

RAJYA SABHA

***SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE**

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Thursday, July 27, 2017/ Shravana 5, 1939 (Saka)

Information to the House

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): Responding to a matter raised by Shri Partap Singh Bajwa on the 19th July, 2017, demanding the speedy return of 39 Indians stuck in Mosul, Iraq since 2014, I would like to say that I have never said that they are very much alive neither in the House nor out side of it. We have no such concrete proof of their being alive or dead as on date. But I will say that the statement of Harjeet Massi is not credible because that is very much contradictory in terms of facts. It is to be mentioned here that no one has come forward to verify Harjeet's claim yet. The Government of India continued its search for the missing Indians and still trying to have any information about them through its reliable sources. All of you know that on 9th Iraq officially declared that Mosul is now liberated from ISIS. Our Minister left for Mosul on the very next day to have some information, but got nothing. One very senior Iraqi officer told that they had information from their intelligence sources that they were arrested from the Mosul airfield and after that they were kept in prison. Thereafter, they were engaged in the construction activity of a hospital and thereafter they were made to work in farms and in the

*This Synopsis is not an authoritative record of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.

beginning of 2016 they were sent to Badrus prison. Since then we could not have any contact with them. This information was shared with their families. I cannot give them any information without any proof. During the last three years we have secured the safe return of 80,000 Indians stranded abroad on the expenses of the Indian Government. I would like to mention that until I get concrete evidence, their search will be continued. I would also like to reiterate that it is a sin to call someone dead without a proof and I would not commit this sin.

MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

1. Need to stop the Privatisation of Salem Steel Plant

SHRIMATI VIJILA SATHYANANTH: The Government of Tamil Nadu had acquired land in nine villages for Salem Steel Plant, more than four decades ago in the foothills of Kanjamalai in Salem. The State Government has offered a structured package of incentives to Salem Steel Plant in various forms. Our public sector undertakings are capable of performing very well provided they are given the right support and direction in the dynamic economic scenario. I request the hon. Minister to stop going ahead with the privatization move of Salem Steel plant and save the numerous labourers and workers working in the Salem Steel plant.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

2. Alleged Killing of Tribals on the Pretext of Combating Naxalism in Jharkhand

SHRI SANJIV KUMAR: A tribal worker named as Moti Lal Vaske was shot dead by the police on 9th June, 2017 on the pretext of Naxalite. Moti Lal had no past criminal record. He used to carry Jain Pilgrims on his shoulders at Parasnath mountain. The killing of innocent tribals in Jharkhand on the pretext of Naxalites or their surrender should be totally stopped. The practice of posing as role-

model for the sake of Photo App should be stopped. I urge upon the Government that there should be an independent investigation of Moti Lal Vaske episode and the killing of tribals and other people in the name of eradication of Naxalism in Jharkhand should be totally stopped.

(Shri D. Raja and Shri Ravi Prakash Verma associated.)

3. Need to make Regional Language Compulsory in C.B.S.E. Schools and Kendriya Vidyalayas

SHRI K.K. RAGESH: As per the three-language formula, for Hindi-speaking States, apart from Hindi and English, any modern Indian language is being made compulsory as third language. So far as non-Hindi speaking States are concerned, apart from Hindi and English, it should be a regional language. In many of the CBSE schools, regional languages are not being taught, but the Government is imposing Sanskrit as a compulsory language in these schools. I wish to know whether this formula is being implemented in the Kendriya Vidyalayas too. In the Kendriya Vidyalayas, from the VI to the VIII Standard, Sanskrit has been made compulsory but not any regional language. Government is trying to impose Sanskrit in all CBSE schools up to the X Standard, which is a very serious issue. I demand from the Government that it may ensure that regional languages are taught in CBSE schools.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR), responding to the matter, said: I have made it clear umpteen number of times that we are not imposing any language on any student. Three-language formula is three Indian languages-formula. It is on the basis of the choice of students.

