

LOK SABHA

SYNOPSIS OF DEBATES (Proceedings other than Questions & Answers)

Monday, December 19, 2011 / Agrahayana 28, 1933 (Saka)

REFERENCE BY SPEAKER

MADAM SPEAKER: Hon. Members, as you are all aware, today marks the Golden Jubilee of the liberation of the State of Goa and the Union Territory of Daman and Diu. It was on 19th December 1961 that the Indian Armed Forces launched Operation Vijay and liberated Goa, Daman and Diu from the shackles of Portuguese rule.

The House congratulates the people of Goa, Daman and Diu on the occasion of completing fifty years of freedom and conveys its best wishes to them in their march towards prosperity and all around development.

On this occasion, let us pay our tributes to the valiant freedom fighters and soldiers who laid down their lives during the freedom struggle.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while.

SHRI FRANCISCO COSME SARDINHA: I shall stand before the nation in the name of all the Goans to thank the country on the occasion of 50 years of liberation of Goa. The Goans are indebted to all the freedom fighters starting from

Tristao Branganza da Cunha who is considered as the father of the freedom movement of Goa and all others who have laid their lives and sacrificed for the cause of liberation of the State from the colonial rule of Portugal. The Portuguese ruled Goa for about 450 years and it was finally liberated on 19th December, 1961. On 19th December, 1961, the Indian troops marched into Goa, Daman and Diu and liberated all the territories in 48 hours. This operation was called Operation Vijay. Operation Vijay was entirely supported and welcomed by all the people of Goa. On this historic day, we not only celebrate our Independence but also pay tributes to the Indian Armed Forces for their heroic feat. Goa is now an economically and socially advanced State and boasts of socio-economic indicators that are way above the national average. People of Goa are grateful to the Central Government for all the help and support that the State has received in its march to prosperity. The State shall be extremely proud if the entire country joins us in celebrating the golden Jubilee of Liberation and the achievement of the State in the past 50 years.

SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK: Goa is celebrating its 50th Independence Day today. Several freedom fighters like Dr. T.B. Cunha secured independence to Goa after suffering a lot. Dr. T.B. Cunha is known as the father of Goa. Dr. T. B. Cunha was a visionary freedom fighter. He dedicated his whole life to secure independence to Goa. Goa is a small part of the country. Independence of country would not have been complete without independence of Goa. I thank all the freedom fighters who laid down their lives in Operation Vijay and the leaders who contributed a lot for securing independence to Goa.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): We had to wait 14 years from 1947 to 1961 to get Goa liberated from the yoke of the colonial rule. Goa, Daman and Diu were under the control of the Portuguese. Not only the people of Goa but even the people from the rest of the country also had to fight for its liberation. Two very distinguished Members of this very House itself – Prof. Deshpande and Shri Tridib Choudhary offered Satyagraha for the Goa liberation and they spent a number of years in Goa Aguada Fort jail during the regime of Salazar. A large number of people of Goa and people from different parts of the main land of the country had struggled for the liberation of Goa and ultimately on 19th December, 1961, the people of Goa got their liberation and the process of Indian independence completed. I salute those great heroes.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: 19 December is celebrated as Independence Day of Goa. Not only the people of Goa but the people from other parts of the country went to Goa to lead the struggle for freedom of Goa. Shri Jaggannath Rao Joshi of Bhartiya Jansangh and Shri Madhu Limaye and Jamuna Prasad Shastri from Samajwadi Party participated in freedom movement of Goa. The Government of India granted the status of freedom fighters to the people who participate in freedom struggle of Goa and they were granted the freedom fighters pension on the line of the freedom fighters of 1947. But 9 people from Jammu and Kashmir participated in the freedom struggle of Goa and that pension has not been granted to those people till date. The State Government has given it in writing that these people have participated in the Goan freedom struggle. Those people are

very old now. A meagre amount of money is not important for them but it should be recognized that they have participated in the struggle for liberation of Goa. Today, standing in this House, I bow my head to all those freedom fighters who secured freedom for Goa.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV: I fully agree with the views expressed by the hon. Members from Goa, the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia fought the decisive fight for liberation of Goa and played an important role to get Goa liberated. India was liberated earlier but Goa was still a colony. Therefore, it is imperative to give importance to the people who played an important role for freedom of Goa.

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: Goa is a very beautiful State of our country. Many people have sacrificed their lives for the liberation of Goa. This is a noble day. I congratulate the people of Goa on this occasion and I would also like to appreciate them for maintaining their culture. At the same time, we pay our respects and homage to the martyrs who lost their lives in the liberation struggle of Goa.

DR. RAM CHANDRA DOME: On the solemn occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Goa's Liberation Movement, on behalf of my party CPI(M), I sincerely pay my heartfelt respect to the heroes of the Independence Movement of Goa and I congratulate the people of Goa.

SHRI SHARAD YADAV: Today is the day on which Goa attained freedom. Dr. Lohia was the first person who started struggle for freedom of Goa.

I associate myself with the views expressed by the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and other Members.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB: We are remembering today the great struggle the freedom fighters have undertaken to liberate Goa 50 years ago. That struggle did not start in 1947 but much before that. I visited a number of freedom fighters' families there and till today there are many families in Goa who are still languishing in poverty. I would request the hon. Finance Minister and the Leader of this House that adequate steps may be taken for the children of freedom fighters who are poor and dejected.

SHRI DARA SINGH CHAUHAN: I pay tribute on behalf of my party to the people who made supreme sacrifice for securing independence to Goa from the Portuguese after fairly long time of Independence of the country.

SHRI LALU PRASAD: Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Madhu Limaye and Saryu Raiji were the most important among the great people who participated in the movement for liberation of Goa. On the one hand, Goa is marching towards the path of progress and on the other hand we are remembering the martyrs of Goan freedom movement. I on behalf of my party pay tribute to those brave soldiers who laid down their lives for independence of Goa.

DR. SANJEEV GANESH NAIK: Goa and Maharashtra are closely related. People like Madhu Dandvateji and Madhu Limayeji succeeded in securing freedom to Goa. I thank all those leaders on behalf of my party on this occasion.

DR. RATNA DE: I congratulate the people of Goa on this auspicious occasion. We congratulate Mr. Tridib Chaudhury, former MP of our Lok Sabha and also Gen. Chaudhari, who had conducted Operation Vijay in Goa.

