encroachments will be removed. Killing indiscriminately the tiger and other rare species of animals must be prevented. The Forest Act as well as the Wildlife Protection Act must be strictly implemented. Merely publishing the photo of the Minister in the newspapers and giving publicity is not enough. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI VIJAYENDRA PAL SINGH (Bhilwara) : Sir, I would like to associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH (Rajgarh) : Sir, I would also like to associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi) : Sir, I would also like to associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

SHRIMATI KIRAN MAHESHWARI (Udaipur) : Sir, I would also like to associate myself with what the hon. Member has said.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Your names will be associated.

Shri Rayapati Sambasiva Rao.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Sabarkantha) : Sir, I oppose the statement. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : I was referring to the country as a whole. I am not blaming anybody. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Only Shri Rayapati Sambasiva Rao's statement will be recorded.

(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing is going on record.

(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing will be recorded.

(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI) : Deputy-Speaker, Sir, in all humility I would like to inform the hon. Member that the Government brought a legislation, and this very House did not carry the legislation; they preferred to have it examined by Joint Parliamentary Committee. The Joint Parliamentary Committee is yet to give their outcome to the House, and thereafter appropriate decision and debate can take place. I feel all the views will be heard by the Joint Parliamentary Committee. The intention of the UPA Government is not to uproot any tribal from the forest. That is the policy of the UPA Government. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Only Shri Rao's speech will go on record.

(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing else will be recorded.

(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRIYARANJAN DASMUNSI : Sir, we do not like to question the competence of the Judiciary and we do not have any intention to undermine the Judiciary. . . .(Interruptions) Sir, the UPA Government, after coming to power, made it abundantly clear at the every beginning through our National Common Minimum Programme as well as through legislation that we want to protect the

*Not recorded.

interests of the tribals. The Bill was introduced. It was examined by a Group of Minister. It was cleared by the Cabinet. It was introduced in the House and it was referred to the Joint Parliamentary Committee. The outcome of the Committee will come soon. We shall ensure that every inch of the interest of the tribals will be protected. . . .
(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, Shri Rayapati Sambasiva Rao. Nothing will go on record except the submission of Shri Rayapati Sambasiva Rao.

(*Interruptions*)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing is going on record. Please sit down.

SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO (Guntur) : **Sir, I would like to bring to the kind notice of this august House about the plight of the cotton farmers who are facing acute problems with regard to the sale of their cotton.**

Sir, it seems that there is no simultaneous interpretation facility. We have requested long time back to arrange for a Telugu Interpreter. Sir, for every language you are arranging an Interpreter. I do not know why you are not arranging an Interpreter for Telugu. It is very bad. For all languages, you are arranging interpretation facility. . . .
(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : As per rules, you have to give a notice.

SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO : Sir, I have given a notice also. . . .(*Interruptions*) If you want me to speak in English. I can speak in English. But in future, I want to speak in Telugu. . . .(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You can speak in English now.

SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO : Sir, when you are entertaining all regional languages, why are you neglecting Telugu language?. . . .(*Interruptions*)

*Not recorded.

**English translation of the speech originally delivered in Telugu.

SHRI K.S. RAO (Eluru) : Sir, we are consistently asking for it but nobody has been appointed as Telugu Interpreter. It is a pathetic state for Telugu. . . .(*Interruptions*) Sir, many a time we made this request. . . .(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please listen. The recruitment of Telugu Interpreter is in process.

SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO : How long will it take? It is very unfortunate. . . .(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : As soon as it is possible, we will have the Telugu Interpreter.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Rayapati Sambasiva Rao, there is no arrangement at present for interpretation. Therefore, I would request you to speak in English today. The recruitment of Telugu Interpreter is in process.

SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO : Sir, I would like to bring to the kind notice of this august House about the plight of the cotton farmers who are facing acute problems with regard to the sale of their cotton. In India we produced around 2,90,00,000 bales of cotton. As far as our requirement of cotton is concerned, 2,40,00,000 bales of cotton are required throughout India. In the last year we got a surplus of 45,00,000 bales of cotton left over in India. Till yesterday, CCI purchased many bales of cotton from Andhra Pradesh also. Still about 15,00,000 bales of cotton are left over in Andhra Pradesh.

Sir, every Government is talking about farmer and says that farmer is the country's backbone but nobody is looking after the interests of the farmers as regards the sale of their commodity.

Sir, as far as cotton is concerned, CCI bought the cotton around Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 2,400 per quintal. Now, CCI has stopped purchasing it and the price has fallen down to Rs. 1,000 or Rs. 1,500. I request the hon. Minister to intervene and see that at least five lakh bales of cotton are purchased from Andhra Pradesh. Now the cotton farmers are going towards BT seeds. As far as BT seed is concerned, we are getting inferior quality of cotton.

With five per cent inferior quality, cotton cannot be sold in the international market. But as far as BT cottonseeds

[Shri Rayapati Sambasiva Rao]

are concerned, we are getting more than five to six per cent inferior quality. That is why, our cotton exporters are unable to export these cottons to the international market. It is because of this situation, I would request the hon. Minister to give direction and see that at least five lakh bales of cotton are purchased from Andhra Pradesh.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The name of Shri Sudhakar Reddy is also associated. Chaudhary Lal Singh.

[Translation]

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH (Udhampur) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to speak on this very important topic.

SHRI SUDHAKAR REDDY (Nalgonda) : The Deputy-Speaker has called my name.

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH : Did you not hear my name? Your number will come later. I have to speak first.

[English]

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY : My name was called. . . (Interruptions)

[Translation]

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH : Shri Sudhakar Reddyji, two channels cannot run together. They should function separately.

[English]

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY : The Deputy-Speaker has called my name.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : No, I have not called your name but I have said that as far as your matter is concerned, I have allowed you to associate with him.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY : No, I am not associating with him. I have different types of points to which he has not given the solution. So, I would like to mention this.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I will see that later.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY : I am not associating with it. I have different types of solutions on the same subject.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Then, I will give you time later on. Please sit down.

Chaudhary Lal Singh.

[Translation]

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, with your permission. I would like to draw the attention of the House to a very important topic. I had brought this issue to notice of the Government two years ago. The funds was sanctioned for up gradation of Medical College of Jammu on the line of AIIMS under the leadership of Chairperson of Congress, Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh and the minister of Health Dr. Ambumani Ramadoss had also done a lot on this account.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please ask your question.

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH : Sir, near about 53 lakh people are concerned with it and there is a need to give sufficient funds for this work. I would like to request that a lot of fund is required for purchasing implements and creating infrastructure for this work of up gradation. Self sufficient amount should be given for this work. It will cover the Gurdaspur district up Punjab and Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh in connection with treatment of the people. These all will be benefited by this institute.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : What is your demand?

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH : The people of this area go to AIIMS, in Delhi. I want the work of this institute should be speeded up and sufficient amount be given to this work so as to complete this work as early as possible.

[English]

SHRI BANSAGOPAL CHOUDHURY (Asansol) : Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to mention about the Hindustan Cables Factory. It is situated near Asansol and is a very important Public Sector Undertaking. It has been facing a lot of crisis since the last three of four years. Actually, we demanded some measures from the Depart-

ment of Heavy Industries and also from the Department of Telecommunications.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I can allow you only one minute.

SHRI BANSAGOPAL CHOUDHURY : Actually, a revival package was submitted by the IIT, Kharagpur and Tata Consultancy Limited. Sir, I urge upon the Ministry to take proper action regarding the revival package and also the salary of those workers to whom the salary has not yet been paid.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, Shri Sudhakar Reddy, you take only one minute.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY : Sir, while I agree with the problem posed by Shri Sambasiva Rao on the question of the crisis of cotton, I have some different types of solutions.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You are given only one minute. Though you are raising different types of issues, I can give you only one minute.

SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY : Yes, Sir, I will be taking only one-and-a-half minutes.

The Cotton peasants in Andhra Pradesh are in deep crisis as M/s. Cotton Corporation of India has stopped purchasing cotton for the last two weeks. It is estimated that about 18 to 20 lakh bales of cotton are lying unsold with the peasants. Last month the price of the cotton was Rs. 2,500/- and now it fell down to Rs. 1,300/-. The refusal of M/s. Cotton Corporation of India to Purchase the cotton has been taken advantage of by private businessmen who are purchasing cotton at the rock bottom price. The so-called BT cottonseed has resulted in the production of lower grade cotton which can be neither exported nor sold internally.

It is said that more than 4.5 million bales of cotton are in excess stock in the country from the last year crop. This year another five million bales are supposed to be in excess than the internal demand in the country. Cotton crisis is so serious that more than three hundred persons have committed suicide in Vidharbha region of Maharashtra. There are suicides by peasants in Andhra Pradesh and

other States also. So, it is high time that the Government should take serious note of this issue and draw a comprehensive plan to solve the problem of the cotton peasants. I suggest that M/s. Cotton Corporation of India should enter the market and purchase the cotton by giving peasants not less than Rs. 2,000/- per bale.

They should explore the possibility of export of cotton. They should restrain or ban the low-grade cottonseed in the country and supply high-grade cottonseed to peasants in long-term. They should ban the cotton import from outside. They should also subsidies to M/s. National Textile Corporation Mills and Cooperative Spinning Mills for purchase of local cotton. I believe this will help to reduce the serious crisis in cotton.

Lastly, NAFED should open purchasing centres at Warrangal, Guntur and Bhadrachalam to purchase chillies.

[Translation]

DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Giridhari Lal Bhargavaji, please conclude within 1 minute only.

SHRI GIRIDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it is injustice to me. I am thanking you. Please listen to me.

Sir, the quota of kerosene to Rajasthan, which had been allotting to them for the last many years, has been reduced by 7742 kiloliter. The food Minister of Rajasthan has met the former Minister of Petroleum Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar twice and hon'ble Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Vasendraji has met the concerned Ministers on many occasions. This kerosene is used in stoves for cooking the food and in lamps and lanterns for light in unauthorized colonies and jhugi clusters. The urban people also use it due to cuts in power supply. The State Government has curtailed the supply of kerosene proportionally in cities and villages whereas increasing supply of kerosene in the villages and poor unauthorized clusters is a must.

Sir, gas cylinder is used both ways i.e. domestic or commercial. There is lot of difference between the prices of both of them is use commercial cylinder on the occasions of marriages and other social functions has been done mandatory whereas these cylinders should be

[Shri Giridhari Lal Bhargava]

supplied at the rate of domestic cylinder supply. Therefore, I request the Minister that this type of restriction should be done a way with and cylinders should be supplied at the rate of domestic supply instead of commercial supply during the occasion of marriages and other social functions. Every person in possession of a ration card is entitled to 5 liter and kerosene whereas he is getting only 3.8 ltrs. Kerosene due to its shortage.

Sir, I have to more only two demands from the Central Government. Firstly, the curtailment in quota of Kerosene for Rajasthan should be increased on the basis of increasing population. Secondly, the restriction that has been put on the use of domestic gas cylinders on the occasions of social function and marriages should be removed and the Government should do away with the rule of providing commercial cylinder on the occasions of social functions, marriages and religious ceremonies.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I have a list of 40 Members who want to raise important matters.,

(Interruptions)

SHRI B. MAHTAB (Cuttack) : Sir, I raise a very important issue relating not only to Orissa but also to the whole country.

'Kalahandi-Bolangir-Korput (KBK) districts' are the most under-developed districts of the country which needs special assistance and support from the Government. Accordingly, a Long-term Actio Plan was mooted in the earlier Nineties and funds were allotted, but not much progress occurred. Later a Revised Long-Term Action Plan (RLTAP) was implemented in the KVK districts for this Plan period. During the initial three years of launching of the programme between 1995-96 and 1997-98, the Central allocation was only Rs. 20.49 crore against the requirement of Rs. 389.21 crore. This resulted in tardy progress in the implementation of the projects.

So, I urge upon the Government that the programme should be expended by another Plan period of achieve

the major objectives of RLTAP as well as improve the quality of life in KVK districts. . . .*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the issued raised by honourable Member of Parliament in the House is very important and it is also related to my constituency. That is why I associate myself with him.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Yes.

SHRI SUNIL KHAN (Durgapur) : Sir, I draw the attention of the whole House as well as of the hon. Minister of Power regarding the empanelment and absorption of casual workers like safaiwala and drivers in DVC Maithon.

Sir, I met the Chief Engineer on 22nd June, 2005 along with the workers' union regarding the empanelment and absorption of these casual workers who are working in GOMD-II.

A large number of causal workers have been working in GOMD-II under different departments of DVC Maithon. They have been fighting for their due rights. Though the vacancies are lying vacant, they are still in a queue for absorption. So, I urge upon the hon. Minister of Power of kindly absorb these safaiwala and drivers so that they should not suffer.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Next is Shri Shishupal N. Patle, but only to speak for one minute.

[Translation]

SHRI SHISHUPAL PATLE (Bhandara) : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of honourable Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas to this point that there has been in acute shortage of gas cylinders in some States of the country like Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. There has been shortage of gas cylinders in Tumsar Tehsil, Bhandara and Gondia districts of vidarbha region for the last 10 months. As there is need to provide 22 thousand gas cylinders to the consumers in Tumsar whereas only 6-6.5 thousand gas cylinders have been reaching there for 10 months. Due

to this, consumers are facing a lot of inconveniences there. I request and ask honourable Minister as to what reasons are there for shortage of gas cylinders. To the best of my knowledge in connection with this shortage, gas cylinders are being sold to the private persons in good numbers. Therefore, it should be looked into and the necessary action should also be taken by the Minister himself in connection with the supply of gas cylinders to the people of Tumsar, Bhandara and Gondia.

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha) : Sir, tender coconut water is very sweet, and we all now enjoy it on the flights also because it is available there. Why do they not popularise it throughout India? If crores of people in India get accustomed to it, then I think the coconut-growing farmers will be saved. I am saying this because the farmers are now in great difficulty. Each inch of coconut is of importance, and it is very palatable. It is very tasty, and it is useful from the health point of view also. . . .

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please put your demand.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, the farmers of coconut, pepper, cardamom, vanilla, and all such cash crops are in great difficulty and hardship. The farmers are committing suicide because they are not getting good prices for the same. Why is the Government not coming forward to popularise these items among the people?

There was an advertisement issued by the Spices Board, which stated "*Elam oru sheelam aaku*". It was in Malayalam, which meant: "Make cardamom a habit."

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : What is your demand?

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, this was the advertisement issued, and it had a big effect on the people to popularise cardamom. Why not popularise each of these items, and create domestic market for all these items?

I would appeal of the Government of India to popularise these items. Large amounts are shown in the Budget, but no amount is reaching the ground level.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Thomas, it is just

repetition. Please sit down. Nothing more should be recorded.

(Interruptions)*

SHRI P.C. THOMAS : Sir, please give me one minute. The Government should take some initiative to popularise these items. It will also help the farmers who are facing a lot of difficulty. I would submit, through you, that the Government should take a serious note of this matter.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Thomas, it is sheer repetition. Next is Shri Ram Kripal Yadav. I will be able to give you only one minute to speak.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, through you, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Government and entire House, to the very serious issue. Prof. Mumtaz Ansari use to be a member of this House and now he is an ex-Member of Parliament. He has his own house in Patna but was employed in Ranchi, Jharkhand as a professor. Some years ago he stepped out from his house towards office of join the college, but there has been no clue of him so far. Due to which his whole family is agonized. But he is still missing. If there had been any mishappening, there would have been information through you. Whether he is drawing his pension or not, no information is there is this connection. His whole family is agonized.

Through you, I would like to draw the attention of honourable Minister of Home Affairs that whereabouts of Prof. Mumtaz Ansari an ex-Member of Parliament, should be found out as early as possible by taking action and this matter also be handed over to CBI considering it a serious issue. You are custodian of all sitting and ex-honourable members of Parliament. I would like to urge upon you that the Government should be specifically directed so that it could trace out Prof. Mumtaz Ansari while taking initiative in this matter. He should also trace out as to where he is otherwise this whole affair should be handed over to CBI so that his case could be brought to the notice of government.

*Not recorded.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please sit down. Next is Chandrakant Khaire

*(Interruptions)**[Translation]*

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : Honourable Minister of Parliamentary Affairs is sitting here. He may collect the information. It is very important matter. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Your matter has come up and your point has also come up.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : He is also a Minister of Information and Broadcasting. But what does mean information? You should tell him that he should look into it in the capacity of Parliamentary Affairs Minister as to where ex- MP has been missing for two years. The Government are not paying any attention to it. . . .*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Ram Kripal Yadav, please sit down. The point being made by him has already come in the record.

*(Interruptions)**[Translation]*

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : You are a custodian of sitting Members of Parliament and ex-Member of Parliament and it should not be taken in lighter way. It is very important and serious issue. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : May I associate the name of Shri Sitaram Singh?

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV : An ex Member of Parliament is not there. He has been missing for two years. Whether he has been murdered or something other has happened to him, nothing is coming to notice. . . .*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You know that I can not compel the Government to make a statement. Please sit down.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRAKANT KHAIRE (Aurangabad, Maharashtra) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Nanded of Marathwada region of Maharashtra comes under or South Central Zone of Maharashtra. The people of that area have been demanding for long a time and all Members of Parliament, Members of Legislative Assembly and activities have also submitted that Dharmabad and Mudkher should be annexed to Marathi speaking Nanded and be brought under Central Zone by removing them from South Central. I have made this demand many a time. Former Minister of Railways Shri Nitish Kumar was to bring in over a proposal in this regard, but it could not be done so due to some difficulties. Therefore, through you, I would like to urge upon the Minister of Railways and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways sitting in the House that our Nanded Division should be brought under Central Zone by removing it from South Central so as to provide the convenience to the Marathi speaking people. ZRUCC Committee have also sent a similar proposal to the Railway Board.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You may please meet Shri Lalu Prasad separately in his Chamber.

DR. RAMKRISHNA KUSMARIA (Khajuraho) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it has been heavy hailstorm in Tikamgarh and Chhatarpur district located at Khajuraho in which around 250 villages of Tikamgarh and 150 villages of Chhatarpur district have come in the grip of hailstorm prior to it, one hundred or and one hundred twenty five villages were also destroyed due to flood. Thereafter due to frog arhar, masoor and gram crops were destroyed. Condition of that area is very bad Drought like situation is prevailing there. Six tehsiles of Tikamgarh have become drought ridden. Drinking water problem has arisen there. People have been unemployed there. The State government is helping with its full might. But still the Centre Government has not paid any attention so far. I would like to request through you that a survey should be conducted there by sending a central team there and the farmers be helped by giving them a special package. Condition should be brought under control. The people are compelled to migrate from there. Livelihood problem has arisen there. Mere employment guarantee is not going serve the

purpose there. There is also need to give a package in addition to it.

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR : Today revolution has been brought about in the field of information and technology. Post office is the base for exchange of information in six lakhs villages of the country. But unfortunately post office in rural areas are in dilapidated condition. It has come to know that many rural post offices are being closed. I would like to draw the attention of honourable Minister through you regarding my parliamentary constituency that a lot of village post offices are being closed. Similarly, sindhauli is a very big village. No post office is being opened there despite of writing so many times. In addition to it, there is neither proper arrangement of proposed post office in the developed areas in the cities nor they are opened at the right places.

Therefore, I demand that proper arrangement of post offices should be made in the villages and they should be opened on proper places. Proper attention is not being paid in this regard by the Government. I demand that appropriate step should be taken by the Government to improve the postal facilities in rural areas.

[English]

SHRI TAPIR GAO (Arunachal East) : Hon. Deputy-Speaker, I would like to expose the nexus between the Power Minister and a private company and the State Government of Arunachal Pradesh. . . .*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Sabarkantha) : This is a State matter, Sir. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Except Shri Tapir Gao, nothing will be recorded.

*(Interruptions)**

SHRI TAPIR GAO : Sir, under the National Power Policy, the Government of India undertaking, the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation would generate more than 39,000 megawatt from Arunachal Pradesh. Seven projects are under investigation and survey for the same is being conducted by the NHPC. But the Ministry of Power

has permitted the State Government to tender out five projects of NHPC to the private power companies which have no experience in the generation of hydropower. . . .*(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : What is your demand?

SHRI TAPIR GAO : If these private companies, namely, Reliance Energy, JP Construction Group and DS Construction are allowed to generate hydropower, tomorrow anything would happen to Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Assam and Arunachal Pradesh would be the victims of natural calamities. Who would take the risk for this? Therefore, I urge upon the Government not to allow these private companies to go ahead when there is a risk for the North-Eastern States. The office of the hon. Prime Minister has not given permission to meet him in his Office. I would expose the nexus between the private companies, Power Ministry and the State Government.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM SINGH KASWAN (Churu) : Honourable Deputy-Speaker, Sir, many many thank for allowing me to speak. The share of water for Rajasthan in water distribution of Ravi-Beas was determined 8.6 MAF. Today BBM is supplying on 8 MM water to Rajasthan and Rajasthan is struggling for the remaining 06 MAF. This issue has been raised here for several times. I request you to give the remaining 06 MAF share of water to the Rajasthan Government. This water shortage has mainly affected the Churu district. One lac and 20 thousand hectares of land was to be irrigated in Churu district, but all the work has been put to a halt due to the non-availability of water. If water is not made available there, only 20 hectares of land will get water for irrigations and one lack hectare of land will remain unutilized due to the absence of water.

Deputy-Speaker, Sir, a new thing happened yesterday. The Punjab Government has denied supply of water to Indira Gandhi Canal for seven days. Falling of water level of Pong Dam below 1301 feet has been stated as a reason for that. I want to say that the earlier when the water level as below 1301 feet at that time also, but water was supplied. I urge you to give sufficient water for the unreaped crops without making any delay, keeping in view the larger interests of the farmers of Rajasthan from the

[Shri Ram Singh Kaswan]

Pong Dam. Water distribution was executed six months ago. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You point concludes here.

(Interruptions)

12.47½ hrs.

At this stage Shri Subhash Maharia and some other Hon'ble Members came and stood on the floor near the Table)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The House stands adjourned to meet at 1.45 p.m.

12.48 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till forty-five minutes past Thirteen of the Clock.

13.49 hrs

The Lok Sabha re-assembled at forty nine minutes past Thirteen of the Clock.

[Shrimati Krishna Tirath in the Chair]

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377*

[English]

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Matters under Rule 377, listed for the day, may be treated as laid on the Table of the House.

- (i) **Need to construct over-bridges at Kadodara-Char Rasta and Kamrej-Char Rasta on National Highway Nos. 6 and 8 respectively in Gujarat**

DR. TUSHAR A. CHAUDHARY (Mandvi) : I want to draw the attention of the Government towards construction of over-bridges at Kadodara-Char Rasta and Kamrej-Char Rasta on National Highway Nos. 6 and 8 in Gujarat. Kamrej-Char Rasta is located at National Highway No. 8

which also connects Surat City. There is always a Heavy rush of traffic on this Highway. Kadodara Char Rasta is a place where NH 8 crosses NH 6. As both the Highway crosses at Kadodara, there is always a heavy rush on this road. NH 6 on one hand connects my Constituency, 25-Mandvi, and on the other hand it connects Surat City.

