

RAJYA SABHA

LIST OF BUSINESS

Friday, February 9, 2018

11 A.M.

#QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS entered in separate lists to be asked and answers given.

(FROM 2.30 P.M. TO 5.00 P.M.)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS (RESOLUTIONS)

1. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY to move the following Resolution:—

“Having regard to the fact that:

- (i) India requires speedy economic development and higher growth rate to make it among the few large economies in the world with propitious economic outlook;
- (ii) infrastructure development is one of the key components for industrial development and engine of growth;
- (iii) road network is one of the essential parameters for economic development and communication;
- (iv) economic downturn seen in the last few years has caused reduction in the growth of traffic and lowered revenue realization for Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) road projects; and
- (v) reduced revenue realization has adversely affected debt service concessionaires and caused widespread default in debt accounts;

this House urges upon the Government to-

- (a) take immediate and concrete steps to remove all bottlenecks in the awarding of road projects under BOT and EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction);
- (b) initiate measures to restore market confidence and to ensure that project execution does not suffer owing to cash flow constraints, rescheduling of premium payment under BOT projects;
- (c) initiate early settlement of disputes and find amicable solutions since heavy amount is involved and the road projects are virtually stalled; and
- (d) extend re-finance/soft loan to the operators in the road sector, at lower rate of interest, to revive the infrastructure industry.”

2. DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA to move the following Resolution:—

“This House is of the opinion that in order to make social and economic democracy meaningful and to promote the dignity of people and fraternity that ensures the unity and integrity of the nation, mentioned in the preamble to the Constitution, effective measures should be taken in the ensuing three

At 12 Noon.

years through a time-bound action plan to achieve social, economic, educational parity and equality".*

3. SHRI BHUPENDER YADAV to move the following Resolution:—

"Having regard to the fact that:—

- (i) in the absence of simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, there is hardly any year without election in the country which is highly time-consuming and monumental wastage of financial, manpower and other resources;
- (ii) separate elections affect stability, governance, administration and stands as hurdle in attending to peoples' grievances simultaneously bringing down economic growth because of enforcement of Model Code of Conduct during elections;
- (iii) the Election Commission of India and the State Election Commissions have separate electoral rolls which result in duplication of voters, electoral malpractices resulting in considerable expenditure in holding this democratic exercise;
- (iv) many defence personnel, certain categories of Government employees, displaced Kashmiri Hindus, etc., are deprived to exercise their right to franchise due to their geographical locations;
- (v) in the absence of public funding, which otherwise is being allowed in many countries, there is huge flow of black money into the electoral system which is also paving the way for entry of unscrupulous elements into electoral politics;
- (vi) even though Election Commission puts limit on campaign expenditure, depending upon the nature of election, such ceilings practically remain only on paper and the actual cost of running an election campaign is often much higher than the prescribed limit;
- (vii) the Election and Other Related Laws (Amendment) Act, 2003, aims to control expenditure of every candidate in election, has little impact at the ground level since the existing system lacks transparency;
- (viii) lack of strong legislative backing with effective implementation machinery and absence of legally acceptable public funds resulting in leaving candidates to fend for themselves during each election without any steady support to ensure continuation of their respective campaigns which otherwise has the obvious consequence of proliferation of black money into politics and the institutionalization of corruption;
- (ix) the absence of effective measures to ensure transparency and accountability in funding of political parties exacerbates present situation by creating authoritarian power structures, which are hard to relinquish for those who enjoy their benefits and tend to impose themselves in the scheme of national politics as well; and
- (x) the high cost of elections prevents those with modest financial resources from being competitive in elections resulting inevitably in biased policy decisions,

this House urges upon the Government to -

- (a) amend the election and other related laws forthwith to hold Lok Sabha and Assembly elections simultaneously which gives a period

* Original text of Resolution received in Hindi.

of clear five years to the incumbent Government to focus on governance;

- (b) amend laws and rules in such manner which facilitate reforms in electoral cycle in order to limit election expenditure and avoid wastage of time in electioneering;
- (c) ask Election Commission to have one single electoral roll in the country to weed out duplicate voters, check electoral malpractices and bring down the cost of holding the democratic exercise;
- (d) amend the Constitution and other relevant Acts and rules to introduce e-ballot/ e-voting system in order to enable all voters, who may be away from their places of residence for different reasons, to exercise their right to franchise online;
- (e) implement State funding of elections;
- (f) enact or suitably amend laws to regulate utilization of funds by political parties;
- (g) take steps for strengthening democracy, transparency in political funding and other necessary reforms;
- (h) link Aadhaar Number with Election Card issued to every eligible citizen of the country; and
- (i) permit NRIs and Indians staying abroad to cast their vote during elections."

