

Lok Sabha Debates

Discussion On The Supplementary Demand For Grants (Railways) No. 16 ... on 11 August, 2006
an> Title: Discussion on the Supplementary Demand for Grants (Railways) No. 16 in respect of Budget (Railways) for 2006-07.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The House will now take up Item No. 16.

Motion moved:

“That the respective supplementary sums not exceeding the amounts shown in the third column of the Order Paper be granted to the President of India, out of the Consolidated Fund of India, to defray the charges that will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 2007, in respect of the head of Demand entered in the second column thereof against Demand No. 16.”

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16.00 hrs.

(Interruptions)* ...
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Sir, I represent Jalpaiguri constituency of North Bengal which is enriched with flowers, fauna, forest and natural reserves but the people of this area have not ever got any scope to use these natural reserves for their economic upliftment. It is for want of political will. The entire region's economy is mainly dependent on road transport. After Independence, India's trade relations with different countries have gone up. But even after so many assurances from the Ministry of Railways on my proposals during the discussion on the Railway Budget, nothing has been done as yet. For example, I quote from page 21 of the present proposal. "The Government has admitted that Rail foot has become thin and rail fractures are occurring at a higher rate on New Jalpaiguri-Malda line." It has also been admitted that rail renewal is essential to ensure safety of traffic. But for a work of an estimated cost of Rs. 585.11 lakhs, the outlay is only Rs. 1 lakh for 2006-07 and Rs. 0.01 lakh as supplementary grant. Is it not a mockery? When the question of safety is the main concern, we are spreading over the scheme for 585 years allocating Rs. 1 lakh per year.

Sir, the stone for Moyuaguri –Jogikhopa line was laid down by the Railway Ministry. But against an estimated cost of Rs. 733 crore, only a meagre fund is being allocated for this work. I request the hon. Minister for Railways to stop this stepmotherly attitude towards the people of North Bengal including Assam.

On this floor, I raised the demand for declaring Darjeeling Mail as heritage train. Tourists from all over the world come to visit Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Sikkim and Bhutan by this train. But the condition of the coaches are so dilapidated that one cannot describe them. Can we not spend a share of our foreign exchange that we earn from tourism to give a new look to this Darjeeling Mail[bru26] ?

Sir, during the British regime, people of North Bengal used to reach Sealdah from Haldibari within six hours via present Bangladesh. We have started Kolkata-Dhaka bus service. Why is this railway line not being re-opened?

Now, I draw the attention of the hon. Minister to certain burning issues. Recent statistics show that incidents of theft, loot and murder in trains are on the rise. I want to know what precautionary steps are being taken by the Government to stop such crimes.

Another important thing is the need to provide medical assistance to victims of accidents or incidents at the earliest opportunity. I suggest that one doctor with paramedical staff and emergency medicines be provided in long distance important trains.

In my constituency, Railways have surplus land along the railway lines. These lands are being gradually encroached by miscreants. The Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority has sent a proposal to hand over these surplus lands to the State Government or to the autonomous bodies so that they can build up marketing complex on these lands to provide employment. People of my constituency are demanding upgradation of Odlabari and Jalpaiguri road station. They are demanding stoppage of all mail and express trains at Odlabari and Jalpaiguri road stations.

They also demand: (a) a pair of super fast train between Haldibari and Sealdah via Jalpaiguri; (b) rail bridge on Teesta between Haldibari and Mekhligunge; (c) manning of unmanned level crossings; (d) railway recruitment centres at New Jalpaiguri.

After the presentation of this year's Railway Budget, Railways have renamed 156 trains as superfast trains. In terms of money, it means increase in fare to the range of Rs. 10 to Rs. 50 per passenger. Freight charges in parcel vans have also been increased. So, money is no constraint for development. Only a pinch of political goodwill can meet people's aspirations.

The Consultative Committees of Zonal Railways do not function. As such the Ministry does not get important inputs. Licences to Railway hawkers have not yet been provided.

I demand these problems be addressed by the Ministry of Railways on war footing. The time is limited. But there are hundreds of problems. Without taking any further time, I once again

support the proposals in the Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for this year.

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(k3/1640/kkd/jr) 1640 hours SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (SRIPERUMBUDUR): Mr. Chairman, Sir, on behalf of my DMK party, I rise to support the Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for the year 2006-07. Our hon. Railway Ministers Shri Laluji and Shri Veluji are doing well. They have made the Railway Department a profitable one since last two years. It is a great achievement.