Due to heavy rush on these Highways there is always traffic jam on the above two locations. If the over-bridges on Kadodara and Kamrej are being constructed it will ease the problem of the lakhs of the people of these areas who face traffic jam problem on these Highways.

Sir, I request the Government to construct over-bridges at Kadodara-Char Rasta and Kamrej-Char Rasta on national Highway No. 6 and 8 in Gujarat.

- (ii) **Need to clear the pending proposals of the Government of Karnataka for development of tourism in the State**

SHRI IQBAL AHMED SARADGI (Gulbarga) : The Karnataka State Government has submitted the proposal for development of Gulbarga, Bijapure, Bidar, Pattadakal on 24.8.2004 at an estimated cost of Rs. 800.00 Lakhs under Tourism Circuit Development Scheme.

As proposal are still pending with the Union Minister of Tourism, Government of India, I urge upon the Government to urgently consider these proposals and release necessary funds for the same.

- (iii) **Need to open a railway booking centre at Bodinayakanur, Tamil Nadu**

SHRI J.M. AARON RASHID (Periyakulam) : Bodinayakanur is an important international auction centre for spices including Cardamom in my Periyakulam Parliamentary constituency. The small traders and growers of spices are facing lot of difficulties in transporting their goods from this Centre. When these people send their goods through Coimbatore route to other places they are required to incur heavy lorry charges and other octroi duties including Taxes. To avoid such heavy expenses in transportation of their goods, these people have been demanding for opening of a local Railway Booking Centre at Bodinayakanur for booking their goods. In this

*Treated as laid on the Table

connection I have already taken up the matter with the Hon'ble Minister for Railways, but the Railways have not taken any action so far for opening a Booking Centre at Bondinayakanur. Keeping in view the genuine difficulties faced by the growers and traders on this account.

I request the Railway Minister to order for opening of Centre there immediately. It will not only remove their just and genuine difficulties but would also prove to be a profitable adventure for the Railways.

(iv) Need to open Kasturba Girls Residential Schools in Alwar district, Rajasthan

[Translation]

DR. KARAN SINGH YADAV (Alwar) : Honourable Speaker, Sir, Mew (Murslam) community residing in Alwar and Bhartpur districts adjacent to Haryana border are socially and educationally backward. Girl education is very negligible in the region known as Mewat. So, I request the honourable Minister of Humane Resource Development to open Kastoomba girl Residential School in Tizara, Kishangadh, Ramgadh, Laxmangadh tehshils of Mew dominated Alwar district.

(v) Need to check the rising population in the country for sustained growth and development

[English]

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN (Dindigul) : Sir, by 2035, India will have a staggering population of 1.46 billion, far more than China. Clearly all our family planning policies and other population control methods have failed to yield any positive results. With such a vast population our resources are inadequate to sustain a decent quality of life. We do not have either the required capital or low capital output ratio to generate a high rate of growth. Result is that here is a huge unskilled and under-nourished work force, which is a big liability on our economy. India's galloping population is a serious cause of concern because it neutralizes all benefits of growth and development. The government must therefore rise to the occasion and initiate immediate steps for stabilizing our population. If we do not act now we may as well give up our aspirations of playing

a major role on the international scene. I urge upon the Government to give priority to those who are having one child norm in educational institutions and promotions in job.

(vi) Need to clear pending drinking water proposals of the Government of Andhra Pradesh

SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO (Guntur) : Andhra Pradesh Government has urged the Union Government for revival of Submission Programme and Clearance of Projects worth Rs. 68.00 crores to Andhra Pradesh.

About 12,000 out of 15,000 NSS habitations in the State have been covered with safe drinking water with the help of Sub Mission Programme of Government of India and also loans taken from NABARD. People in the remaining 2,682 habitations are still suffering with excess fluoride and brackishness. Government of Andhra Pradesh submitted a project report to cover all these 2,682 habitations with safe drinking water at a cost of Rs. 685.00 crores. Government of India may revive Sub Mission Programme and sanction projects to cover all these 2,682 habitations with safe drinking water. The project report is in the Department of Drinking Water Supply in Government of India.

As this proposal is pending for long, I urge upon the Government to approve the same at an early date.

(vii) Need to expedite construction of houses under 'Sainik Awas Nirman Yojna' in Pithoragadh district, Uttaranchal

[Translation]

SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT "BACHDA" (Almora) : A housing scheme was formulated for the soldiers by the Ministry of Defence in the year 2003-04. Under this scheme Rs. 114 crore (One hundred and fourteen crore rupees) was sanctioned for the soldiers' housing scheme in the bordering district Pithoragadh of Uttaranchal. For this purpose the work of the selection of land in Pithoragadh and prepare a detailed report in this regard was assigned to RITES. But the people of this area are agitated, as no headway has been made so far under the aforesaid scheme.

[Shri Bachi Singh Rawat "Bachda"]

So, I urge the Central Government to start the work of Soldiers' Housing Scheme at the earliest.

(viii) Need to declare the birth anniversary of Sant Guru Ghasidasji on 18 December as a public holiday

SHRI PUNNU LAL MOHALE (Bilaspur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Baba Guru Ghasidas ji of Chhatisgarh was born on 18 December, 1756 at village Giraudpur, Tehsil-Balauada in Raipur district. Smt. Amrautin was his mother and Baba Manhgudas, his father. The saint Baba Santguru Ghashi being inflicted with the death of his wife Mata Sapura, jumped from the Chhata Mountain of 200 feet in the Giraudpuri forest. But nothing happened to him, so he sat in meditation there. He remained in penance there for six months. Subsequently, he became enlightened one and got a cup of elixir. Thereafter he back to his village and brought Mata Sapuri back to her life by digging out her dead-body from the grave which was buried six months ago. He performed many a social work and bring a dead calf to its life.

The number of the followers of this saint all over the country is 9.50 lacs. So, honouring their feelings, 18 December has been declared as holiday by the Chhatisgarh Government. It is, therefore, requested that on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Baba Guru Ghasidas 18 December may be declared as public holiday in the entire country.

(ix) Need to revise royalty on coal and other minerals produced in Orissa

[English]

SHRI ANANTA NAYAK (Keonjhar) : The State of Orissa is suffering a loss of revenue due to the inordinate delay made by the Central Government to revise the royalty rate on coal. As per rule, the revision should have been made in every three years. First the royalty rate was revised on 11.10.1994. The next revision should have been made on 11.10.1997. However, it was revised on 16.8.2002 after the expiry of about eight years.

In the case of major minerals the revision was made on 12.9.2000 and the next revision was due from 12.9.2003, but this has not been done so far. Thus the loss due to late revision in the rate of royalty on coal is nearly Rs. 750.00 crore. As per the State it should have been compensated in case of delay in the revision of royalty. But Government of India has not acted upon this.

In view of this I demand that the revision be made on royalty rate on coal and other major minerals produced in Orissa and other State. The delay in the revision should be suitable compensated without any further loss of time.

(x) Need to take steps for early release of funds to Non-Government Organizations engaged in providing meals to girls in hostels

[Translation]

SHRI BHANWAR SINGH DANGAWAS (Nagaur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, education ratio of women is very low in comparison to that of men. I also accept that State Government and the Central Government are providing financial aid to the girl students in various ways to promote women education. For this purpose, not only free of cost study material, hostel facilities but also free of cost meal is being provided to them. Out of these facilities, some are being provided by the State Governments and some others by the Central Government.

Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the honourable Minister of Human Resource Development to the fact that there are a number of private educational institutions which are promoting girl/women education in the rural areas. However, Ministry of Human Resource Development assist in providing food to the girl students residing in hostel, but it gets delayed and due to procedural lacunae most of the representations are not accepted.

If such funds are allocated to the State Governments, it will be easier for them to sanction the same to the institutions. If it is not done, mechanism should be evolved to sanction it within three months of the inception of the session. Usually session starts in July, so within two months after the receipt of the proposals from the

educational institutions the funds should be allocated to the institutions.

My request is that considering my request, I may please be informed of the decisions taken in this regard.

(xi) Need to look into the problems faced by Cell-one subscribers in National Capital Region, Delhi

MAJ. GEN. (RETD) B.C. KHANDURI (Garhwal) : Speaker, Sir, presently Delhi and the National Capital Region are not being covered under Cell-one mobile services of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited. This area falls within the purview of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited. The subscribers outside Delhi and in National Capital Regions could avail mobile facility through roaming only because the signals of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited are not received in these areas and the signals which are received through roaming facility are from the Dalphin mobile service of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited. Thus the subscribers of Cell-one have to pay roaming charges without any reasons.

I urge the Government to arrange for the improvement so that subscribers to Cell one have not to bear unnecessary economic loss.

(xii) Need to set up a full-fledged E.S.I. hospital in Kanyakumari district, Tamil Nadu

[English]

SHRI A.V. BELLARMIN (Nagercoil) : There are 20 ESI Dispensaries in the southern districts, viz., Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli and Tuticorin of Tamil Nadu. These dispensaries are functioning with limited working hours, say 7 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. These dispensaries with such a meagre working hours are not sufficient enough to cater the medical requirements of the number of workers covered under ESI scheme, in the districts. More so, these are meant for providing out-patient treatment and first aid treatment. The serious cases are referred to Government Hospitals where only very few beds are earmarked for them. This situation often leaves the sick workers in lurch, leaving them with no alternatives but to take treatment from private nursing homes at exorbitant costs. Thus the

insecured workers are deprived of their lawful rights under ESI scheme.

The number of workers covered under the scheme are comparatively higher in Kanyakumari district and it will be facilitating for the workers of the southern three districts, particularly to the workers of Kanyakumari district to have the ESI if a full-fledged ESI Hospital is set up in Kanyakumari district, particularly at Nagercoil where the infrastructure required for it is easily available at the Government Head Quarters Hospital at Kottar which is remaining vacant as the Hospital was shifted to Government Medical College premises at a nearby place, Asaripattinam.

I request Central Government to take up the matter with the Government of Tamil Nadu.

(xiii) Need to open a Branch of State Bank of India at Jakhania market in Saidpur Parliamentary constituency, Uttar Pradesh

[Translation]

SHRI TUFANI SAROJ (Saidpur) : Speaker, Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards the problems faced by businessmen, employees, officers and other persons residing at Jakhania market. Jakhania is not only a town but also, an important railways station of this area. There is also tehsil headquarters and block headquarters in this town. There are also degree colleges, inter-colleges and high schools in this town. There is sizeable number of Government office also due to presence of market; railway station, block officer and tehsil headquarter. There is the office of the S.D.M. and the courts also. But, due to lack of any branch of State Bank of India, the officers, employees, business men and common men have to face problems for getting their bank drafts prepared for debiting and credit of money as well as business transactions. To get rid of these problems, the people of this constituency have been demanding since long time for opening of a branch of State Bank of India in Jakhania.

Therefore, through you, Sir. I would like to demand from the Government for taking immediate steps to open a branch of State Bank of India in Jakhania market.

(xiv) Need to expedite construction of National Highways in Bihar

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna) : Speaker, Sir, the government have given their approval to N.H.A.I. for completing the construction of 890 km. National Highways but the construction work for the same have not started yet. The reason behind it is that no contractor is ready to bid a tender for it. Bihar is a backward State. The Roads and infrastructure facilities are almost nil in Bihar. Keeping in view the circumstances the Government should take some steps to relax the conditions of tender if necessary, so that contractors may be encouraged to construct roads there.

Through this House, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways and urge him to take steps to gear up the work of road constructions, keeping in view the poor infrastructure construction of Bihar.

(xv) Need to set up industrial units in backward District of Tamil Nadu

[English]

SHRI D. VENUGOPAL (Tiruppattur) : Sir, I would like to highlight a growing need in drought prone districts of Tamilnadu. I urge the Union Government to ensure uniform development in all the backward districts of the country while they implement job oriented schemes and economic development measures like setting up Special Economic Zones or identifying drought prone districts for special agricultural development programmes. Thiruvannamalai, Thiruppathur and Vellore in and around my Constituency have got potential for industrial activity with traditional labour who were till now gainfully employed in tannery units. Recently, Union Government has cleared more than 100 Special Economic Zones both in public and private sector. It is necessary to start such zones in industrially backward areas of the country in the Joint sector to augment industrial growth and economic development in backward areas. I call for a coordinated effort on the part of rural Development, Agriculture and Commerce and Industrial Development Ministries along with the Ministry of Finance to start viable projects in setting up industrial

units and extending modern technological facilities to farmers and labour force in industrially backward areas.

(xvi) Need to construct a new bridge over river Lone on Unnao-Raibareilly road, Uttar Pradesh besides conducting a survey of dilapidated roads in Unnao Parliamentary Constituency

[Translation]

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK (Unnao) : Speaker, Sir, the bridge over Lone river on Unnao-Raibareilly road, in my parliamentary constituency, Unnao, in district Unnao of Uttar Pradesh is in damaged condition for more than two years. The condition of Bangarmau-Sandila route is very bad. It is not suitable for traffic at all. Pariyar-Chakalvanshi road, Bangarmau-Miyanganj-Asivan road, the road leading Lalkuan to Rasudabad town area are also in the bad condition.

Besides these roads there are many other roads that are badly damaged. Due to bad conditions of these roads the villagers have to face a lot of difficulties in coming and going. Through this House, I would like to request the Union Government to take steps to issue directions to the State Government for earlier construction of the bridge over Lone river on Unnao-parliamentary constituencies, one of the most backward areas. Besides, Union Government should also direct the State Government for early completion of construction of the above-mentioned roads after conducting a survey of the damaged roads.

(xvii) Need to sanction funds for renovation of Nrusinghanath Temple including facility of rope ladder between Nrusinghanath and Harishankar temples in Orissa

[English]

SHRI PRASANNA ACHARYA (SAMBALPUR) : Nrusinghanath temple is situated on Gandhmardhan Hill in Orissa. This temple was built during 12th Century A.D. Thousands of devotees from all over Orissa and Chattisgarh come every year to this temple to worship Lord Nrusinghanath. An annual congregation is held every year where lakhs of people gather for a Darshan of the Lord. Thus this temple has been an attraction of the pilgrims,

particularly, the Vanwasi since centuries. But due to poor maintenance, the structure of the temple has started weakening and few years back a crack developed in the body of the temple. Though, the Archaeological Department did some repair work still a thorough renovation has become highly necessary.

The Gandhmardhan Hill is a divider between districts Bargarh and Bolaangir. Whereas on the one side Nrusinghanath is situated, on the other side of the hill a famous Harishankar Temple is located which also attracts lakhs of pilgrims. But there is no sufficient infrastructural development in that place to facilitate better tourism.

I would, therefore, urge upon the Ministry of Tourism and Culture to (i) sanction the required amount for total renovation of the Nrusinghanath Temple and the Archaeological Survey of India be asked to take up the work, (ii) provision may please be made by the Tourism Ministry of Government of India for providing rope ladder facility from Nrusinghanath to Harishankar which will help prospect of tourism in that area.

(xviii) Need to release a Commemorative stamp in memory of M.C. Veerabahu, veteran freedom fighter of Tamil Nadu

SHRI M. APPADURAI (Tenkasi) : Mr. M. C. Veerabahu, a great freedom fighter and a distinguished Parliamentarian related to the great V.O. Chidambaram Pillai hailed from a business family and took to public service as a Lawyer. Shri Veerabahu responded to Mahatma Gandhiji's call against imperialism and took keen interest in India's freedom struggle for many years and gave up his lucrative legal practice. He suffered imprisonment twice. He was closely associated with stalwarts like Kamaraj and Rajaji. He actively worked for removal of untouchability, prohibition and championed the cause of Scheduled Castes. He was a member of the Constituent Assembly and Provisional Parliament during 1946-1952.

Though he worked for Freedom fighter's pension, he never took any pension throughout his life. He managed his family expenses only from his ancestral property and income. He always worked for the social cause.

M. C. VEERABAHU Centenary Celebration Committee has already requested the Minister of Communication to release a Commemorative stamp on his birth centenary on 19.5.2003. Hence, I urge upon the Hon'ble Minister of Communication and Information Technology to release a stamp in memory of the great freedom fighter and great parliamentarian Mr. M. C. VEERABAHU immediately. If not now at least on his 30th death anniversary a commemorative postal stamp may be released to pay respect to that great freedom fighter.

(xix) Need to revive Sindri Fertilizer Works and Hindustan Zinc Limited in Jharkhand with a view to protect the interest of workers

[Translation]

SHRI TEK LAL MAHTO (Giridih) : Speaker, Sir, Sindri Fertilizer works in Dhanbad district of Jharkhand has been closed since the year 2002. Due to closure of this plant workers employed therein have been rendered jobless and their livelihood is in danger. And the Tundu unit of Hindustan Zinc Limited a public undertaking of Government of India was handed over to Messers Star Light Opportunities and Venchers Limited on 11.04.2002 under disinvestments policy but it is a matter of regret that this company closed its plant on false pretexts. As a result, hundreds of workers lost their jobs. Workers should be paid with salaries and allowances for the period, these both plants are lying closed and sincere efforts should be made to revive them immediately.

(xx) Need to release adequate funds for computerization and modernisation of courts.

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha) : It is necessary that immediate steps be taken to computerize all Courts in India so as to make Judiciary more efficient, speedy and transparent. A proposal for computerization of all District Courts in India was pending with Planning Commission. It is also necessary that the Centre gives more assistance for modernization and construction of court buildings, furniture and other facilities for all courts including Lower Judiciary. The appointment of Judges in various High Courts are getting delayed and this has caused flooding

[Shri P.C. Thomas]

of pendency in several of them. The new building of Kerala High Court is befitting to the stature of Judiciary. More funds should be allotted and all High Court in India should be given modern facilities like that of Kerala High Court. Clients and people who visit courts must be given facilities so that they all should feel that they are assisting the process of Law and Justice. The common man, especially the poor should get speedy justice in effective manner. I request the Government to take urgent steps in this regard spending more money on Administration of Justice.

13.51 hrs.

PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS REGULATION BOARD BILL, 2006

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Madam Chairman I rise to welcome this Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Bill, 2006. In fact, the earlier NDA Government should be thanked for this very bill as the NDA Government made up their mind to bring this bill in the year 2002 itself and got its draft prepared to be introduced in the both Houses of the Parliament. But under some circumstances, the 13th Lok Sabha dissolved and this bill could not be passed. Moreover, it was due for the scanning by the Parliamentary Committee concerned so it was delayed further. Since then, it has been a long-felt need that a regulatory authority should be constituted for Petroleum and Natural Gas, as many private companies have also joined in this sector along with the public sector companies and thus, a controlling and regulatory authority is all the more needed. Hon. Minister concerned is present here, though the former Minister who brought in this Bill before Rajya Sabha is not present here, but Shri Murlidhar Deora has succeeded to him and this is his first Bill. Therefore, we welcome him also.

Madam Chairperson, regarding this Bill I would like to state, as has been stated in the introduction of this Bill also that it has been brought to protect the interests of consumers and entities engaged in specified activities relating to petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas and to ensure uninterrupted and adequate supply of

petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas in all parts of the country and to promote competitive markets and to regulate the refining, processing, storage, transportation, distribution, marketing and sale of petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas excluding production of crude oil and natural gas and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Madam, two kind of works are generally done in this sector; namely upstream and downstream works. This board will only supervise the downstream works like extraction of oil or natural gas and post-extraction works, such as—refining, processing, storage, transportation, distribution, marketing, sales etc. But I would like to urge upon the Government to also constitute a similar board for upstream works too such as, exploration of oil and gas, and make incidental research-work etc. This very bill brought here, makes no mention about this aspect. Please tell us about your policy on this as to how long such a board will take to get constituted? Hon. Minister may please clarify the position on this while giving his reply. The board in question will have no control over the exploration and digging-work for extraction of oil or natural gas, what is the position about this? At present, we have to import 70% of our required quantum of oil. We have very low production of oil and we have to depend on its import. For the last three-four years, there are reports that the Godavari and Krishna river basins have large reserves of oil and natural gas. Large reserves of oil have been explored at Jaisalmer, Jalore and Barmer in Rajasthan. Under Bombay-high, which was taken to be a saturated field earlier, many new oil wells are being explored for and digging-work is one at other newer places. Many private companies like Reliance, ESSAR and Cairns Energy have been permitted to conduct their activities in this field side by side with ONGC and other public sector companies.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister, through you, Madam, that what is the reason that under new licence policy, the private companies conducting digging and other works, invariably explore oil and gas reserves while the public sector oil companies are lagging behind and failing to explore the same? Is it so that private sector is being encouraged covertly at the cost of public sector companies in which huge amount of public money is invested?

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Rasa Singh ji, please speak in brief and to the point as the allotted time for discussion on this Bill is about to be over and the hon. Minister is yet to reply.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Madam Chairman, I am coming to the point. My point is that public sector companies like ONGC, Oil India Limited, Indian Oil, HPCL and BPCL are presently engaged in distribution of oil and gas but they are not taking help of foreign companies in exploration and digging-work, perhaps it is the reason that they are not much successful in this field while other private sector companies are doing good work. I would like the hon. Minister to clarify the position in this regard also while going his reply.

Many hon. Members while participating in this discussion have said that this Regulatory Board reserves the right of controlling the price of oil. With apology, I would like to tell the hon. Minister that this very right of the Regulatory Board, i.e. to control the prices, is nowhere mentioned in this Bill. This Board is equipped with powers to probe into the irregularities committed, if any, and also to control them, but controlling the prices is beyond its purview. I would like the hon. Minister to please clarify whether the prices of oil would be determined *at par* with the prevailing international prices or status in this connection or is there any mechanism to fix them?

There is a good provision in this Bill about composition of the Regulatory Board and its members and also that the experts in this field will be given place among those. A Search Committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of the member of Energy division in the Planning Commission. In this Search Committee, the Secretaries of Ministries of Finance, Law and Justice, Petroleum and Natural Gas and Commerce and Industry will also be the members, besides him. This Committee will make a panel of board members. But I want to emphasize here the need to include the experts who are aware of the public problems and who know about intricacies of oil and gas transportation-system so that they can discuss the problems in this regard.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Please conclude.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Madam, please don't ring the bell so frequently. I need some more time and seek your protection. I greet you on this suggest Chair as Chairperson.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : But you should also respect the honour this Chair begets.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Many companies are engaged in oil extraction works in Rajasthan, Gujarat and other States. But the Government have set up refineries in Punjab, U.P. etc, where there are no oil-reserves while in Rajasthan we have huge reserves of oil. In Rajasthan, oil-reserves have been found in Jaisalmer, Sanchore, Barmer and Jalore and I request you to consider setting up of oil-refineries there. Whenever we ask about setting up of refineries in Rajasthan, the Government shifts the responsibility sometimes on the public sector oil-companies and sometimes on the private companies. The people of Rajasthan would not like the oil and gas link running through their State if their just demands about oil-refineries are not met. They would not resist themselves. I would like the hon. Minister to please clarify the position on this also.

