

## LOK SABHA

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### SYNOPSIS OF DEBATES (Proceedings other than Questions & Answers)

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Thursday, May 17, 2012 / Vaisakha 27, 1934 (Saka)

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#### CALLING ATTENTION

- (i) *Re: The need to include Bhojpuri language in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution and steps being taken by the Government in this regard.*

**SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL** called the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs to the need to include Bhojpuri language in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution and steps being taken by the Government in this regard.

**THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM):** There are 22 languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. The Government has received, from time to time, representations and suggestions for including more languages in the Eighth Schedule. There are representations in respect of 38 languages for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule. Bhojpuri is one of the 38 languages.

There was no established set of criteria for considering proposals for inclusion of languages in the Eighth Schedule. A High Powered Committee was

constituted under the Chairmanship of Shri Sitakant Mohapatra to evolve a set of objective criteria for inclusion of more languages in the Eighth Schedule. This Committee submitted its report in 2004 and suggested certain criteria for inclusion of languages in the Eighth Schedule. A final decision on these recommendations is yet to be taken.

A proposal was mooted in 2006 for inclusion of Bhojpuri and Rajasthani languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. The inclusion of a language in the Eighth Schedule has, at present, a direct link to the examinations conducted by UPSC. Hence, it was decided that a decision on the inclusion of these languages in the Eighth Schedule may be deferred till a decision is taken by the Government on the issue of the UPSC examinations. UPSC made a request that the Eighth Schedule languages may be de-linked from the Commission's scheme of examinations, keeping in view the problems faced by the Commission in conducting the examinations in all the Eighth Schedule languages.

UPSC had constituted a High level Standing Committee to examine the modalities for implementing the recommendations of the Parliamentary Resolution of 1968 which had recommended that all languages of the Eighth Schedule may be permitted as alternative media for the All India and Higher Central Services Examinations. It was decided to await the report of the said

High Level Committee before a decision is taken on the Shri Sitakant Mohapatra Committee's report regarding inclusion of more languages in the Eighth Schedule. The report of the High Level Committee constituted by the UPSC has been received by the Department of Personnel and Training in March, 2012 and it is under consideration.

**Responding to the points raised by Shri Jagdambika Pal, Shri Shailendra Kumar, Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, Shri Uma Shankar Singh and several other hon. Members the Minister further stated:** All the hon. Members have made out a very strong and powerful case for inclusion of Bhojpuri language in the VIII Schedule. There has been some progress since 2006. Although it has not been progressed fast enough. In 2006, a proposal was moved to include Bhojpuri and another language in the VIII Schedule. But at that time, a decision was taken-‘Let us deal with the issue of the UPSC language first, and then take a decision on Shri Sitakant Mohapatra Committee Report.’ The UPSC Committee Report has come in March, 2012. The DoPT is examining the Report. I will certainly make every effort to see that a decision is taken on that Report as early as possible; and immediately after a decision is taken on that Report, I certainly endeavour to have the Government to take a decision on Shri Sitakant Mohapatra Committee Report. I hope that I come back to this House with goods news. We will consider these two Reports and

take a decision and we will be able to announce a decision in the Monsoon Session.

*(ii) Re: The situation arising out of non-implementation of wage revision of Industrial Development Bank of India employees and steps taken by the Government in this regard*

**SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA** called the attention of the Minister of Finance to the situation arising out of non-implementation of wage revision of Industrial Development Bank of India employees and steps taken by the Government in this regard.

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE):**

In terms of the scheme of amalgamation, erstwhile IDBI Bank Ltd. was amalgamated with Industrial Development Bank of India Ltd. with effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2005. United Western Bank was amalgamated with IDBI Ltd. with effect from 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2006. The name was changed to IDBI Bank Ltd. with effect from 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008.

A Memorandum of Settlement was signed between the IDBI Ltd. and the All India IDBI Employees Association on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2006 for a period of 5 years, beginning 1<sup>st</sup> November 2002. This was modified vide the Supplementary Memorandum of Settlement signed between the IDBI Ltd. and

the All India IDBI Employees Association on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2007. This *inter alia* stated that:

*“We further agree that upon expiry of the settlement for the said period, all pay and allowances would be negotiated and mutually agreed upon between the bank and its employees having regard to the well accepted principles of wage fixation”.*

Prior to its merger with IDBI Ltd., the terms & conditions of service of workmen employees of erstwhile United Western Bank were similar to the bipartite settlements signed under the aegis of Indian Banks Association and applicable to Public Sector Banks. As per the scheme of amalgamation, the employees of erstwhile United Western Bank were to be granted the same compensation and the same terms and conditions of service as were applicable to the employees of IDBI Ltd. within a period of 3 years.

Indian Banks' Association in November, 2007, sought IDBI Ltd.'s mandate to negotiate with the industry-wide officers and workmen Unions on behalf of IDBI Ltd. with regard to the proposed revision in pay & allowances that would be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2007. However, in view of the different compensation packages existing in the three merged entities before the merger, IDBI Ltd. did not give its mandate to Indian Banks' Association and decided to develop its own compensation package.

While developing the compensation package, management of IDBI Bank Ltd. invited the All India IDBI Employees Association for consultations on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2009 when copies of the proposed pay scales and terms and conditions of service were handed over to them. Another meeting with the All India IDBI Employees Association was convened on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2009. However, All India IDBI Employees Association, vide letter dated 12<sup>th</sup> May 2009, sought a mutually convenient date for discussion. Another round of consultations was scheduled on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2009, but the All India IDBI Employees Association did not participate.

Board of Directors of the IDBI Bank Ltd., in its meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2009 approved the compensation package for its employees. This package has been implemented for officers in January 2010 for the period from November 2007 to October 2012. However, in the case of workmen employees, the wage revision settlement, for a similar period, could not be finalized, as All India IDBI Employees Association did not agree to the package offered and were demanding parity with RBI.

In order to resolve the matter amicably, the management of IDBI Bank Ltd. set up a Committee of three Executive Directors to hold consultations with the All India IDBI Employees Association on its revised proposal. Besides a series of informal consultations, a meeting was also held on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2011

when the revised proposal was presented. However, no agreement on the proposed compensation package could be reached.

All India IDBI Employees Association, during these consultations, continued demanding parity with the Reserve Bank of India in pay and allowances. They were also opposed to negotiations with IDBI Karamchari Sangh, representing mostly the employees of the erstwhile United Western Bank. IDBI Karamchari Sangh, on the other hand, were insisting that they being the majority association, negotiations should be held with them. On the WP No. 3699 filed by the IDBI Karamchari Sangh, the Hon'ble High Court of Bombay, vide order dated 18<sup>th</sup> August 2011, directed the Deputy Labour Commissioner to verify the membership of the petitioner union.

After conversion of IDBI Ltd into a Banking company in October 2004, IDBI Bank Ltd. is categorised as other Public Sector Bank. In terms of the Memorandum of Settlement signed between the IDBI Bank Ltd. and the All India IDBI Employees Association on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2007, subsequent settlement for pay and allowances were to be based on the well accepted principles of wage fixation and were no longer linked with the RBI. Since settlement under the aegis of the Indian Bank's Association, adopted in the nationalised banks, do not have parity with the pay scales in the RBI, any demand for such parity in

the IDBI Bank Ltd., which is a public sector bank, is unjustified and, hence, not acceptable.

In order to expedite the conclusion of settlement, management of IDBI Bank Ltd., in November, 2011, and again in December 2011, advised the All India IDBI Employees Association that it was open to bilateral discussions and sought their cooperation in finalizing the compensation package.