SHRI T.K.S. ELANGO VAN: We congratulate the people of Goa on this great occasion. The DMK Party's founder leader Dr. C.N. Annadurai had visited Vatican City and met the Pope to release Shri Ranade, who was languishing in the Portuguese prison even after three years of independence of Goa. After his meeting, the Pope intervened for the release of Shri Ranade. We pay our respect to all those leaders who had fought for the Independence of Goa.

SHRI ANANDRAO ADSUL: Today Goa is celebrating 50th anniversary of its independence. On behalf of my party I pay tribute to the martyrs of Goan freedom movement on this occasion.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Re: Comprehensive Package for the Handloom Sector

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY AND MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): During the Budget Speech of 2011-12, the Finance Minister had announced that the Government of India would provide Rs. 3000 crore for implementing the financial package for handloom sector for waiver of overdue loans. The Financial Package has recently been approved by the Government with an outlay of Rs. 3884 crore. This includes one time waiver of overdue loans and interests as on 31st March, 2010, for loans

disbursed to handloom sector. The Financial Package is expected to benefit about 3 lakh individual handloom weavers and 15000 cooperative societies, and they will be able to access institutional credit once again. A statement in this regard has already been laid on the table of the House on 25th November, 2011.

However, the above financial package will benefit only those weavers and their cooperative societies that had taken loans earlier. There would be many handloom weavers who had no access to institutional credit in the past. Such weavers will not be benefited under the financial package. Further, a need was also felt to provide yarn to handloom sector at a price which is cheaper than that at which it is available to the powerloom and mills, so that handlooms can compete with them.

Therefore, in order to address the two critical needs of cheap credit and cheap yarn, the Government has now approved a comprehensive package for handloom weavers. The interventions will be operationalised by modifying the two existing Plan schemes, i.e., Integrated Handlooms Development Scheme for extending cheap credit, and Mill Gate Price Scheme for supply of subsidized hank yarn. The brief details of interventions approved by the Government are as follows:

Credit to handloom sector: The Government will provide assistance for the following:

Margin money assistance will be provide @ Rs. 4200 per weaver to individual weavers, their self help groups and joint liability groups by the Government so as to enable them to get fresh loans from the Financial Institutions.

Interest Subvention of 3% per annum for 3 years from the date of first disbursal will be provided by the Government so that handloom weavers and their cooperative societies can get loans at a subsidized rate of interest.

Credit Guarantee: The loans extended by the Financial Institutions to the handloom weavers and their cooperative societies will be guaranteed for 3 years by the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE). The Government of India will pay the required guarantee fee and annual service fee.

Information, Education & Communication (IEC) Activity: A publicity and awareness campaign will be carried out to make the handloom weavers aware of the scheme.

Service Charge to the Implementing Agency: The Scheme will be implemented by NABARD, SIDBI, CGTMSE and Nationalised Banks. These agencies will be paid service charges @2% of the amount of margin money and interest subsidy disbursed by them.

Yarn supply to handloom sector: To address the issue of yarn availability at reasonable prices, the following benefits will be provided:

10% price subsidy on silk and cotton hank yarn will be provided by the Government to ensure supply of subsidized yarn to handloom sector.

The Government has decided to enhance the freight reimbursement for transportation of different types of yarn used by the handloom sector in order to offset the increase in fuel cost. This will ensure availability of yarn in the handloom clusters in far flung areas of the country at roughly the same price at which it is available at yarn manufacturing mills.

The National Handloom Development Corporation would implement the scheme for supplying subsidized yarn. The State Governments and their agencies will also be associated for supplying yarn wherever necessary on the same terms. A yarn passbook will be issued and the subsidized yarn will be supplied either to individual handloom weavers or to their self help groups, cooperative societies etc., but not to both. This subsidy will be available for cotton and raw silk yarn.

The comprehensive package will benefit all the handloom weavers and their cooperative societies in the country as per the Budget allocation. The cooperation of the State Governments is crucial for the successful implementation of this comprehensive package. They will have to carry out IEC activities and conduct special camps periodically in handloom clusters for extending the loan facility to handloom weavers. They will also have to issue yarn passbooks to weavers.

The projected financial outlay involved in the implementation of the comprehensive package during the current year and the 12th Plan period is Rs. 2362.15 crore. The entire funding will be provided by the Government of India.

INTRODUCTION OF MINISTER

THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH) introduced his Cabinet colleague Shri Ajit Singh as the Minister of Civil Aviation to the House.

*MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

- (i) **SHRI HAMDULLAH SAYEED** laid a statement regarding need to direct Airport Authority of India to expedite assessment of Environmental Impact due to proposed reclamation of sea land for extension of runway at Agatti Airport in Lakshadweep.
- (ii) **SHRI KAMAL KISHOR 'COMMANDO'** laid a statement regarding need to provide funds for electrification of villages in Bahraich Parliamentary Constituency, Uttar Pradesh under Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana.
- (iii) **SHRI R. DHRUVANARAYANA** laid a statement regarding need to implement the proposed Kengri-Kankapura-Chamarajanagar railway line project in Chamarajanagar Parliamentary Constituency, Karnataka.
- (iv) **SHRI P.L. PUNIA** laid a statement regarding need to provide reservation of jobs to Muslims in Central Government Services.

* Laid on the Table as directed by the Chair.

- (v) **SHRI PRADEEP MAJHI** laid a statement regarding need to constitute a National Commission for Farmers' Rights for redressal of problems of farmers in the country.
- (vi) **SHRI KHILADI LAL BAIRWA** laid a statement regarding need to give environmental clearance to diversion of forest land for construction of hydro-electric and irrigation projects in Karouli-Dholpur Parliamentary Constituency, Rajasthan.
- (vii) **SHRI MAKANSINGH SOLANKI** laid a statement regarding need to release funds for electrification of villages under Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana in Khargone Parliamentary Constituency, Madhya Pradesh.
- (viii) **SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA** laid a statement regarding need to provide citizenship to the Hindu and other minority community of Pakistani refugees who took shelter in India after partition in 1947.
- (ix) **SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR** laid a statement regarding need to take measures to ensure the return of the innocent labourers who are forced to work as bonded labourers in foreign countries after being trapped by fraudulent travel agents.
- (x) **SHRIMATI USHA VERMA** laid a statement regarding need to ensure availability of fertilizers to farmers at affordable price and to remove the disparity between supply and distribution thereof.