14.00 hrs

I would like to raise one more point. There is so much adulteration being found in oil. The kerosene is adulterated with diesel, its being cheaper and easy to mix. The Government should check this adulteration as this kind of fuel chokes the engine of the vehicle in which it is used. I have come across a news-item which says that a certain device will be fitted at every fuel-outlet which would reveal if there is any adulterated material in the fuel. If there is any such device, it should be fitted at every fuel-point.

There is one more problem that dealers of public sector companies get less commission. There are all sorts of facilities in Reliance therefore all vehicles are going after Reliance but outlets of Public Sector Companies are not growing. People do not have information about regulatory Board and other rules. Now, there exists a petrol pump at every furlong and those, who have taken petrol pumps are getting prepared to return this also.

Matter of fixation of prices is also important and what happened to pipeline coming here? Please tell us whether

[Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat]

pipeline will come through Iran and Pakistan or through Turkistan-Myanmar and Bangladesh? What is the condition of public sector companies working in Sudan and Russia with these countries? Tell us about how much requirement will be fulfilled and how much petrol will have to be imported and when will the works of extraction begin?

[English]

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now. There are still 15 more Members to speak on this Bill. If we give even 10 minutes to each Member, then also it would take around 150 minutes.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : The hon'ble Minister should also tell us about non availability of gas in the Capital, long ques for cylinder and shortage of cylinders in the country also.

[English]

SHRI K.S. RAO (Eluru) : Madam, this is the first Bill that our hon. Minister is introducing as the new Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas. I wish him all success not only for getting this Bill passed, but also for his efforts to bring in substantial changes in the field of hydrocarbons in this country. This Bill should have been passed a long time back, particularly when there was a change in the Administered Price Mechanism and a lot of encouragement was given to private sector and the Government decided to de-regulate the petro-chemicals sector. At least now the hon. Minister has brought this Bill and I am sure, that this Bill would be passed by this House aimed at bringing about energy security in this country and also to rectify a lot of irregularities that are presently plaguing this sector.

Sir, to begin with, I would like to refer to some of the clauses in this Bill. It is a well drafted Bill on the lines of other similar Bills that were meant for setting

up regulators for different other sectors in the country. I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister two to three points for this consideration. In regard to selection of a Chairperson it has been mentioned in the Bill and I quote :

"The Central Government shall appoint a Chairperson and other members of the Board from amongst persons of eminence in the field of petroleum and natural gas, industry, management finance, law, administration and consumer affairs."

But in the matter of selection of a member from the legal community it has been mentioned specifically and I quote :

". . . provided no person shall be appointed as a member (legal) unless he is qualified to be a judge in a High court."

We do understand this stipulation when it comes to selecting a member from the legal community. Now, similarly, should there not be a technical member qualified in that particular subject? But such a thing has not been mentioned anywhere in the Bill. I would like the hon. Minister to see to it that a similar condition also be incorporated in the Bill. At least there must be one technical member with enough experience in the particular field. Otherwise, it would be headed by a permanent non-technical member resulting in the regulator itself becoming useless.

My second point is about clause 31. It is mentioned there that a Technical Member will have to be there on the Appellate Tribunal. I certainly support that because no right decisions will be taken by the Tribunal also without a Technical Member. But then it is said :

"The Technical Member (Petroleum and Natural Gas) shall be appointed from the panel prepared by the Search Committee constituted under sub-section (2) of section 4."

Unfortunately, the Search Committee does not consist of even one Technical Member. The Search

Committee consists of Secretaries and Member, Planning Commission. At times, it may be that none of them may be having technical knowledge particularly connected with petroleum and natural gas. I wish this Search Committee must consist of one Technical Member who is an expert in hydrocarbons because he will at least look into the real technical aspect to choose the right person as a Member.

Clause 31 also says that a person shall not be qualified for appointment as a Technical Member (Petroleum and Natural Gas) of the Appellate Tribunal unless he is, or has been, a Secretary for at least one year in the Ministry. A Technical Member must also be a Secretary in the Ministry. I was given to understand that on many an occasion, the Secretary of Petroleum and Natural Gas was not a technical person. He was only a bureaucrat. If that were to be so, what is the difficulty in selecting a Technical Member who must necessarily be a Secretary? So, I wish the hon. Minister to give a serious thought to it and see if that requires an amendment in the clause dealing with the Secretary in the Ministry or Department. In other Departments, there will not be a person of eminence in hydrocarbons. If such a Secretary will be there, that Secretary will be there only in this Ministry. And unfortunately, it is headed all the time only by bureaucrats who are not technical people. I wish that an amendment may be required. I wish the hon. Minister to think in these lines. I do not want to go into clause by clause of the Bill. But I wish the hon. Minister to take care of these three points.

I appreciate that this Bill is brought with a view to protect the interests of the consumer. I am happy that this most important point is incorporated. The Bill also says "to ensure uninterrupted and adequate supply in all parts of the country including remote areas" If they really do it, then it is exemplary. But I do not think they will be able to give adequate supply everywhere and ensure fair price. I appreciate these points. It is also said "to promote competitive markets, access to common and contract carriers on a non-discriminatory basis".

When I went through the objectives for which this Regulatory Board Bill is brought, I felt that they are excellent which I admire. But then, I only have an apprehension as to whether they will be able to assure uninterrupted supply.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Please conclude. There are three more Members to speak.

SHRI K.S. RAO : Madam, please do not interrupt me. I am not the kind of a person who would speak often.

I wanted to only caution the Minister on things like adulteration that is going on in a big way in this country causing lakhs and lakhs of rupees of loss indirectly. When oil is adulterated, it affects the functioning of the machine and then everything will get spoiled, the cost of which will be abnormal. But there is no mechanism provided in the Vigilance Department to check these things. They are only depending upon the recruiting and investigating agency or appointing an investigatory authority as and when required.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Please sum up now. Only eleven minutes are left.

SHRI K.S. RAO : I will do it, Madam.

Then artificial scarcity is another problem. Earlier, taking the opportunity of artificial scarcity, there used to be black-marketing. That also has to be checked.

As far as the distribution of cooking gas is concerned, there is a lot of harassment by the dealers. We too experience this and we also know how much the dealers harass the consumers while issuing the gas cylinders. So, in respect of all these aspects, I wish the hon. Minister to think it terms of providing a permanent investigating mechanism in the Bill.

When it comes to the question of Public Distribution System, it is mentioned many a time that cooking gas meant for domestic use is diverted to commercial use. That also has to be checked.

[Shri K.S. Rao]

It is said that in the Krishna-Godavari basin a lot of gas is found by various agencies, like Reliance, Gujarat Petroleum, Cairn Energy, etc. I wish to know from the hon. Minister whether he is going to arrange town gas to Hyderabad. To many of the coastal areas in Andhra Pradesh, in Krishna-Godavari belt, it can be supplied very cheap. The cost can also be brought down substantially. The entire country would be happy if they were to arrange a pipeline and connect it to the pipe directly by which the cost also can be reduced.

There was a proposal by which the ONGC wanted to start a refinery in Andhra Pradesh in the land of 6,000 acres. I understand that it is getting delayed only because of the delay in the acquisition of land. We did not know the inside story as to why it is being delayed in spite of the fact that the ONGC has provided all the funds required for that. We will talk to the Chief Minister also. We request the hon. Minister also to interfere in that.

It is mentioned that the Head Office of the Regulatory Authority will be in Delhi. The Member who spoke before me also talked of this. How many offices will be there in Delhi? Mostly gas is found in Mumbai, Gujarat and in Andhra Pradesh.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Do not elaborate that. You just mention your points.

SHRI K.S. RAO : The Head Office must be situated in any one of these places. At least a regional office of the Regulatory Authority must be provided in Rajahmundry, where gas is found in the vicinity. Due to the acute shortage of the hydro carbons in the country, the hon. Minister must concentrate on research and development on alternative fuels. Through research and development, we will be able to find alternative fuels in this country. According to the Minister himself, we are importing today 26 billion dollars worth of oil. Obviously, the sales of petroleum products must be ten lakh crores of rupees.

Keeping that in mind, we have to find alternative sources of fuel. Use of jetropha, bio-diesel and ethanol is already being encouraged. So, research and development

is a must. It must be taken up in a big way. Without that our entire treasury will be spent only on the import of oil.

I understand that the Ministry was thinking in terms of having a collaboration with Mr. Mittal. When the entire technical people are with the ONGC, Oil India, etc, whether it is Mr. Mittal or anybody else, they will utilise our technicians. When the private people can use our own technical engineers and do business worth crores of rupees, why can the Minister not think in terms of utilising our own manpower and doing it by the Government itself?

The ONGC Videsh is doing an excellent job. . . . (Interruptions) We are having 140 billion dollars worth of foreign exchange reserves. We are paying more interest to the depositors and we are getting less interest by keeping it in the American treasury. I request the hon. Minister to give part of that reserves to the ONGC, the Oil India and other oil marketing companies to take up blocks outside the country and get oil sharing so that our import can be reduced. We can save a lot of money. I understand that the investment that is given to the ONGC Videsh is not to the extent that is required. When we are giving our blocks to the foreigners, why should we not utilise our own technical people by which we can provide employment also?

I would request the hon. Minister to take all these things into account. I congratulate him. I wish that in his tenure the import of oil will be reduced and we will be able to produce all these things locally.

DR. SUJAN CHAKRABORTY (Jadavpur) : Thank you, Madam, for giving me the scope one speaking on such an important Bill. First, I would like to congratulate the new Minister, being a parliamentarian for a long time, but, maybe, this is the first time he has introduced a Bill, which is of such an important nature.

The question of energy in our country is very important and critical. Technically also, it is very complex one. There is no doubt that the whole issue should be dealt with properly. There is also no doubt about it that 70 per cent of our oil consumption is getting imported. Therefore, I

would agree here that the question of oil or gas exploration is much more important. There is no indication in the given Bill how the things will be regulated, planned or proposed. I hope, the Minister will answer these points at the end.

The original Bill, which was placed in 2003, was scrutinized by the Standing Committee. The Committee has given a lot of suggestions. The Ministry has accepted many of the suggestions. But, some new issues also have been taken up in the new Bill of 2006 like city, local area distribution network, and many other issues, which have never been discussed in the Standing Committee. It would be proper if, maybe, a short time of one month or so is given to the Committee to scrutinize the new points that have been incorporated after the Standing Committee's proposals. I believe, that chance should be given.

As regards the composition of the Board and the competence of technical persons in the Board, Appellate Committee, etc., I broadly agree with what Mr. Rao has suggested. I would not like to go into the details. Yes, it is true that the Chairperson of such an important Board must be a technical one. It cannot be generalized as has been placed in the Bill. Technical, management, finance, and what not, everything can be taken from that end. It must be very professionally, technically expert team.

The composition of Search Committee also is probably somewhat different. The Search Committee is being headed by Member Energy, Planning Commission, which, probably, is not proper. Probably, there is no such reference where Search Committee is being planned that way. Three members in the Board will be rather appointed by the Central Government. The loyalty of the Board to the Government is clear. But, what about the accountability? Is the Board accountable to the Government? It is probably not accountable. Then, whether there should be any scope for the Board to be accountable to the Parliament? It cannot be made accountable just by placing the report in the Parliament. A provision for structured discussion in the Parliament on the functioning and the report of this Board must be provided for.

I would like that some equitable balance of distribution of oil and gas should be there. Whenever the Members speak, they also speak that the reserve is very good in the country, whether it is North Eastern States or Western

States or Southern States or the Sunderbans. That has been discussed here also. We have huge reserves of gas. These days, probably, gas is more important than oil. The last century was the arena for oil. But, the new century, obviously, will be the arena for gas. Even the question of gas hydrate also is there. All taken together, the question of exploration and the question of equitable distribution, since gas is very important for the development of the States and also the remote areas, how best that can be made use of should be planned specifically.

I would like to say that these days in the remote areas, in the districts – not only in the urban areas but also in the rural areas – the necessity of gas distribution is increasing. CNG is being supplied in some cities in the country. But it can be supplied to the other parts of the country. Along with our own gas reserves, we have the scope of inter-country gas pipeline. I would rather propose that the distribution network, the retail network should be coordinated. Since it is related to the development of the States, the State Governments must also have their say. Probably, this Bill has not provided for that. I would like to remind here that a number of scams in the field of oil and gas has taken place over the years. So, involving the States in the process of registration, opening outlets is a must. It should also be provided for.

The question of hudge adulteration is there. Yes, it is quite known to us that kerosene is being adulterated with diesel. Petrol is also getting adulterated – Shri Rao has rightly said it – thereby the entire cost is going up. It is affecting the machinery also. So, what should be the method of checking that? Probably, specific scope should be kept in the functioning of the Regulatory Board about this. For example, in the case of milk, lactometers are there. So, we have to think of how things can be invented and developed so that the consumers themselves can understand it.

The question of protection of consumers is a very important issue. The question of checking adulteration and making it known to the consumers is also very much important. I believe that from that end, maybe, some R and D work is also required. From that end, particularly, the question of adulteration should be dealt with. . . .
(Interruptions)

[Dr. Sujan Chakraborty]

I will complete it within one minute. The question of protecting the consumers' right is very important. I agree with you that the Headquarters must be in Delhi. But the branch offices must be there particularly in the areas where the gas reserves are there – maybe in South, in Gujarat or whatever it may be. In West Bengal also, the Sundarbans has very important gas reserves. All of us known about it. So, from that end, Kolkata should also have an office. Otherwise, how will the people appeal when a dispute arises? Whenever there is any dispute, can they come to the Head Office to make the things clear here? No, it is not possible. It cannot be.

Next, the composition of the Appellate Authority is also not correctly maintained. The Appellate Authority cannot be along with that of the Electricity Appellate Authority. It should not be like that. Technically, both are related to energy. But the question of electricity and the question of oil and gas are completely different. So, it should be a separate Appellate Authority in this case also.

For the protection of consumers, the most important thing is pricing. A lot of debate is going on for years together in this regard. Towards conclusion, I would like to say that 60 per cent of the oil price is because of the burden of tax. How can it be properly shared? It is a very important issue. Maybe, within one and a half years, probably price has been increased four times. Maybe, because of the pressure of the Left Parties and others, it could not be increased the way it was getting proposed. So, there must be a pricing mechanism in respect of oil and gas it should be affordable to the people. Affordability and the availability of gas is the index of the development of the State. That should be the approach in fixing the price also. I believe that from this angle, the Ministry can think of. I would be better – since new incorporations are also there – that a Committee should further cross-check the issues within a month so that we can come to a conclusive decision.

With these words, I would congratulate the new hon. Minister. He is a long-time Parliamentarian. He has taken the Ministerial responsibility now. I hope, he will correct the issues and the country will prosper further.

[Translation]

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK (Unnao) : Madam Chairman, I express my gratitude to you for giving me an opportunity to express my views about Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Bill, 2006. I express my gratitude to the new Petroleum Minister also. I think that this Board has been constituted because the Government was not in a position to do something or failing to do something. The Government was not doing this work appropriately. I will not take much time but want to place some points before you. I want to make a request a hon'ble Minister through you that this fact should be kept in mind along with constitution of the Board that oil is a sector to which people of weaker sections, rich sections and all other sections of India are directly associated with. If the oil reaches to our poor people properly and at reasonable price then we will be able to fulfill the dreams to some extent which the people had cherished regrading India really.

Madam, The constitution of Regulatory Board is a most important thing. I want that oil experts should be included in the Board. Whether the Government Officials be included in the Board or not but inclusion of oil experts is necessary. He should have adequate knowledge of the subject as to how we could progress well in oil sector and how we could make oil available on reasonable price to consumers.

Madam, oil is costly in our country because production of oil is less in our country and we depend more on foreign countries. We see advertisements in newspapers, television and at road sides regarding oil. I ask to the Minister as to what is the need of these advertisements? If advertisement is not made about oil, can we not sell this oil? I have information that advertising companies give commissions upto 20 to 25 percent to oil companies so that their advertisement be seen in TV, Newspapers and on cross roads? I want to ask whether advertisement to save oil cannot be given by the Department itself. I fail to understand why advertisement is needed to sell the oil. Therefore, I request the Minister that there should be restrictions on these advertisements and they should know as to why advertisement of crores of rupees are given now a days. The Government should make such arrangements so that the people could understand that to save oil is beneficial.

Madam, some private companies have come in competition to public sector companies in oil sector only a few year ago. I have sent that private companies have been making profit whereas staff of public sector oil companies are sitting idle. The reason of less sale of petrol at the public sector Petrol pumps is that they adulterate kerosene in petrol and this is done in connivance with the officers. The consumer think that on the one hand there is adulteration and on the other petrol is less in quantity. Due to this he opts for private companies. When the Government is in the process of constituting the Board then it is my request that oil experts be included in the Board for the betterment of the people keeping in view my suggestion.

Madam Chairman, I have met and informed hon'ble Minister in writing and to MD and Chairman of Indian Oil Corporation as to what extent corruption prevailed in northern zone of loc? From where this corruption originate? It prevails in whole of India. It happened in South Zone. Highest Bidder has been awarded tender instead of highest Bidder in northern zone. It is matter directly linked to corruption. When I made a request to the Minister then officers began to say that it is not so. I have to say that I give affidavit and that officer should also give affidavit and let the culprit be punished. I have full faith in leadership of the Minister and hope that he will take action in this matter. . . .(Interruptions)

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Please speak on main points and conclude.

SHRI BRAJESH PATHAK : Madam Chairman, I am doing the same. It is a very serious matter. You also must be knowing this. When corruption rises it reaches towards the top echelons also. The Government should pay attention towards this side. Besides, this Depot have been made for the distribution of kerosene in the country for the poor people. Where quota owners goes with material to villages. The poor, lit their store and lantern with this kerosene oil. But it has been found that the whole kerosene oil of quota is brought to the petrol pump. If the quota owner uses this oil for any other purpose then the District Magistrate cancels the license of quota owner. What I mean to say is that Minister should pay attention towards this. Such depots are existing in the whole country which are

the places of corruption. The Government should put restrictions on them.

Madam Chairman, our Hon'ble Member of Parliament from Varanasi has told that a Regional Manger of Bharat Petroleum in charge of that area has been sacked as he was honest and dutiful officer who took action against the adulteration and black-marketing of petrol. The reason for this and framing charges against him has been stated that he was involved in corruption but charger leveled against him could not be proved in the enquiry and now that hapless officer is facing the music. The activities of adulteration are still going in the petrol pumps, and they are looting public as earlier. These activities are going on in entire Varanasi zone. Through you and through this House I urge the Government that this corruption should be checked at any cost.

Madam, another matter is related to Unnao. There was a petrol pump of Indian Oil which was first seized, then suspended and in the last its licence was cancelled by the Regional Sale Tax Officer as the document of Petrol Pump were not produced before him on his demand. I would like to bring this fact into the notice of the Hon'ble Minister that this Sales Tax officer signed the all three orders on the same day. I have told all these things to the Member of Standing Committee on Petroleum, Shri Rajesh Verma also. That poor petrol pump owner did not grease the palm of that officer hence he cancelled the licence of the petrol pump. And now the petrol pump owner is on the verge of starvation. It is, therefore, requested that the Hon'ble Minister may pay heed to the aforesaid things so that we may perceive that there is such a Minister who can hear the people. With these words I conclude and express my thank for providing me time.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA (Surat) : Madam Chairman, I am grateful to you for providing me an opportunity to speak.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Ranaji, please, you conclude your speech in three minutes only as only three minutes time is left for your party.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA : I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to the clause 4(1) in which it is enumerated that there will be a legal member along with

[Shri Kashiram Rana]

three more members, to be appointed by the Government of India in the Board which is likely to be constituted. Clause 4(1) says:

[English]

"The Central Government shall appoint the Chairperson and other Members of the Board from amongst persons of eminence in the fields of petroleum and natural gas industry, management, finance, law, administration or consumer affairs."

[Translation]

MADAM CHAIRMAN : If you give only suggestions here then you will save your time.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA : I would like to give only one suggestion that now-a-days all the work like distribution and transportation ultimately depend on consumer. No one is here to hear the complaints of the consumers. LPG is not being supplied to them. Work in this regard is being done for a long time but their problem regarding LPG could not be resolved yet. I would like to say that the Member from amongst the consumers should be included in the Board. His eligibility must be examined but a representative of the consumers, for whom the board has been constituted, should be included in the Board.

I would like to touch upon the clause 21 in which it is enumerated that. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Ranaji, your party's time is over.

[Translation]

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA : Such a big board is being constituted. . . .(Interruptions)

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Please give your suggestions directly.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA : If this problem is not solved, then its condition may worsen in future, moreover women also complain that there is shortage of gas. . . . (Interruptions)

MADAM CHAIRMAN : The proceedings of the House will be run according to the time available here. Please give your suggestions within one minute.

SHRI KASHIRAM RANA : Right to use has been explained in the clause 21. I would like to seek explanation from the Hon'ble Minister as to how they will distribute the remaining capacity mentioned therein and how the rights will be given to them. At present the Gujrat State Petroleum Corporation has laid pipelines in my area. Everything is complete. Now we are asking for gas and the same is not being given to us. We are asking the gas for the Pipawa Power Project. The Government has said that gas will be given at market rate. We accepted it. We made the highest bid whereas the Government said that gas will be given to GAIL and not to you. That is why I want to know how the remaining capacity and quantity will be distributed.

I want to say that the State Government should be given rights in this regard. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat Maharashtra and other oil producing states should be authorized to distribute capacity. The Government may put its condition on that. This way we will be able to pass on the burden of the board constituted by the Government of India on the State Governments. I have observed that the State Government of Gujarat wants to distribute it. Would you like to bring in any change in this clause or would the Hon'ble Minister like to make any clarification in this regard so that no injustice is done.

[English]

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL (Vijayawada) : Madam Chairperson, thank you for the opportunity given to me. I would like to commend the hon. Minister for introducing this Bill on the one hand and on the other hand I will give some suggestions to be incorporated in this Bill.

We need to recollect and remember that many people want the Government to protect the consumers. The main problem the consumer from the Government. That is the reason why we are moving from the controlled economy and controlled Government to the regulated economy and regulated Government. This Bill has introduced the concept of a Regulatory Board. I fail to understand, why it cannot be authority because authority has more powers and Government interference will be less.

There is a full chapter here, in clause 42, on the Government interference and Government powers, where it says that 'Not only on policy but on any matter, a directive given from the Government has to be implemented by this Board'. It means, this Board does not have the full authority and full powers to act on their own. The reason why we are moving on to this regulatory mechanism is that the regulator should act dispassionately, objectively, practically, taking into consideration all the factual situations so that they can bring about equitable justice in this society and in this country. For that reason we are talking about a regulator rather than Government control. When I talk about regulator, I fail to understand why we name it as a Board.