A bi-partite settlement for the period of 5 years with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007 was signed between IDBI Bank Ltd. and the All India IDBI Employees Association on February 22, 2012. As per the agreement, the bi-partite settlement shall after approval of the Board of Directors of IDBI Bank Ltd. or directions, if any, from Government, be released for implementation. Board of Directors of IDBI Bank Ltd. approved the bi-partite settlement at its meeting held on March 2, 2012. The IDBI Bank Ltd. has sent the settlement to the Government for approval.

While a bi-partite settlement has been signed by the IDBI Bank Ltd. with the All India IDBI Employees Association, IDBI Karamchari Sangh has, so far, not agreed with this settlement. The Government will take a decision on the proposed settlement taking *inter alia* its implications on the nationalised banks into consideration.

**Responding to the points raised by Shri Basu Deb Acharia the Minister further stated:** I would have no problem if the Employees' Association had agreed to give the mandate to the IBA. (Indian Banks' Association) which negotiates on behalf of all the public sector banks. They did not agree. That is why the problem came that when all Public Sector Banks settlement took place, this bank could not settle. The second issue is that the Industrial Development Banks Employees Association was requested to make negotiations several times. But the association did not agree and insisted on having parity with RBI. On January 2012, the package was once again offered without linkage to RBI parity and now that package has been agreed on February 2012. I would have no problem to implement it immediately. But in between, another union namely Karamchari Sangh has refused to agree to this package. During the last negotiation, I told them that even if they want a little bit more, I asked them to negotiate. I assure you, as soon as the Parliament Session is over, I will call the IDBI Chairman and the other relevant concerns and I will try to attempt an agreed solution where the package is acceptable to both the Employees Association and Karamchari Sangh.

**\*MATTERS UNDER RULE 377**

- (i) **SHRI IJYARAJ SINGH** laid a statement regarding need to enhance the procurement price of Garlic as per its price in the international market and to promote export of Garlic.
- (ii) **SHRI N. PEETHAMBARA KURUP** laid a statement regarding need to increase the kerosene quota to Kerala.
- (iii) **SHRI P. L. PUNIA** laid a statement regarding need to ensure increased participation of women in higher education.
- (iv) **SHRI P. VISWANATHAN** laid a statement regarding need to issue Railway Izzat Monthly Season Ticket to all eligible working members in a family with the enhanced validity of income certificate required for obtaining the monthly season ticket.
- (v) **SHRI RAKESH SINGH** laid a statement regarding need to provide adequate quantity of jute sacks for packaging wheat and to ensure timely procurement of wheat by FCI from farmers in Madhya Pradesh.
- (vi) **SHRI K. D. DESHMUKH** laid a statement regarding need to run direct trains from Balaghat in Madhya Pradesh to Raipur and Nagpur.

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\* Laid on the Table as directed by the Chair.

- (vii) **SHRI VIRENDRA KUMAR** laid a statement regarding need to undertake repair of N.H. No. – 76 between Jhansi and Dewari Bandha and N.H. No.- 75 between Dewari Bandha-Chhattarpur-Satna.
- (viii) **SHRI HANSRAJ G. AHIR** laid a statement regarding need to release funds on priority for disbursal of scholarships to OBC students in Maharashtra.
- (ix) **SHRI HARIBHAU JAWALE** laid a statement regarding need to make provision for grant of subsidy to farmers to enable them to construct godowns for foodgrains.
- (x) **SHRI LAXMAN TUDU** laid a statement regarding need to introduce a new passenger train service between Tatanagar and Badampahar and an express train service from Badampahar to Rourkela, Ranchi and Chakradharpur.
- (xi) **SHRI K. SUGUMAR** laid a statement regarding need to provide grant for research and development to Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore.
- (xii) **SHRI BALIRAM JADHAV** laid a statement regarding need to improve telephone and Internet services in Palghar Parliamentary Constituency, Maharashtra.

## **ADMINISTRATORS-GENERAL (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2012**

*(As passed by Rajya Sabha)*

**THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED)** moving the motion, said: The objective of the Act is essentially to empower the Administrator-General to grant certificates to any person who is interested in the property of a deceased person without being a creditor so that on the basis of that certificate, the assets that have been left behind by the deceased person can be administered and looked after by the person given the certificate. I request all the hon. Members to support and pass this Bill.

**SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL:** This Act is not in force in Jammu & Kashmir and Sikkim. My point is that it should be made mandatory so that all widows and minors are benefited.

**SHRI P. L. PUNIA:** The Amendments moved by the hon. Minister are good. But the people are not aware about it. It should be publicized.

**SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED** replying said: The Bill is applicable to the entire country but the exceptions in all our legislation are laid for Jammu and Kashmir. So, it is not possible for me to make a commitment on that.

*The Bill was passed.*

# **RAILWAY PROPERTY (UNLAWFUL POSSESSION) AMENDMENT**

**BILL, 2011**

*(As passed by Rajya Sabha)*

**THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MUKUL ROY)** moved the motion for the consideration of the Bill.

**SHRI S. S. RAMASUBBU:** In most of the areas, the people swindle railway properties. So, we have to have a strict law to protect railway properties. That is why we need this amendment. The encroachment is mostly in and around metro cities and urban areas. The encroachment upon the railway property in rural areas is less. However, eviction could not take place because of lack of cooperation from most of the State Governments. In some zonal areas, people have encroached the land and have leased it out. They have constructed *pucca* buildings and have given them to shopkeepers on rent. I would like to know what our Government is going to do in this regard. The Railway Protection Force must be given more powers. They must be well equipped. They must be given powers and they must also have to take strong action to protect the people from such anti-social elements. A lot of property of the Railways is in the hands of the anti-social elements. These properties can be restored to the Railways and the Railways can earn profit and it can be utilized for the development of the Railways. In my constituency, the

conversion of broad gauge line from Tenkasi to Thirunelveli is complete but has not yet become functional. I request the hon. Minister to take immediate action in this regard.

**SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI:** The present Bill seeks to amend the original Act to the extent of strengthening the provisions that curb the offence of theft of railway property. This particular Bill was sent to the Standing Committee which recommended certain provisions which the hon. Minister has included in this Bill. I support the Bill. The Standing Committee on Railways has observed that the powers of the Railway Protection Force are proposed to be further extended to the passengers so that the officers authorized by the Central Government can take cognizance and launch prosecution in respect of offences specified in the original Railway Act of 1989. The scope of this piece of legislation is very limited but its impact is very much there on theft, abetment and conspiracy. I request the hon. Minister that it should be strictly adhered to and implemented so that the abettors or the conspirators should be brought to book.

**SHRI SHAILENDRA KUMAR:** The Bill has a minor amendment and provides for power to the Railway Protection Force for investigation in matters related to theft, abetment and misappropriation as well as to penalize. Railway scrap is stolen and there is very little control over it. Thereafter an FIR is

lodged, investigation conducted and other legal aspects are involved. Finally, the matter reaches the Railway Magistrate. The Bill proposes to give more power to the RPF which to a great extent will control thefts. The security forces should work honestly and they also should be monitored. I welcome this Bill whole-heartedly.

**SHRI LALJI TANDON:** According to me, there is no clear definition of property in this Bill. Some words have been replaced. Laws can be implemented effectively only when the common man understands it. Which property are you trying to save? A police officer when posted in the city abets in the encroachment of railway property and when he is posted in the railway force how can you expect that he will get the encroachment vacated? There should be a strong law to protect railway property. Instead of replacing a few words, a new law should be brought. If there is clarity in all aspects then there would also be some check on the Government. The Government leaves a scope in the law for interpretation as per its convenience. Whether any official responsible for protection of the railway property would be punished if he fails to protect the property? A present railway has a magistrate. We can save the railway property by immediately getting an order from the Magistrate. We do not know about the extent of railway properties and its encroachment. In this Bill misappropriation has been used for theft. In other words theft is made

respectable. Sooner or later we will need a comprehensive Bill. This Bill will not serve any purpose. To make this Bill strong more power should be given and accountability be fixed. If a drunk driver causes an accident the railway suffers loss of hundreds of crores of rupees and several lives are also lost. The railways have to pay compensation. Is it not a financial loss to the railway? How many drivers have been punished for causing such accidents? Those who are incompetent in the civil police are generally posted in the railway. What would be the punishment for someone who has caused loss to the railway? The Government should bring a comprehensive Bill with definition of railway property and its custodian who would be responsible for that. There should be a provision for punishment for causing loss to railway property. There should also be a provision for quick recovery of such losses. There is nothing in the Bill for me to criticize or praise.