- (xi) **SHRI BHISMA SHANKAR ALIAS KUSHAL TIWARI** laid a statement regarding need to provide adequate quantity of fertilizers to farmers at affordable price in the country.
- (xii) **SHRI VISHWA MOHAN KUMAR** laid a statement regarding need to release funds for construction of roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in Supaul Parliamentary Constituency, Bihar.
- (xiii) **SHRI YASHBANT LAGURI** laid a statement regarding need to convert Kalimati-Kankadahad route (via Baspal-Bamebdari-Telboi) in Keonjhar Parliamentary Constituency, Odisha into a National Highway.
- (xiv) **DR. TARUN MANDAL** laid a statement regarding need to set up an institute of national importance at Kolkata after the name of Shri P.C. Ray, a great scientist of India.

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2011

(As passed by Rajya Sabha)

THE MINISTER OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY) moved the motion for consideration and passing of the Bill.

The Bill was passed without discussion

COST AND WORKS ACCOUNTANTS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2011

(As passed by Rajya Sabha)

THE MINISTER OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY) moved the motion for consideration and passing of the Bill.

The Bill was passed without discussion

COMPANY SECRETARIES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2011

(As passed by Rajya Sabha)

THE MINISTER OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY) moved the motion for consideration and passing of the Bill.

The Bill was passed without discussion.

CONSTITUTION (SCHEDULED TRIBES) ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2011

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA DEO) moved the motion for consideration and passing of the Bill.

The Bill was passed without discussion

SUBMISSION BY MEMBERS

Re: Reported ban of Bhagvad Gita in Russia and the need to protect the religious rights of Hindus in Russia.

**THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND
MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL)**

responding to the issue raised by several hon. Members, said: We respect the sentiments of the hon. Members expressed with regard to the Holy Bhagwat Gita. It has been brought to the notice that some legal action has been taken against the Bhagwat Gita in Siberia, Russia. The hon. Minister Shri S.M.Krishna will make a statement in the House tomorrow furnishing details in this regard.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Re: Situation arising out of the threat being posed to the very existence of River Ganga and the Himalayas due to their ruthless exploitation.

SHRI REWATI RAMAN SINGH initiating the discussion, said: I am sorry to say that the Government of Uttarakhand is trying to destroy the symbol of our culture and civilization, the Ganga. It has been mentioned in our ancient scriptures that the Ganga is holy and its water is nectar. Two Mahakumbhs are held on the banks of the river Ganga. Crores of tourists, devotees and saints not only from our country but from abroad come to attend these two Mahakumbhs. But, today a conspiracy is going on for the annihilation of the Ganga. The outcome of this conspiracy would be that a population of around 50 crore which is

dependent upon the Ganga for their mainstay and the people living in the four States along the banks of the Ganga are going to lose their livelihood. Keeping in view the importance of the Ganga, the hon. Prime Minister had announced it to be the national river in the year 2008. Today, the year 2011 is coming to an end but not a single meeting of the Committee thereon has been held. Neither any law has been enacted for the conservation of the Ganga.

At the time of construction of the Tehri Dam, it was said that it would generate 2400 MW electricity and 1.50 lakh hectare land would be irrigated. The reality is that the Tehri is generating merely 400 MW electricity and so far as the irrigation is concerned, it is merely on paper. The Ganga used to flow continuously. Its water had all the medicinal values and it was a habitat of various types of flora and fauna. But now, all these living-beings are going to be destroyed. Down from Kedarnath Dham to the river Mandakini, a chain of dams has been constructed and despite the opposition of the people of that area, the same is going on. If the Government does not take immediate steps, the Ganga is going to vanish. The National River Authority was constituted but it has not been granted any legal status. Besides the Ganga, the existence of the Himalayas is also in danger. The Himalayas is situated at 4-5 seismic zone. In case the Tehri Dam collapses, the entire area up to Allahabad will be submerged. On the intervention of the hon. Prime Minister, the four projects namely, Loharinag, Pala, Maneri and Bhairavghati dams were shelved. But, the work on 150 dams is still going on. 550 dams have been identified on which the work will be taken up. Only one per cent

of the total electricity generated in the entire country will be available after the completion of all these projects. Let the Ganga flow uninterrupted and try to check the sewage flowing into it. The World Bank had given Rs. 600 crore for cleaning of the Ganga during the tenure of Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Again, the World Bank has provided Rs. 6000 crore for this purpose. If we destroy this heritage of the Ganga and the Himalayas, the country will lose its identity. 50 crore people earn their livelihood from the Ganga and the Yamuna. Explosions are done to construct a tunnel in the Himalayas. Lakes are constructed and the debris is left there. The water which is released give birth to many diseases. The Government should constitute a commission comprising of ecologists. The water of the Ganga has arsenic contents while flowing from Balia to Benaras which is not fit for human consumption.

SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ: Every Indian feel proud in saying that he comes from the country where holy Ganga flows. Intention behind saying the revered Ganga as mother is that the people will generate power by utilizing its water, barren land will yield crops and greenery, and millions of people will earn their livelihood from it. Indiscriminate exploitation of the Ganga and the Himalayas is going on. Dumping of sewerage from urban areas and half burnt dead-bodies flown in the Ganga have turned it into a gutter. For this, the sewerage treatment plants have to be established. The hydrogen received by treating sewerage water will be used to run turbines and the treated water will be used for power generation. Today, state of the art technology, termed as run of the river, is

being used in power generation. In this technology, there is no need for constructing any dam. Instead, water is flown in tunnels and the power is generated by running turbines through this flowing water and the gradients of the earth. Indiscriminate digging of river bed is being done for illegal mining. This illegal mining generate black money and the Governments get no revenue from this illegal mining. Apart from this, the money generated from illegal mining is never used for the development of the nation. Scientific technology should be used for mining activities. In 1985, the Central Ganga Authority was established with the initial budget of Rs. 350 crore. In 1985, the Directorate of Ganga Project was established in the Ministry of Environment and Forests. I urge the Government for formulating an action plan for the protection of the Ganga and scientific exploitation of the Himalayas.