As far as the appointment of the Chairman as well as its members is concerned, in fact, there is a lot of judicious process, legal issue and logic has to be used when we have to bring about equitable justice to this country. So, it would be better if either a technical person or a judicial member should be on the Board rather than anybody having experience in finance or consumer affairs and all that.

Clause 43(2) says that in the event of taking over and control by an act of the Board, the District Collector shall determine the amount of compensation payable for taking over of the property. He will determine what will be the value of the property or assets. I fail to understand, whether a District Collector has the inputs of all these things. There has to be some mechanism under this regulator which can evaluate all these things.

I also fail to understand, when you form a regulator, why we should burden the regulator with dispute settlement. Dispute settlements take a very long time. Why should the regulator solve the disputes when we have an arbitrary mechanism available already in the law?

A lot of Members mentioned about the Head Office being in Delhi. I would like to know why it should be in Delhi. It should either be in Mumbai, Ahmadabad, Andhra Pradesh or Tamil Nadu where there are gas and oil reserves.

The most important point that we have missed out in this Bill is not including the production of oil and gas. In

fact, the cost of exploration, production of oil and gas is the most valuable thing and that gives us the whole input cost. By excluding that, we are almost eliminating 50 per cent to 70 per cent of the cost and we are trying to regulate, for Controller's sake, the prices for marketing, prices for transportation, prices for agencies and all these things. It is not a major issue.

The major issue today is that we have to break the monopoly. We cannot allow either the Government or the private sector to have a monopoly in any sector. That is the reason why this regulator should also include the exploration, production of gas and also oil.

As far as the Appellate Tribunal is concerned, you have mentioned that the member should have one-year experience as Secretary. We need to have a pure technical person in the Appellate Tribunal who understands gas and petroleum sectors.

Finally, I would like to tell the hon. Minister that today's conflicts not only in India but internationally also only arose because of hydrocarbons, gas and petroleum. Take any conflict that is taking place in India and in the world. They are taking place because of gas. So, I want the hon. Minister to think about all these suggestions.

I would like to recollect the words of Indiraji. Indiraji told that we cannot shake hands with a chented first. So, I want the hon. Minister to be open-minded, open-hearted and also take with open hand all the suggestions given by the Members, incorporate them in this Bill and rectify all the mistakes or the omissions that are there in this Bill. At the same time, I support this Bill.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' (Begusarai) : Madam Chairman, we are discussing on the Petroleum and Natural gas Regulatory Board Bill, 2006 and it is an important bill. The Bill was introduced in the House in May 2002 and thereafter it was sent to the Standing Parliamentary Committee. The Committee meticulously deliberated on the Bill for one year and thereafter it returned the Bill to the House in May 2003. Since I had an opportunity of being a Member of the Standing Committee related to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural

[Shri Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan']

Gas, so I know this Committee had given more than 50 recommendations after thorough examination of the subject. The then Government had reintroduced the bill in the House in December 2003. That Government had accepted a number of recommendations made by that Standing Committee, and accordingly incorporated suitable amendment in the Bill but due to dissolution of the Lok Sabha, the bill lapsed.

Madam, now the same bill has been introduced in the House in a new shape but a number of recommendations made by the Committee at that time have been dropped. Thus, the Government have defied the very purpose of the bill. In the original bill there was no provision of appellate tribunal but now a provision for appellate tribunal has been added in the Bill. Therefore, I say the very spirit of the original bill has been tampered and the original bill has been introduced with new chapters. Therefore my first suggestion is to refer the bill again to the Standing committee because this bill is very much different from the earlier bill. Now there is a provision for appellate tribunal in the Bill. On the line of the Electricity Regulatory Act a provision for appellate tribunal has been made. Therefore, it needs detailed examination. It needs a vast review so that it may be ascertained whether the existing tribunals are effective or not and if effective, the extent to which they are. Therefore, my submission is that the Government has tampered with the very spirit of the bill. Therefore, it should be referred to the Standing Committee afresh.

Madam, my second suggestion is regarding adulteration. At that time, the Committee had recommended in the bill to make arrangement for monitoring adulteration and that was a very important recommendation. An Adulteration Cell was functioning under the Ministry but, now, it has been closed. Keeping in view this, the Committee recommended that this Regulatory Board should be given full responsibility of checking adulteration. Hon'ble Minister also, is worried on adulteration. The meeting called by him on last Sunday to find out the ways of checking adulteration also show his concerns. If the responsibility to check adulteration is given to the Regulatory Board, it may be checked. Therefore it is an important question and

adulteration is a major problem and for checking it no effective mechanism has been provided in the bill.

Madam, I have been a Member of the Standing Committee of Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry for six years and during this time the Committee did many tests on adulteration. Therefore, on this, separate recommendations suggesting only the ways to tackle the problem of adulteration have been made by the Committee. Therefore, I say that a provision had been brought for entrusting the responsibility to check adulteration with the Regulatory Board because there is no anti adulteration system in the country.

My third point is on composition. A recommendation was made by the Standing Committee that a Search Committee will be constituted in the Chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary. I the bill introduced in December 2003 by the then Government this was accepted and a provision for this was included. Now, by removing it they have said that the Search Committee would be constituted under the Chairmanship of the Energy Member of the Planning Commission. I would like to ask the Minister to explain the purpose of constituting this Committee under the Chairmanship of Energy Member after deleting the provision that mentioned the Chairmanship under the Cabinet Secretary. Besides this the criteria of eligibility of qualification for the post has been relaxed. We are aware that generally, the officers of IAS and PCS cadres on higher posts, after retirement on getting the age of 61-62 get appointed on top posts of the Boards. You have relaxed the qualification to that extent that they would get appointments even in this board. Of course, it should have been done that the eminent persons working in marketing, distribution and finance divisions of petroleum sector would have been appointed as Chairman or a Member. Instead of it, the qualification has been relaxed. All of us, you and I am aware of the lobbying in the Government you may also understand the consequences of this. Therefore, I say it needs amendments and a limit should be fixed that only the experts of petroleum sector will be appointed as Chairman and Member.

Besides this I would like to mention as already said, that new changes have been included in the bill. In this the chapter of authorization has been included in the

chapter on the board. In original bill there was no chapter on authorization but this new chapter has been added in the new bill. The Government kept all the powers to constitute the board with themselves in spite making a provision for transparency in it. Therefore, I say that the purpose of the constitution of the Board would not be fulfilled and this Board would also function as other boards are doing and the purpose would be defeated.

In addition to this, I would like to conclude, after mentioning a point. Many new changes have taken place during last two years when the bill pertaining to petroleum sector was introduced before 2-3 years and the Standing Committee was constituted. Many countries are facing the problems of oil security, at international level, there had been deliberations for energy cooperation. An unprecedented increase in oil prices have been noticed. Therefore, I suggest that it is the need of today that after an extensive review, the report should be presented, if the Minister is serious to this bill and want to give it the shape of a petroleum regulatory bill. For controlling petroleum products and monitoring all the situations bring a proposal to refer it to the Standing Committee and after extensive review get it passed.

[English]

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (Midnapore) : Thank you Madam Chairperson. The Minister is present here. Before my speech, several Members have raised many points. I hope, everything would be addressed by the Minister.

Madam, it is correctly said that a good legislation had been brought in December, 2003, so far as I remember but it was lapsed as the House had been dissolved. The former NDA Government though that there was a feel good factor and India was shining, and so a pre-poll was there.

So, that legislation lapsed. But it is very difficult to understand why such a good legislation is coming up after 22 months. Why has the new UPA Government, after coming to power, taken so much of time in bringing this sort of a good legislation? It is correct that that the Standing Committee has given several recommendations and most of the recommendations have been considered by the Ministry. That is correct but some new clauses are being inserted and these are all important. Technically and

commercially, these clauses are very important. A point on city and local natural gas distribution network has been inserted. This type of new point has been inserted there.

Also, it is very correct and it has been mentioned here that there is an allegation of adulteration. It is very much there. Now, the private companies are coming to operate the pipeline set-up. They are also joining. I do not know what is the mechanism to address this problem. Not only that, how can the consumers know that it is free of adulteration? What is the technology available so that the consumers get to know this? The Right to Information Act was already passed here. So, what is the right of the consumers to know whether the gas or oil is free of adulteration? The main reason behind adulteration is the difference in prices that are given to kerosene, Naptha, petrol, diesel, etc. So, this point should be addressed.

Now, I am coming to the composition of the Board. I do support the idea that technical men should be deputed there. This should not be a rehabilitation centre. This should not be taken as such. So, the technical men should be empowered. They should be promoted. They should be posted in this field also.

Also, we are having acute shortage of oil and gas that we have to import from abroad 70 per cent of the gas and oil. The former Minister, Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar used to move around the globe. Now, he is moving State to State. I do not know whether he will get the assignment in future to go village to village. But whatever he may be doing, he raised the hope, the raised the expectation of the country so that we thought that the India-Iran pipeline is very hopeful for us and it will be coming in the coming days. So I want to know the future of that project. The Minister will tell us about that.

Madam, about the question of the Appellate Tribunal, yes, in the original Bill, this was not there. So, what is the idea behind this? That should be clarified. I do not know whether the Standing Committee examined this idea. Naturally, this point has been raised here by the hon. Members that earlier this Bill was examined and scrutinised by the Standing Committee. Now we are in the House and it has been brought before the House. So, I think the Minister will explain this. I am not against that

[Shri Prabodh Panda]

Appellate Tribunal but he should explain what should be the right of the Appellate Tribunal.

There is a question of adulteration. Who will deal with the matter? I want to know whether the Board itself will deal with the matter or that Appellate Tribunal will deal with the matter. I am not taking much of the time. I think the Bill is a good legislation. I thank and I congratulate the Minister. If it is late, but better late than never. They have brought the Bill in this august House. We must support it unanimously so that it would be forceful and it will deal everything related to petroleum, natural gas, etc.

With these words, I thank you very much.

SHRI KIREN RIJU (Arunachal West) : Madam, Chairperson I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

Since Dighboi days, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam have been a pioneer in oil sector, but slowly our importance is losing and finally the Bill proposes that the headquarters should be in Delhi. Some of my colleagues have also raised this issue. But I must say one thing that we have been a pioneer in this entire oil sector for a long time. So, why not, for the first time, for a change, one corporate office be located in North East? I would like to request the hon. Minister that if he is not able to give the main corporate or head office, then at least a branch office should be given at Guwahati for the North-Eastern purpose.

Secondly, the pipelines issue from Iran through Pakistan to India seems to be facing a lot of obstacles. How much thought has the Government given for a pipeline from Myanmar to India, as there is no 'Pakistan' in between? I do not think there will be much of a problem.

Sir, coming to the Bill, I rise to support this Bill because this is very vital for the nation. Madam, in the Bill, the prices of the natural gas and oil will be regulate by the Board. Now, what will happen to the commitment the Government has given in the production-sharing contracts signed for upstream oil sector wherein it has been agreed upon that the prices of natural gas will be market-driven and the crude oil will be based on international prices? Now, how

will the Board regulate the price which is market-driven? The hon. Minister should clarify this point because this is very important. I find that this is very contradictory.

I appreciate the idea of a five-year term and there will be no double renomination except that a member can be nominated as a Chairperson. But what will happen if they are nominated after a gap or those who are original members will never be members again? Or after a gap can they be members again? This should be specified because the problem might come up later on.

As regards the person to be in the Board, you have given that they have to resign from so many posts. But I feel that non-governmental organisations should be executed and non-profitable NGOs should be excluded from this bar. They should be least be allowed to hold. This is not a profit-making portfolio. So, that should be allowed. That is what I feel.

In clause 10, I would just like to know from the hon. Minister what is the rank of the Secretary who will be the Secretary of the Board. I want to know whether the will be of the rank of a Secretary to the Government of India or a Joint Secretary. What will be the rank of that Secretary of the Board? That needs to be clarified.

In clause 12, where it is said the Board will hear and receive the complaints from any person to conduct an inquiry with regard to retail service obligations, marketing service obligations and all, there I would like to request to add the quality of products and services. That should be included. Anybody can complain when he finds that the quality is bad. That should also be included in the criteria where a person can make complaint.

As far as powers and duties of the Secretary are concerned, I feel that this should have been regulated by the Board. As per the Act, the power and functions of the Secretary are to regulated by the Board itself. I feel that the Government should frame the rules and as per that rule, the Board should run. The Board should not be allowed to freely regulate what the Secretary is to do and where they have to hold meetings and how many times etc. It is all right that that part the Board can regulate themselves. But as far as the duties of the Secretary are concerned because the Secretary is very vital what I have

seen from this Bill, they should be framed by the Government.

Lastly, after 65 years of age, he cannot continue as a member or after the expiry of his tenure, he cannot join any Government service or any of the corporate office or any office of profit. I think that will bar the dynamic, attractive and energetic people from coming to the Board. That bar should not be there. That bar should be relaxed. That is my request to the hon. Minister that we should try to attract more competent people into the Board to have a better and more efficient Board.

15.00 hrs.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Sabarkantha) : Thank you very much Madam Chairperson for giving me this opportunity to speak. I will not take much of the time of this House. I rise to echo the sentiments of the people of Gujarat over their demand for their share in the petroleum products. Gujarat was one of the early States where petroleum and gas struck and even now only five kilometers from my house the gas struck. We have been demanding in Gujarat for a long time and I am sure the hon. Minister will take a note of this because, in fact, this has been going on for years. The people of Gujarat have been demanding that why should the headquarters of ONGC be in Dehradun and not in Ahmedabad or in any part of Gujarat. You have come with this Bill where it is written that the office of this Board will be in Delhi. I strongly resent that. It could be in any part of India but certainly not in Delhi because it becomes much bureaucratic and the other influences are there. As a result the number of States which have, in fact, contributed and from where the gas and petroleum are available, are suffering. You take into consideration the feelings of the Members, and especially those from Gujarat and I would request you to have the headquarters of this Board in any part of Gujarat.

Secondly, I want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to one point. We have been demanding for gas to our State. We have a shortfall of electricity of almost 3,000 MW in Gujarat and as a result, the industries are suffering. The gas is transferred from Dahej in Gujarat to Jagdalpur, from Salawa to Mathura refinery unit. All

pipelines are being laid in every part of the State and gas is going to different parts of India but not in Gujarat. I do not know what is the rationale for this. We have been demanding that we urge you to give us a share in the production. Why can this policy not be adopted? We do not want money. You do not give us royalty. Let us have a share, 20 or 25 or 30 per cent share of the production and we will sell it.

In fact, the particular Gujarat State Gas Act which has been lying with the Ministry has not been signed. There is a conflict going on between GAIL and the company which has been formed by the Government of Gujarat. As a result, the ceramic industry, other industries including textile industry and dairy industry are suffering a lot. We want a solution of this. I do not know whether the Board will be able to handle this kind of things or not. If it is simply of distribution and marketing it is different. I hope that they formulate certain norms for distribution and so on.

I am not going into the aspects of adulteration and other things. A lot of other hon. Members have spoken on it. If I am not forgetting, there was a young engineer who went round in one of the petrol pumps in UP who had been killed. It was an inhuman act. There are such instances. I hope that this Board will resolve such issues. But, nonetheless, you resolve the demands of the State. Our entire water has been polluted. There is fluoride-related disease. You take out the gas, you take out the petroleum products in the entire North Gujarat. The land of North Gujarat has become infertile as a result of this. I do not know why they are not compensating for this. Besides the royalty they should give us a development cess for the area. We contribute to the entire country's development. But why can we not get our share to develop our own State? That is my submission.

There was also an assurance given in the House by the then Minister to give us gas from the Tapti Valley. They formed a consortium to provide the gas to the people in Surat and other parts of the State. We have still not received that gas. The other thing is about corruption. I must say that it is rampant. How the Board will deal with this, how the Government will deal with this are the question. You take the small cases of giving dealership of LPG to those whether they are tribals or belonging to Scheduled

[Shri Madhusudan Mistry]

Castes and so on. Now the system is that somebody comes from Mumbai, goes in one of the hotels and in the early morning they call each of the people and then they decide there and then. I have very reliable information that they connive with the officers and they get the dealership, they get the petrol pump etc.

There is premium for all these things. Now how would you deal with this problem? There is no people's representative in the Board. The unfortunate part is that we have the same sort of life. We have not been able to form the Human Rights Commissions in a number of States, partly because there is a requirement that there should be an ex-judge, there should be the consent of the Leader of the Opposition and so on and so forth. Here is the same thing. You put the Judges, you put the bureaucrats as if bureaucrats are experts of everything. Yesterday he was in the Police Department as Secretary and then he is shifted and made Commercial Manager of the Board. He will take the entire things into his hands and the Board will make profit! I do not understand it. What kind of a logic we apply in formulating such things where we do not trust people's representative, thinking that they will create a mess or they will give some kind of favours? I say with great humility that the politicians are the most scrutinised species of the people in public life and not the bureaucrats. Are we going to give support to this thing? I think, you should just consider it and try to find solutions to this solutions to this problem. An MP just cannot make to the Board.

Madam, let me cite an example. One of the tribal persons for the first time wanted a dealership of LPG. I did not know who to contact. I telephoned. He said, 'Sir the system is that the ONGC gives an envelope to some officer of the Mumbai Office and that officer comes next morning. Those five or six people interview and decide about it.' There is a definite information that in-between are the people who deal with officers and these dealers. If you give them money, you get dealership. If you do not give money, you do not get dealership, whether you are an SC, ST and so on. My question in this. With this Board, how would you deal with these problems? There are people belonging to SC, ST and OBC who want to go higher in

the social hierarchy. I want to know whether they will get justice out of it. I would like to request you that when you give reply, please try to find some solutions to these problems, either in rules or in other mechanism. If the rules have to be amended after some time and you have to put it into the rules, please do it. That is my concern.

For three days, people have been raising the issue of Jatropa. In Maharashtra and other areas, there are lot of NGOs and young engineers who have been trying to promote it, but the State Governments are not giving them any encouragement, so is your Ministry. Are you going to find out some other alternative because energy will be in great demand? As more and more years pass, energy will be the first thing the people will be demanding, whether it be electricity, gas. . . .(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY) : Ethanol is new addition to Jatropa. . . .(Interruptions)

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY : I hope, this is taken up by your Ministry.

Nonetheless the last thing I would say is that please try to satisfy the people. The long-pending requirements have created discontentment among the people of our State. We feel that we have been victimised and injustice has been done to us by the Ministry of Petroleum.

Shri Rana has just referred to Pipavav Gas Project. I do not know what is wrong with that. Why can we not get gas for that? Why can electricity not be generated there? There are lot of people who are trying to set up industry in Gujarat, but because of lack of energy, we have not been able to do it. We collect almost 80 per cent of our own Budget from the State itself. We hardly get 20 per cent from the Union Government to run our State. So, my humble request to both the Ministers in your Department is to please look at these issues. . . .(Interruptions) I am also telling you. I hope, we do not change with you.

Since the ONGC headquarters is in Dehradun and you are from Mumbai, at least it will not go to Mumbai, but you please try to set up this office anywhere else and also try to see and find out some mechanism whereby the common

people who have grievances, their grievances can be redressed. You also address the very issues and concerns of all those States where the natural gas and petroleum is available because it creates unnecessarily a different kind of feeling among the old people in the Administration.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha) : Thank you, Madam. The first and foremost thing – whenever we speak about petroleum – which comes to the mind of the common man is regarding the price of petrol, diesel, LPG, etc. I do not know how far this Regulatory Authority is going to be concerned with the regulation of prices.

I find in clause 11 (f), in respect of notified petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas that monitoring the prices is one of its functions. On the other hand, if we look at the definition of the notified petroleum, then it is limited to all that is being notified by the Central Government. I do not know whether its hands are strong enough and long enough to control the prices of petrol, diesel, etc.

We are all concerned with the report that has recently come in the Rangarajan Committee's Report. I have referred to this matter in the Parliament earlier also. I think that this would be an opportunity for the hon. Minister to state the policy of the Government, and clearly state the view of the Government with regard to the recommendations made by the Rangarajan Committee. The Report of the Committee says that the price of petrol, diesel, LPG, etc. are to be raised. The price of petrol and diesel are to be raised by less than Rs. 2, and for LPG or domestic cooking gas to about Rs. 75 per cylinder. Therefore, the country is very much concerned about this issue, and the common people would like to know whether the Government is going to accept it, reject it or going to consider it. I hope – whatever way it is going to be considered – it would be a very good opportunity for the House to know about the issue.

One more point with regard to the Regulatory Authority is this. We often find that whenever a Regulatory Authority is formed or made, the Government sometimes gets away from its duty to ensure that the prices – as far as the common man is concerned – are actually regulated. I feel that the Board or the Regulatory Authority is sometimes made a scapegoat. I do not know whether that would happen here also.

As far as the powers that are given to the Board are concerned, it is not a condition, and it is not that independent too. It is only a Board. We also find in clauses 11, 13, 42, etc. that many of the powers of the Government are still very much there to control the way in which the Board can act. For example, in clause 42, directions can be given to the Board. Of course, it may be necessary at times also.

In clause 11(j) I find that the Central Government can give recommendations or suggestions in the form of directions for the Board to accept. In this clause also, we find that the real control, eventually, comes to the Government only. However, in clause 13 with regard to judicial powers, the powers like court are given to the Board itself. I think, these matters are to be clarified by the hon. Minister in his reply.

As regard the issue of exploration, of course, it does not come directly under the Board, but we find that that is also a matter to be regulated under it. Many private companies are engaged in exploration, and in getting oil from the shores.

I would like to make a point here with regard to the Cochin High. I think that a lot of work was being done there, and there are reports that a lot of oil is available in the offshore near Cochin. A lot of work was being done there, but I think that it was stopped at a particular point.

Though there are reports that further drilling was done and oil was almost available, we would like to know the exact position with regard to this matter.

With regard to imports and exports, I think, section 14 gives the powers to the Board to do something regarding imports. These are also to be clarified a little.

I do not want to take much time of the House, though there are other points to be made. I hope the new Minister will be able to give a reasonable hope as far as the common man is concerned. It should not be a mere hope because the hon. Minister is a man of action. I congratulate the new hon. Minister who has moved this Bill.

PROF. M. RAMADASS (Pondicherry) : Thank you, Madam Chairperson, for the opportunity given to me. On behalf of my Party PMK, I support this momentous Bill.

[Prof. M. Ramadass]

As we all know, petroleum products occupy a pivotal role in the life of the economy as well as individuals. Therefore, its production, supply, distribution and determination of price play an important role in the acceleration of economic development of this country. I support this Bill because it is based on important objectives and goals. It tries to protect the interests of the consumers, tries to protect the interests of the entities, ensures uninterrupted supply in the market and promotes a competitive market for petroleum products. Therefore, I support this Bill. At the same time, I would like to indicate some of the possible contradictions in this Bill.