The Railway Department is doing services to the nation for the last 50 to 60 years but they are not able to progress as like NHAI. It is a pathetic condition. For want of road over-bridges (ROBs) and road under-bridges (RUBs), and unmanned gates, the people of this country are agitated. They are suffering a lot. We, the hon. Members, are also writing to the hon. Ministers but whatever letters we write, we would get the same reply for the past 20 years. They would only give the reply in the Starred Question. But now, we are very much thankful to the Railway officers because as and when

we write a letter, they would respond it immediately by replying to us.

Sir, in Tamil Nadu, which is one of the profit-making State in regard to railways, a large area is pending without gauge conversion. The people of Tamil Nadu are fighting continuously to get the metre gauge into broad gauge. But till today, hundreds and hundreds of kilometres are pending in Tamil Nadu for gauge conversion.

16.42 hours. (Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey in the Chair) Even yesterday, there was an agitation in Tiruvarur for doing gauge conversion to broad gauge from Tiruvarur to Thanjavur. Even the sanction of gauge conversion of Myladuthurai to Karikudi Section along with Trithuraipoondi, Agasthiarpalli and Madurai-Bodi section are pending projects for making them broad gauge. These projects may be accorded sanction for this year..

Sir, in this regard I would request the hon. Minister of Railways, Shri Lalaji. Our Velaji, is assisting him and working hard. He has been giving good reply in this august House, especially during the Question Hour. He has to take keen interest to get more funds from Shri Lalaji to complete gauge conversions in Tamil Nadu.

Sir, Tamil Nadu is one of the progressing States. Velaji, being a Minister of State of Railways hailing from Tamil Nadu, if you are not able to bring more funds for the State of Tamil Nadu, the people of Tamil Nadu would curse you in the future.... (Interruptions) You should not take them for granted. Please take up their causes seriously.

While presenting the last Rail Budget, you gave the impression that you were doing so much for Tamil Nadu. We were very much happy. But after reading the papers only we came to know that you have given a few new trains. You had given only four new trains and extended some trains and treated them as new trains. But we thought you have brought so much of funds to Tamil Nadu. But there is no use of new trains without funds.

Not only that, the electrification between Tiruchirapalli and Kanyakumari is to be done. Today, southern part of Tamil Nadu is fast growing; economic zone is coming there. So, there is a need and you should take interest to do the electrification between Tiruchirapalli and Kanyakumari.

Similarly, doubling has to be sanctioned between Chengleput and Tuticorin. Our leader, the hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has requested you and also written a letter to the hon. Minister of State for Railways for doubling of Chengleput-Tuticorin. Doubling of Chennai-Thiruvallur suburban has been done. But you have not made the doubling from Thiruvallur to Arakkonam. Mr. Vellu, you have been the Minister of State for Railways since two years, and only three more years are remaining. For doing the doubling of Thiruvallur to Arakkonam, you have to take some interest. There is also a need to have a double line from Ennur to Gummudipoondi.

Sir, I would make a point regarding Mardras University. It is one of the famous and oldest universities of India where so many leaders have studied there.

(13/1645/mmn-har[m28]) It is celebrating 150 years. In that university, a Railway Research Wing may be created for the benefit of research scholars of the university. It should be sponsored by the Railway Ministry. Today, we, the old students of Madras University, are contributing fund. We are renovating the Senate Hall. We are making beautification of Madras University. At this juncture, if they have a research centre with the Railway Department's support, it would be most beneficial to the Madras University.

One of the important and long pending demands is connectivity between Central and Egmore. I do not know when you are going to do this. I had read in the newspaper that you had a review meeting. I also read that there is some technical problem. You have to solve those technical problems, whatever may be the cost involved. We have to connect it so that the northern part of the people may easily go towards Rameshwaram and Kanyakumari in a single train. Otherwise, they will have to get down at Central Station, they will have to go to the other side and then go towards Rameshwaram and Kanyakumari.

Day before yesterday, I got a complaint about Tamil Nadu Express train from those people who come to Delhi. After the railway canteen has been taken over by a separate department, the quality and the taste of food are very poor. Before that, the Railway Department provided very good food. But when you started some corporation like that, the quality and the taste of the food have gone bad. So, it should be rectified.