SHRI HUKMADEO NARAYAN YADAV: We call the Ganga our mother. As the milk of the mother nourishes all parts of the body of a child, in the same way, the water of the Ganga river nourishes our entire society. The water of the Ganga is a boon for our crops. It is our national duty to maintain the cleanliness of the river Ganga. But the campaign of the government to cleanse the river Ganga remains on the papers only. Our bureaucracy creates hurdles in this work. All the rivers which originate from the Himalayas ultimately merge in the river Ganga. If these rivers remain clean only then the water of the Ganga will remain clean. The government should think about it. The sewer water of the cities is discharged in the river Ganga, Yamuna and other rivers. This water should be

discharged in these rivers only after it gets treated in the water treatment plants. This water could also be used for irrigating the nearby fields by using pump sets. The industrial effluents are also discharged in the river Ganga and Yamuna. This practice should be stopped and strict action should be taken against such industries that indulge in this work. The government will have to show its will power to check it. The trees are being felled in the Himalayan region. This is causing soil erosion and thereby silting the river Ganga. The flow of the water is getting reduced day by day and the day when the river Ganga dries up our culture will also vanish. Therefore, we have to save river Ganga at all costs. Finally, I would like to say that the cleansing work of all the rivers of the country should be undertaken without further delay.

DR. BALIRAM: The flow of water has reduced in the river Ganga. We talk about cleansing of the Ganga with the financial aid from the World Bank and the government grants. If there will be no water in the Ganga then what is to be cleansed? The government should look into as to why the flow of river Ganga has reduced. The water of the river Ganga is being held back by constructing many dams in Uttarakhand. Whenever we play with the nature, the entire country has to face its consequences. A lot of illegal activities are taking place in the Himalayan region. The level of pollution in the river Ganga has reached to an alarming proportion. Today, people are compelled to consume polluted water which is causing fatal diseases. Trees are being cut down in various parts of the country. Illegal mining is taking place here and there and thereby causing adverse impact on

our environment. I urge upon the Union Government to prevent the Government of Uttarakhand from undertaking its pending projects of constructing dams on the river Ganga so that the water of the Ganga reaches the plains of the country. There are about two dozen cities of Uttar Pradesh that are situated on the banks of the river Ganga. They should also get the benefit of the water of the river.

SHRI SHARAD YADAV: The Himalayas is made up of sedimentary rocks. The entire Himalayan region faces the utmost danger of earthquake. Today, a very dangerous situation has arisen in this region due to indiscriminate development activities which are taking place there. A number of rivers like Mandakini, Alaknanda, Yamuna, Gori Ganga, Kali Ganga, Sharda, Dhauliganga, Pindhar, Ram Ganga, Chinab, Ravi etc. originate from Himalayas. But the government has been bleeding the Himalayas by constructing tunnels, dams etc. Due to this fiddling with the ecology of Himalayas, the river Ganga has become a drain. The civilization which flourished along the banks of Ganga is one of the greatest civilizations of the world. All the civilizations of the world have come up on the river banks. The river not only gives drinking water but also keeps the underground water level intact. The receding glaciers will increase the sea level, inundating the coastal areas like Mumbai, Goa etc. and thus play havoc with our civilization. Environment is not an issue to be dealt by a state or Uttarakhand only. We are on the brink of disaster. The Government of India should stop all these activities immediately. It has constituted Ganga Authority. I ask where is the office of this Authority? What type of people are there and what type of

grievances they listen? The hon. Prime Minister has declared it the national river. Whether this declaration will encourage the government to do something to save this river? The survival of Himalayas will ensure the survival of India and if the Himalayas vanish our country can not be saved.

SK. SAIDUL HAQUE: The Himalaya and the Ganga are of immense importance to the nation. But, of late, the deteriorating environment of the Himalayas and the Ganga are posing a serious problem to the country. The way the Himalayan glaciers are melting, they would disappear in the next few decades endangering a large part of life. The Himalayas is under grave threat from big dams, deforestation and mining activities. The Ganga is now under great threat of pollution. The disposal of domestic and industrial waste brings with it the water-borne diseases. In 1996, the Supreme Court had banned the discharge of effluents from various tanneries and factories located on its banks in Kanpur. The construction of buildings in an unplanned way and illegal mining in and around the Ganga basin are also posing danger to the river bank and the riverbed. The Ganga Action Plan was initiated in 1985. Almost Rs.1,000 crore have been pumped in Ganga Action Plan between 1985 and 2000 but the river is still sullied. That is why, the Government has constituted National Ganga River Basin Authority. According to a report published in the *India Today*, a plan to produce electricity in the Himalayas would make Ganga disappear from its origin itself. The Farakka barrage is not being maintained properly. One lock gate has been broken that will pose a great danger. I appeal to the Government to look into all these aspects.

SHRI LALU PRASAD: The hon. Member, deriving inspiration from his leader has invited the attention of the Government to an issue of cardinal importance. The Ganga river is indeed the longest river of India and its sacred water used to be considered as nectar but now it is not so any more. People have polluted the waters of both Ganga and Yamuna rivers. Thousands of crores of rupees were provided for cleansing the Yamuna and for Ganga Action Plan. If a proper inquiry is carried out then some very big shots would land in jails. Today, chemical effluents and drainage water is directly flowing into these rivers. If we intend to cleanse the river Ganga then we should dismantle these big dams. The Himalaya is also to be protected but China has constructed a six lane road up to Arunachal Pradesh. They have taken over the entire land there by encroaching into Himalayas. China is already under possession of our vast area of land. I recently visited Mathura and some rituals were being performed at a place where water of Yamuna was highly toxic. Several rivers flows into the river Ganga but this sacred river is drying up. Had it been any other country, people would have been meted out harsh punishment. A huge amount of water has been given to Bangladesh then why this sacred river would not dry up. Lakhs of migratory birds used to come in the basin of Ganga river. The Government of India should come out of this treaty. Right from Farakka to Uttar Pradesh lakhs of fishermen live along both sides of this river but today they are starving and have no work to do. Nobody is there to listen to their grievances. People have disfigured the geography of this nation and have also done a great damage to the rivers. Today, China is