The first contradiction is that the Bill seeks to promote competitive forces or competitive markets for petroleum products. From a theoretical angle, competition prevails when there are a large number of buyers and sellers. In the case of petroleum, we have a large number of buyers, but the sellers are only a few. Therefore, we have only a monopolistically competitive market rather than a competitive market. Competition prevails or flourishes when there is absence of regulation or controls. How will you promote competition when you have a regulatory board? When there is a regulatory board, it will influence the supply, prices and monitoring aspect in some form or the other. Therefore, the invisible hand that is supposed to determine the prices of the products in a competitive market will be absent in case of regulation. This is an apparent contradiction.

The second contradiction or overlapping is that this Board will try to monitor the prices as well as restrictive practices in the market. But already this function is being performed by the Competition Commission, which was created in 2003 under the Competition Act of 2002. When the Competition Commission looks into the monopoly trade and restrictive practices of all the products, including the petroleum, how will this regulatory board perform that function? This has to be either taken away from the Competition Commission or it has to be clearly stated that as far as this product is concerned, the Board alone will deal with it.

The third important issue, Madam, is with regard to the measures of the Bill. Currently the entity owning a

transmission pipe will not have an obligation to keep it open for any other person. But the Bill says that it will become a common or contract carrier. But what is the basis on which the individual entity which owns the transmission line will be converted into a contract or common carrier? This is not clearly mentioned in the Bill.

The fourth important issue is how the tariffs for transmission of natural gas through a common or contract carrier are to be determined by the Board. The details on how the tariff will be determined is not mentioned in the Bill. On what basis, which on the basis of cost of service, cost of operations or the cost of any other thing, is not clearly mentioned in this Bill, and it has to be taken into account.

Coming to retail service obligation, currently, the Weights and Measures Department or the Civil Supplies Department in each State determines the quantity and quality of the products sold through retail outlets. Now, the Bill says that the Regulatory Board will regulate these retail outlets. What is the mechanism by which the Regulatory Board is going to do it? It is a national organisation. Will it be able to work at the ground level or at the retail level? How is it going to do this? What is the mechanism by which it is going to provide these retail service organisations?

Further, there is going to be a common regulator, both for electricity and petroleum? Both are complementary and competitive with each other. Electricity is developed with the help of petroleum, and petroleum also helps in the promotion of electricity. Is there going to be a common appellate authority or a common regulatory authority is not known? If there is going to be a common regulator, we will have to bring about a constitutional change because 'electricity' is in the Concurrent List, where the State Government as well as the Central Government can have a say. But 'petroleum' is the Union List. There also, you find 'electricity' in one department, and 'petroleum' in another department within the Union List. All these contradictions have not been overcome by this Bill.

With regard to the composition of the Board, I have only one point to say. Most of the functions performed by the Board are economic in character or commercial in character because it is going to refine, process, market,

distribute and transmit – all these characters or functions are in the range of economics or in terms of commerce. But among the five members in the Board, there is not even a person who is qualified in the matter of economic policy or economic analysis, etc. The Bill makes a special provision for a legal person. There should be a person, either in the field of commerce or economics. An expert on economics should be included as the member of this Board so that he will be able to give his views. There are a large number of people in the Indian Economic Service with high qualifications and competence. One of them should be made as a member of this Board so that all economic issues can be rightly discussed.

Another point is in regard to salaries and allowance. It is said that salaries and allowances will be prescribed. Prescribed by whom is not yet made clear. It has to be clearly mentioned here.

With regard to the Secretary, some people said as to what is his qualification. He is going to be a very important person in the Board. What is his qualification? Who is going to appoint him? The Board will not appoint the first Secretary. Maybe, the second and the third Secretary will be appointed by the Board. Will he have the voting rights? Decision in the Board will be taken by a majority of the persons who are present. When there are five persons and only three persons attend, how three members alone would decide? Therefore, I would feel that the Board should have at least 10 persons so that they would decide on critical issues.

Petroleum is an important product. There should be no discretion by anybody and the Board should function in an objective way so that it provides natural justice to people. Monitoring of prices by the Board is also doubtful because the prices of petroleum products are determined not by us but by the international markets. Whenever there is a crisis in the international arena, there is a crisis in the Indian pricing also. Therefore, how far this Board will be able to monitor the prices has to be decided?

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Prof. Ramadass, you have made very specific points. Please conclude now.

PROF. M. RAMADASS : Therefore, I support this Bill. It is a very important Bill which the country needs today.

However, an enlightened Bill should be an enlightened development instrument for the country. Hence, I would request the hon. Minister to take all these factors into consideration.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi) : Madam Chairperson, I rise to support this Bill. There is nothing to oppose here. But we would like to be precisely clear when the hon. Minister replies to tell us as to what necessitated the forming of this Regulatory Board. Probably, import bills went up. It went up to \$ 26 billion every year. The crude oil price per barrel was not stable. There was a jump from \$ 28 a barrel somewhere in July last to \$ 61 a barrel at the end of August. Besides, *Navratna* companies in the oil sector want that the subsidies should be withdrawn now. Are they saying that the Government would pay subsidies? Would the Government agree to this? They want the withdrawal of subsidies as the ONGC companies are not doing very well. They are starting losing. BPCL is at a loss of Rs. 4,000 crore. Other companies also would become red with the internal oil scenario.

So, considering these facts, I think, he will get a Regulatory Board. But he should not please make it like a dealer selection board as the regions where a lot of corruption is going on. He should make it a genuine Board because now gas imports will also be there, gas distribution will be there and gas exploration will be there. They would be doing 8,000 odd kilometres of gas pipeline transmission. Then, a Tariff Policy has to be laid down in the Bill. I am not repeating the points, which have already been made. But there should be transparency at all levels.

Madam, I was reading a magazine of ONGC on 'combating corruption', where the CMD of ONGC Mr. Raha, in his Vigilance Awareness Week had said: "It is not enough to be honest ourselves, but it is an inescapable obligation on all of us to ensure that everybody else too practises disciplinary ethics." He means, everybody to be honest. Within his organisation, he is giving an indirect message to the public also that everybody should be honest. In this regard, I would submit that when people are represented by this august body, which is the highest legislature of the country, which is the supreme body, of our democracy, why should not a

[Shri Bikram Keshari Deo]

representative from the MPs of both the Houses be there so that they can put forth the grievances of the people?

Now, the *Navratna* companies want subsidies to be done away with. But is it possible to do away with the subsidies? Take, for example, kerosene. We are giving subsidies on kerosene; and kerosene is used by the poor people, the people below poverty line. So, is it possible to remove subsidy on kerosene? Now, kerosene is being adulterated for diesel. Moreover, there is a lot of pilferage in kerosene and diesel in the backward areas of the country. So, all these things need to be addressed. I would like to know from the hon. Minister that does he have any regional mechanism to look into all this? So, the regional mechanism in consonance with this Bill should be formed at the State level so that it can be properly regulated at the State level also.

Here, I would like to say that also the States should be encouraged in regard to exploration of gas and forming petrol and gas companies, like in the case of Gujarat. I have been reading the ONGC Report and the Infrastructure digest for the last couple of months, but I am sorry to state that my State of Orissa, which is on the coastline and which has vast deposits of gas; in the Mahanadi basins where offshore gas deposits are there, which have been formed by the Reliance company but no action has yet been taken. The hon. Minister of Petroleum, who has just adorned this Ministry and he is a very efficient person – we hope – would direct the activities towards the State of Orissa so that the activities of oil exploration and gas exploration may be upgraded. I am saying so because in the gas pipeline, which we are going to lay now, about 3,300 kilometres would be put in the Krishna Godavari basins. About 1200 kilometres of pipeline have already laid out in Gujarat, and the balance is there. So, I would request to the hon. Minister of Petroleum to make a modest start about this new gas pipeline. At least, 1,000 kilometres should be started in the Mahanadi basins and offshore Orissa. Orissa is rich in minerals as well as coal. But coal methane gas is not a subject concerning the Ministry of Petroleum. It concerns the Ministry of Coal or alternative energy, which is under the Ministry of Renewable Energy.

Now, the public enterprises that are saying now to do away with the Government subsidies have a public obligation; they have a social obligation; and they are not private enterprises. So, they must put in more money for R and D in the sector of energy renewal, in the sector of development of coal methane gas because they have been enjoying the profits for the last 45 to 50 years.

Madam, there is nothing to oppose the Bill. It is a welcome Bill. It was first introduced during the regime of the NDA Government. Though the Revised version of the Draft on gas pipeline policy was made public in October 2004, I do not know why it was delayed in getting forward the legislation because gas is a very strategic sector. It is a very strategic sector. It is a very important infrastructural need for us achieve a growth rate of 10 per cent eventually.

SHRI B. MAHTAB (Cuttack) : At the outset, I should say that I am not the lead speaker for my Party; our main speaker has already spoken, but I would like to raise certain issues for the consideration of the hon. Minister.

The Minister is new, but he has experience as a very able Parliamentarian. When we are discussing about petroleum, we are aware that petroleum is slippery and at the same time very much inflammable. With his expertise, I do hope and expect that he is going to pilot very ably the Ministry in the days to come.

While going through the mid-term appraisal of the Tenth Five Year Plan, I found out this. It is mentioned that the current indigenous production of crude oil is about 33 million tonnes whereas the requirement is about 120 million tonnes. Import dependence is therefore very large and is expected to increase over a period of time. It is stated that India's current balance recoverable resources of crude oil may last only for about 22 years at the current rate of production, unless accretion exceeds the current rate of production. Why I am saying this is that we need more investment in the upstream sector. There is a thrust that were identified in the Tenth Plan were four in number. The first was market-determined pricing mechanism for crude oil and petroleum products; the second was rationalisation of taxes and duties; the third was restructuring of the sector and the fourth was establishment of an independent regulatory regime.

This was the proposal of the Tenth Five Year Plan. Accordingly, the regulatory regime came into being and a Bill was proposed; it went to the Standing Committee; subsequently it was placed in the Rajya Sabha and now we are discussing it here today.

The idea therefore was mooted in the Tenth Plan. Accordingly the Bill which has been prepared is to provide for setting up of a Regulatory Board, to protect the interests of the consumers of entities engaged in such activities. The Government has reportedly said that the Board would ensure – this is very interesting – uninterrupted and adequate supply of petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas in all parts of the country and promote competitive markets. These are the two major aspects which this Board is going to look after and repeatedly the Petroleum Minister – the previous Minister also – has said both in the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha that these are the two main components for which this Board is going to function. I have my doubts here.

I do not see in the Bill how competitive markets will be promoted by the Board. Therefore, my question is whether the Government is abdicating its responsibilities in monitoring to ensure uninterrupted and adequate supply of petroleum and natural gas. My second question is relating to another aspect. We have a Competition Commission of India. We also have read in the newspaper – and a Ministerial Committee also went into it – regarding the super regulator. It is because two other Ministries are also involved to look after competition activities of different organisations, which is responsible for promoting and sustaining the competition in the market and to protect consumers interests. So, the status of CCI has to be maintained. The overall power to examine anti-competitive practice would rest with the CCI. This is the policy and this is the law. I would like to know on the autonomy of the proposed Board, which is being proposed now.

To regulate prices and its capability to protect the interest of the consumers, have the Ministry of Chemical and Fertilisers and the Ministry of Company Affairs accepted the autonomy of the Board? What is its capability in fostering competition?

Thirdly, there is a proposal that the Board would oversee downstream oil refining and marketing of

petroleum products, natural gas sales and transportation of gas and pipeline. It is stated that the Board would operate at an arms length from the Central Government.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Please conclude. Your Party time was over and it is bonus time which is being given to you.

SHRI B. MAHTAB : Madam, I can expect bonus only from you.

Petroleum is a Central subject. As far as I understand, the Bill does not give that much of independence of the Board.

The last point which I would like to mention here is that when consumption of petroleum product is increasing, there is a need to increase exploration and to acquire equity share in production of oil and gas overseas. But the Board which is being formed has a little role to play in up stream regulation. The Mid-Term Appraisal of Tenth Five Year Plan had suggested to have an independent regulation in both upstream and downstream segments. When we are going to have a downstream regulation board, what steps are being taken for upstream regulatory board?

[Translation]

SHRI ALOK KUMAR MEHTA (Samastipur) : Hon'ble Madam Chairman, You have given me two minutes time to speak but it would have been really good had I been allotted some more times as per the strength of the party. Through you I would like to urge open hon'ble Minister and also give some suggestions that as far as the proposal and the bill relating to Regulatory Board is concerned there is a need to consider the welfare of common people. The problems faced at the consumer end should also be taken care of. Farmers group in our country use the petroleum products to the maximum. But when the question regarding selection of sites for allotment of petrol pumps arises, what we can see is that all the petrol pumps and commercial centers have been set up in cities. Therefore, this practice should be checked through the Regulatory Board.

Madam, we receive a number of complaints regarding gas cylinders. All the consumers do not weight the cylinder.

[Shri Alok Kumar Mehta]

Therefore, a system should be developed to keep a control on this. A lot of complaints are received regarding bursting of gas cylinders due to which a number of accidents take place. A major reason for this is the availability of fake and unapproved cylinders in the market. Either, we do not have sufficient plants for testing these cylinders of whatever system we have with us till date, is not give any proper attention. Therefore, there is an urgent need to control this. The Government should keep the testing plants under its own control and should also make arrangements for testing all the cylinders periodically through them. Besides this, we see the problem of calibration of oil outlets. Due to wrong calibration petrol and a diesel are given in less quantity at the oil outlets. The consumers do not have any equipment to measure this. Whatever is reflected in the meter, he has to receive that and pay accordingly. Therefore, *Jatropha* plant is being planted throughout the country. The Government are encouraging people for plantation of *Jatropha* plant. Once this plant grows 3-4 years old, it would start producing seeds and with these seeds diesel can be produced. My question is that a regulation and planning can be done to see as to who shall be controlling all this? The Government should be concerned as to how license would be given because this matter is directly related to the farmers. It has been expected from the farmers to grow this plant on their fallow land, wasteland and fertile land. It is also to be seen that they must yield profit out of this. The Government will have to make efforts for all these things but there can be a possibility that as per the economics they may have a suffer losses. Therefore, I would like to request hon'ble Minister to pay attention to what I have said and the Regulatory Board should be fully empowered and all the arrangements should be made in proper order. With these words I support the Bill.

[English]

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (Srikakulam) :
Madam Chairman, I rise to support the Bill. Energy is an essential requirement for the economic development of the country and also it is an important pre-requisite for improvement of the quality of life of the people. I, however, would not like to go into the details of the Bill.

This Bill was introduced during the regime of the last NDA Government and it stood referred to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee had given 49 recommendations and of the 49 recommendations, 47 of them, almost all of them, so to say, have been accepted and incorporated in the Bill.

My first point is with regard to the constitution of the Board of this Regulatory Body that is being proposed. What I find here is that the Board is proposed to be filled by members who are all bureaucrats. My suggestion in this regard is that instead of having all bureaucrats in the Board the Government may include in the Board one or two members who are having expert knowledge in the field of, say, commerce or even management. There are many Members of Parliament who have such expertise in the field of commerce or even management. The reason as to why I propose this is because ours is a country with a population of more than a hundred crore and where about 30 to 40 per cent of our people live below the poverty line. So, if we have public representatives in the Board then the condition of the people as prevailing could be put up before the Board in a proper manner. In a democratic set up we should not depend only on the bureaucrats. I am not against bureaucrats. But if the hon. Minister could consider increasing the number of members in the Board and incorporate members, public representatives, who have eminence in the field of commerce and management, then it would be a good thing.

My second point is about adulteration. That is the most important aspect. Even now we have not been able to control adulteration. How would the constitution of this Board help in controlling adulteration is a question that the hon. Minister would have to answer. Kerosene is allotted to States under the Public Distribution System. According to recent reports, only 30 to 40 per cent of kerosene, of the total allocations made to States, is being distributed through the Public Distribution System and the rest of the allocation is either being sold in the black market, or are being mixed with petrol and diesel. The cost of kerosene that is being sold through the Public Distribution System is Rs. 9/- per litre and the cost of petrol and diesel is around Rs. 50/- and Rs. 40/- respectively. There are some States where there is a lot of demand for kerosene. I would say

for the State of Andhra Pradesh where there is a lot of demand for kerosene and the hon. Chief Minister also had written about it to the Central Government. Some other States of the North-Eastern region also are in need of kerosene. But even if they are being provided with 100 per cent of their quota, only 30 to 40 per cent of the total allocation is being distributed through the Public Distribution System and the rest are being sold in the black market. That is why this adulteration is taking place. This is one reason why the States are asking for more number of mobile laboratories whereby it could be checked on the spot and the offender could be penalised instantly.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA) : You had raised this point through a question that day.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Yes. But that question could not be answered because the House got adjourned.

Madam, this Bill is confined in three areas, namely, it seeks to regulate the refineries, transportation, distribution and marketing, secondly, it seeks to protect the interest of the consumers and the entities that are engaged in this field and thirdly, it seeks to ensure uninterrupted and adequate supply of petroleum.

You are not including exploration and production for regulation. They should also be regulated here. Nearly 50 per cent of the most goes towards exploration and production. Without adding exploration and production, we cannot achieve 100 per cent target. Exploration, production, refining, processing, storage and distribution should all be put under the control of the Board. Only then we can do something to the society and the poorest of the poor. So, I say that exploration and production should be regulated.

I will come to the issues pertaining to Andhra Pradesh. There is a request for augmenting gas supply to power utilities in Andhra Pradesh. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and GAIL have entered into an agreement for eight power projects. We require nearly 11.55 MCMD (10.2 MCMD firm plus 1.35 MCMD fallback). Already 7 MCMD gas is available. If 5 MCMD of gas is made available, the

power projects will be completed. Apart from this 5 MCMD, the power projects are nearby completion and they are ready to produce power. If you do not provide gas to the power project according to the agreement made between the Minister and GAIL, we have to pay fixed charges to the power companies. As it is, the Electricity Boards are not getting profits. In this situation, the Electricity Boards will incur more losses and ultimately, the burden will pass on to the people. That is why, we have to take firm steps and give instructions to GAIL to explore more gas. You have to plan to explore more gas.

We have a request to establish the LNG terminal at Krishnapatnam Port by Indian Oil Corporation. This is pending since long in spite of repeated requests by the previous Chief Minister, Shri Chandrababu Naidu and the present Chief Minister, Shri Rajashekhar Reddy. They have written at least five or six D.O. letters to the Government of India. The matter is still pending.

Another project is pending near Kakinada Terminal. I am requesting our Congress Members also of this issue. It has even come in today's newspapers. The Government is ready to establish the terminal at Kakinada but land is not available. So, my request to the Government is to provide 6000 to 7000 acres of land so that they will be ready to establish the terminal. I request the Minister to influence the Chief Minister to acquire land for this purpose.

Coming to LPG shortage in Andhra Pradesh, the waiting list has come from one month to about 14 days which everybody knows. We have given gas connections to 25 lakh people. Even the previous Government continued to do it. We have given 25 lakh gas connections to the weaker sections, the Scheduled Tribes, the minorities and the OBCs. That is why, the period of waiting list has reduced from one month to 14 days. Since Independence, we have given 30 lakh connections and in the last nine years, we alone have given 35 lakh gas connections under the programme. In this scenario, you may find that the demand is more and the supply is less. Even now, gas is not available. Earlier, when anybody applies for a gas connection, he used to get it immediately and the gas companies used to distribute it at the

[Shri Kinjarapu Yerrannaidu]

doorsteps of households. My humble request to the hon. Minister is to ensure adequate gas supply for the poor people so that they will get gas supply at their doorsteps.

*SHRI SURAVARAM SUDHAKAR REDDY (Nalgonda) :

This is an important Bill. Main source of energy in India and the world is petroleum and Gas. As there are number of private players also in Petrol, Diesel, Kerosene and Gas production etc., it is said that a independent regulatory board is necessary to do justice to both public sector and private sector. I agree with the argument. But I have some apprehensions about the formation of board.

Though it is a independent body, it is and it should work under Government control. If the Government wants to increase the prices of Petrol, Diesel, Kerosene and Gas, it will through the responsibility on the Regulatory Board as if Government has no control over it. This is what is being done when electricity charges are increased on the name of mandate of Electricity Regulatory authority. Right now the rise of prices is on cards of the Ministry as Shri Rangarajan Committee has recommended has recommended it. Please do not do it on the name of competitive market.

Whatever is the price more than 50% of it is due to different type of taxes. I understand that Bharath Petroleum is in big losses. This may be case with other companies also. This is all artificial losses. Taxes should be reduced to reasonable panel and make Petrol, Diesel and particularly Kerosene and Cooking gas at reasonable prices.

ONGC is investing terms of thousands of crores of rupees for research and for search of Petrol and Gas. But several fields after identification are being handed over to private companies. This has been done in Krishna, Godavari basis This should not be done in future.

ONGC is permitted to supply gas to general power plants in Andhra Pradesh and now backing out. We had our doubts about the adequate supply of gas and argued before the A.P. Electricity Regulatory Commission against

permitting new electricity generating plants on gas but arguments were not replied. Now ONGC should fulfil their commitment and supply gas to lower plants. Board should have technical personal and political representation through two members from Lok Sabha and one from Rajya Sabha should be included in it.

One Regional Office should be opened at Rajamundry as there is lot of Gas resources around it in Krishna, Godavari Valley.

Public Sector should play important role in Petrol Diesel. Kerosene and Gas, sale, refining etc., in future also.

[Translation]

SHRI TUFANI SAROJ (Saidpur) : Madam Chairman, during the 13th Lok Sabha a Bill regarding Petroleum Regulatory Board was introduced in the House on 6th May, 2002 which was referred to Parliamentary Standing Committee on 17th May, 2002. The NDA Government did not pass this Bill due to some reasons. Non-passing of this Bill lead the oil companies to function arbitrarily. I would like to suggest a few things to hon'ble Minister in this regard. The Independent Selection Board of Oil Companies which has been constituted, should be suspended and the selection process should be brought under this Board. The oil companies select sites arbitrarily and function on the similar lines. Present scenario is that there is a cut throat competition prevailing amongst all the oil companies. The distance between one petrol pump and another petrol pump is not more than two hundred or three hundred meters. One company is working in competition with another company, which has caused huge depression amongst the dealers of rural areas. A law should be enacted to see that there should a minimum of five kilometers distance between one petrol pump and the other so that the consumers as well as oil companies in rural areas could be benefited because with less distance between petrolpumps the problems of the dealers are increasing.

The entire cost of petrol pumps allotted to the people belonging to Scheduled Tribe Category is borne by the Government but what we see is that the sites that are selected by the Companies are such where there is possibility of lower sales. Due to this, the petrol pumps on

which Government invests its money, run into losses and most of these petrol pumps are on the verge of closure. Many such petrol pumps have even been surrendered by the people. Prior to this a land scheme was started by the companies under which petrol pumps were being allotted.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Please tell in brief.

SHRI TUFANI SAROJ : A large number of people had applied under this scheme but the scheme was shelved. I would particularly like to mention about Uttar Pradesh that in the matter of allotment of petrol pumps in that state under this scheme the SC, ST quota was not adhered. Hindustan Petroleum did not fill even the two percent quota of SCs and STs. I would like to request the hon'ble Minister that the post which is being created in the Board must be a reserved post for SCs, STs.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Posts are reserved as per the Constitution.