4. Revelations Made in the Samjhauta Express Blast Case

SHRI SHIV PRATAP SHUKLA: There was a blast in Samjhauta Express on 18th February, 2007. The blast in Samjhauta Express was due to the indulgence of Pakistan. David Colemn

Headley has recently revealed that Pakistan had full involvement in this. He had named SIMI and Abdul Razzak. He told that Lashkar-e-Taiba and SIMI together executed this incident. The most important thing is that the NIA had all the information in 2008 regarding this but the NIA and then Government exonerated Pakistan from this crime. UPA Government coined a new word as "Hindu Terrorism" which has insulted all the Hindus of this country.

DR. SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Since the Samjhauta Express terrorist attack, there have been illusions in the media of a narco test on the suspected terrorists where vital data was disclosed. Media has been carrying these illusions; but for the first time, we have actually seen video evidence of narco test. This House has a right to know whether it is a fact that there is a video tape of narco test conducted by the Government, and the Home Minister knew about it.

SHRI LA. GANESAN: It has been confirmed by recent reports in the media that the Samjhauta Express blasts were carried out by SIMI activists. I am talking about the activities of SIMI supported by Pakistan.

SHRI DIGVIJAYA SINGH: They are trying to hide all the accused of bomb blast cases. It is a different issue. This is being alleged on untruthful things. It is a Sangh terrorism. We demand verification and authentication of video from Minister of Home Affairs.

5. Concern over Unfair GST Rates on Sanitary Napkins and Non-AC Restaurants

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: The GST Council has fixed tax rates for AC restaurants serving liquor and AC restaurants which are not serving liquor at 18 per cent and for non-AC restaurants, it is 12 per cent. It has imposed as high as 12 per cent tax on sanitary napkins. The Government while imposing tax on restaurants, has failed to take into account the changing trends in the industry. Fixing rate for an AC restaurant not serving liquor and for non-AC restaurant serving liquor is anomalous. Government has put a GST of only five per cent on sweets but for a common man's food like idli, dosa and chapatti, it

is as high as 18 per cent. There is a lack of sensitisation of menstrual health and lack of availability of quality napkins. I urge upon the Government to review the tax rates and provide for flat tax rates from AC restaurants and non-AC restaurants not serving liquor at five per cent and roll back the tax on sanitary napkins, which is an essential commodity for every woman in this country.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

FAREWELL TO A RETIRING MEMBER

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, we bid farewell today to Shri Shantaram Naik, Member, representing the State of Goa, who is retiring on the 28th July, 2017, on the expiry of his term of office.

Shri Naik has made rich contributions in the deliberations of the House and of its Committees. As Chairman of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice and also as a Member of the various other Parliamentary Committees, he has been instrumental in influencing public policy for the larger good.

I wish to place on record my personal appreciation for the courtesy and cooperation extended by him to the Chair.

The House would certainly miss Shri Naik. I am sure he would continue to serve in other capacities and would be making good use of the knowledge and experience gained by him during his association with this House.

On behalf of this august House, I wish him good health, success and long years of service to the nation.

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK: I entered Parliament, i.e., the other House in 1984. I had a career of 17 years. Of these 17 years, I will mention only one aspect of the other House. I have got the statehood for Goa and at that time Rajivji was the Prime Minister. I told him that this is the demand. First two-three years, I did not say anything. But Rajivji told me, "If you are raising it, raise it." And I

went to the front row—that was not permitted at that time—and during Zero Hour, I mentioned the case for Statehood of Goa, and the Prime Minister stood up to respond and granted statehood to Goa then and there. This was my biggest achievement in my life to cherish.

One aspect that I would like to stress is that our Parliament's powers are being eroded and that needs to be restored. The function of the Judiciary is to interpret the law, not to lay down the law. We have seen new laws being laid down by the Judiciary. This is not welcome.