**SHRI VIJAY BAHADUR SINGH:** The word 'found' in the Bill would be misused. According to the Government, theft and misappropriation are defined in the IPC. Theft involves recovery and misappropriation is misuse. If the RPF is given power regarding 'found', then any innocent passengers can be framed by them. When the railway force would be involved, the freedom of the citizens would be in jeopardy. At present there are checks and balances. Why this word 'found' has been used repeatedly? If the phrase 'penalty of theft' is

used, I do not have any objection. If 'dishonest misappropriation' is used, I do not have any objection. If 'found' is deleted then more or less, I do not have any objection. The powers of investigation and prosecution have been sought in the Bill but both these powers should vest in separate authorities because if it is not done, it is likely to affect the system of checks and balance. If the power of investigation are being sought then investigation power vested should be to the extent of not raising any question mark on your credibility. The meaning of theft and misappropriation are well defined in IPC. There is a need to delete the word 'found' because it raises a question mark on the fairness of the investigation.

**SHRI BHUDEO CHOUDHARY:** More than 2 lakh people have encroached on the railway land and the railway land whose value is worth billion of rupees has been left without being paid any attention. There is a need for positive measures to overcome this situation. The railways has so far failed to take any serious and concrete steps to free this encroached land. I would like to suggest the hon. Minister of Railways that if he wants to get this railway land free from encroachment then he should think in terms of allowing the Ministry of Human Resources to set up Kendriya Vidyalayas and centrally approved model degree colleges and other technical institutions in view of the growing needs of central educational institutions. I would say that there is enough land

at Jhajha, Gidhor Dadpur and Simratulla in Jamui district, I would like to request the Government to do the survey of this land and also ensure construction of a school and hospital on this railway land. I also demand that a Kendriya Vidyalaya be set up at vacant railway land in Narkatiyaganj. The maximum land in district Bhagalpur and Banka is in Jagdishpur, Tekani and Dhavani. I demand that a Kendriya Vidyalaya and hospital be set up there. A lot of empty land is lying between Shekhpura and Quel in Jamui Lok Sabyh constituency. I would demand that a hospital and a school be set up there and the work of doubling of rail line should also be undertaken.

**SHRI LALU PRASAD:** The hon. Minister has brought very minor amendments in the old Act to free the railway land from the illegal occupation. After the Defence, railways has the maximum areas under its occupation which is a national assets. Railways has the responsibility to maintain this land. There is a need to conduct a survey in this regard as to on what places the railway property is situated and also where it has been encroached upon and by whom? The entire scrap of railways including the unused iron scrap can be aggregated at one place and its weight can be measured. Now, our wheel factory at Jaipur has started. This junk consisting of old rails can be sent there and it can be converted into wheels after being processed. In this way, the theft of that iron can be stopped. The main reason of theft in railways is that the

goods train do not reach at their destination on time because of heavy traffic congestion. They have to be kept pending on the loop lines to give way to the passenger trains. It is when they are stationary the theft of cashew, raisins, wheat, rice etc. takes place. This loot does not take place because of a single person but a whole lot of people are involved in it. Due to the collusion of officers, the iron scrap of railway is going to private people. They are processing it and selling it in the market. Provision do already exists in IPCs along with other stringent laws to tackle the mafia which has entrenched deep into railway to loot and cause harm to it. These provisions can be used to punish.

There is a bridge at the river Ganga in our area. There was a lot of fanfare about starting it in the year 2012. But, the Minister has just mentioned that it will take three more years to get completed. It will leads to its cost escalation . I would like to know as to when this bridge will be completed? I oppose the proposed powers to be given to the RPF. There is a need to clearly define the investigative powers between GRP and RFP. There is also a need to conduct a survey of railway land because they are lying all across the country. You bring a law by keeping all things in view and by taking opinion of all people.

**SHRI K. SHIVKUMAR ALIAS J.K. RITHEESH:** This Amendment Bill is the need of the hour. As per Section 3, the penalty is only for unlawful possession of railway property. It gives chance for many to escape. So, it would be more appropriate to substitute it with the words 'whoever commits theft, or dishonestly misappropriates or is found, or is proved'. In Section 4, punishment for 'connivance' is mentioned. Now the words 'abetment' and 'conspiracy' are added, which make it more explicit and clear. If in section 8 the words 'when an officer of the Force receives information about the commission of an offence punishable under this Act or when any person is arrested' are included, it gives more power to the Inquiry Officer to proceed further into cases of thefts of railway property on receipt of information about the commission of an offence. While amending this Act, the Government should also keep in mind some exceptions. In my constituency, Mandapam is busy seashore for fishermen. They are all coming under the Below Poverty Line category. There is no private vacant land available between the railway track and the seashore. In these circumstances, they are using the vacant land of the Railways to dry their nets, repair their boats and stock the fish which are in the seashore. I urge upon the Government to permit them, as a special case, to set up the fire proof huts there and the Government can collect the nominal rent from them.

**SHRI PRABODH PANDA:** This amendment Bill seeks to empower the Railway Protection Force with the power of not only investigation but prosecution also. The power for investigation is right, but if power is given for prosecution to the RPF, then it is highly objectionable. The Standing Committee is of the opinion that the powers proposed in the Bill are not sufficient to curb offences against Railway property as the law and order is a State subject. Hence, it is suggested that there should be some statutory mechanism to improve coordination among the State Police, Government Railway Police and the Railway Protection Force. Such a mechanism should be set up. The Railway land is not coming in its purview. When we are going to define Railway property, then land should be included in it. The issue of unoccupied or unauthorized possession of land cannot be solved with one stroke, namely, eviction. Thousands of families are staying on the Railway land for years. A proposal was envisaged by the Railways of having the Sukhi Griha Parivar Project in which the families staying on the Railway land for years together will not be evicted and they will be given land for construction of their homes. The Government should think over this issue so that thousands of poor people are not evicted.

**SK. SAIDUL HAQUE:** This Bill seeks to empower the Railway Protection Force with investigation and prosecution powers. I have an

objection in giving prosecution power to the RPF because sometimes RPF personnel themselves are in connivance in committing these kinds of thefts. My next objection is about the definition of Railway Property. The definition does not include the immovable property. The immovable property of railways is in the form of land. On grounds of unlawful possession, they are evicting thousands of slum dwellers living on the side of the railway line. Whether there is any plan for rehabilitation and giving them a portion of this land. The next objection is about the safety and security of the railway property. There is corruption in every sphere of Railways. What is most surprising is that men in high office in the Railways themselves have vested interests in purchase or sale of railway scrap or other things. The safety and security of railway passengers and railway property is being neglected by the Railways. Railway property is our national property. We need to generate awareness among people and motivating them to protect it.

**SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI:** The Section 3, 4 and section 8 of the Act are being amended. The Bill was sent to the Standing Committee. The Committee feels that there is some ambiguity in the definition of the Railway Property which requires to be rectified. Therefore, they recommended the Government to bring a comprehensive Bill before the Parliament, widening the definition of the Railway Property in the Act. Now prosecution power is given to the RPF.