Regarding some of the basic amenities in all the railway stations, I saw the escalator at Egmore and in the Central Stations. You have made it. It is a very good thing. I have seen this in the airport. You have done it here. That is very useful to the old people. Without any struggle, they can climb the foot-over-path and cross the over-bridge. Today, the Railway Police and the Railway Department are very interested in filing cases against those who cross the line. So, if you put escalator in all the railway stations, if not in all the railway stations but in all the crowded railway stations, it will be very useful and it will benefit the people. The passengers will not cross the railway line and accident will not occur. When you do modernisation of the railway station, you can put escalator at all the crowded railway stations.

Raising of platform is pending at so many railway stations. You have to raise all the platforms. In Chennai Division, three or four years back, the Railway had sanctioned about Rs.125 lakh for platform under the fast track platform. But till today it has not been done.

Also, regarding the lift barrier gate, now the Railway Department is putting lift barrier gate at so many railway stations. It is well and good but in some railway stations, for example, at Minjur and Kadampathur stations of my constituency, it has been sanctioned two years back. The Railway Department also provided money. Only Rs.5 lakh is required to have a lift barrier gate. This is very useful but it has not been installed till today. Whenever I approach the railway officials, they say there is a contractor's delay. It should be looked into.

As I said earlier, today at Gummudipoondy, a case has been lodged against some of our Party cadres because they crossed the railway line. But there is no foot-over-path. There is a

foot-over-path for connecting two railway platforms only, but on the third railway platform, there is no foot-over-path. To cross all the platforms on one side, they have to cross the railway line. Otherwise, how will they come? Six months back, there was a Grievances Day. So many people gave complaints to put one more foot-over-path. But till today, it has not been done but the Railway Police are lodging cases against those who are crossing the railway line.

Today, Chennai city is crowded. So, I request the hon. Minister to provide a halt at Avadi in the Bombay section, and at Gummudipoondi in the Delhi-Chennai section so that you can avoid the traffic in Chennai city. These are sub-urban areas which are growing now. As in Tambaram, you can reduce the crowd here if you provide a stoppage of Express and Mail trains at Avadi in the Bombay section, and at Gummudipoondi in the Delhi section[m29] .

(m3/1650/krr/ind[krr30]) Sir, before I conclude, I want to make one request to have railway connectivity to Sriperumbudur where late Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. For five to six years I am continuously requesting the Government of India to have railway connectivity to Sriperumbudur because thousands and thousands of people are daily visiting the Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Centre at Sriperumbudur. There is a plan to connect Sriperumbudur from St. Thomas Mount via Poonamalli. The hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and other Ministers are here. ... (Interruptions) Shri Dasmunsi, I want to draw your attention regarding connectivity to Sriperumbudur. I am asking about connectivity to Sriperumbudur. You have to support my request. ... (Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI): I fully support you. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (SRIPERUMBUDUR): Sir, Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Centre is there in Sriperumbudur. Thousands and thousands of people are coming there by road. There is a possibility of connecting this place by rail. A survey has already been done to connect Sriperumbudur from Tiruvallur and on the other side from St. Thomas Mount. This place Sriperumbudur should be linked by railways. It is a very important one. We can have a railway station there in the name of late Rajiv Gandhi. Now Sriperumbudur is one of the booming parts in Tamil Nadu where Santro car is manufactured. Saint Gobian glass factory is there. M/s. Nokia have installed their factory there. M/s. Motorola is going to come up there. So many factories are there. Thousands and thousands of crores of rupees of foreign direct investment is coming there. There will be a feasibility of much income if you have a railway station there.

MR. CHAIRMAN (DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA): Please conclude now.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (SRIPERUMBUDUR): Yes, sir. I spoke about ROBs and RUBs. Whenever we write letters to the hon. Minister of Railways or to the officials of Railway Department to have these ROBs or RUBs, immediately they are writing a letter that the States should participate in it. You have a fund and you do it on your own. When two persons cannot come to an agreement, how can the State and the Centre come together? It is very difficult. That is why we are having delays. You make a corporation for having ROBs or RUBs and you get funds from private shares and

construct the ROBs and RUBs on a speedier basis.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Mohd. Tahir to speak now.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (SRIPERUMBUDUR): Sir, please allow me for a minute.

Regarding commercialisation of railway land, the Railways have plenty of land in the country. You have passed a bill last year.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please conclude now. I have called another hon. Member.

SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (SRIPERUMBUDUR): Yes, sir. Last year we passed a Bill about commercialisation of railway land. But till today we do not know as to what is the progress in this regard. Particularly in places like Minjur and Avadi we have not have a place for markets. As I said, we have promised to our local people in my constituency that 'a Bill has been passed and quickly they will commercialise the land so that they will have a market in that area'. But till today there is no progress regarding commercialisation of railway land. This is my request.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing more will be recorded.

(Interruptions) * ... (Not recorded) SHRI A. KRISHNASWAMY (SRIPERUMBUDUR): My last point is that the meetings with MPs have not been conducted. ... (Interruptions)

* Not R ecorded (ends) MR. CHAIRMAN : What you are saying is not going on record. Please resume your seat now. Shri Mohd. Tahir to speak.

(Interruptions) * ... (Not recorded) MR. CHAIRMAN : I have already called another hon. Member.

... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : This is too much. You have already taken 15 minutes. It is not going on record. Shri Mohd. Tahir to speak now.

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1657 hours SHRI BRAHMANANDA PANDA (JAGATSINGHPUR): Hon. Chairman, Sir, I extend my hearty thanks for giving me an opportunity to speak on Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways), on behalf of my Party. As we are all well aware, Railways is the lifeline of country's economic prosperity, being the largest public sector of India. So far as Orissa is concerned, which is full of vast natural resources, it is neglected in the railway map of India. In order to connect Madras during the British Rule, the British Government was compelled to install railway lines with a view to connect Madras. Otherwise, it would not yet have been materialised till today. Even after 58 years of Independence, Orissa has not yet achieved its goal in the field of expansion of railways, though all other States are ahead of us.

Recently, hon. senior Member of this august House, who is also the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Railways, Shri Basu Deb Acharia, expressed his concern regarding completion of various projects in Orissa. In two Press Conferences, he has also indicated that those projects are lying for about one and a half decades and since no adequate funds have been allocated, completion of those projects has not yet materialised.

Sir, as you know, Orissa has its unique importance in the tourist map of India. Under the dynamic leadership of the present Chief Minister, Shri Naveen Patnaik, industrial revolution has already been started. So, Orissa needs more infrastructure so far as railway is concerned[S31] .

(03/1700/sh-bks[R32]) 17.00 hrs. As you know, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes dominate some of the areas in my State. In some of the districts in Orissa, like Phulbani, people have not seen a railway track, and a railway line has become a dream for them. It is the case in respect of other hilly areas in my State. Therefore, we expect more from the Railway Minister,

who is also from our neighbouring State, and he knows it very well. He is also a spiritual man and he is an ardent devotee of Lord Jagannath, whose message of peace, brotherhood and tranquillity is being followed for centuries together as it is a unifying force that unites India. It is, therefore, high time that the hon. Railway Minister should give more emphasis for the development of backward areas and backward States like Orissa because even after 57 years of Independence, the common man has not realised his dream.

The Garib Rath which has been introduced for the sake of the common man should have been first introduced in Orissa, but we do not know why the hon. Railway Minister did not choose Orissa.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, Sir, the second bridge over the River Mahanadi will bring all-round prosperity for Paradip Port, and it has not yet been completed. The other thing is that work on Kurda-Bolangir - via Phulbani and Haridaspur-Paradip railway lines and other railway lines are getting delayed because the Railway Ministry has not yet allotted adequate funds. I urge upon the Railway Minister that these old projects should be completed on a war-footing basis with a view to promote all-round development in the State of Orissa.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, as you know, Orissa can be termed as the 'disaster Capital' of India because it is very often affected by floods, cyclones and droughts. Taking into consideration the industrial revolution which has now been ushered into under the leadership of our hon. Chief Minister, it is the moral responsibility of the Railway Ministry to give all the emphasis to the railway infrastructure in the State in order to enable Orissa to compete with other States of India.

My learned friend from Bihar was saying that Bihar was neglected. We should give emphasis on developing railway infrastructure in all States, and they should have all amenities in the railway sector. In this respect, my humble appeal is that Orissa should not be neglected, and that the projects should be implemented on top priority basis and on war-footing.