They say that because the Legislature, Executive is not doing its duty, we are being compelled to do this. In the same response, I cannot say this, but the Prime Minister, who is the Head of the Executive can say, that because lakhs of cases are pending in the Supreme Court, you are not passing judgements, I, as the Prime Minister will pass judgments. Can he say so? Obviously not, because the compartments are divided very clearly.

Then, there is another agency which also encroaches upon our powers. Under Article 324 of the Constitution, day in and day out, during elections, instructions are issued on the subjects which are the powers of Parliament. Let them not issue instructions and encroach upon the powers of Parliament. I had an opportunity to raise the issue of special provisions under Article 371, which is popularly called 'special status'.

Bihar has been asking for special status in a different context. Only Goa has asked for special status under Article 371 because we would like to protect our land. Encroachments happen in various forms, by Russians, Israelis and our own local people. Therefore, some protection of our land is required.

I also had the opportunity of proposing an amendment to the Citizenship Act because some citizens of Goa had applied for Indian citizenship, in Portugal. As a result, the Government of India had started deleting names of those people. Ultimately, I had moved an amendment. The Government of India had sent two representatives and got it rectified. It was not important whether my amendment was

accepted or not. With just one stroke of pen, it could have been done. But it did not happen.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Congress President, Soniaji, my colleagues, especially sitting with me on this Bench, as well as all others in the House and the staff of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, for helping me, cooperating with me and responding to my requirements. Similarly, I also thank the hon. Deputy Chairman for all the cooperation that I got from him.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO THE MATTER OF URGENT
PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Situation Arising Out of Recent Floods in Various Parts of the
Country Particularly in Assam**

SHRI RIPUN BORA: I call the attention of the Home Minister to the situation arising out of recent floods in various parts of the country, particularly in Assam.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI KIREN RIJJU): India receives heavy rainfall from June to September every year during the South West (SW) Monsoon Season. The rainfall during this period accounts for about 70-90 % of the total annual rainfall over India. As a consequence of this rainfall, flooding of rivers is a natural weather phenomenon. This year monsoon set in over Kerala on 30th May, the monsoon has already covered entire country by 19th July 2017. In terms of area wise distribution, 89% of the area in the country received excess/ normal rainfall and 11% of the area received deficient rainfall till date. Over 40 Million hectares' land of the country is prone to floods and river erosion. The flood prone regions of India are the Himalayan Rivers Basin (Kosi and Damodar Rivers in particular), the North Western River Basin (Jhelum, Ravi, Sutlej and Beas Rivers) and the central and Peninsular River Basin (Narmada, Chambal, Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery River). During the current South West monsoon season, various parts of the States of Assam,

Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal reported to have been affected by heavy rains / flash floods / and rain oriented calamities of varying degrees. As per the information of damage received from these States 508 persons have lost their lives, 24,811 cattle heads have perished, 63,215 houses/ huts have been damaged and about 2.8 lakh hectares of crop area have been reported affected due to heavy rains/ flood/ landslides etc.

Primary responsibility to deal with natural calamities rest with the State Government concerned. The Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments by providing financial and logistics support to effectively deal with such exigent situations. The concerned State Governments have been taking necessary relief, preparedness/ preventive measures, which inter-alia includes distribution of relief, evacuation and shifting of the people to safer places, setting up of multipurpose relief shelters/ camps, providing Governments have also taken necessary health and hygiene measures to prevent outbreak of any epidemic during floods/ post flood calamity period. State authorities are monitoring rainfall, water level of the rivers/ dams in coordination with the IMD and CWC as well as issuing weather advisories to all vulnerable districts. With regard to Assam, there are 2 major rivers system (viz; Brahmaputra valley and Barak valley) in the State which causes floods. The State faces acute flood problem in the flood plains of the river Brahmaputra and Barak and other smaller river sub-basins. Assam has faced two waves of floods till 19th July 2017 affecting 29 districts out of 33 districts, resulting in loss of human lives, livestock and large scale damage to the dwelling houses. The State Government is providing necessary relief assistance affected people in the State. As per information received from the State Government of Assam, about 59430.45 quintal rice, 11142.18 quintal dal, 3541.71 quintal salt, 37249.89 liters M. Oil and 58092 numbers of tarpaulins etc. have been provided to the affected people in different districts of Assam. The State Government has mentioned that 1160 relief camps (357