Without the coordination of the State Police and GRP, proper security to the property and the passengers cannot be given. Whether the Government has taken confidence of the State because ultimately law and order is the State subject? A number of posts are vacant in RPF for the last so many years and without manpower, even if you give them power how do they guard Railway property. Lakhs of acres of vacant land has been given on lease with the connivance of the officers at the local level for some peanut amount. No proper account of it has been kept.

**CHAUDHARY LAL SINGH:** Railways is the largest department of the Government. It has huge assets and it is not being maintained properly. A number of incidents of thefts are reported in the trains. The RPF is unable to check it. Railway personnel are also involved in these thefts. What actions have been taken against the officers involved in these incidents? Farmers have given their land willingly for Railway because they want railway facilities in their areas. The Railways have acquired this land at cheap rate but that land is lying vacant for years. I would like to suggest that this land should be used the horticulture, floriculture, hotels and hospitals.

*The discussion was not concluded.*

## DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

*Re: The steps taken by the Government to protect the river Ganga from pollution and the Himalayas from ruthless exploitation since the discussion on the subject was last held during the Ninth Session of Current Lok Sabha – Contd.*

**DR. RATNA DE** continuing said: There cannot be two opinions about making Ganga pollution free. We have to protect it and safeguard it for our own benefit. The Ganga Action Plan has been in implementation for long. It is the responsibility of the Government to ensure proper and effective implementation of the Ganga Action Plan. The Ganga Action Plan has failed. Pollution of Ganga is all pervasive in its long stretch encompassing many States of the country. What efforts have been made by the Ganga River Basin Authority to ensure Ganga River is cleansed and made pollution-free? Is there any monitoring mechanism at the Centre, to monitor the function of this Authority? Hon. President, in her last speech to the Joint Session of the Parliament, has highlighted that Ganga should be made pollution free. What initiatives have been taken by the Ministry on this remark of the hon. President? I would like to make a fervent appeal on a very specific aspect of the Ganga Action Plan scheme. All the stakeholders should be involved so that there is no

shortage of funds. Our goal should be to ensure that Ganga is saved from destruction and Ganga is free from pollution.

**SHRI RAJENDRA AGRAWAL:** There is no doubt that the river Ganga symbolizes our identity. It nurtures us right from our birth to death. The faith of people towards Ganga shows its importance. The Ganga water makes our lakhs of hectares of land fertile. The efforts made by the Government to cleanse the river Ganga are insufficient. The Government has set up a National Ganga River Basin Authority. The hon. Prime Minister is its Chairman but nobody knows where its office is located. Several projects are going on in Uttarakhand on the river Ganga. The Government had given an assurance that all these projects would be stopped but not a single project has been stopped so far. Therefore, the Government should think seriously over it. Crores of rupees have been pumped into Ganga Action Plan and Yamuna Action Plan but the result is zero. The condition of Yamuna River is no better than the Ganga. Sewage water is discharged into the river Ganga right from Kanpur to Kolkata. The same thing is also happening right from Uttarakhand to the Ganga Sagar. I request that the Central Government should take the full responsibility of making the river Ganga free from pollution because this work is not in the priority list of the concerned State Governments at all. Sewage water and polluted water of factories should be thrown into the river only after proper

treatment. The Government could levy a tax on the factories for the purpose. Uttarakhand is relatively a new state. Therefore, the Central Government should give adequate financial assistance so that it does not depend on the hydel projects being constructed for earning revenue. Once the Thames river used to be a very polluted river but the British Government had now made it completely free from pollution. Similarly, the Government of India should also resolve to make the river Ganga free from pollution in order to maintain its holiness.

**SHRI PRADEEP TAMTA:** Today the pollution is increasing in the river Ganga day by day and the entire Himalayan region is being exploited ruthlessly. The source of water of the river Ganga is Himalayan Glaciers. These glaciers are receding very rapidly. More than hundred projects are going on in my Parliamentary Constituency, Pithoragarh. This region is highly sensitive from the view point of earthquake. Thousands of local people are displaced due to these projects. First of all, we should understand the pain and agony of these people before taking up any new project. A Task Force was set up in the leadership of Shri G. B. Mukherjee. They were of the view that following the construction of hydro power projects in the area has adversely affected the environment there. Therefore, we should think about it. They were also of the view that hydro power should be generated through small projects only. We will have to divide the entire Himalayan region into several zones.

We will have to draw a *Laxman Rekha* somewhere and should ensure that no unnatural activity takes place in the most sensitive zones. Therefore, we need to give a relook at big hydro power projects. A new policy should be formulated for the entire Himalayan region. At present about 184 hydro power projects are under construction in Uttarakhand. We are not oppose to this but this should be done through small projects wherein local people could also get employment and the development of the area would also take place. The said Task Force had also recommended for setting up a fund to make up the losses likely to be incurred by the Himalayan States by stalling the work on the ongoing power projects. Finally, I would like to say that a Himalayan Development Authority should also be set up on the lines of the Authority set up to save the river Ganga.

**SK. SAIDUL HAQUE:** Today, there is a very big question mark on the existence of the Ganga River itself. The way the Ganga is being polluted today, it appears that in the coming years, the river Ganga might disappear from our land. As per the report of the Department of Science and Technology, the Himalayan glaciers are receding 17 meters each year. This would certainly put the existence of the river Ganga in jeopardy in the coming decades. The global warming may be one of the reasons but we are the biggest culprits for the present state of the river Ganga. We are polluting the river through different

ways like by constructing big dams, cutting the forests and mining activities etc. All these activities have led to earthquakes and landslides. The global earth satellite has recently sent some photographs which show that a 8 kilometer stretch of the Bhagirathi river has completely dried up and a stretch of Alaknanda which merges with the river Ganga has also dried up. Therefore, the Government should immediately take urgent steps to save the river Ganga. The second main issue concerns pollution in the river Ganga. We all know that the this river is getting polluted day by day. There are 29 cities, 70 towns and thousands of villages are situated along the banks of the river Ganga. As per an estimate, 1.3 billion liter domestic waste is discharged into the river daily. Thousands of dead animals are also thrown in it. Similarly, about 260 million liter industrial effluents are also discharge into the river. The factories particularly, tanneries located along the banks of the river are mainly responsible for it. The Supreme Court in its decision in 1996 had given a ruling for setting up effluent treatment plants in these tanneries but this has not been done so far. As regards the Ganga Action Plan, almost Rs. 1000 crore has been pumped into it in Phase-I and Phase-II, but no development has happened. River Ganga is still sullied. The Government has constituted National Ganga River Basin Authority in 2009. The Government had sanctioned Rs. 2,165 crore but the amount that was released was only Rs. 468 crores. The amount

that was spent was just Rs. 91 crore. CAG opined that there would be no water in the long stretches of the famous Alaknanda and Bhagirathi riverbeds if the Uttarakhand Government goes ahead with its plan to build 53 big power projects on these two rivers, which join the Ganga. The CAG came down hard on the State Government whose power policy of 2006 allows a private player to divert upto 90 per cent of the river water to power turbines, leaving only ten per cent to flow in the natural course of the river. If that happens the villages settled along the river basin will be uprooted. It will lead to mass migration and it will also lead to cultural erosion. 'Cultural erosion' is an important factor. We know that Himalaya and Ganga are having a greater role in the development. If this process goes on, Ganga would disappear in the Valley. One lock-gate has been broken in Farakka. A lot of water is going out. The Government should give proper attention to it.

**SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB:** There are two aspects which are being discussed. One is the emotive aspect because of the way in which we always look up this river. Another aspect is the development aspect. Our attempts should be to bring in a semblance between the development aspect and the emotional attachment which we have towards this river. Our country's main rivers reflect the callousness and the ineptitude with which we approach the issue of managing the natural resources. The Government has constituted

the National Ganga River Basin Authority in February, 2009. It is an empowered Authority for conservation of the river Ganga. World Wildlife Foundation, WWF, has marked the Ganga among the ten most endangered rivers in the world. Ironically, the river is dirtier now than in 1985 when the plan to clean up Ganga was operationalized. Between 1985 and 2009, the Union Government has spent Rs. 916 crore to clean up the river. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs had approved a Rs. 7,000 crore project to clean the Ganga. The Government is heavily dependent on the World Bank's financial assistance. The World Bank approval is surely to boost but without proper monitoring and close scrutiny the project will meet the same fate as of Ganga Action Plan (GAP). The catchment area of Ganga basin spread over four countries. We would like to know the steps the Government intends to take to meet this challenge. When it comes to conservation of river Ganga, the Government seems to be moving at snail's pace. As part of the effort to restore ecology of the river from Gaumukh to Uttarkashi, work was stopped on three major hydro electric dams. Ganga downstream Haridwar fails practically all standards of purity. Unless the Government is serious about punishing those responsible for polluting the river, no action plan would succeed in restoring the Ganga's pristine glory. 50 per cent of the water must be immediately released from the existing hydro power projects, Tehri, Maneri Bhali, Koteswar and

Vishnu Prayag. A set of rules must be laid out for rightfully managing all activities like construction, mining, sewage disposal and deforestation. There is a need to have a detailed Himalayan Policy with the participation of the locals of the Valley.

**SHRI R. THAMARAISELVAN:** The Ganga action plan was launched to improve the water quality by Interception, Diversion and treatment of domestic sewage and present toxic and industrial chemical wastes. Crores of rupees had been spent so far in this regard yet the river Ganga is not free from pollution. Cleaning Ganga needs a decentralised system based on biogas generation technology that is not only cost effective but also easy in operation and maintenance. The State governments should take immediate action against industries polluting the river as well as setting up STPs. There is a need to strengthen the relevant enforcement mechanisms. The water of many rivers in our country has become unfit for human consumption. Therefore, there is an urgent need to initiate an action plan to clean the rivers of our entire nation.

**SHRI TUFANI SAROJ:** Regarding pollution in Ganga, I would like to say that the filthy water and sewage of the cities are flowed into the river Ganga from the source of its origination upto the last confluence (Ganga Sagar). The Puranas depict the sacredness and greatness of the river Ganga. Lakhs of hectare of land is irrigated with Ganga water. The water pollution in Ganga is

making the drinking water polluted for the people living along the five kilometers area on the banks of river Ganga. If this problem is not addressed well in time, the situation of river Ganga will become worse. The sacred water of river Ganga should be protected from getting polluted.

**SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE:** This discussion is concern three ministries i.e. Ministry of Environment and Forest, Water Resources and Power. The projects being constructed in Himalayan region are posing a threat to the river Ganga and the Himalayas and there is apprehension of major mishap that is why public as well as we, the Members of Parliament are against the upcoming projects in that region. The House is aware that we are not against any provision. We fear that our river will be ruined due to these projects and it will affect the entire country. Ganga has spiritual and religious importance and moreover it has social importance. It is the longest river in our country. River Ganga is not only a river for the people of our country, it is revered as a place of pilgrimage and we deem it as our Mother. This is the reason that the water of this river is considered sacred. I am aware of the importance of Hydro electricity. The Government has sanctioned hydro power projects in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and north-eastern states but protecting our river is as important as hydro power generation. There is no danger to the river from the run off river projects. In run off river projects, water is passed

through tunnels. Construction of tunnels may weaken Himalayas. If any major earthquake occurs in Himalayan region will Himalayas be safe. There is a need to protect Himalayas and the river Ganga. Rivers are as important as oceans.

**SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL:** To save the Ganga from pollution and the Himalayas from ruthless exploitation there is dire need of coordination among authorities/institutions .The budgets available for the purpose need to be utilized in a coordinated manner and through concerted efforts. Forming a new authority is hardly needed for that purpose. A time bound scheme is certainly requested.

**SHRI RAMESH BAIS:** The Ganga is our culture. The Government is spending a lot of money on cleansing the Ganga but this work is incomplete. Japan has given huge amount as assistance to clean Ganga project. The glaciers are drying up therefore water in Ganga is depleting. Saving the Ganga is most urgent for us.

**DR. M. THAMBIDURAI:** We are treating all the rivers in the country as Goddesses. Its importance is known to everyone. The River Ganga is the mother of all rivers. We are giving great importance to all the rivers in our country. This is a very serious issue and we should take this issue of pollution of River Ganga very seriously and take effective measures to clean River Ganga. Our civilization and culture also originated from river valley

civilizations. All the states are constructing dams. The dams are useful for generating hydropower but at the same time, we have to see that the river water is not restricted only for that particular area, but it has to go to other States also. Water is a natural resource. It has to be used by all, not by the people of a particular area. Therefore, it is our duty to see that water must be allowed to flow in the river. We are allowing all the sewage water to only go to the river. There must be stringent action to prevent that or there must be a scheme to treat the sewage water and that can be used for irrigation purposes. In the same way the effluents of the industries can be treated. The industries are polluting the rivers. If the rivers are polluted we cannot get the water. The drinking water is more important. Now the country is facing shortage of drinking water. River Ganga is polluted and we cannot take its water for even drinking purposes. We take Ganga water for all auspicious functions throughout the country. Therefore, I am suggesting that stringent action must be taken by the Ministry to prevent all this kind of pollution. The Ganga Development Authority has already taken some action, but I think it needs to be improved. Yamuna River is also completely polluted. River Yamuna and all the tributaries have to be conserved properly. My constituency is near River Cauvery. The River Cauvery is completely polluted. The water is not coming to River Cauvery as Karnataka is preventing that because it is constructing dams on it. Not only the

River Ganga but all the rivers must be preserved. Otherwise, a time may come when our future generations may curse on us that we have failed to protect our rivers. I request that all the rivers must be nationalized. Only then these rivers can be protected.

**SHRI PREMDAS:** Discussion regarding the Ganges here, is under Rule 193. Rs. 900 crores had been given for the development of River Ganges, still the river could not be made pollution free. In our country 15 to 20 crores people's livelihood is related to the Ganges. I suggest that barrages being constructed on it should be stopped and mines should be closed.

**SHRI RAM SINGH KASWAN:** The way the river Ganges is being exploited presently, it seems that it will soon become extinct. Dirty water of sewers, factories is drained into the Ganges. In Himalayan area dam projects are being constructed in the Ganges. That way Ganges will go completely dry. Already due to Tihri and Maneri dams 115km stretch of Ganges has gone extinct in upper Himalayas. From Gangotri to Gangasagar a big drain should be constructed along the Ganges, all the sewer water can be drained through that.

**SHRI NAMA NAGESWARA RAO:** I think that it is an important issue and it is the responsibility of the Government to protect the river Ganga. This river flows down six states right from the starting to the end it is responsibility of the States to protect the river Ganga. The water of the river

Ganga has polluted. Today, due to untreated municipal waste and industrial waste being thrown in it. Hydro project has also contributed to this problem. The flow of water has decreased. The inflow and outflow of the dams should be measured. I would like to suggest the Government that a study should be conducted with regard to the effects on water flow due to hydro power projects. How the polluted water will be treated. There should be some effective and constructive planning to have a check on population. River linking should be undertaken and there should be water management.

**SHRI SANJAY SINGH CHAUHAN:** Ganga is associated with our *Sanskars*, our ancestors, our history, our future and our generations to come. At the time of giving reply, the Hon. Minister should inform as to how the money has been spent at least in brake ups on the Ganga Action Plan. There is large-scale corruption in Government schemes. In my Parliamentary Constituency there are three big pilgrimage places namely Shukratal, Hastinapur and Vidurkuti on the banks of the river Ganga. The condition there is very miserable, thousands of dead fish in these pilgrimage places on the bank of the river Ganga lie at a time. We will have to think at what cost we want to go for industrial development in this country. If it is at the cost of the river Ganga then at least I do not agree with it. Save Ganga only then we and our generations to come will be saved.