Here, I would like to quote what the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Railways has categorically stated. He said that Orissa was a neglected State in the railway sector. The Chairman of the Committee is one of the dynamic Members of this House. Under these circumstances, I hope and trust that the hon. Railway Minister will look into the matter which has been highlighted by the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Railways, Shri Basu Deb Acharia.

Thank you very much; Jai Jagannath.

(ends) 1704 hours SHRI PRABODH PANDA (MIDNAPORE): Sir, I stand to support the Demand for Supplementary Grant of the Railways. In fact, this is not a discussion on the full Railway Budget. Therefore, the scope is very limited. However, I would take this opportunity to raise some important points. I want to draw the attention of the hon. Railway Minister and the Railway Ministry to these points so that the Ministry can think over it and take proper initiatives to resolve the issues[R33] .

(p3/1705/kmr/asa[KMR34]) At the outset, I must congratulate the very dynamic Minister of Railways. Many good words have been spoken here about him and I associate myself with them.

Indian Railways have emerged as a profit-making entity from a loss-making entity. It is notable that Railways have embarked upon a number of initiatives like public-private partnership, Special Purpose Vehicle, Rail Vikas Nigam Limited, and so on and so forth. However, even after such remarkable achievements, the Railways could not draw a perspective plan for expansion of railway network in a holistic way.

Sir, I would like to invite the attention of the hon. Railway Minister to this but he is very busy with other matters. ... (Interruptions)

The major challenge facing Indian Railways is to arrange funds for about 60 projects sanctioned on socio-economic considerations. To implement these projects, new scheme called Remote Area Rail Sampark Yojana envisaging an investment of about Rs.20,000 crore in a period of five years was announced by the Minister himself in the Interim Rail Budget 2004-05. But, till date no funding arrangement has been made. These projects are to be taken up especially in hill, tribal and backward areas. This is the major challenge facing the Railways today. But nothing has been done so far. No funding has been made. A meagre amount of Rs.3 crore has been allocated for four projects that have been declared as national projects.

I come to the growth aspect now. This is already mentioned by hon. Member Shri Brahmananda Panda. A number of big industrial units are coming up in different sectors like iron and steel, cement, thermal power, etc. To match the growth of these industries, additional wagons are needed. Non-availability of wagons in adequate numbers is causing problems.

MEMU and DMU trains cover long distances. We have raised this matter in this august House several times in the past [KMR35] .

(q3/1710/spr/hcb[s36]) I had a talk with the hon. Minister in this regard. I have even raised this matter in different forums. MEMU and EMU trains which ply for long distance of over three hours should have the provision of toilet facilities. This has not yet been done. This is related to the passenger amenities. ... (Interruptions) I am not talking about carpets but toilets. Regarding time-table, about the running trains which are rescheduled, passengers are facing inconvenience as the same has been given effect to in the time-tables. ... (Interruptions) I am only reading the points.

A request has been made about inviting the representations of people and passengers of different Forums to the meeting for giving their suggestions but the same has not been done. The catering policy of IRCTC should be reviewed.

Railways have projected the rolling stock to be acquired during the Tenth Plan period as 9,160 coaches and 17,043 EMUs. In the first year, it could acquire only 5,957 coaches and 397 EMUs. ... (Interruptions) What was the requirement of diesel locomotives and how far it is being met? The lapses are there.

About staff strength, I would say that a large number of vacancies, specially in Group 'C' and 'D' posts is there in the Production Unit and open lines of the Railways. Norms are such that only

one out of three is going to be filled up. If that is the case, how is it to be done? The hon. Minister is well known about the recruitment of the Gang man in Kharagpur Division. This problem has not yet been solved till date. I would like to draw his attention to this and I hope the same would be solved as early as possible.

Regarding passenger fare hike, it is true that passenger fare hike has not been done so far but with the upgradation of Express Trains, passengers of the Express Trains have to pay more. Not only that, a new thing has been introduced recently, that is, if any passenger wants to purchase a ticket in a particular station, he has to pay more money. If a passenger wants to purchase ticket from other stations to his destination, he has to pay more money. This new instruction has come from the Railways. If a passenger has to purchase tickets from a nearer station, then, he has to pay more for that. I would urge the hon. Minister to withdraw this instruction.

Some social commitment is required from the Railways. Railways are the largest public utility sector. So far as bus stands, cultural institutions, sports stadiums, schools, etc. are concerned, Railways should provide suitable lands without charging anything to these institutions.