relief camps + 803 relief distribution center) have been opened and 1,31,416 inmates are housed in these camps, so far. However, at present the situation is under control in the State. The State Government is closely monitoring rescue & relief operations in the districts to deal with any eventuality.

The Ministry of Home Affairs is also keeping constant round the clock watch on the situation in the country including Assam. In order to assess the loss of immediate nature, upon receipt interim memorandum an Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT) was constituted on 21st July 2017. The Inter-Ministerial Central Team, in consultation with the State Government, are visiting the affected areas of the State, from 25-28th July 2017 for on the spot assessment of damages of immediate and temporary nature. Further, action would be taken in the matter, in accordance with the established procedure. To ensure effective preparedness, MHA conducted annual meeting of Relief Commissioners/ Secretaries, Department of Disaster Management of State / UTs on 17 May 2017 to review the status of preparedness and to discuss other disaster management related issues. The representatives of various Central Ministries/ Organizations rendering Emergency Support Functions also participated in the meeting. During the conference the emphasis was laid on close coordination with forecasting agencies such as Central Water Commission (CWC), India Metrological Department (IMD), GSI and INCOIS. As stated earlier, the State Governments concerned are primarily responsible for undertaking necessary rescue, relief and preventive measures in the wake of natural calamities. Apart from providing logistics support, the Government of India supplements the efforts of the State Governments by extending financial assistance through State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) as per the laid down procedure.

An amount of Rs. 9382.80 crore has been allocated as central share to all the States in their SDRF accounts for the year 2017-18. An amount of Rs. 3387.15 crore has so far been released, as the installment of Central share of SDRF for the year 2017-18 to 21 States. In addition, financial assistance from NDRF amounting to Rs. 1555.84 crore has been provided during 2017-18, so far, to different

States which were affected by calamities of severe nature. In addition to regular schemes of crops damage, the farmers are also entitled for compensation under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna of the Ministry of Agriculture, which is being implemented by the State Government. MHA have deployed about 88 specialized teams of NDRF in 26 States and UTs with 304 boats another necessary search and rescue equipment. Based on vulnerability profile of different regions of the country, NDRF teams have been presently stationed/ deployed at 12 Bn HQ viz; Guwahati (Assam), Haringhata (West Bengal), Mundali (Odisha), Arakkonam (Tamil Nadu), Pune (Maharashtra), Vadodra (Gujarat), Bhatinda (Punjab), Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh), Bihta (Bihar), Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) and Doimukh (Arunachal Pradesh). Besides, pre-positioning of the NDRF teams has already been done at 31 different locations in the country depending on the vulnerability profile of the area. In addition, NDRF teams also assist to the State administration in distribution of essential relief material and provide medical support to affected people at the time of emergency. NDRF also conducts mock drills along with the relevant departments and State agencies in the country for effective management of floods, response and rescue operations. Hon'ble PM has reviewed the flood preparedness of the nation via PRAGATI on 12th July 2017. Hon'ble MOS (PMO & DONER) has reviewed the flood situation of North-Eastern States including Assam on 13th July 2017. Hon'ble MoS (Home) has visited and reviewed the flood situation of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh from 13th to 15th July 2017. I would like to assure the Hon'ble Members that the Government of India will give due importance to the valuable suggestions given by them during the discussion to deal effectively with the situation caused by floods and other natural calamities.

The Hon'ble Minister, replying to the points raised by the Members, said: I would like to thank the hon. Member, Shri Ripun Bora for bringing this Calling Attention. Every nation of the world is facing the problem of disaster. Major floods started in North East and then it spread across almost every part of the country. Some States are facing drought issue and the other States are facing the flood problem.