**SHRI PRABODH PANDA:** The river, Ganga, has an exalted position in the Hindu ethos. The river, Ganga, is associated with the life of the people. It provides water to about 40 per cent of the Indian population in 11 States. It is the lifeline of these areas. But in the modern time, it is known for being polluted. The most polluted part of it is at Varanasi. The causes of pollution are restricted and disturbed flow due to huge number of dams and tunnels, industrial waste, religious events and human wastes. In the Upper Reach of the Ganga we should do a review about the existing dams and tunnels. Several towns, industries and agriculture activities contribute to pollution load in the Middle Reach. In this reach, significant are the leather tanneries at Kanpur. Dumping of solid wastes in many places, including floral offerings also contribute to pollution. Semi-cremated dead bodies are being thrown. Other problems with the lower Ganga are also there. The Ganga Action Plan was launched by former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in April, 1985 in order to reduce the pollution load. But, it failed. I come to the National River Ganga basin Authority. The Supreme Court has been working on the closure and re-location of many of the industrial plants. How do you respond to it? In 2010, the Government declared the stretch of river between Gaumukh and to Uttarkashi as an 'Eco Sensitive Zone' – whether we are maintaining that or not? Farakka project is creating problems in many respects. My suggestion is that, fast

augmentation of water flow should be done and most of the dams should be bent and crushed. Steps should be taken against illegal mining. Stringent laws should be made against pollution causing activities. There should be a re-look at the international and several other agreements. There should also be a re-look at the dams, canals and hydro plants. There are several options of providing electricity, but there is no alternate to the river Ganga. So, the Ganga should be protected now.

**SHRI P.T. THOMAS:** The situation of the polluted Ganga is grave. I would like to know about the progress of the Ganga Action plan. Ganga is not a mere river. It is a part and parcel of our culture. Almost all rivers in our country are facing acute shortage of water and day by day, its pollution is going upwards. It is high time to find out alternative and adequate methods to revamp our rivers. If river Ganga dies, then the future of India will also die.

**SHRIMATI ANNU TANDON:** Today, we are discussing about the problem of pollution in the river Ganga. It is a very serious problem. The Ganga is a symbol of our existence and culture. Therefore, it occupies a significant place in the heart of every Indian. Regarding cleaning of the Ganga, Late Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi laid foundation stone of the Ganga Action Plan (GAP). Later, Shri Rajiv Gandhi set up the Central Ganga Authority in February, 1985 and thereafter, the GAP was launched in June, 1986. Despite all

this, the river Ganga has got very badly polluted. Industries are polluting the river since a lot of waste material is being pushed into it. But, no action is being taken in this regard whereas, a very strict action is required to be taken necessarily. In this connection, the Union Govt. has provided adequate technical assistance and allocated adequate funds to the states for taking anti-pollution measures. But the concerned state governments, local bodies etc. could not deliver the desired results on the implementation aspect in this regard. A number of dams are being built in the name of power and development etc. It shall have to be checked. Undoubtedly, we need power and development etc. , but not at the cost of the Ganga.

**DR. TARUN MANDAL:** This subject is profoundly sensitive for a large section of people of India and Bangladesh. The measures adopted and being taken are not up to the mark. Acts, Rules, Regulations are being violated years after years by moneyed people. The capital system is ruthlessly exploiting rivers, water, sea, minerals, forests and all other natural resources for the individual gains and maximum profit of the capitalists, imperialists, corporates and multinationals. Ganga river bed is not cleaned of pollutants and silts. Nearly 200 dams from upstream to down up to Farakka are practically killing and drying the river years together. After Gangotri, within 100 kms. so many hydroelectric projects have been built up. These are not made for benefit of

local people or farmers but mainly to make profit by producing and selling electricity. The Government must stop any illegal project having dams and diversion of river. Governments, PSUs, semi-Government, private industries are discharging tones and tones of pollutants. Industries are flouting laws. There is a Ganga Basin Flood Control Commission. One flood control Master Plan, Ghatal Master Plan as the State of west Bengal covering the districts of Hooghly and Midnapore is long pending. I should be expedited.

**SHRI S.S. RAMASUBBU:** The Ganga river originates from Gaumukh glacier, Gangotri from Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand state. It is having the length of 2550 kilometers traveling between UP, Bihar, West Bengal and upto Bay of Bengal. More than 200 Hydro power projects are constructed within the purview of the river. Most of the people from the above states are getting water for cultivation and also use its water for drinking purpose. The Ganga river now-a-days is polluted. In Tamil Nadu, Tirunelveli district, Thaamirabharani is an important river which is facilitating for cultivation to the tune of Rs.50,000 crores. But, now-a-days, it is also polluted due to industrial waste and the sewerage water is entering in it. The Ganga water is polluted because of all the waste, hazardous materials, passing of drainage water and pouring industrial wastes into the Ganga river. With the cooperation of the public and Government machinery we can make all the water resources clean. Government should take

much more efforts to make the river clean. In order to clean all the rivers, we need a National River in which excess water can be poured. That water can be utilized during dry season. During this season all the rivers of our country are polluted. In this season, the polluted water can be removed from dried rivers by getting the water from national river.

**SHRI SHAIENDRA KUMAR:** According to Indian Philosophy, a person attain salvation by having a sight of the Holy river Ganga and the people regard it as their mother. It is a belief that by taking a holy dip in the river Ganga, we get rid of our evils. Mahakumbh is also organized on the river Ganga wherein 12 to 15 crore people take holy dip in the river Ganga. But now-a-days the river Ganga is polluted. Sadhus stage movement to protect it from pollution.

**SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SINGH:** Ganga is not concerning any particular state or any particular area rather it is a cultural heritage of the people of our country. Therefore, treating river Ganga as any common source of water is as good as exploiting it and it will be suicidal for the future. Several large companies including the public sector companies are digging tunnels in Himalaya for construction of dams, barrages. It is as good as foeticides of river Ganga in Himalaya itself. Since all Environment Impact Assessments (EIA) for obtaining clearance for construction of dams have been undertaken by dam

construction companies itself. Therefore, it seems obvious that the environmental study in this regard may be incomplete and also biased in favour of the companies. It is necessary to apprise the house that these companies are constructing the power plants on Ganga tributaries, Mandakani, Alakhnanda in upper Himalayan valley. In view of its adverse impact such as the houses developing cracks due to blasting, land sliding, caving in of land, drying of sources of water, the common man in these areas have stood up against these projects. The Government of Uttarakhand has always been protecting the interest of these companies and it is not at all concerned about river Ganga-Himalaya or the cultural heritage of our country.

What long term adverse impact the blocking of fertile silt in these dams is going to have on cultivable land in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal is being totally neglected. The common man of this country are asking us since thousands of people sacrificed their lives for freedom of this country, how this Parliament is ready to sacrifice the cultural heritage of this country, its faith and its identity, mother Ganga, in the economic interest of state government of Uttarakhand? I urge the Government that work on all on-going projects and proposed tunnels and barrages based hydel power projects should be stopped immediately as there are several alternatives for power generation but there is no alternative of our cultural heritage like Ganga-Himalaya.

**PROF. RANJAN PRASAD YADAV:** As Ganga is associated with our history, therefore, our hon'ble Members are naturally concerned about Ganga getting polluted. In fact it is a matter of concern. Ganga Plan phase-I started in 1985. It is quite unfortunate that even after 27 years and spending 1314 crore rupees on its cleaning, Ganga's water still remains polluted. At some places there is hardly any water in the river and it is almost dried up. I understand that this problem can be solved through mutual consent of various states and an all party group should be constituted for consulting the concerned states for solution of this problem. The on-going projects on the river should be stopped.