I would like to once again request the hon. Minister as he himself noticed as to what happened in Kharagpur Division. He noticed that Rajdhani and other trains are plying on a single line in Kharagpur Division. Doubling of this Division is required. Particularly, doubling of line from Kharagpur to Midnapur via Giri Maidan is required. A second railway bridge on River Kasai is also very much required.

In the coming Railway Budget, I hope, the Railway Minister would incorporate all the points mentioned by me in my speech. With these words, I support the Supplementary Demands for Grants of Railways.

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1726 hours SHRI ADHIR CHOWDHURY (BERHAMPORE, WEST BENGAL): Madam, I rise to support unequivocally the Supplementary Demands for Grants proposed by the hon. Minister of Railways, Shri Lalu Prasad. Further, I am goaded to join the praise Shri Lalu, praise value ban Shri Velu “banddwagon ” because over the years they have been performing exceedingly well which deserve s to be praised lavishly.

The year 2006 has been dedicated by the Railways as a year of the service to the passengers with a smile. But what we have been experiencing in our Railway sector is still haunting our memory. The horrendous episode of Mumbai blasts is still haunting our memory. We are yet to overcome these horrid situations. Therefore, apart from all this, I must draw the attention of the hon. Minister to prepare a road map so that this kind of terrorist and subversive attack act ivities s could be avoided because averted as it is perceived that Railways are very much vulnerable to any kind of subversion be it propelled by foreign terrorists or by domestic insurgents. The entire Railway are existing on a vast expanse of land where it is really next to impossible to provide security to the entire network. Therefore, for the safety and security of the passengers and not only

passengers but our freight movement also, anti-subversion measures must be adopted in consultation with various experts.

The odyssey of Indian Railways set out in the year 1853 from Boribunder to Thane which was merely 34 kilometres. Now, as on 31.3.2005, the Railways network has been expanded to 63,465 kilometres[r37] . The Indian Railways are a synopsis of secular fabric of our nation. The panorama of India exists on its track.

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I must appreciate the hon. Minister that he has realised the longstanding dream of the people of my district, Murshidabad and the adjoining districts of Nadia and Birbhum by offering a sum which was required to construct a bridge at Mashipur-Azimganj across the river Bhagirathi. However, I would request him to expedite the job as it has been dilly-dallying for various reasons which need to be sorted out as early as possible.

The hon. Minister is well aware that Murshidabad is recognised as a backward district. Lakhs of people from that area used to travel to Southern India for medical treatment. But there is no direct train facility available between that region and Southern India. So, I would request the hon. Minister to consider my proposal by providing a train from Malda to Chennai so that the hapless patients will get an opportunity for being treated there.

Secondly, you are well aware that lakhs of people who are native of Bihar are eking out their livelihood in West Bengal. In my district and also adjoining districts, there is a huge concentration of people native of Bihar. But there is no good train available from Bihar to Murshidabad or Nadia or Birbhum. Therefore, the Bihari people living in those areas are facing severe inconvenience while travelling to their home districts or home State. I would request the hon. Minister to consider this proposal also.

Madam, I would draw the attention of the Railway Ministry to its turnaround which they have demonstrated in recent years. But still over-aged rolling stocks are running on this system. Still, safety measures are to be fulfilled. Special Railway Safety Fund amounting to Rs. 17,000 crore has been proposed to be available for a span of six years since the inception of the Railway Safety Fund so that all outstanding works and arrears in terms of rolling stock, rehabilitation, etc. will be completed[bru38] .

May I know from the hon. Minister whether the arrears which were promised to be accomplished have been done or not? ... (Interruptions)

The Hon. Minister is well aware of the problems of my district because he had visited my district already. There is no fast passenger train plying between Kolkata and Murshidabad during the morning hour. I made one proposal to the hon. Minister regarding this. Murshidabad district is situated on the borders of Bangladesh. Everyday thousands of poor people used to travel to Kolkata for their livelihood. But there is no fast passenger train plying between Kolkata and Lalgola in the morning session.

Therefore, I urge upon the hon. Minister to consider this proposal because hundreds of people are suffering due to the absence of fast passenger train in the morning hour from Kolkata. The hon. Minister is very sensitive to the needs of our State, West Bengal. He has already taken a slew of measures and programmes for development of railway in our State. Therefore, I am going to be a bit indulgent to ask him some more. It is a very small proposal. That is, a fast passenger train be run between Kolkata and Sealdah in the morning time.