4. SHRI VIVEK GUPTA to move the following Resolution:—

"Having regard to the fact that:-

- (i) the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of expression to all its citizens;
- (ii) India is ranked 136 out of 192 countries in 2017 on World Press Freedom Index released by Reporters Without Borders (RWB);
- (iii) threatening the journalists and media personnel is an attack on the freedom of press;
- (iv) the Press is the fourth pillar of the democracy and ensuring its freedom of expression is thus important;
- (v) the news media provides the necessary information to engage citizens with the functioning of their elected representatives and the Government;
- (vi) cases of work related threats and violence against journalists are increasing with the recent one being the shooting of Ms. Gauri Lankesh on 5th September 2017;
- (vii) the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) database records only those cases of attacks on media persons where there is 'grievous hurt of varying degrees', falling under Sections 325, 326, 326-A and 326-B of Indian Penal Code but does not include murder of journalists resulting in under-reporting of cases;
- (viii) the number of journalists facing work related threats in the country is grossly under estimated due to this less reporting of such cases;
- (ix) the NCRB statistics itself suggest 142 attacks against journalists for grievous hurt between 2014 and 2015;
- (x) as per the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), out of 70 journalists who were killed in India between 1992-2016, 28 were murdered;

- (xi) only 73 people were arrested for 142 attacks against media personnel in 2014 and 2015, according to Hon'ble Minister of State for Home Affairs, in a reply to a question in Rajya Sabha on 26 July, 2017;
- (xii) there is disparity across the states between the registered cases of attack on the media personnel and the number of persons arrested for these attacks, for instance, Uttar Pradesh registered highest number of such cases (64), but only 4 persons were arrested in relation to these attacks in 2014-15 whereas in 26 cases of attack on journalists which were registered in Madhya Pradesh, 42 persons were arrested;
- (xiii) the conviction rate of the persons arrested for crimes against journalists is even lower than the arrests;
- (xiv) India is ranked 14th globally in 2015 on Global Impunity Index in murder cases against journalists, which is calculated on the basis of number of unsolved murders reported by Committee To Protect Journalists (CPJ);
- (xv) not a single case of journalist's murder was solved in India over the past decade and 96% of cases of attack on media personnel remained unresolved since 1992 according to the report of Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ);
- (xvi) there is no strict deterrent to attackers of media persons in our criminal justice system thereby investigative journalism/ reporting is becoming increasingly dangerous;
- (xvii) the Press Council of India (PCI) has recommended making attack on journalists a cognizable offence punishable with a five year imprisonment;
- (xviii) the Indian Penal Code does not have a separate section to deal with work-related threats and crimes against journalists and media personnel; and
- (xix) there is no umbrella scheme for the overall protection and security of journalists and media community throughout the country,

this House urges upon the Government to-

- (a) initiate CBI inquiry into the death of senior journalist Ms. Gauri Lankesh;
- (b) conduct a nation-wide comprehensive survey to get an actual estimate of the number of journalists facing work-related threats, to help plan protection, security and welfare measures more efficiently;
- (c) establish a robust grievance redressal mechanism for media personnel attacked or intimidated;
- (d) provide special protection to journalists facing work-related threats to defend freedom of expression;
- (e) provide for toll free number specially for personnel of press and media to contact the police when they feel threatened;
- (f) help States in taking preventive measures like providing effective security to employees associated with press and media;
- (g) provide for an umbrella scheme for the overall protection and security of journalists and media community throughout the country, with effective coordination between the States;
- (h) establish a separate division under the Ministry of Home Affairs to supervise the scheme for providing security to persons associated with press and media;

- (i) establish special benches in courts for trial of cases relating to crimes against journalists and media related personnel;
- (j) make the laws stricter for offenders who curtail and endanger the freedom of press and to bring the culprits to justice to boost the confidence of journalists in the criminal justice system; and
- (k) amend the Indian Penal Code to include a separate section dealing with offences against media personnel and to include provision of stricter punishment to culprits for threatening the life of journalists and other media related personnel."

NEW DELHI;
February 6, 2018.

DESH DEEPAK VERMA,
Secretary-General.