SHRI TUFANI SAROJ : The dealers are faced with an acute problem in regard to the Depot. Oil pilferage from the tankers was a continuous phenomenon but now the dealers are complaining of oil pilferage from Depots also. I would like to give a suggestion to the hon'ble Minister that he should make such an arrangements that oil pilferage from depots as well as from the tankers in transit could be checked so that the consumers and dealers do not face any difficulty.

[English]

DR. K.S. MANOJ (Alleppey) : Madam Chairman, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to participate in the Petroleum and Natural gas Regulatory Board Bill, 2006. I rise to support the Bill. But I have some apprehensions. All these regulatory authorities, whether it is the TRAI or the Electricity Regulatory Commission or the IRDA, have been constituted because of the introduction of private players in all these fields. Previously, these sectors used to be the monopoly of the public sector undertakings or the Government. The Government assured some kind of a service to the people. As far as the public sector companies are concerned, profit was not their only concern. Providing service was the sole intention of the public sector enterprises. But for the private sector

companies, which are coming into these fields, profit is the primary concern. So, these authorities should ensure that these private companies fulfil their social obligations, especially regarding the quality of service, regarding the prices and regarding the subsidy given to the petroleum products, like LPG and kerosene. So, they should fulfil their social obligation.

One of the prime intentions of this legislation is to minimize the power and control of the Government to this sector. Autonomy should be there, and accountability also is equally important. Delegation of autonomy without accountability could lead to chaos. Therefore, appropriate mechanism need to be put in place to make these regulatory agencies accountable. The current provisions with regard to regulatory accountability are usually far from adequate. But I am happy to know that in this Bill, there is a provisions to submit annual report of the Board before the House of Parliament. Madam, my opinion is that this report should be sent to the Standing Committee and deliberations should be made on this report.

Madam, another important point is that there are mushrooming of petroleum outlets in our country. In most of these petroleum outlets, young girls are employed as salesgirls. But they are not adequately paid. Even, minimum wages are not paid to them. So, I would request the hon. Minister that while considering the interest of the stakeholders and the consumers, he should also take care of the welfare of these poor girls who are employed in various petroleum outlets.

With these few words, I do support the Bill.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (Chirayinkil) : First of all, I would like to thank you, Madam, for relieving me from this job. Not only that, I also hope how long you will be there is a matter which future alone can decide.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : You are most welcome.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : It is because your predecessor who was with us got a ministerial berth and gone. I hope, that you may also get that job and go! That is another matter for the future to take a decision.

I rise to welcome this Bill. But it is belated. Now, the present Minister got the opportunity of initiating this Bill.

[Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan]

His predecessor could not do it. So, the least ministerial berth brought in the change and he lost his portfolio, for reasons which I do not know. Perhaps, he may know it. All of a sudden, now, there is a tendency in the country for opening outlets at every furlong in the National Highway. How far this will be a successful attempt, I do not know. But lakhs and lakhs of rupees are being spent for opening an outlet. Some time before, only in junctions and important centres, outlets were available. Now, even in remote corners, where there are no vehicles for taking petrol, hundreds of new outlets are being opened. How it was sanctioned, I do not know. I am told that there is a Committee. I am not going into the details what transpired there. But my learned friend, the present Minister, he may all know it. He is very thorough with the procedure. Now, I would again suggest that ours is a country which is importing 70 per cent of crude oil. So, if we do not have the controlling power in the matter of deciding prices, whenever the Government is in difficulties, whenever the foreign exchange is in adverse position, the Government will be forced to increase the petrol every now and then. The common man is put to difficulties. That continues even today.

Now, the question I would place before him is that there is a countrywide pollution in petroleum products.

16.00 hrs.

In every outlet, either kerosene or some other oil is added with petroleum products and supplied to the consumers. That is our bitter experience. In every State, there is no controlling authority so far as I understand. Of course, there are some controlling authorities but they are not doing their job properly. More over, there is no specified standard for petroleum products.

We all know that in our country, adulteration has become the common practice. There is food adulteration. So, everywhere, there is adulteration. Naturally, in petroleum products also, there is adulteration. Hence, I would urge upon the hon. Minister to see that it is controlled.

This Bill is meant only for the simple purpose of

establishing a Regulatory Board. For that purpose, the scheme of the Bill is in such a way that it is to establish a Board. The object of the Board is to help the consumers. But the consumers are taking adulterated petrol every now and then even at every outlet.

The entity is defined in Clause 2 of the Bill. So, all these are the entities which will come under definition in this Bill. For that purpose, he must bring in some control, some mechanism for regulating them. . . .(Interruptions)

Regarding the scheme of the Bill, I have to state one or two things. The Appellate Authority, constituted under section 110 of the Electricity Act, will be the same for this also as per clause 30 of this Bill. So, we have a common Appellate Tribunal for Electricity as well as Petroleum Products with the addition of a technical member to the Board. This is the provision in this statute. The difficulty is that whenever there is any dispute arising out of this, if any aggrieved party has to file an appeal, he has to go to the Supreme Court only. The High Court is completely excluded from the provision of this Bill. That will create a very difficult situation. . . .(Interruptions)

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Thank you, Shri Radhakrishnan. Please conclude.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : If you do not like, I would stop it.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : You have made every point. Now, one more Member is there to speak. Now, the Supplementary List of Business is also there. Papers to be laid on the Table of the House by Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal.

(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : As far as the Appellate Authority is concerned, I have to make an observation. . . .(Interruptions) Recently, we passed the Information Act. There, we have created an Authority for the Central Government as well as the State Government. In my opinion, it is to make this an asylum for the retired bureaucrats. Here also, the Board will become more than an asylum for the retired bureaucrats. They can go up to

65 years. . . .(Interruptions) The tenure is for five years. The maximum age is 65 years or whichever is earlier.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Now, the Supplementary List of Business is there.

(Interruptions)

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : So, I would say that this is a legislation which is primarily meant for the protection of the consumers. So, do not fill the Board with the retired bureaucrats.

With these words, I support the Bill.

16.03 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE – *Contd.*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL) : Madam, on behalf of my senior colleague Shri P. Chidambaram, I beg to lay on the Table of the House a copy of the 'Outcome Budgets 2006-07 of the Flagship Programmes' (Hindi and English versions.)

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 4096/2006]

16.04 hrs.

PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS REGULATION BOARD BILL, 2006 – *Contd.*

[Translation]

SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR (Bareilly) : Madam Chairman, I think, there is no need to speak more in this regard. Many hon'ble colleagues of mine have already spoken on this Bill. As it was earlier said that the Standing Committee had accepted most of the things of the Bills which was brought by the NDA Government. Now, it has come to knowledge that you have added more than 10 clauses in the Bill. It would have been better if the Standing

Committee would have discussed the Bill. Since, this bill has already been passed by the Rajya Sabha and I think, now it should not be possible here.

Our friends have told some things. I will tell 2-3 points in brief. Adulteration is an important issue. As one of our friends has said that it causes dispute also. You are well aware that an officer was killed in Uttar Pradesh. So far as the adulteration is concerned, if the Government do not take it seriously it will remain a big problem. One point related to it is that many RO have been set up on the NH and there is doubt on their viability as to whether they will become viable or not. I urge upon the Government to think over the Vision-2025, presented during the NDA, regime, as to what our need will be.

Today, the demand of gas is increasing. Today, this demand is 150 MMCMD and in the year 2025 it will increase to 400 MMCMD. We will not be able to supply it. You have made some alteration in the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Bill about which the hon'ble Members had told you. The Cabinet Secretary should be in charge definitely. But, you have made amendment in this regard. The appointments in the Planning Commission are made on political basis. I would not like to mention more in this regard.

Our friends were saying that you have a good knowledge. You know the oil policy. You are well aware of the game of oil. I would like to request you to ponder over the use of fossil fuel. You have come to know everything about the common carrier. You should consider the issue of new pipeline access code also. If there is any problem after the passage of the Bill then we can consider on it.

At the end, I would like to say on one thing only as to who will be accountable for it. We want that its report should be discussed in the House every year. If the Board gives its report, then the board should be responsible for sending a copy of its report to the Lok Sabha. Its accountability should be fixed. After dismantling of APM, the NDA Government did a lot but, now the scenario has changed. In view of the scenario, we will work in right direction.

With these words, I conclude.

[English]

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Now, hon. Minister to reply.

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA) : Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson. Nearly 28 Members have participated in the discussion and I am very grateful to them for taking so much interest. I can assure you that we will look into the suggestions made by them and I will try to reply most of them now. If I cannot reply to some of them now, I will see that we will reply to you in writing within one week.

16.08 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

The unprecedented increase in the international oil and gas prices in the recent period and taking into account our oil import dependence, it is all the more important that the oil and gas sector in our country is regulated by a professional body. The countries which do not manage their energy needs in a professional manner are likely to face serious problems in their economic growth. I will like to quote from the statement made by hon. Prime Minister in this very House on 7th March on discussions on civil nuclear energy cooperation with the United States. The Prime Minister said and I quote :

"The House will appreciate that the search for an integrated policy with an appropriate mix of energy supplies is central to the achievement of our broader economic or social objectives. Energy is the lifeblood of our economy. Without sufficient and predictable access, our aspirations in the social sector cannot be realised."

The efforts made by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas in enhancing the oil and gas security of the country include increasing domestic production under New Exploration and Licensing Policy (NELP), which was only announced earlier this month, and acquiring acreages abroad. We have acquired four-five properties abroad like in Vietnam, Sudan and Russia and they are doing good, they are doing well and whatever investment we have made has paid back already.

The third alternative is to import LNG through translational pipelines. The last alternative, which several Members have suggested, is to bring gas to our country through translational pipeline like the Iran pipeline. I would like to inform the House that only this week the Secretary of the Ministry went to Tehran to discuss about this pipeline. The Oil Minister of Pakistan himself came to Delhi last month and discussions are continuing regarding this pipeline. But there is another pipeline, which is under our consideration, and that is the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-India pipeline. We are seriously considering this and we are trying to implement it with the help of assistance from the Asian Development Bank. The third pipeline, which we are planning to have, is from Myanmar. It has some problems because we have to bring it through Bangladesh and we are finding other sources so that we can bring this pipeline through the North Eastern region of our country.

The Sixth Round of New Exploration Licensing Policy announced last month promises an attractive regime for seeking investments in a very transparent and objective manner. It is a matter of great satisfaction that despite tremendous increase in the international oil price in the last few years, the Government has not only been able to protect the consumers from increasing prices of domestic fuels, that is, PDS kerosene and domestic LPG but we have also been able to control the overall inflation which has been kept in check thereby benefiting the overall economy. We have hardly increased the price of LPG or rather the increase is very small and in kerosene there is no increase in price. The price of Rs. 9 per litre of kerosene is going on for so many years now. Nowhere else in the world the price of kerosene is so low. For instance, while the international oil prices have increased almost three-fold since the dismantling of APM in April, 2002, there has been no increase in the price of gas and kerosene and there has been no increase even in the price of domestic LPG.

The proposed regulatory board would essentially perform three functions. It would protect the interests of the consumers, attract investments in the sector and encourage competition. The increase in competition will benefit the consumers as has been the experience in other sectors. For example, as a result of increased competition

in the telecom sector, the consumers have already benefited tremendously. Similarly, in the civil aviation area when there was only Indian Airlines, we all remember how we used to influence people to travel from Mumbai to Delhi and go back, but now there are 32 flights between Delhi and Mumbai. In the telecom sector, about 15-20 years ago, if we were to go to Mahabaleshwar, a small hill station near Mumbai, it used to take one full day to get a telephone call through. What was the call rate then? It was Rs. 47 per minute and it is not even one rupee per minute now. So, when there is competition, the rates will be cheaper and the quality will be better.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Now we have the cheapest telephone tariff in the world.

SHRI MURLI DEORA : Thank you. You are right. So, competition will help reduce the price in the oil sector also. If there is no competition and if we do not have private players, kindly imagine what would have happened.

Sir, hon. Member Shri Vijayendra Pal Singh made a suggestion for setting up a super regulator for the entire energy sector covering electricity, coal and petroleum and natural gas. While there is a need for having reforms in all these sectors, the suggestion to have a super regulator is not workable essentially on two grounds. Firstly, while the coal and petroleum and natural gas are in the Union List, electricity is in the Concurrent List under the Constitution. Secondly, each of these sectors have their own complexities and in case a single regulator was to deal with all these sectors, its role will become quite unwieldy, besides resulting in concentration to too much authority in a single regulator and so it is not workable.

Hon. Shri Suresh Prabhu, who is not here now, has raised the point as to why exploration and production are not covered under the Bill. Several other hon. Members also raised this issue. I would like to clarify that we already have a well-established legislation, which is called, Oil Fields Regulation and Development Act of 1948, and the rules made thereunder to regulate and develop hydro-carbon resources in the country. The Government has formulated a transparent exploration policy, called New Exploration Licensing Policy for regulation and development of hydro-carbons.

This NELP provides a level playing fields to PSUs, domestic and foreign companies. This Policy has been quite successful and is yielding rich dividends through discovery of hydro-carbons. Director-General of Hydro-Carbons oversees all these technical functions of this.

I am very happy to inform the House that large discoveries have been found in Barmer, Rajasthan.

[Translation]

I would like to tell particularly Rawat ji that a large oil reserve has been found in Barmer, Rajasthan. It was purchased by the world's largest oil company 'Shell' and the company drilled there but found nothing. Later on, it was sold to another 'Ken' company of Europe at cheaper rate and today you can not estimate as to how much oil will be extracted there. Only God knows about it. No body knows as to how much oil will be extracted and from which reserve.

[English]

In the Krishna-Godavari Basin also we have found large discoveries. These are good examples of that.

Hon. Shri Tathagata Satapathy, my young colleague, must be busy somewhere. He is not seen here.

SHRI TATHAGATA SATPATHY (Dhenkanal) : I am here.

SHRI MURLI DEORA : He changed his *kurta*, so I could not recognise him. But I hope he does not say to which Party he belongs to. He wanted to know as to why the proposed regulatory board is called a Board and not a commission nor an authority. We have no love for the word 'Board'. One of the three has to be chosen, whether you have an authority, whether you have a board or whether you have a commission.

While the regulatory bodies for electricity and telecommunication carry the nomenclature of commission and authority respectively, we chose to call it a 'Board' considering that most of the public utilities are generally called boards. Irrespective of the nomenclature, the objective of setting up of a regulatory board remains the same. The objectives and the principles are the same.

[Shri Murl Deora]

Several hon. Members spoke about the constitution of the Board. A number of hon. Members, including Shri Jai Prakash, Shri Shailendra Kumar, Shri Ram Kripal Yadav, Shri Suresh Prabhu, stressed the need for a proper selection procedure for selecting the chairperson and members of the Board and inclusion of a non-official member to take care of its interests.

Clause 4 clearly lays down the qualifications for the chairperson and other members who are to be selected from amongst the persons from eminence in the field of petroleum and natural gas industry, management, finance, law, administration, consumers, etc. I wish I could say politicians also. There is no bar on the politicians.

[Translation]

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah) : They may be included.

SHRI MURLI DEORA : Many politicians are going to retire. Yesterday, many Members of Lok Sabha have been retire, who can contribute a lot. I am telling the right thing. I am not joking.

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' : Sir, all of them may be included.

[English]

SHRI MURLI DEORA : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the politicians can contribute so much. So, this is under our consideration.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : In some areas, they can contribute in a better way.

SHRI MURLI DEORA : Sir, then the Search Committee is headed by Member (Energy), Planning Commission, who is supposed to be an expert in energy sector. It is, therefore, expected that only persons of eminence and having due merit shall be appointed as chairperson and members on the Board. Also persons of eminence in the field of consumer affairs are already eligible for being appointed as member.

A number of hon. Members, including Shri Jai Prakash Shri Shailendra Kumar, Shri Ram Kripal Yadav

and Shri Tathagata Satpathy, raised the issue of adulteration, short delivery of products, etc. I would like to speak for three-four minutes on adulteration because even in the committees also some questions were raised on adulteration.

The real issue of adulteration is profit motive, based on price differences of the two products here and two products there. You have rightly said it, Shri Yerrannaidu. I would like to tell you that the price of diesel is Rs. 37.57, while the price of PDS kerosene is Rs. 9.05. So the price of diesel is four times the price of kerosene. Price of petrol is Rs. 49.16 while the price of naphtha is only Rs. 25. So the price of Petrol is double the price of naphtha. This is a great incentive for the people to get into adulteration. I can assure you that we are doing our best to see that the adulteration is stopped. Only last Sunday, day before yesterday, I called a meeting in Mumbai of all the Chairmen of the Petroleum companies, and we are trying to find ways and means. We have authorised more amount of money to them. We have told them to tighten their Vigilance Department and they are all getting into it.

[Translation]

SHRI TUFANI SAROJ : If the Commission of the dealers is increased then the incidence of adulteration could be reduced.

SHRI MURLI DEORA : Yes, this question was raised earlier also. If they will not get incentive and they will not earn then how they will work. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : No disturbance please.

[Translation]

SHRI MURLI DEORA : Shri Naiou Ji raised a question.

[English]

On the day the House adjourned. . . .(Interruptions) We have formulated a new marketing discipline guidelines in the year 2005 in which there is a provision that the people who are wrong doers and are caught in the first incident, their dealership will be terminated. A question was raised here, whether the new system is loose in comparison to

the old system. No, the new system is very hard. There has been considerable improvement in it and there will be more improvement in it in the future.

[English]

The State Government have been given owners to enforce under the Essential Commodities Act and the Control Order passed thereunder. I am writing letters to all the State Governments to see that their Distribution Department uses the Essential Commodities Act which will keep a track on them. We are also doing one more thing, namely, technological efforts. There is introduction of new tamper proof tank truck locking system and GPS on trucks. It has been found that a truck, when it starts, is full, and when it reaches its destination, some quantities are already missing. We are trying to find the new locking device through which only now it can be opened.

Lastly, under the Jan Kerosene Pariyojana, which is going to work in the villages and gram panchayats, members of public, NGOs etc. can directly take. One of my friends here raised the issue of IOC sales officer shot dead by some unscrupulous petrol dealers. We have provided enough assistance to his family and also we will see that the guilty people are punished on this issue. This is what I have to say, as far as adulteration is concerned.

Whatever other suggestions the hon. Members have given, we will see that they are implemented.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' : There was an Anti-adulteration cell in your Ministry. You had wound up that cell. The Standing Committee recommended for empowering the Regulatory Board to check the adulteration. But, you have not accepted that recommendation too. You are admitting that adulteration is a serious problem but will put an eye on it?

[English]

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Sir, in some States the Public Distribution System is strong and in some States it is not strong. Whatever allocation we are providing under PDS – out of Rs. 9 – out of that they are utilising only 30 per cent and the remaining 70 per cent is going

to the black market. To avoid all these things, where there is a need we have to supply and where there is no need, we have to control.

SHRI MURLI DEORA : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, as far as the role of the Regulator in controlling adulteration is concerned, as per clause 11(f)(v) of the PNGRB Bill, the Board will provide, by regulations, and enforce, retail service obligations for retail outlets in respect of petroleum products. The definition of "retail service obligations" under clause 2(zk) include the obligation of dealers to supply specified quality/quantity of the products.

So, this make take care of it. Anyway, your suggestion is well understood, and we will be very happy to consider that. . . .*(Interruptions)*

SHRI VIJAYENDRA PAL SINGH (Bhilwara) : Sir, there was a suggestion that Kerosene can be coloured. . . .*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

Why are you feeling uneasy. . . .*(Interruptions)*

[English]

The Minister is ready to answer it. . . .*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI MURLI DEORA : Mr. Singh, I am giving reply. I had started my reply from your point. . . .*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Shri Vijayendra Pal Singh, this is not the way. First you should ask the Chair and get the permission. This is not the way.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing should be recorded except the speech of the hon. Minister.

*(Interruptions)**

SHRI MURLI DEORA : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, a few hon. Members drew the attention of the House about the

*Not recorded.

[Shri Murlī Deora]

shortage of LPG in their areas. At present, the Oil Marketing Companies are serving about 8.76 crore customers through 9,011 LPG distributors' network across the country. The 50 per cent of LPG requirement is produced by the Public Sector OMCs and 25 per cent is produced by private refinery, and 25 per cent of the total requirement is met through imports.

I will tell the reason for the shortage of LPG. The country witnessed shortage of LPG during the months of October-December, 2005 on account of shut down of RIL refinery, and there was a fire in Mumbai High. But now the situation is perfectly all right. I know that still some people from Tamil Nadu complained to me, and they are repairing them. The Reliance refinery has resumed the production from 1st December, 2005 and the supply of LPG has reached normal levels. This is what we have been informed. I agree that still there are complaints coming and we are trying to see that such complaints do not come again.

OMCs are now reporting a waiting list of about 2.8 lakh consumers as on 15th February, 2006 and all efforts shall be made to liquidate the waiting list before 15th March, 2006. The Ministry is focussing on streamlining the distribution process in consultation with the Oil Companies to avoid any inconvenience to the consumers.

Sir, I have tried to reply as much as possible and I can assure the Members that for those who have not got their reply to their points, I will reply them in writing within one work.

With these words, I request the House to pass this Bill.

[Translation]

SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH (Rajgarh) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, thank you. My only question to the hon'ble Minister is that you and the officers of your Ministry are going to sign Iran-India Gas Pipe Line agreement. You have entrusted the safety of the pipeline to Pakistan.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : This is not concerned with this Bill.

SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH : Sir, I am making a very important point. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : This is not concerned with the Bill.

[Translation]

SHRI LAKSHMAN SINGH : In Pakistan, 45 per cent gas is supplied from Swi gas field. This pipeline has been broken in Baluchistan. When Pakistan is unable to protect its own pipeline, how will it protect our pipeline? If you lay gas pipeline from Myanmar via North-East then the North East will develop. It will be good. Besides, Iran has also increased the rate of gas by 20 per cent whereas there will be less expenditure on bringing the gas from North East region. . . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : This is not concerned with the Bill. Please sit down. Do not record further.

(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : There is no need to reply.

SHRI MURLI DEORA : Sir, it is a suggestion for action. We will consider it.

SHRI VIJAYENDRA PAL SINGH : Sir I have a very specific question to the Minister and this is just a suggestion. I am not trying to criticise or do anything of that kind. Why do you not have coloured kerosene, like you have red coloured kerosene, so that whenever there is a mixing of the kerosene, we will get to know? It is not difficult to put colour into it. Every time anybody mixes anything, we will get to know that. So, it is a very simple way of doing it. It is the officials who do not want to do it because they are involved in adulteration. That is the point.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, during the debate I asked a Question to the hon'ble Minister that Telephone Regulatory Bill was

*Not recorded.

introduced in the year 2002, why fundamental changes have been made in the said Bill?