**SHRIMATI BOTCHA JHANSI LAKSHMI:** Hon'ble Speaker  
Madam I am thankful for giving me an opportunity for initiating the discussion to protect the River Ganga from pollution. River-Ganga is not merely a river and the Himalaya are not mountain but they are linked with our great civilization and culture. Ganga has been declared as a National River and the Ganga is getting polluted and the Himalayas are being subjected to ruthless exploitation. Himalaya are rich in water, forests and natural resources but the State Governments are hell bent upon destroying these resources mainly producing power of generating power. Ganga its tributaries like Yamuna, Krishna, Godavari, Cauveri, Tungabhadra are also in a bad condition. These are very important rivers across the country . They are linked with one another.

All rivers are having rich minerals and gas basins and valuable things. We protect our rivers from pollution, encroachments of the river beds from illegal lifting of sand mines. This is high time to protect our rivers, mainly Ganga-river from industrial waste, pollutants, discharges and release of municipal wastes, plastic wastes. Ganga is the life of the nation. The water of river Ganga is dirty and not fit for drinking and irrigation purposes. An Action Plan for development of Ganga was set up under the Chairmanship of the then Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Dams are built to store water for irrigation purposes and also to generate electricity. These are infrastructural requirements which are required for development of the country. There has to be a balance on environment and development. Like Ganga, we have Krishna and Godavari rivers in Andhra Pradesh., Though they are not as large as Ganga, yet they are part and parcel of life of not only Andhra Pradesh but also Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Odisha. Lakhs of acres of crops are irrigated by these rivers. Many hydro power projects have been undertaken. These rivers quench thirst of crores of population. But these rivers are also need to be developed. They are required be cleaned, desilted and dredging works should be undertaken so that those rivers can become clean and help in irrigation of more crops. I demand that an Action Plan to clean and develop Krishna and Godavari

Rivers should be prepared. Adequate allocation of funds should be made for this purpose.

**SHRI KAPIL MUNI KARWARIA:** The river Ganga is the centre of faith where crores of people throng in across the country. But, now-a-days, the Ganga is polluted. To protect the Ganga from pollution there is urgent need to check the source of polluted water and effluents of factories pouring in it. Capacity of sewage treatment plants should also be enhanced so that the flow of sewage and polluted water pouring in river Ganga be checked.

**\*SHRI O. S. MANIAN:** The huge perennial water system called River Ganga travels through six States of India covering a distance of 2,500 kms. before it could meet the Bay of Bengal. Ganges gets polluted both by human beings and through the man-made industrial effluents and other artificial things. There are no two opinions that this has to be taken up urgently, on a war footing to save this river for all years to come. People must be educated to see that they do not pollute the rivers and river banks in the name of religious ceremonies. Allowing the industrial effluents to flow into this river system must be completely stopped forthwith. Not only River Ganges, but all the rivers of the country must be protected and conserved from being polluted any further. Hence, it is imperative that rivers must remain clean and must be cleaned on a war footing if they are polluted. A national awakening will help us to conserve

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\* Original in Tamil

our river water systems and hence, we must nationalize all the rivers as they form the basis of human life.

**SHRI GORAKHNATH PANDEY:** Madam, through you I would like to put forward some points with regard to the protection of river Ganga and Himalayas. The Ganga is our mother and it is a symbol of our belief. Therefore it has been declared as 'National River' and it is our cultural heritage. Today its natural flow is being affected. The River Ganga passes across the six states of country and covers 40% of population of the country. The Ganga makes our land fertile. Today, Ganga-river is being polluted. Though we are spending crores of rupees under 'Ganga Action Plan' but the same has become useless and condition of Ganga is deteriorating day by day. Madam, today Ganga –river is not only getting polluted but it is on the verge of extinction. Number of agitations and demonstrations are taking place to save Ganga. Construction of dams and cutting of trees in Himalayan region are inviting great danger in future. Therefore, keeping the above aspects in view, I would like to demand that steps should be taken to maintain its uninterrupted flow and to save her from the pollution. The centre should intervene by putting this subject in the concurrent list. Please understand the pain of the movements which is taking place in Varanasi and other parts of the country and take strict action to protect Ganga and Himalayan.

**THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)** replying said : I have heard with very great interest and with very great seriousness the interventions of all the hon. Members about the threat posed to the existence of the River Ganga and the Himalayas due to their ruthless exploitation.

The river originates at the Gangotri; everybody has pointed out that it runs through 2,525 kms; 11 States; 14 rivers flow into the river Ganga; there are 434 million people in the Ganga river basin in the 11 States who depend – for their lives and livelihood apart from the emotional aspect – upon the holy river and upon what comes out of the holy river and for emotional sustenance. The river means something extremely important to the entire country. It is intertwined with the faith, tapestry, nationhood, patriotism, the emotions, and the feeling of every Indian.

The emotive importance of the holy river cannot be underestimated nor does the Government underestimate it. It means all things to all people. It is an issue that concerns all of us. It is an issue which is extremely important for the Government. We are committed to ensuring the aviral dhara, the nirmal dhara, the purity and the flow of the holy river Ganga.

There are four issues, as far as environment is concerned. The most important issue, undoubtedly, is the issue of dams; the issue of the ecological flow, and whether the hydroelectric projects on the river Ganga are preventing the flow of the river because if there is no dilution, then there can be no question that the pollution will not decrease.

We have only a total of 70 dams. 70 dams means that they are actually working. Only 17 dams are actually commissioned and generating power. Under construction, there are 14 dams. The projects which are in the pipeline are 39 dams.

The Maneri Bhali – II is generating 304 Megawatts, Koteshwar is generating 400 Megawatts and Tehri –I is generating 1000 Megawatts. All the rest, Madam, are generating 4.8 Megawatts, 24 Megawatts, 3 Megawatts, 1 Megawatt and even the dams which are under construction, only Tehri stage-II is 1000 Megawatts. And all dams except Koteshwar and Tehri are run off the river.

Hon. Member Shri Geete referred to what is run off the water. The water comes back to the river. The fact is that the tunnels are blown and the water is pushed through the tunnels. That is wrong and that is a different issue. As far as the holy river Ganga is concerned, the water comes back. It is not as if water is taken away from the river. The water comes back and it continues to flow in the

river. However, it is a matter that needs to be determined very carefully whether we need to blast those tunnels. Those are the decisions that we have to take for the country as a whole. The mover of the resolution Shri Rewati Raman Singh said that he himself was in fact was Irrigation Minister of Uttar Pradesh when Tehri was first commissioned. There were many projects at that time against the Tehri dam.

The Government of a day takes decisions, in the best interests of the people of this country hoping that this will be to the larger public good. About hydro power projects, there are certain problems with these projects including the problem of relief and rehabilitation. Most of the projects are run off the river. The Government has taken the extreme step of closing down three projects. One is an NTPC project. Three hydro electric projects were closed down by the Government as hon. Member Anu Tandon had mentioned at a cost of over a thousand crore rupees because the Government believed that it is important to maintain the flow of the river. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of April, the Prime Minister had the meeting of the National River Ganga Basin Authority. In the meeting, the Prime Minister had expressed concern about domestic and industrial pollution in the Ganga. He pointed out that Pollution Control Boards functioning under the State Governments should monitor the effluents being discharged by the industries. He asked the states to take action against the

defaulters. The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh specifically mentioned that it may not be feasible to maintain 200 cusecs of flow from Narora to Allahabad as proposed for the flow of the River. It is because during the non-monsoon period, the discharge in the River is only 35 to 65 cusecs. He also mentioned that the hon. High Court of Allahabad which considered the matter, ordered fifty per cent discharge in the River from available flows because they are taking it for irrigation. The Chief Minister of Uttarakhand mentioned very seriously about the sentiments of the State Assembly. We have notified a 135 kilometres as an 'eco-sensitive zone' from Gomukh to Uttarkashi. It should be implemented immediately. We should have a Commission which is for atrocities against the Ganga. I believe that the entire stretch of the River should be declared as an 'eco-sensitive zone' so that there is no effluent, there is no discharge. There is over 70 per cent of the water, of the Ganga, which is taken away by the Ganga canals for agriculture. So, the flow of the river is also disturbed because the water is diverted through canals for agriculture. This is also a decision that the nation has to take.