claiming its control over the Brahmaputra and threatens that it will now on regulate the river and utilize its waters. Those running the Central Government today should ponder over it as to how this treaty was signed and water was given to Bangladesh. All this was done without any proper discussion and without any all-party meeting. The moot question, therefore, is as to what our bureaucrats were doing. How come they could not visualize its future implications and now the river has dried up. In the larger interests of the nation, this treaty should be discontinued as there is no need of it and it is against the interests of our nation. The Ganga has lost its entire aqua life. The river Yamuna is also called mother Yamuna. Today, there are several places in Bihar where *chhat pooja* is not being performed. People perform *chhat pooja* by constructing small ponds of water in their houses. Such a situation has arrived. In the name of power generation, these sacred rivers are being finished off. A boy from Darbhanga sacrificed his life for saving the Ganga. The Prime Minister has already declared that the river Ganga would be our national river. Its maintenance would be undertaken and it would be made pollution free. The river Ganga should be cleansed and an all party meeting should be called to find a solution of this vexed issue.

***SHRI C. SIVASAMI:** Many of our rivers in the country are polluted massively and it is a matter of great concern. In the South in Tamil Nadu rivers like Cauvery, Coovum, Noyyal and Pennar are getting polluted. The untreated effluents and the sewerage let off from the industrial towns cause massive

* Original in Tamil

pollution in the river systems available by their areas. I would like to point out the pollution problem accruing to river Noyyal in my Tirupur Lok Sabha Constituency. Now, its water is not fit even for cultivation. This calls for a concerted effort to treat the effluents from industrial units before it could flow into a river. In order to carry out river cleansing operation in a big way in Tamil Nadu the Centre must come forward with a special package and must extend at least Rs.10,000 crores to the Government of Tamil Nadu. All these problems can be solved by way of taking measures to treat wastewater that flow into rivers. This calls for huge funding and the Centre must help the State Government with adequate release of funds.

DR. KIRIT PREMJBHAI SOLANKI: The climate change has endangered the natural resources of Himalayas. The glaciers of Himalayas are melting due to global warming and the originating point of Ganga is shifting. We are polluting the Ganga by throwing garbage in it. The drains of cities, towns and villages along the river are polluting Ganga. I would like to suggest that priority should be accorded to maintain the sanctity of Himalayas and Ganga and a strict law should be formulated in this regard.

SHRI MAHENDRASINH P. CHAUHAN: It should be our duty to ensure the chastity, sanctity and existence of Himalayas and River Ganga. No garbage and waste should be thrown into the river Ganga. Steps should be taken to do away the danger being posed to the existence of Himalayas and river Ganga. We are not against the development but technology should be used with caution in order to

maintain the chastity and sanctity of these places and there should not be any harm to the environment as our existence is connected with them.

***SHRI P. LINGAM:** River Ganga passes through several States and finding its confluence with several rivers like Yamuna, Gomti, Kosi and Damodar is increasingly becoming unsuitable for irrigation. This has greatly affected our agricultural activity. The Government must take care to see that pollution does not come in the way of our food production. To increase food production and ensure increased protection to our rivers, the Government should think in terms of nationalizing all the rivers of the country. In Tamil Nadu, we have Cauvery, Porunai, Vaigai, Palar the ancient ones which find themselves polluted now. We must go in for the Garland Canal Scheme to link the southern rivers and give life to the river systems there. Now, at this juncture when we contemplate Food Security Bill, we must give priority to save our rivers and river water from being polluted. Apart from nationalizing our rivers we must also go in for cleansing them in a big way.

***SHRI THOL THIRUMAAVALAVAN:** Water is one among the five elements that constitute life and this world. River Ganga is our sacred river known for its purity. Since river Ganga has been polluted in a big way, the Government of India has taken upon itself a massive scheme to clean Ganga evolving a project at a cost of about 7,000 crores of rupees. Resorting to mining activities near the rivers cause enormous pollution. We are harming the smooth flow of our river

* Original in Tamil

systems and its capacity to purify the water by itself by way of quarrying sand most in illegal way exploiting nature. This results in furthering the pollution. Recently, I had been to the river Ganga. I was greatly shocked and saddened by the dirtiness of the impure water there. I would like to urge upon the Union Government to take up the inter-linking of rivers projects and take steps to link river Ganga with river Cauvery to create a situation that there is no place in India where there is scarcity of water. As a step towards this, all the rivers must be nationalized to save them from pollution and conserve water for equitable distribution. Scarcity of drinking water and inadequate water supply assumes priority. So, we must take steps to put an end to this problem ensuring adequate drinking water supply, providing water for irrigation, creating pure environ for fishes to grow and thereby increasing overall agricultural production.

SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL: Ganga is not just a river. It has ensured the continuous flow of life and civilization in India. The Government need to create awareness among the people to save the Ganga. It should make consistent efforts in this respect. There should be a strong mechanism for monitoring the funds made available by the Government to ensure their timely use.

SHRI A.T. NANA PATIL: Ganga and Yamuna river are synonyms of holiness of our country. But the river Ganga is getting dried day by day as the flow of the river have been obstructed and the water left out in our Ganga river is polluted with waste emitting from cities along with industrial chemicals. We should check it. The farmers are not getting water for agriculture. Fishes have

disappeared in absence of sufficient fresh water. The construction work of dam on river Ganga should be stopped at once. Pollution in the holy Ganga river should be checked so that the water purified and used with the help of treatment plants.

SHRI RAMASHANKAR RAJBHAR: As per a research regarding effect of arsenic in the fields of Ganga, arsenic have been found in Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh. People are dying of lungs, urinary, liver and cancer etc. related diseases after drinking arsenic water. Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh has tried to overcome the situation by constructing 66 water tank with a cost of Rs.100 crores in district Baliya.

I urge the ministry of Rural Development to take effective initiatives and to declare special package in order to save the people of these district. If Himalayas lose its identity, entire country will be destroyed. We can't imagine life without Ganga. If Ganga dries up, all our cleaning efforts will prove futile. I request that stringent action should be taken by the Ministry of Environment against the factors responsible for polluting river Ganga.

SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE: Rivers are symbol of our existence. The rivers and sea have become polluted and poisonous due to polluted water of villages, cities and factories as well. Use of polluted water for drinking causing fatal diseases. There are many laws in this regard but these are not being implemented properly. The arrangement for purification of water should be made.

SHRIMATI ANNU TANDON: We got this opportunity to express our concern on the exploitation of our mother i.e. Ganga Maiya. Our experts say that

Hydro Power potential above 60 percent in Ganga Basin is about 10,715 megawatt. But so far it has been utilized only 12 percent. Today our neighbour state is Uttarakhand which is proposing to construct many dams on the tributaries of Ganga. It would create problems for environment. Today in Uttar Pradesh both Sharda tributary canal project and Saryu canal Project depend on river Ganga. Due to lack of maintenance of both these projects there is shortage of water. Today availability of Ganga ji to farmers and citizens is decreasing. It needs not to mention about the illegal mining. I would like to draw the attention of the House towards pollution of Varanasi and Allahabad of Uttar Pradesh. My parliamentary constituency Unnao on this side of Ganga and on the other hand is Kanpur. Tannery industries of Unnao and Kanpur are polluting the river Ganga. Nation Ganga River Basin Authority has been constituted under the Ministry of Environment.

The progress of a state and our country is a matter of pleasure. The Government of Uttarakhand is exploiting Ganga Basin. The State Government is generating electricity from Ganga. Due to this Uttar Pradesh has to face acute shortage of water in future. The farmers of my constituency depend on water of Sharda Tributary Canal Project. But due to shortage of water they are unable to get it. Through you I appeal to save our Mother Ganga. It has been declared national river. Therefore, it should be given complete regard.

SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY: By constructing dam on the river Ganga and cities along the said river are polluting it by dumping their waste in the river. The Government formulates the schemes but those schemes are not being

implemented properly. The foreign assistance and the money spent by the Government for the Ganga action plan have not served the purpose. I request to the Government that we should clean the river Ganga by judiciously using the amount meant for the Ganga action plan so that in future there is no pollution in river Ganga. I would like to suggest that the Programme for interlinking of rivers should be formulated so that portable water can be made available and arrangement could be made for irrigation as well.

SHRI RAJENDRA AGRAWAL: Ganga is not only a river- it is the lifeline of this country. The Bhagwad Gita has been discussed in the House today itself and both are holy for us. Ganga is being polluted in many ways. There is need to enforce strict penalties to stop this. The thousands of cities and metropolises flourishing on the coasts of Ganga release water polluted by effluents straight into the river. The responsibility for treating the polluted water lies fully upon the Union Government. This responsibility should not be passed on to the local bodies or the state governments. The Prime Minister has declared Ganga to be the national river. The efforts to save the river should be commensurate with this status.

***SHRI PRASANTA KUMAR MAJUMDAR:** We are today discussing the threat to Ganga. Indo Gangetic plain is very fertile due to the river water which is immensely helpful for agricultural activities. The farmers are dependent on the water for cultivation purposes. In my state west Bengal the Farakka dam obstructs

* Original in Bengali

the river and the Calcutta port is also in poor condition. So the Central Government must take steps in this regard. The fishing community of the basin is wholly dependent on Ganga. The river Ganga must be preserved in the interest of the fishermen also. Pollution of Ganga adversely affects the ecology and environment and in turn the livelihood of the people. The river should be cleaned at regular intervals. The funds earmarked for the purpose should be utilized properly and not misused. I urge upon the Central Government to look into all the above aspects and take immediate action to save the sacred river Ganga.

SHRI GORAKHNATH PANDEY: In order to save Ganga from pollution, we have to check mixing of polluted, chemically treated waste into river Ganga and to maintain the flow of river intact. Many dozen villages of district Bhadohi under Allahabad Lok Sabha constituency upto Varansai are affected with flood, erosion. There is a need to set up a dam there. Effective steps should be taken to save the Glaciers of Himalaya and the river Ganga from the polluting substances.

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB: I had been fortunate enough to be a Member of the Public Accounts Committee ten years back. It was a Herculean task to travel from Rishikesh to Patna. I had varied experience going across different cities and towns on both sides of the bank of Ganga. This Ganga Action Plan was initiated by late Shri Rajiv Gandhi Rs. 1,000 crore or more was provided to keep the Ganga clean. A Parliamentary Committee Report of Public Accounts Committee pointed out the failure of the respective State machineries in keeping the Ganga clean. No one ever calls any river as 'Mother' of that land. We have

been calling this river 'Mother Ganga'. This river is more than 2,510 kms long. The Ganga basin is the largest one in India constituting 26 per cent of the country's land mass, and supporting 43 per cent of its population. This shows how huge this Ganga Basin is. The Basin covers 230 cities and towns. The Central Pollution Control Board in its Report said that the total coliform count in Patna downstream has been calculated 60 times higher than the permissible limit. I would like to say that the sacred River is unfit even for bathing. Patna town generates about 200 million litres of sewage every day. The Varanasi City has open drains and they enter the River. The river bed has been turned into a sewerage. Recently, the World Bank has approved US \$one billion as credit and loan to support India's effort to clean up the Ganga Basin. In April, Union Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved a Rs. 7,000 project to clean the Ganga, where the Centre's share would be Rs. 5,100 crore and that of the Governments of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal would be Rs. 1,900 crore. Today, funds are not a problem in our country. It is the proper monitoring and utilization which are great issues. Nearly 50 per cent of the leather processing units in the Ganga river basin are located in Uttar Pradesh. I urge upon the Government that it needs to provide a certain amount of funding from financial institutions to those industries. I would say that to clean up that river, you have to do a Bhagirath Prayas. Regular monitoring is necessary. The Centre and respective State Governments have to work together.

SHRI P.T. THOMAS: At the outset, I am fully supporting the issue raised by hon'ble Rewati Raman Singhji about River Ganga, the heart of India. Even though I am from the extreme South of our country, I am also concerned about the well being of the holy river Ganga. Today, river Ganga is fully polluted due to careless activities done by tens and thousands of inhabitants who are living in the banks. I am also requesting the Uttarakhand Government to control all kinds of inhuman activities which are going on now-a-days. While we are discussing about river Ganga, the issue of Mullaperiyar Dam is also to be considered, as it being a very old dam, it is endangering the lives of 35 lakh people and the people of Kerala are demanding that a new dam should be constructed at Mullaperiyar.