[English]

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Sabarkantha) : He has already raised this issue. This is a repetition. What is this? . . . (Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : There is no need to reply. Now, Shri Ramdas Athawale.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record except the speech of Mr. Ramdas Athawale.

(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE (Pandharpur) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the rate of Petroleum and Diesel that has been given. . . . (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : You are not on your seat. First you go to your seat.

[Translation]

You should know that Athawaleji is called only when debate has to be concluded.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, my seat was in the front row but now it has been placed in the back row.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : If you might have requested earlier then I could have permitted you to speak from the front row.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Now, you please call me in the front row. Sir, the rates of diesel and petrol is different in different states and the rate of these products are quite high in Mumbai. The rates of Petrol and diesel should be similar in all the States and I request you to kindly formulate a policy in this regard.

[English]

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (Kalahandi) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I have one small clarification. My clarification is this. I would like to know from the hon. Minister about the policy on subsidy. What is the policy on subsidy? Subsidy is a big concern. Will they keep it? Or, will they withdraw it? It is because kerosene is highly subsidized. So, it should be continued so that the poor people would benefit.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Your suggestion has come.

The question is :

"That the Bill to provide for the establishment of Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board to regulate the refining, processing, storage, transportation, distribution, marketing and sale of petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas excluding production of crude oil and natural gas so as to protect the interests of consumers and entities engaged in specified activities relating to petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas and to ensure uninterrupted and adequate supply of petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas in all parts of the country and to promote competitive markets and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

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

The question is :

"The clauses 2 to 63 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

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

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The Minister may now move that the Bill be passed.

SHRI MURLI DEORA : I beg to move :

"That the Bill be passed."

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

16.35 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Re: Outcome of the Round Table Conference held between the Prime Minister, various Political Parties and Kashmiri leaders on 25.2.2006 to promote peace in Jammu and Kashmir.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Now, the House will take up item number 35-Discussion under Rule 193. The time allotted by the Business Advisory Committee is two hours.

I would request Choudhary Lal Singh to initiate the discussion.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH (Udhampur) : Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank you cordially for giving me the opportunity to discuss under Rule 193 and want to say that our UPA Government have taken a decision under the guidance of our Hon'ble Prime Minister ji and Chairperson Smt. Sonia Gandhiji and a peace process is started in Jammu and Kashmir. Talks are going on to promote peace process in the State. In my views, this is a popular and noble work. I would like to congratulate Hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs for raising the issue of Jammu and Kashmir during the Round Table Conference. . . .*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I need complete silence in the House.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH : Minister for Home Affairs has taken a lot of pain to solve this problem. But I want

to say that this problem does not came into existence during the year 1947. I feel proud to tell that British Government invited Maharaja Hari Singh of my State i.e. Jammu and Kashmir for the Round Table conference held in year 1931 and he said in that Conference that I am an Indian first then a Maharaja. I want to tell that the Maharaja said the price of being an Indian from the very same day and some leaders emerged in the State of Jammu and Kashmir in the year 1931 as a result of divide and rule policy adopted by the Britishers from that day day onwards. They promoted communalism, imbalance and disturbed the feeling of brothertic in the State. This is a matter of concern which is still existing. Therefore, I would like to say that we have to understand social structure of the State, which was existing prior to 1947. The binding factor of a particular area which kept it United and what was the identity of that area? The regions such as Gilgit, Baluchistan, Hunda, Asgartu, Muzaffarabad, Kashmir Valley, Laddakh, Jammu were emotionally United in the State. In 1846 an Amritsar treaty was signed with Gulab Singh. According to the treaty, signed between East India Company and Maharaja Gulab Singh, The State of Jammu and Kashmir formed, which was having people with different languages such as Pahari, Gurjari, Dogri, Kashmiri, Balti Ladakhi etc. It was called emotionally united due to the existence of so many languages. Maharaja Gulab Singh purchased Kashmir Valley from the Britishers for Rs. 75 lakh. The State still carrying his name, but what happened after 1931? Opportunists tried to create affray among the people in the name of Islam. They tried to create disturbance among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, which resulted in riots of 1947. This is a matter of great regret that the nation is divided into two countries and seeds of contention was sown between them. Pakistani troops attacked and captures one third area of Jammu and Kashmir. On 20th October, 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh a gave his consent for instrument of accession with India. Indian Army moved to Jammu and Kashmir and Army was moving ahead but it is regrettable that the then Government was misled at that time and the Armed Forces were stopped somewhere else as they were looking for the domination of some people. We are still facing its consequences. The Pahari speaking areas, which are still occupied by Pakistan are named as Azad Kashmir by Pakistan and we call it as Gulam Kashmir. The 24

Assembly seats are still vacant, which are earmarked for that area. Some people were migrated to Jammu and Kashmir. You would be amazed that the so-called politicians shifted Sikhs and other people to Jammu overnight throwing them out of Kashmir through trucks and other means. Those people are still called migrants and treated as refugees although they belongs to Jammu and Kashmir, they are even deprived of all the rights given to refugees. It is very disappointing that those refugees who came from Pakistan to India, got full facilities, they got education, land, shops and other business opportunities but those people, who came to Jammu and Kashmir from West Pakistan did not get any right, respect or Home they are still in dilemma. Three generations have been passed of approximately 80 thousand people. They neither get ration from Jammu and Kashmir Ration-Depot nor are entitled to get. I.M.I. houses. They do not have a right to vote in the election of State Assembly or Panchayat. They can vote for Parliamentary elections only. We are making these people fool from last 50-60 years by promising of raising their problems after getting votes from them but nothing has come up in this issue. In the year 1948, Nehruji and Shekh Saheb advised the people, who came from Pakistan to live in Jammu and assured that they will get all the rights to par with the people living in Jammu and Kashmir. They resided there because of Surety and Guarantee given by them but it is a pity that no arrangements have been made for them till date. Even today, their children are illiterate, they are deprived of jobs and not even a single person in the family is in job.

[English]

Not a single man from among 80,000 people.

[Translation]

Similarly, half a million people came from PoK, who belongs to Muzzafrabad, which is still considered as a Part of Jammu and Kashmir you would be amazed to know that the people living in PoK does not consider themselves as Pakistani. You can verify this thing from them. When I was a Minister and he was also a Minister, our Colleague who was Minister for Finance got a letter saying that our forests are being cut because the people do not consider him a Minister of Jammu and Kashmir only that is why they have

been suppressed, but still there are many opportunities leaders. But I am happy that my Party always tried to give some relaxation to Jammu and Kashmir. But our so called leaders, Politicians who come to power, no matter which party they belong, they did nothing. My aim is to present a clear picture of Jammu and Kashmir. Some leaders, who wants to become Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir when they came to power they talk in the favour of India and when they are in opposition they support autonomy. Again when they came to power. They were suppose to become Minister of Home Affairs, Finance or President, they spit venous.

[English]

We know well.

[Translation]

This fact is known to every Kashmiri be it Muslim, Hindu or Sikh

[English]

This is the height

[Translation]

today they are talking about demilitarization of Jammu and Kashmir. They themselves have opted for deputing the Indian Army in Jammu and Kashmir. Now today when these people have all army protection, NSG commandoes and Black belt commandoes protection they want that all these facilities be conferred to them only. They should be given chambers and all other facilities. They even wants that guards should be posted outside their houses but when they are in opposition they talk about only demilitarization.

[English]

They are representing only militants.

[Translation]

They are talking about to please them. I would like to bring into your kind notice the speech of Home Minister delivered day before yesterday. Please ask for the speech delivered on 16th. A leader is sitting there, he is mentioning in his speech that India adopted Tiranga, it composed

[Chaudhary Lal Singh]

Jana-Gana-Mana, it constituted the army and grabbed all the water and supplied to Pakistan. If someone could save you, then that is none other than the self Rule.

[English]

This is the height.

[Translation]

Who are the people, with whom you have some sort of intimacy? Who wish to get you killed?

[English]

They are the exploiters.

[Translation]

70,000 Kashmiri, Hindu, Muslim Sikhs were caused to be killed, but still they do not feel. . . * Do they still wish to get more people killed? My request is that the situation which had raised in the year 1931, the things which came into light, whatever happened in this country, and efforts made for such things on 20th October, 1947. . . .
(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : This word may be deleted.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Choudhary Lal Singh, I know what is to be expunged, and what is not to be expunged.

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH : Sir, you are the custodian of the words used by me too.

MD. SALIM (Calcutta – North East) : Sir, please ask the hon. Member to come to the issue of Round Table Conference.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Chaudhary Lal Singh, please conclude your speech now.

[Translation]

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH : Sir, I will conclude only when only a few points are left. Pakistan has established

*Not recorded.

base camp in that area of Kashmir with the collusion of some leader, to which they call Azad Kashmir (free Kashmir) and we call Gulam Kashmir (Kashmir under slavery) and they are really slaves. Why they have established camp there? Do they want to convey a message to the world that these are the Kashmiri people, who are making efforts and fighting against the Jammu and Kashmir and Hindustan. Those base camps are not being run to confuse Jammu and Kashmir and Hindustan. They want to made forward. They wish to capture Jammu and Kashmir.

Sir, those who were the part of the Government in the past, have started raising their voice. Parvez Musharraf talked about self rule, and a party emerged in Jammu and Kashmir and supported the concept of self Rule. What is this? You also talked about Self Rule. You should ask in POK that whether the Self Rule is existing there? You should ask the pahari people and Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir, who are living there. You must see their position.

[English]

They are more frustrated than the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

[Translation]

They use the term Self Rule and our people follow their stand. These points need to be considered. In many States of Hindustan only 45 percent votes are registered. In Jammu and Kashmir 45 percents votes were registered. What is the reason which shows that there is no Self Rule. What are the reasons due to which people are not coming forward to vote. What are the reasons due to which people of that area are being ignored. My opinion is that some people have misused the Democratic Rights given to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Some people misappropriate the huge funds sanctioned for them. I think this practice must be checked. . . .(Interruptions)

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : Now, Congressmen have understood the facts.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Hon'ble Members, please do not give any running commentary in the House.

[Translation]

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH : You see that pahari speaking people who live on LOC at Rajouri to Uri, Poonch, Karnal and Kupwada belt are not Kashmiri. First of all you should clear your confusion.

[English]

First of all you must clear the confusion with regard to this issue. There were only 20 percent Kashmir before 1947 and even after 1947.

[Translation]

It is confusion. This thing is just to make someone fundamentalist and provocative. I want to tell you about the flag which was hoisted there. Our hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited there. At Srinagar, he inaugurated the passage leading towards the Pakistan where a bridge has been constructed. Pakistani flag was hoisted across the bridge but Pakistan can not hoist flag there.

[English]

I am saying this because that area belongs to Jammu and Kashmir, and that area belongs to the Government of India.

[Translation]

But what about the Indian side. It is regretted that a big hoarding of Parvez Mushraff was erected here and next to it CM's hoarding was placed and after that the hoarding of Prime Minister was erected there. But our tricolor flag was no there. These are the things which are creating confusion. This is what they are creating. If you observe the hoarding usually erected there, you will find anomalies. For example if you are visiting there, you will not find the posters of Prime Minister or Home Minister, which is a trend in general. All these things need to be considered.

It is required to consider the ways to change the ideology. Even it has been said that education is imparted through Madarsa. I want to ask that is there any difference between the Madarsas being run in Jammu and Kashmir and in other parts of the country.

[English]

You must see and check their activities, which are anti-India and anti-people of Jammu and Kashmir.

[Translation]

Those activities should be checked on.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please conclude now because I have a long list of speakers.

[Translation]

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH : I am concluding. This is the great thing that then hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Chandrashekhar ji visited the Gujjars populated areas and to the gaddis and awarded them the status of Scheduled Tribes. It was a fantastic thing. They felt that they have been considered. They are in large number but it was shocking that the Pahari speaking people were ignored at that time. The recommendations are coming regularly for them but I do not know where these are stopped. People from all religions like Hindu, Muslim, Sikh are among them, who speak pahari language. I mean if the pahari speaking people would have been given a special status, I am dead sure that people of Azad Kashmir would have assumed that we are their relatives. It would convey a better message to the masses. They are looking at us. I want to say that it is a good thing. Government have included Dogri language in the 8th Scheduled, which had increased the strength of Gujjari and pahari language. It has brought a great change in the atmosphere.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, from 1947-1965, 1971, 1989 and 1999 when Kargil war took place, many migrants came here. Many of our people have also migrated. People migrated from Chhamb and Batala in Jammu and Kashmir. Cross firing and shelling causes deaths. It is written in our common minimum programme that they were settled. I want to say that do something for them at the earliest. We promised them to provide 5 marla land at safer place and I am sure that Government of India would take positive decision in this regard. If this work is expedited their demand will be fulfilled.

[Chaudhary Lal Singh]

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, there have been two capital cities in Jammu and Kashmir for the last 150 years. One is Jammu and the other one is Srinagar. You will be surprised to know that Kashmir has a separate Radio Station and TV Centre. It announces its name from the Radio Station whereas Jammu never announces its name although it has a separate Radio Station. When 'Maharaja' shifted there from Jammu, it became capital. I want to say that this confusion should end. The patriotic people should be given strength. You should not care for anybody. You can manage these 'so called' people with love and get any work done. This is also the policy of the Government.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, three fourth of Kashmir is hilly area. The hilly area of Jammu is totally outside. The Jammu Kashmir Government had constituted a Vazir Commission. When the time came to do Justice during division of Kashmir in three parts, the Government have recommended three districts for Jammu and one district for the valley. I have said this many times. Only Doda-Kathua districts are equal to one thousand square kilometer. The area of Laddakh is equal to the area of Himachal Pradesh.

17.00 hrs.

The area of Himachal Pradesh is equal to the area of Laddakh. You will be surprised to know that they said for three districts but they created only one. You can see the population, the area, migration. All have settled in Jammu. You have to pay attention towards this. You should do comprehensive settlement whether they are from PoK or they are Kashmiri Pandits, Muslims, Sikhs, whoever have migrated and come here, we have to provide comprehensive settlement to them. The 'Pahadi' speaking people residing in Rajauri, Punch and Bhadarwah should get their status. You must remember that Late Shrimati Indira Gandhi signed an Accord with Pakistan's Prime Minister Zulphikar Ali Bhutto. The whereabouts of this Accord is not known. At that time 92000 soldiers of Pakistan were under our siege and Madam had decided all that. Thereafter Indira-Sheikh Accord was signed in 1975 in which relations between State and Centre were decided. I want to say that we should pay attention to the Indira-Sheikh Accord, 1975 in which relations between

State and Centre were defined. I want to say a few things in the end of my speech.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please conclude now. You have taken more than half an hour.

[Translation]

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH : I am concluding.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, you remember everything. Whichever Government of India have, no Government have ever allowed an inch of land to be occupied by Pakistan or any other country fighting against us. We loss many soldiers for a piece of stone in Kargil. We cannot just be mute spectators of the act of destroying the glorious Kashmir. Today, due to arsoning, destroying the bridges, the buildings, disturbing education, the smiling faces of the innocent Kashmiris have now become sad. There are lots of deaf and dumb children. Incidents of blasts and firing are a common feature there. Today, the children of 18-20 years do not know what is their life. This is the most important issue. We can see that when these children cross the road they are afraid of any vehicle coming from behind.

[English]

They are confused due to militancy.

[Translation]

No one supports militancy there, they are only under pressure. Some persons made big groups and came here after receiving training from Pakistan. These 'Gundas' want that when they make some person a leader why not they themselves become leaders. Who are these people? They are the people belonging to Huriat Conference. The gundas of downtown Kashmir got-united and formed the Huriat Conference. They claim that they are the leaders. No one knows them in Jammu. No one in Laddakh and even people in Kashmir do not know them. They say that Kashmir should be a Islamic country, secularism should end there, it should be destroyed and therefore they try to attend meetings. I am happy that hon'ble Prime Minister and Madam Sonia Gandhi are making efforts and Minister for Home Affairs is implementing them. I am sure that

without caring for anybody persons deliver long speeches, speak in English or are educated in foreign countries. The children of militants study in foreign countries and they are killing children of this area. They are wedding overseas and we congratulate them that you arranged marriage with the people in Pakistan. If we will not discourage it, they will become more aggressive.

[English]

Fundamentalists should be crushed.

[Translation]

We should unite the country. There is no need to make any compromise for it. There is no need to reach any agreement for it. Anyone can write anything anytime that Maharana Pratap did not exist, Raja Ramchandra and Lod Krishna did not exist. Someone is saying that Rajiv Gandhi had done this and that-but no one is punished. Whenever any one wants he writes anything. Everyone is becoming 'Khabamama'. But the people of this State believe only in democracy. I can say that even today, people try to get the work done through Member of Parliament, MLAs or Sarpanch. There is a need to pay attention regarding the functioning of the representatives, the bureaucrats. The exploitation of people have increased. Sir, this news take different turns.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please conclude.

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH : Finally I would like to say that we should unit Jammu and Kashmir. The people living in PoK are our brethren. They are in difficulty. Their problems hurts Chaudhary Lal Singh, it hurts every resident of Jammu and Kashmir. People of PoK are drying. Our brethren should get freedom. Some are in exile, please save them. Pakistan is not in a state to talk with us and try to ruin our state. You should encourage our Military, Paramilitary forces, Army. We should not discourage them. You ask them not to do anything. The Military have made high walls instead of facing to protect them and they are living inside these boundary walls. If the Military have to live inside the boundary walls then what the general public will do? Therefore, you have to think as to why the Military is inside the boundary walls. There is a reason for this. You have to listen to it.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please conclude.

CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH : I am happy that all three of our forces are working properly under the guidance of UPA. I also want to congratulate you that first time the people of Jammu and Kashmir are feeling that we have a Hindustani Chief Minister. People say that thank god, there is a Hindustani Chief Minister. People are feeling good, I want to say that the matter will be sorted out soon. You should not care for anything. Mr. Home Minister, all people of whole Jammu and Kashmir are with you, but you are not doing anything for the people who made sacrifices for Jammu and Kashmir. The SPOs, BDCs are not getting anything. They sacrificed their children. SPOs who made sacrifices for the country are policemen. The so called constable gets only Rs. 1500 per months. Even it is not regular. BDC who fight with terrorists are also suffering. There should be a special recruitment drive for them. You should also pay your attention towards Agriculture. What Pakistan will do if we want to use our sources of water as per our convenience who is Pakistan to interfere. This is our water, water for Hindustan. These are our mountains, our source of water. They are saying that time has elapsed. Earlier they were saying that they were not in a position to generate electricity. Now, they can generate electricity. We should use our source of water and distribute it all over India only after that it will be given to Pakistan.

SH. AVINASH RAI KHANNA (Hoshiarpur) : Sir, you have given me an opportunity to speak on a very important issue. I congratulate Chaudhary Lal Singh.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, he has presented the basic problem of Kashmir, the problems of common people and the problem of Jammu and Kashmir State before this house forcefully. You know what is the relation between Punjab and Kashmir. We both are neighbouring States. If anything happens in Pakistan, Punjab Knows about it first. Their thoughts, dialect, dress pattern and living standard all are similar to Punjab. Therefore, we know well about Jammu and Kashmir.

Sir, today when I was asked to speak first on behalf of my Party, I understood why I was being given the opportunity to speak first. Sir, I would like to tell you that

[Sh. Avinash Rai Khanna]

when atrocities were being committed against the people of Kashmir, when they were being forced to convert, they said that they would visit Punjab, seek help from Guru Teg Bahadur Singh Ji and would seek help from him. The people of Kashmir came to our 9th Guru Teg Bahadur Ji in Punjab and put their problem before him that in Kashmir they were being forced to convert their religion and they requested him that he should come to their rescue. He said that the country needed sacrifice of a great man. He had a 9 year-old son called Guru Govind Singh whose childhood name was Guru Govind Rai. When he came to know this, he told his father as to who could be greater than him in this world. After that we all know that Guru Teg Bahadur Ji had sacrificed his life in Delhi at Chandni Chowk for the Kashmiri people.

Sir, there is a saying in Punjabi-Kudum Kupaff bhale no jaye, Lekin gawandi kupat whi hone chahiye. (Relations with one's father-in-law can be soured but relation with neighbours should not sour). We both the neighbours know each other well. Earthquake took place in Kashmir, at that time I myself went to Kashmir from Punjab for relief and rescue operations there, but we were stopped at the border. We were told that this Government had refused to bring relief material into their country. Therefore they would not let it cross border without payment of tax. Pay tax and take the relief material. When our senior leaders talked then only we were allowed to cross the border with relief material. Our intention was to help the people of Kashmir only. Therefore, we went there.

Sir, if we look India in the World scenario, India is the worst affected country as per the internal and external experts on terrorism or the security agencies in the world. In India atleast 50 thousand people have fallen victims of terrorism during the year 1994 to 2005. I was searching South Asia Terrorism Portal and came to know that there is an institution namely S.A.T.P. associated with this kind of survey. They have started by conducting a survey that in India 23955 terrorists, 19662 civilians and 7320 security personnel have been killed in terrorist related incidents during 1994 to June, 2005. Other countries like USA, UK, Israel and Sri Lanka are also facing the same problem but India especially Jammu and Kashmir is the worst affected.

Security Analyst Shri Uday Bhaskar has pointed out that most terrorist related incidents occurred in India. International Security Institute, London stated through a research study that there are around 18 thousand potential terrorists who indulge in expanding terrorist activities in 60 countries of the world. We all know how many of them are in India.

Shri Lal Singh Ji has just raised a very important issue regarding Kashmir. I talked to him and Shri Madam Lal ji is sitting beside him. I spoke to him also. I have also written a letter to him and raised the matter under Rule 377 and received the reply. Hon'ble Home Minister is present here, I would like to tell him that people of Jammu and Kashmir who lived in Jammu as a refugees, after 59 years of independence are still deprived of the right of casting vote in Assembly. They do not have the right to vote, nor do they have the right to become Panch of Sarpanch, nor they have the right to become the Members of Block Committee or Legislative Assembly. If they could not become so. Who will regard them? When I went to their conference, they told me that they earned their livelihood as 'Rehri' Vendors earlier but now a days Government have begun asking them if they are State subjects or they have right to Vote or they are the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir, then they are entitled to run a Rehri otherwise they could not get their children admitted in Government schools or colleges. Under those circumstances how can one dream of getting his child admitted in medical or engineering colleges. Lal Singh ji has truly said that he belongs to the family having one lakh population, it means fourth generation has descended. There are about 3-4 lakh people having no State subject. Today they are fighting for right to vote in Jammu and Kashmir so that they could cast their vote in Assembly elections and get elected as the representatives. They have no Right to vote. So, do all those Indians who have migrated from Pakistan have the right to vote, Is it to the violation of human rights. Is it not the discrimination against the minority? Is it not the violation against these 10 people sitting here. I would like to request that you please intervene in the matter of them. Lal Singh ji, Your Government are there, you may intervene and atleast give them right to vote, make them state subject.