SHRI LONAPPAN NAMBADAN (MUKUNDAPURAM): Sir, I support this supplementary demand for grants. This Railway Budget has conspicuously neglected the southern most state of our country, that is, Kerala. We strongly oppose the non acceptance, of some of our urgent demands, like railway zone, electrification, doubling of railway tracks, gage conversion, and also allotting new tracks for Kerala.

We are now in the neglected zone, New trains from metros of Bangalore, Chennai, Mumbai and Delhi to Kerala, need to be allotted. Also additional coaches should be added to the existing trains. Kerala is today known world wide as God's own country. Therefore, to encourage the tourists and also make their journey to Kerala comfortable it is mandatory that tracks from various centers of the country to Kerala are allotted. Kerala is also the land of cultural pageants and water sports and festivals. Thousand of foreign tourists are coming to our state to take part in the Nehru trophy boat race, that will be held shortly.

The Puram festival of Trichur is also know world wide now. The amount earmarked for the project of doubling railway tracks are pitiable insufficient. Due to this, the work of doubling railway tracks are progressing at snail's pace. Though it is years since the work began, the work remains incomplete.

The work of doubling the track from Ernakulam to Kayamkulam via Kottayam remains incomplete till date. If the state of affairs continue as they are, this project will not be completed in another five years. Same is the case with, the doubling of track work in the Ernakulam railway route via. Alleppey to Kayamkulam. So, unless the work of doubling the tracks on these two important routes for Kerala are completed we cannot say that the railway ministry has done justice to our state. Adequate funds to complete these two routes should be

*English translation of the speech

originally delivered in Malayalam allocated immediately, Steps should be taken to start the new railway line from Kottayam to Kumuli, Also the new line to Thiruvananthapuram via Chengannur, Punaloor, Nedumangad should be allotted.

A new railway line, via Adoor, Kottarakara to Thiruvananthapuram too should be sanctioned. Work on the new track from Angamali to Sabarimala should start immediately. Railway crossings adversely affect the free movement of vehicles in Kerala. Many national highways, do not have over bridges, and therefore the people encounter severe traffic jams, sometimes even for hours together.

The construction of these over bridges have also been officially sanctioned, but so far they have not been implemented. So I will urge, the ministry, to give priority and with utmost urgency take steps to complete the construction of over bridges. In my constituency, which is Mukundapuram, the work of ten over bridges were sanctioned. Out of these Chalakudi, Irigalakkuda, over bridges have been completed and is now open for traffic. But the work of Angamali and Koratti over bridges have been left incomplete for years. The work on these bridges should be completed on urgent basis.

Also work on Nandikara, Aloor, Vellanchira, Divine Nagar, Puliyanam and Nedumpasheri over bridges, should start immediately. The work on Chalakudi underpass should begin, immediately. The subway for Kallettumkara should be constructed immediately. There should be ticket reservation facility and computerization in the Eringalakkuda railway station. I would urge the ministry to upgrade the facilities of Koratti and Nellore railway stations. Trains should stop at Koratti and Nellore.

Sir, the situation of railway stations in our state are really poor. In several railway stations, the construction of platforms has not been completed. There are no foot over bridges to link the different platforms. Due to this, instances of accidents are increasing. There are stations which do not have urinals, toilets, and resting room. Drinking water should be made available where even this basic facility is not provided.

Those who are more than 50% physically handicapped and also the blind, the deaf, and dumb should be provided free travel facilities. Those who are 100% physically handicapped should be permitted to take an helper with them free of cost. Senior citizens should get a concession of 75% and those above 70 years should be allowed to take a helper with them free of cost. The concessions for students should be increased.

Facilities to transport dead bodies free of cost should be allowed and two co-passengers should be permitted free travel with dead body. All the 29 Members of Parliament of Kerala support this UPA Government therefore the Railway Ministers Shri Lalu Ji, Velu Ji, and Balu Ji should sincerely pay attention to development of railway and highways in our state. You should remember all other states except Bihar and TamilNadu have opposed the Railway Budget. So such imbalance and discriminatory policies of the UPA Government will encourage the feelings of separatism and secession among the people of India. Ministers should have a nationalistic outlook. You should not degenerate as partisan Ministers you have to protect the unity of our country, by being impartial.