SHRI KAPIL MUNI KARWARIA: The entire House is concerned about the holiness of river Ganga. Today, the entire waste of cities, mills and tanneries is directly being flown into the Ganga river. Water treatment plants have been installed in some cities and mills, but these are working far behind their capacity. The Government needs to take stern action to improve their capacity alongwith installing other additional treatment plants. I would like to submit to the Government to kindly issue directions to the state governments for taking all necessary steps to shut down all the dams on this river and increase the flow of the river.

SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL: The Ganga river is considered as life giver and 'Mokshadayini'. Exploitation and pollution of the Ganga waters will raise a serious question in the near future. Forests are being cut in the Himalayas since

last few years and illegal mining is taking place which is jeopardizing humanity. Presently, the Ganga starts getting polluted right from Haridwar after descending from the Himalayas. And its water does not remain worth even a sip by the time it reaches Kanpur. The land on both sides of the Ganga in Haridwar, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and areas of Gangasagar in West Bengal is very fertile. The Ganga is not just for irrigation purposes in India, rather it has become the central point of faith in the common man's life in India as a sacred river. The Government of India approved the Ganga Action Plan, but even after that there has been a constant rise in the level of pollution in the Ganga river. There should be a collective effort not only by the Indian Government but also by the State Governments to save the Ganga by rising above politics in the House in the wake of the concern of all through mutual coordination and understanding. Under the 'Ganga Express Way' project in Uttar Pradesh, roads are proposed to be constructed on the banks of the Ganga and big townships will be developed there. The very existence of the Ganga river will come under threat after implementation of this project. Even Rs.1000 crore has been spent under the Ganga Action Plan but the situation is still the same. Avalanches are occurring constantly in the Himalayas due to illegal mining and deforestation there. Concrete measures will be needed to make the Ganga and the Himalayas free from pollution and illegal mining to save India and humanity.

SHRI SANSUMA KHUNGGUR BWISMUTHIARY: The people of Bodo origin worship river Ganges as their mother. The Government should take

stringent action not only to save Ganges, and Yamuna but also Brahmaputra and other rivers of India including Mountains, hills and forests. There is a need to constitute Brahmaputra River Basin Authority to save all these rivers. Hence, Government of India should set up the Brahmaputra River Basin Authority so as to help preserve River Brahmaputra and all the rivers and tributaries within the Bodoland area. Chinese Government has been constructing a number of dams on the Brahmaputra. The Government of India should take action to object this kind of ventures. The Government of India should take steps to raise National Forest and Environment Protection Force on the lines of CISF to protect all rivers, mountains, and forests of India.

SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SINGH: The Ganges is treated as a National river. The Ganges is not only a river, it symbolizes belief of crores of people of this country. The Ganges provide livelihood to fishermen and crores of farmers living on its banks. But the Ganges is being obstructed in one way or the other. The 115 km. mainstream of the Ganges has been obstructed by constructing various projects under hydel power project. Tunnels are being constructed in the name of hydel projects for power generation on all rivers of Himalayan mountain range including the Ganges, Yamuna, Mandakini, Alaknanda and other tributaries. The place of Origin of the Ganges is being destroyed. Private companies are free to conduct their surveys, projects and they start their work after taking the approval. The same should be stopped. If construction of such power projects is not stopped then the same will further damage the Ganges.

SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR: The Ganga and the Himalaya are not just a river and a mountain for us. For centuries, both have been a matter of faith for crores of Hindus. The Ganga is getting polluted due to sewage drainage into it from the habitations and chemical waste flow from factories situated at its banks. The responsibility of keeping the Ganga clean is that of the Government because lives and livelihood of lakhs of crores of people living at its banks also depend on it. With the increasing size of population and growing industrialization in the country, the water of Ganga is getting polluted day-by-day. Chandrapur has been rated second among the most polluted cities in the country. A total of 130 industries are highly polluting in this district. The rivers are getting narrowed due to dumping of O.B. at its banks by the coal manufacturing company Western Coal Fields Limited. As a result, situation of artificial flood is threatening. But Pollution Control Board is shunning any action. The Vardha river fears the threat of disappearance due to proposed installation of about 25 plants at its banks. The monthly water testing of the rivers under National Water Monitoring Programme is mandatory for State Pollution Control Board in Maharashtra, but it is not being complied with. Due to river water pollution, water-chestnut production (Singhaara) and fisheries are adversely affected. Being dependent on it, fishermen have become jobless and the farmers are finding themselves unable to irrigate their farms. I, therefore, urge upon the Government to formulate special action plan like Ganga Action Plan for cleaning of all the rivers in the country and strictly ban the chemical waste disposal of the industries into rivers.

DR. TARUN MANDAL: A stringent law should be formed to prevent pollution in the Ganges. All the rivers of the country should be protected. It is essential for our environment and to check ill effects. There should be an agreement for Tipaimukh dam.

SHRI PREM DAS RAI: The Himalayas needs urgent attention. Water resource from Himalayas is becoming more and more scarce. River Teesta is also drying up. There is a much greater need to look at the whole Himalayan range more holistically. Planning Commission has set up a working group on mountains. We need to take this up more forcefully in the climate change talks.

SHRI PRADEEP TAMTA: It has been just said that the Uttarakhand Government has constructed so many dams on the Ganga river. A total of 194 big and small dams are being constructed in Uttarakhand. After that 168 dam projects are going on only in Arunachal Pradesh. I would like to say that these dams are being constructed by the Union Government as well as the state governments. Thousands of people living along the Ganga river had to be displaced for construction of Tehri dam on the Ganga but Tehri district has made no progress even till date. Today, all the rivers in Himalayan region are facing crisis. Run-of-the-river projects are being constructed on these rivers. On one hand Union Government has withdrawn its approval for Bhaironghati, Lohari, Nagpala and Palameri projects while on the other hand 900 MW power project of Uttarakhand government is proposed there. On one hand these projects are opposed while on the other hand Pancheswar dam and Purnagiri dam projects are proposed but we

are concerned as to if these dams are constructed, where the thousands of people would go. There is no environmental clearance in Pithoragarh district but run-of-the river projects are being planned on the dams. This is not only a question of Uttarakhand but of Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, Bihar and crores of people who depend on these rivers. The second issue is relating to seismic zone. A national level assessment should be made to assess how much water is there in all the rivers flowing from the Himalaya. Whether this water is enough to meet the requirement of drinking water and irrigation? Power generation is secondary. I would again like to request the government to reconsider all the ongoing power projects in Himalayan region.