It is regretted that they are sitting on dharna at Jantar-Mandar for the last 120 days, but no leader came to ask

them as to what their problems are and how they could be helped. . . .(Interruptions). That is why you raised this issue, I thank you for that. Considering their problems they must have been given the right to vote.

I would like to bring to your kind notice one more thing that there are a number of religious places of Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir among which one is Shri Amarnath Ji. When the yatra of Amarnath ji begins., as it lasts only for two months starting from June to August, the treatment which is given to the Yaatrees on many occasions is highly condemnable. I would like to request you regarding the permission which is mandatory to be taken every year for a lot of people hailing from Punjab who go there for organizing 'Langars'. A person who goes to Srinagar from Malerkotla. He comes back if the officers are not available there for the purpose. He will be called again for the same work. Kindly make arrangements for the persons who really organize Langars every year that they need not take permission every year. With this measure a good message will go to the Hindu society since they go there with feelings. I would like to tell you as a common 'yatri' what difficulties they are facing during the yatra. Now the Government have taken a decision that those who were organizing 'Langar' and facilitating pilgrims or donors for the night halt were strictly disallowed to provide such a facility in their tents. They were asked that they would stay in the tents which were erected by the people who had invested so much money in making such a tent. So the first thing, my request is that a permanent permission may be granted to the people organizing 'Langar' at least for five years and the second, as I myself am the Member of 'Langar' Committee, a permanent place may please be provided in Srinagar where the 'langar' organizing people could keep their things. In fact, we have to spend Rs. 4-4 lakhs on transportation each year. We go with about 20-20, 25-25 trucks carrying the articles of tents and other things. With this measure a great message will go to the masses.

The second thing is that the families of about 55,476 Kashmiri Pandits have fled because of terrorism out of which about 20,000 families have migrated to Delhi. The peace talks which are held on Kashmir invite only the people who have raised the guns, but those who have

faced the bullets of such guns are not called for participating in such a talk. They have been ignored. Who are the more sufferers – those who have raise the guns or those who have faced the fire of guns. Each day a new thing happens to disintegrate Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir is the head of this country. If this head will remain high and not bow before others then the country will survive with dignity. The whole country is with you. You should take a stand strictly. The whole country is with you. If you once take a strict stand that we will save Jammu and Kashmir and bring back also the part-which we have lost, a great credit will go to you and you will be remembered in the world for the thing that you have done such a job which could not be done by any Government till date even after the 59 years of independence. You should keep courage and do the work strictly with will-power, since this work could be done with none other than courage. Do to talk to those who are asking to withdraw the military. If you have a withdraw military, ask the people who are living there in villages without any security. He should tell them that the security forces will fulfill their duty of protecting the citizens, but those people who are wrongfully killed, should not be killed. When a terrorist is killed during operation the advocates of Human rights raise their eyebrows that injustice is being done but when a common man is killed their mouths are sealed. He will also have to tackle those questions so that the security forces are able to function properly. Such statements should be banned so that it may not dampen the spirits of the security forces.

I would like to rivet his attention to another issue. I was reading a newspaper and came across this news. I do not wish to blame any party but these were two terrorists named Ata-ur-Rehman and Sabaksh Ali who had links with Pakistan and acquired the identity cards of the youth National conference after penetrating. Similarly, there is also the issue of Srinagar in which a member of the terrorist cell was associated with the youth congress and also residing in Government accommodation. He also had an identity card. My humble submission is that before giving party membership to such people verifications should be made in respect of their identity by all the parties so that they are not able to malign the image of the party and country. Possession of an identity card by a terrorist

[Sh. Avinash Rai Khanna]

makes one feel lest they have changed their strategy that by becoming a party worker, and seeking their protection they might be working against the country it should be taken seriously and I would like them to take cognizance of it.

Sir, every year I get a chance to visit Jammu and Kashmir. The locals praise the security forces and their conduct. Visitors returning from Jammu-Kashmir feel what would have been the condition of Jammu-Kashmir if the army had not been deployed there. The army is not only checking infiltration and killing terrorists but is also dressing the wounds of the local people. Besides it is also evoking the feeling of love for the country among people by coordinating with them. The army is working on three-pronged strategy in Jammu-Kashmir. If the Government has such there pronged approach then it must put some thrust inoculating a feeling of love for and feeling against terrorists among the people because we have seen it in Punjab that terrorism could not be controlled when the people of the state had a will to overcome it. We will have to evoke similar feeling of integrity and brotherhood in Kashmir and that the ones sitting across the border are not their well wishers. It requires large scale awareness. Members of all political parties should work on these lines. I would like to raise another small issue. In the context of Kashmir the figures of the National Survey of India in dictate that despite all the abrasions the Kashmiris living in the urban areas of the country have maximum property. In the rural areas they rank third after Punjab and Haryana. See the potential of Kashmir. Any tourist coming to India would not call his journey successful unless he visits Kashmir. If we consider Kashmir such an integral part of India and ensure peace to the people of Kashmir then we will have to liberate the state from the clutches of terrorism through systematic and concrete planning. In addition to it we will have to uphold the unity and integrity of the country lest anyone should think that the Government of India has made any compromise. We will make a compromise but our policy should be a bullet for a bullet and not of surrender because it would destroy Kashmir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would thank you for providing me an opportunity to speak I would like the hon.

Minister of Home to say few words for people sitting on dhama while replying to this debate. With these words I conclude.

MD. SALIM (Calcutta-North East) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the topic raised by Chaudhary Lal Singh is

[English]

"Outcome of the Round Table conference held between the Prime Minister, various political parties and Kashmiri leaders on 25.2.2006 to promote peace in Jammu and Kashmir."

I will restrict myself to the topic of discussion. We are not discussing the whole gamut of the Kashmiri problem. The House has repeatedly discussed it and we are to discussing other things which have already been mentioned by some of my colleagues. I will restrict myself to the topic under discussion

[Translation]

I will begin with opening remarks of the Hon. Prime Minister during Round Table Discussion.

[English]

This Round Table is about sharing ideas.

[Translation]

We all know that one is not supposed to deliver a speech during Round Table discussion. There is neither an audience nor a speech. All the participants share their views.

[English]

But, as I said, I want to quote from the speech of the Prime Minister in the Round Table Conference. "A process is to start once this Round Table ends.

[Translation]

Chaudhary Lal Singh has stuck to the same line that what was the outcome of such discussion? Since it has been the ideology of my party from the beginning that the issue of Kashmir will not be solved through bullet but negotiations – several rounds of bullets have been fired

on so many occasions be it from the side of militant, security forces or cross border exchange of force. Thousands of innocent people have lost their lives in those rounds of fire. Many people sacrificed their lives for the sake of the country. Several young colleagues from my party as well as from other political parties have also become the victims of this situation. That is why I feel the way several rounds of bullets were fired similarly several rounds of negotiations should take place. Not that we start expecting results from just one round of Round Table discussion. A process of this round table discussion should also be held. I feel that a lot of home work, ground work is required to be done before this round table discussion. I regret that there were several lacunae in our home work that are should have done for making successful the round table discussion that was held in New Delhi on 25th February. And we are sharing ideas with them, but Kashmir issue is a complex one.

[English]

It is complex. The problem is also very complex. It requires some multi-pronged and multi-layered approach.

[Translation]

This cannot be solved in a day. Therefore, first we have to share the ideas mutually. The point was that how the people standing outside the mainstream elected politics can be invited. If this pertains to the mainstream political process only, there is an elected Assembly.

[English]

There is an elected Assembly.

[Translation]

a resolution regarding autonomy was passed in this elected Assembly. Yet the party in power in Kashmir, who were the allies of the then NDA Government, did not agree to participate. Let the Kashmiri people see that. But this is a round-table talk, everyone whether he relates with the mainstream political process or not, should be taken into this and we would like to share their views too. Now, this is on the record of this House and we cannot exclude anybody including the Hurriat Conference.

We have been saying it since the very beginning that there are many undercurrents and different layers of thought within the Leftists too and our view is that we should call the separatists and militants also. You cannot paint all things with a simple brush. They have within them both types of people—hards and moderates. Earlier, if we would say that, it was mocked at, but now it is a reality. We should spare no pains to include them in the talk. We should invite them because they do participate in any dialogue on Kashmir in any part of the world; be it Islamabad, London or USA. But when they were invited to participate in a dialogue held at New Delhi they said that no one listened to them. Shri Lal Singh tells the people in Kashmir that the Government of India do not pay any attention to him. But when the Prime Minister invited all to sit together, why did he not participate? He has lost a good chance. But, let the process go on

[English]

It is a protracted process. This protracted process of dialogue should be on.

[Translation]

They should also be pressurized to take part in this and a movement should be there in this regard in Jammu and Kashmir.

[English]

It is not just a question of lectures and theatrics. It is a serious political process.

[Translation]

We can counter the militancy, be it sponsored from across the border, our security forces can counter them with weapons but

[English]

the mind behind the machine, the mind behind the arms and ammunitions

[Translation]

how can it be countered? Even the religious fevour may be maintained into this, but some kind of belief should be

[Md. Salim]

evoked in the minds of youth there that they should join into the political process, only then they can accomplish their mission.

[English]

I should be backed by them.

[Translation]

We are not lessening the weightage of the situation but we are confused about the mode of using full administrative machinery, bureaucrats, advisors and security forces, etc. to try to solve the Kashmir issue when we face failure again and again through this measure. How long will it continue like that?

[English]

It is a political process.

[Translation]

An elected Government is there. Earlier Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad was a cabinet minister in the centre.

[English]

I can quote Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad. He said: "Invitation to this Round Table is not exclusive. It should be inclusive.

[Translation]

Everyone who is willing to discuss this issue with the Government of India should be invited. It is not like that anybody under the sun may be invited at a small hint. That is why I am calling it a 'political process,' I am telling all this specifically to the Home Minister. The invitation of the Prime Minister to join this Round Table dialogue should have been more seriously thrown. The process had to be followed cautiously.

[English]

How do you rope them in? Invite them. Take them along. We want all of them to be on board, not automatically.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL) : How? How to do? . . . (Interruptions)

MOHD. SALIM : I am speaking on this very issue; you may give your reply later. . . . (Interruptions) A political process should include the political personalities into it. The last Government also did that. They did not leave it on their National Security Advisor and this UPA Government also cannot do the same. . . . (Interruptions) Since you want details, let me say that the Prime Minister has visited that State many times; this is a good sign that he visited there and declared a special package for the State involving an amount of Rs. 2400 crore and that was not a propaganda. The then Chief Minister of the State confirmed that the Prime Minister was apprised of the ground reality there. It is a welcome step, though it may not solve the problem instantly. But atleast it gives a message to the people, it clears the air. If you can constitute a Council under P.M.O. 'Economic Advisory Council for Jammu and Kashmir' for implementation and monitoring of the measures taken to revamp the situation there, why can't you make another Council; including your experts, to unleash this process of political dialogue, especially when the Prime Minister himself says that.

[English]

this process should continue. It should not end with Round Table.

[Translation]

So, why don't you make a Council of your experts in this matter? If Mr. Farooq Abdullah, the former CM of Jammu and Kashmir, does not tend to participate in the discussion you should see the reasons behind that. The members of Hurriyat Conference, former militants—all the them otherwise wanted to meet the PM separately but they did not come to this Round Table discussion, why? I don't have a ready-made answer for this but the hon. Minister should himself see as to why it is so, that they hesitate to join this formal discussion while they remain so eager to meet in person. Whatsoever, such persons should be included in the talk. I am replying it to Shri Lal Singh who was of

the view to put those people aside who did not want to come. We have within us hardliners too, but how can you put them aside? We have to assuage their feelings to solve such a complexed problem. The Prime Minister has himself visited that place. I am speaking this with all details because all this is needed for the success of this Round Table conference. Yet, I am not so sure of the word 'success' used by myself. Any step about Kashmir kindles hope amongst us but finally it leads to nothing and this is a dangerous trend. Yet, I am in favour of continuing this process. I have been repeatedly saying and once again I say, please.

[English]

broaden this dialogue process. We have to broaden this dialogue process.

[Translation]

The Prime Minister too said that this is the very goal of this Round Table.

And, this is the very political message India wants to send to the people of Kashmir, along with the economic package it has offered. If we believe in a secular, peaceful, strong India which is the abode of people of different religions, castes and creeds living together, the campaign of Kashmiri militants and their helpers shall virtually end. But if we have tensed relations, if we advocate the regime of only one creed, it sends wrong message. Our UPS is 'Secular India, Democratic India and Economically progressing India' only. We have a federal structure, the process of decentralization is being followed by us; the authority we are giving to the people; all this sends a good message. We often come across noisy scenes in the Parliament. One political party has a different view while in power and some other while out of power. If we continue talks with Pakistan, why not do so with our own Kashmiris? We said this during the time when you were in power and are saying this today also, that only theatric statements could not serve the purpose. We will have to continue talks with them. You should be happy that this process had started during the NDA – regime and we have not limited that. This is not a one-day affair, but a long journey for us to undertake. I think the country and the people are more confident and eased today under this UPA Government.

[Translation]

A conducive environment has been created by the message given by the Prime Minister and UPA Government to people of Kashmir. Apart from this, a process should be initiated to isolate the hardliners of Kashmir who do not want to form a part of India. Along with this issues relating to autonomy, Article 370 etc are also being raised. You say that we want to give autonomy.

[English]

"I have to make a road map." We have to make other understand it.

[Translation]

We participate in dialogue,

[English]

You have to prepare yourself. Do not say the process is with us.

[Translation]

What do they understand from this, everyone should have understanding. Be it the NDA Government or UPA Government it should be seen that to what extent we want to give autonomy, it should be clear and to what extent they want it should be in the dialogue process. If we reach at a point where we could decide to take some steps then it becomes a meeting point. It is a democratic process, it should continue.

[English]

Involvement of politicians, involvement of the political mind, involvement of the political will is a must.

[Translation]

It should happen. If you take it as a matter relating to security only, then it will not be appropriate. I have full hope that this process will march ahead and UPA Government will take it forward. But it is our demand that you treat it as a major political initiative while keeping it forward and it should not break, it should be continued. The Prime Minister himself should do this or if needed, it should be done in Shrinagar and if needed it should be done in

[Md. Salim]

Inslamabad. We are hoping that the next round of talks will definitely commence and wherever it be it must happen. Apart from this you should proceed ahead taking those together who have been left behind.

[English]

It should be inclusive of all.

[Translation]

SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR (Chail) : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I rise to participate in the discussion started under rule 193 by Chaudhary Lal Singh ji. Hon'ble Prime Minister had called a round table meeting of leader of different political parties in Delhi on February 25, 2006 to encourage peace in Jammu and Kashmir. We are discussing that issue. I would like to congratulate Bhai Lal Singh Ji that he has expressed his feelings during his speech, regarding Jammu and Kashmir and how much serious he is regarding that he had expressed extensively here.

17.42 hrs.

[DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA *in the Chair*]

People from about 40 or 50 groups comprising of intellectuals and knowledgeable and representatives of Jammu and Kashmir, Laddakh and Kargil were present in that conference. Along with them Kashmin Pandit, Gurjer and some hilly people were also present in that conference. As hon'ble Members said that some separatist leader did not attend the conference. Salim Saheb has said extensively regarding that. I would like to suggest that if they did not attend the conference convened by the Prime Minister then at least Home Minister or Union Minister of State for Home Affairs should meet them. The Prime Minister has visited there many times, therefore the series of talks which was started with a purpose we should take with them also to link them to mainstream of talks. I think only then we will get success. Separatist know the intentions of convening of a meeting of different groups or parties but their leaders do not tell. They do not tell thinking that what will happen, what people will think. Therefore they do not tell their feelings. Therefore, they

should be linked to the mainstream of talks slowly and surely.

The problem of Jammu and Kashmir is not a small one. It is a big and national problem. It is a subject of nation also. Kashmir has been an integral part of India. Our forefathers have dedicated themselves to it and they cannot leave that Kashmir so easily. But we will have to identify people who are in the mainstream of India and are concerned for the development of Kashmir or for the problems of Kashmir. We will have to pay attention towards them.

The Prime Minister has listened to the views expressed and suggestions extended by various leaders in the conference with curiosity and patience and he wanted them to tell their problems. To solve the problem of Jammu and Kashmir has been given top priority in the agenda of UPA Government likewise and the Government is concerned for this also. Making an environment of social harmony is needed there. There are so many separatist leaders there who are deviated from main stream of the country. To include them also in mainstream is necessary. Congratulations to our Prime Minister hon'ble Manmohan Singh ji. He has visited thee many times and given economic package amounting to crores of rupees for the development. Primary development and upliftment has been talked of and economic advisory council has been constituted.

When earthquake raked Kashmir then our Prime Minister is taking rehabilitation and relief works seriously. Lal Singh ji is concerned that UPA Government has promised to provide one lac houses then some houses be given surely so that earthquake effected people get house and realize that the Government of India has done something for them.

Some mishappenings have also happened there. Four youths have been killed by security forces. People protested there. Thousands of people have been killed in many such incidences. When people related to mainstream get killed then, the Government should help them and should try that these mishappenings do not reoccur.

Environment of unity and enrichment should be created in Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmir has its own

culture and civilization which is a like Indian culture. Today there is a need to heal their wounds.

Our hon'ble Prime Minister had visited Shrinagar also and he talked to students of universities there also and tried to include them in mainstream also. Peace, enrichment and happiness should be brought in Jammu and Kashmir and Laddakh and building a new Kashmir with the strength of youths residing there so that it should seem that Kashmir is doing something to build atmosphere of peace with her unity.

It has been seen some times that views of Leh-Kargil-Kathua and Saupore are different and some people of the area make intrusion. As Shri Lal Singh has said that some people from that side praise this side and vice-versa. All people from Lakhanpur to Kargil and Kathua are united. At the time of freedom many people of Jammu and Kashmir went to Pakistan and came here from Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan has given them residences and property rights but those, who come here from Pakistan, did not get property rights of their places of residences even after 58 years of freedom.

Whenever head of nations from western countries visit India then incidences of mishappenings happen in the valley. It seems that through that they try to give message to the world that normal situation does not prevail in Kashmir. We will have to pay special attention towards this direction also. Specially when the discussion is going on in this House then cutting across party affiliation we will have to think about problems of Kashmir and come forward to bring peace there and we make Kashmir a peaceful destination.

With these words I thank you Sir, for giving me opportunity to express myself.

SHRI RAGHUNATH JHA (Bettiah) : Mr. Chairman Sir, first of all I want to congratulate Bhai Lal Singh Chaudhary jee today to initiating the Discussion Under Rule 193 in the House on the Kashmir problem. We have been confronting since the independence and the round table conference was covered by Hon'ble Prime Minister for the restoration of peace and progress there. We are outsiders but Chaudhary Lal Singh is a resident of this area and

he has to face the problems that is why he has expressed the pain of his heart before this House.

When the country became independent, more than five hundred Princely states were merged in Indian Union and Kashmir also because a part of India under the circumstances of that time. Thereafter the country, the parliament and the leaders of our country have been convinced that Kashmir is an integral part of India and we will neither discuss anything nor compromise in this regard. However, we should discuss about the Pakistan occupied Kashmir. Sir, I would like to ask whether during 58 years of our independence we have not made any efforts in this regard? Every Government have tried their level best to develop good relations with Pakistan to check the Militancy to develop the state, they made their efforts for this but whether the separatist people in Kashmir want it to happen and whether we are denying the facts and merely discussing the issue in this August House? The fact is that Pakistan is involved in these incidents in Kashmir. If the Government want to discuss only, they may do so. Every time the matter remains confined to discussion only. We are not against the process of discussion. Our colleague has also raised this question, we also know about the left parties. The Prime Minister took an initiative and invited the Separatists for conference but they didn't responded and these separatist wanted us to go to Pakistan and have discussions-How it is possible? It is really unfortunate that question of self-rule or, Autonomy has been raised during Round Table conference. The persons who raised the issue were earlier part of our Government and the Government was kind enough to make him Chief Minister and supporting him. When he becomes a Minister in Central Government, he behaves in our manner and when he is not in the Cabinet, he behaves the other way. This is not proper and this way we cannot find a solution of Kashmir problem. He has raised this issue in a very touching manner. What is the fault of Sikhs who came 50-55 years ago in this country after the division? The Kashmiri Pandits are out of Jammu Kashmir for 14 years. They have no citizenship, no house to live, no employment and no education. We are giving lecture here. When we visit Vaishno Mata we meet many people. How they are living- we as well as the Government should have the knowledge

[Shri Raghunath Jha]

of their situation. They are not foreigners but they came from Kashmir valley. For some reason they lost their land, their fields and houses were grabbed. Now they are living in Jammu. Whether the Government are unable to provide them the facilities and jobs to their children? We want to know that why the Government are afraid? This is justified that they should get their share. Government have forced them to live such a miserable life, we consider Union Government responsible for this. Even after independence they have no place to live. They have been not empowered, they could not get citizenship, they could not get House, their children are unemployed. The Government should help them, whether they are Kashmiri Pandit or others. Today they are in very pitiable condition.

Recently, I visited Vaishno Mata and when I was returning from there, I met a Senior Military officer who was going home during vacation. We introduced to each other. After some formal talks, we started discussion on Kashmir. He told me that we are hearing about autonomy, borders are being opened, roads are being opened which is very good thing but he expressed concern that the Government did not want to know how miserable life the common people were leading there. Whether thousands of people sacrificed their lives for such a situation to rise and now we are compromising with these people.

Our friend Shailendra jee has given his speech. If any innocent person or terrorist is killed by the bullet of security forces the Government suspend the security personnel and further he is dismissed from the service and he also booked under the section 302 but when a person is killed by the terrorist, he does not get any compensation. If Government adopt such a dual policy then how can our country remain united and integrated?

Not taking much time I would like to submit that we should understand the reality and situation of Kashmir. Talks may continue, we may reach on an understanding,

there is nothing wrong on it, we also want the same. I would not like to go into any political discussion as to what are the reasons for the prevailing situation of Kashmir?

Our colleague has rightly said that when there was Bangladesh war, almost one lac Pakistani soldiers were under our seize. Had we been strong enough at that time, perhaps Pakistan occupied Kashmir will have been with India and this dispute would have been settled permanently. I am not saying it with bad intention. Till the issue of Pakistan occurred Kashmir is settled we can't expect peace in India. With these words I conclude.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Madan Lal Sharma, now you can start your discussion for half minutes. He can continue it tomorrow.

SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA (Jammu) : I thank you that you have given me opportunity to speak as you have said but I need at least ten minutes. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : you can continue your speech tomorrow.

SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA : It is already six o' clock.

MR. CHAIRMAN : One minute is left.

SHRI MADAN LAL SHARMA : Chaudhary Lal Singh is my colleague. . . .(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You may continue your speech tomorrow.

Now proceeding of the House stands adjourned till eleven of the clock on Wednesday, 22.03.2006.

18.00 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till eleven of the clock on Wednesday, March 22, 2006/
Chaitra 1, 1928 (Saka)*

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