Pollution is something that is directly the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment, and we owe it to the nation to explain as to what steps this Government has taken to address the question of pollution. One more important

issue is the question of sand mining as a result of which also the flow of the river has been diverted.

As far as the issue of pollution is concerned, pollution load of the Ganga has been increasing over the years. Hon. Shri Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister gave to the nation the Ganga Action Plan-I in 1985 as a result of which a great deal was done.

In the entire Ganga basin, approximately 12,410 MLD of sewage is generated, for which the available treatment capacity is only 5,070 MLD. In the main stem of the river Ganga, 2,900 million litres of sewage is discharged everyday from Class I and II towns, and only 1,100 MLD is treated because of the limited infrastructure. Eighty per cent is due to domestic sewage. I want to inform the Hon. Members that untreated domestic effluent, fecal called colliform is the cause for 80 per cent of the pollution. Industrial effluent is actually volume-wise only 20 per cent. The major contributors are tanneries, distilleries, paper mills and sugar mills and the stretch from Kannauj to Varanasi is critically polluted. Therefore, we need to have a long-term plan, adequate resources and we need to take corrective steps to take care of the technical shortcomings.

Hon. Members mentioned about the consortium of seven IITs. I want to correct a misconception in this House. IITs were given the project of studying

how the ecological flows can be maintained in relation to hydro-electric projects. In this regard the Government has done is to adopt a cumulative impact assessment approach. A cumulative impact assessment study had also been given to the IITs and to the Wildlife Institute. The Government have received seven reports and have to receive still several more reports.

They will study the cumulative impact assessment of all projects of wastes, as a river basin, instead of taking it as a town; and that will create much better results.

Hon. Members said that the IITs are actually consultants of dams. That is not true. There is no conflict of interests. The IITs and the consortium of IITs do studies in hydrology for dam construction. They are technical experts in the matter, as a matter of fact, from whatever interim reports we have got, they have recommended that there should be a minimum of 20-30 per cent, depending on whether it is monsoon or not, at all times, which means that whatever hydro-electric projects are there, will have to make sure that those flows are there in the river.

Shri Mahtab and others mentioned about the World Bank project. It was signed in June 2011 between the World Bank and the Government of India; it is a project that will be implemented in eight years, with an outlay of Rs.7,000 crore – Centre's share is Rs.5,100 crore and the States' share is Rs.1,900 crore

on a 70:30 pattern. The projects that have been sanctioned so far are nearly Rs.2,600 crore under the NGRE, in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar and West Bengal. These include development of sewer network, sewage treatment plants, sewage pumping stations, electric crematoria, community toilets, development of river fronts and other such infrastructure.

Some Hon. Members mentioned that a very small, limited fund is released by the Centre. So far, out of the amount of Rs.2,598 crore that has been sanctioned to various States, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, only an amount of Rs.492 crore has been released and the expenditure, till March, is Rs.318 crore.

In the case of Uttarakhand, the total is Rs. 155.60 crores, the funds released by the Government of India is Rs.36.57 crores, the expenditure till March was only Rs. 16.11 crores. The number of projects not started is four, the number of projects started is 11, the number of projects completed is zero and the total number of projects is 15. The total amount allotted to Uttar Pradesh is Rs. 1341 crores, funds released by the Government of India is Rs.257.64 crores, the expenditure till March is Rs.193.64 crores, the number of projects not started is two, the number of projects started is five, and the total is seven. In the case of Bihar, the total amount allotted is Rs.441.86 crores, funds released was Rs.35.37 crores, the expenditure by the State Government was Rs.17.60

crores, the number of projects not started is zero and the number of projects started is four. In the case of West Bengal, the amount allotted is Rs.659.41 crores, an amount of Rs.166.48 crores was given to the State, an amount of Rs.90.92 crores was spent by the State, three projects were not started, 21 projects started and two projects were completed.

The money is with the Government. We need to spend the money. We can only spend the money if the State Governments actually implement the projects. We allot a vast amount of money, but any State Government, the urban local body is not spending that money. There is no use of my spending all this money to set up a Sewage Treatment Plant or a Central Effluent Plant. The urban local bodies and the State Governments have to take the greatest interest in making sure that these Sewage Treatment Plants work otherwise the dream of zero effluent discharge into the Ganga will never be able to be achieved by 2020. Unless all the States cooperate, this is not something that the Central Government can do. We do not own any land. It is something that the State Governments have to do.

Water quality in terms of Biochemical Oxygen (BOD), Dissolved Oxygen(DO) and Fecal Coliform has improved at most locations because of the implementation of Ganga Action Plan.

The flow of the river is coming down due to climate change and various other issues in Farakka Barrage also. Under Farakka Agreement Bangladesh and India take 35,000 cubic feet divide for ten days between themselves is only 6,500 cubic feet today. Actually the quantity of water has come down.

A meeting of the Standing Committee of the NGRBA was conducted on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, 2012 under the Chairmanship of the hon. Minister of Finance. But decisions had to be deferred because of elections into major Ganga basin States.

A draft report prepared by IIT, Roorkee on Accumulative Impact-Assessment was placed before the Committee. The Standing Committee also decided to continue with an arrangement of providing 17 per cent Central share towards the operation and maintenance cost of the infrastructure, created for a period of five years it also approved a various institutional arrangements to approve the projects on a fast track basis.

I will assure the House that I will come back to the House with the system of monitoring the States as well as whatever exists on the river front to ensure that there is no effluent either domestic discharge or industrial effluent into the Ganga. The Government will not leave any stone unturned to see that this is done.

I have already spoken about the Report of the IIT, Roorkee. The specific administrative action which we have taken is that 716 grossly polluting industries which were discharging into the main stream of the river Ganga, namely, Ramganga and Kali East have been identified and a number of industries were also identified like Uttarakhand having 43; Uttar Pradesh, 637; Bihar, 13 and West Bengal, 23. The drains were identified. The inspection and monitoring of sewage treatment plants were done. The performance evaluation of three major common effluent treatment plants was undertaken; two were in UP and one was in West Bengal. These are designed to treat tannery effluent.

After inspection, directions have been issued under the Environment Protection Act to 16 industries and under the Water Act to 12 industries. It is because the Water Act is under the control of States. I do concede to the House that we need to improve the monitoring and I will certainly take urgent steps. The Government need to make sure that the total monitoring and compliance is taken care of in a very specific way.

The Prime Minister has announced that there should be a multi-disciplinary committee with representatives from the State to give a set of recommendations on minimum desirable e-flows based on scientific opinion. The States, the urban local bodies, the people living on the Ganga river front

and every single citizen of this country have a very important role to play in maintaining the nirmal dhara and the aviral dhara of the whole river, Ganga.

As far as the Central Government is concerned, I want to tell this House that hon. Shri Rajiv Gandhi, was the person who envisioned the Ganga Action Plan and we have implemented it. The Prime Minister had declared the Ganga, as the national river and gave the nation, the National Ganga River Basin Authority. The Government will make sure that no stone is left unturned to protect the river, Ganga, to ensure the flow of Ganga and to make sure that we hand over the Ganga to our children and future generations in posterity with the same purity with which it was given to us.

*The discussion was concluded.*

**T.K. VISWANATHAN,**  
***Secretary-General.***

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