SHRI GANESH SINGH: Today, the existence of both Himalaya and river Ganga is in danger. In fact, not only just these two, the existence of all the rivers in the country is under danger. These rivers get polluted either because of the dams constructed upon them or due to the polluted water or sewage which is directly discharged into the river. The construction of small dams does not hamper the flow of river infact, this revives the rivers further. We can also generate electricity from these dams. The Union Government is required to take effective measures to protect these rivers. There should be a strong check on the industries located along the banks of river Ganga from its origination point to the place where it ends and the constituents polluting the river should also be found out and strong action may be taken in this regard.

SHRI RATAN SINGH: The Ganga river is the lifeline of India and the source of holy faith for crores of people. There is a need to take all measures in time so that the Ganga may not become polluted. The Ganga is also a source of livelihood for crores of people. The Yamuna river and the Chambal river of Rajasthan are also facing the problems of encroachment and pollution like the Ganga. A large population living on the banks of these great rivers is not able to use the water of these rivers for drinking and irrigation purposes. I would like to request the Government, through this House, to protect these rivers. Water should be stopped from going into the sea. Big dams should be constructed on these rivers so as to generate power and provide drinking water. Gangotri and Yamunotri are the centers of holy faith. The people should have smooth access to these places. The strengthening and widening of the roads and construction of safety walls are essential so that the pilgrims are safe.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

responding, said: The Ganga as a river is of utmost importance to every single Indian. It is a symbol of our national integration. It is a symbol of our purity and it is a symbol to which we are utterly committed and dedicated to maintaining the purity and maintaining the flow. One question raised by all the Members is whether the flow of the river has been cut down by dams. The second important point relates to pollution. The third very important point is something about sand mining. It is something that all of us have to pay a great deal of attention to. We

have to balance the needs of our brothers in agriculture and then see how we can make sure that the flow of the river continues to maintain its purity, to maintain the flow and to maintain its life giving properties. This is one Government, with one policy and we are totally committed to preserving whatever policy to preserve and protect the environment, particularly Mother Ganga. I would like to reassure that we are absolutely committed to taking every single one of the actions that all the hon. Members have raised. The Ganga is history, the Ganga is poetry, the Ganga is geography and the Ganga is economy. As Members pointed out, our economy is defined by the flow of Ganga.

Forty-two projects with an installed capacity of 4644 MW are in different stages of development. Hydro power projects above one megawatt only have been considered in the study. As a Central Government, it is our responsibility to take very seriously every proposal that has been submitted to us for consideration for these dams, study the environmental impact very carefully, make sure that they have no impact upon the flow of the river and upon lower riparian States. The question of dams is very important. I am assuring the House that as the Central Government, it is our duty and responsibility to see that no dam is allowed to be built which may create some problem in a seismic zone, which may create any lack or lessening of the flow in the river Ganga or to create any problem for the lower riparian State of the Ganga. Many Members have spoken about the problem of pollution. Pollution of whatever water is flowing down, is something that needs to be tackled in a very serious way. The Ganga Action Plan is working in full swing

under the National Ganga River Basin Authority. The National Ganga River Basin Authority is carrying on its work with a great deal of seriousness and also Rs. 15,000 crore as a whole have been set aside for the work to be carried out in the National Ganga River Basin Authority, which should be viewed holistically. Out of that, Rs. 2,006 crore have already been spent.

Pollution loads on rivers, including the Ganga, have been increasing over the years with rapid urbanization, industrialization and increase in population. All the Central and State agencies have to cooperate. Creation of sewage treatment capacity has not kept pace with the growth in population all along the sides of the River Ganga. The State Pollution Control Boards of the States, which lie along the Ganga, are required to monitor the compliance of effluent discharge standards by the industries and action must be taken against the defaulting industries.

An important challenge is to maintain the ecological flow. A large portion of the water of the Ganga gets diverted for agricultural reasons. This also reduces the flow downstream. There is the issue of inefficient and wasteful use of water. We have to become very conscious that every drop of water is precious. It is equally important to ensure that water is efficiently used and there is no inefficiency and wasteful use of water in the urban areas. Therefore, the urban local bodies and the State Governments should work hand in hand along with the Central Government to ensure that these are put into action. So far as the faecal coliform count in the Ganga, which is a measure of bacterial contamination is concerned, I only want to point out that we are really working hard on it. As

regards inadequate operation and maintenance (O & M) of the sewage treatment plants (STPs) by the States, it is a major cause of concern. I would like to urge the hon. Members to urge their State Governments to make sure that there is no under-utilization of these STPs. We have to build awareness among the Urban Local Bodies and the State Governments to make sure that these sewerage treatment plants work.

The National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) has decided that approximately 135 kms. stretch from Goumukh to Uttarakhand on the river Bhagirathi should be declared as an eco-sensitive zone. We want to involve everybody. We want to constitute State-level empowered State River Conservation Authorities (SRCAs) under the Chief Ministers in the five Ganga States; we want to set up State Programme Management Groups (SPMGs) as dedicated implementation institutions in the States. We also intend to set up a dedicated cell under the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for inspecting and monitoring of industrial units discharging effluents into the river Ganga. I will repeat once again that the Central Government can only supplement the efforts, which are taken by the State Governments and by the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

Excessive exploitation is something that I think should concern every single one of us. I think upper riparian States have to be extremely conscious of the fact that rivers are national assets and rivers have to be dealt with at the national level. As far as dams are concerned, whatever my repeated assurance is that the Central

Government will not do anything that will harm or endanger the natural flow of the river Ganga which is a national asset and the treasure. The Mission Clean Ganga as decided by the NGRBA aims to achieve that no untreated sewage will be discharged into the Ganga by 2020. Illegal sand mining has to be curbed also by the State and District authorities. I have repeatedly said that community participation is extremely important.

The discussion was concluded.

T.K. VISWANATHAN,
Secretary-General.

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