Today, we are discussing about the flood which started in North-East. The situation in Assam is very grim. When it comes to the question of funding for such disasters. The provision is very clear. Every year we allocate funds for the States. The Central Government again assist the states as soon as they exhaust the funds. The inter-Ministerial team assess the damages caused by the disaster whether it is man-made or natural. It is not easy to assess the total cost of damages at one go. It takes time. This is not right to blame the system. It is hard to predict cloud burst as this happens in a small pocket of any area. We deploy NDRF men in advance and they work day and night. Apart from this, we deploy paramilitary forces and Army in such areas. Almost all states have improved their capacity to deal with natural disasters. We want to mitigate the risk but it is not the question of rescue and relief operations, we have to look beyond that. We focus on awareness creation and preventive steps. We conduct mock drills on regular basis. Now, our response time is just one minute. Life cannot wait beyond a minute. Disaster is not a political issue. No money is pending with us which the Assam has asked. Essential items have been distributed. I visited three districts and I was personally satisfied with the work being done there. Disaster affect the people. Flood situation in Assam is unprecedented and you expect that nobody should be affected. Definitely, the people are going to face the problem. Whether it is Assam or the Gujarat, the response has been the quickest possible. The Government of India cannot be biased in its approach. The amount announced for Gujarat, is a part of the SDRF amount which is due to Gujarat. Karnataka has received the maximum amount for drought. Odisha Government has done marvellous job in dealing with Phailin cyclone. The matter of relief is not taken care of by Home Ministry alone. Other departments are also contributes in this. So far as Damodar Valley Corporation is concerned, the authorities were forced to release the water due to heavy rainfall. As per the Expert Committee, de-siltation is not the ultimate solution. Nobody will suffer due to inaction. We must give top priority to deal with the disaster, whether it is man-made or natural.

GOVERNMENT BILL

The Indian Institutes of Information Technology (Public Private Partnership) Bill, 2017

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MAHENDRA NATH PANDEY), moving the motion for consideration of the Bill, said: Our Government introduced this Bill in Lok Sabha in April. The Bill was passed on 19th July. There are 15 IIT working in the country under PPP mode at present. One of our aims to bring this Bill is to declare it as an institute of national importance and secondly after this Bill being passed the institutes will get the power to award degrees to their students themselves. With these objectives the Bill has been brought forth. I would request that it may be taken into consideration.

PROF. M. V. RAJEEV GOWDA: I rise in support of IIT (Public-Private Partnership) Bill, 2017. The field of Information Technology has made India proud and it has made India reach the cutting edge of technological development in fields related to computer science. When we think about such a cutting edge field and the field of education, it is important that we create more institutions and that is why the public-private partnership model was initiated and it has proven to be a tremendous success. When we want to make the public-private partnership model work better, it is important that we ensure that the private players also get a more significant role in the decision-making. Currently, the governing body has exactly two Members from the private sector. Given that, it may be important for the Minister to consider how in the rural areas and elsewhere this partnership can be turned more tangible by enhancing the representation of the private sector in both the governing bodies as well as in the Senate.

One of the good things about these institutions is that they have come up with courses that are relevant to fields of national importance such as agriculture and rural development. It is important that these institutes create courses to ensure that India has a cadre of

cyber security professionals. We have been moving aggressively towards the mobile platform and we are now very, very familiar with the concept of Apps. Cell phones and smart phones are going to be in the hands of the most of the public over time. It is important that these mobile Apps are also developed in languages that are useful in those regions and which are understandable and intelligible to the users in those regions.

I would urge the hon. Minister to ask these institutes to focus on Blockchain technology and all other kinds of developments that are taking place in terms of Internet etc. The institutes also must play a role in triggering the Start-up culture. There is a lot of work that needs to be done in the area of civic technology.

SHRI BASAWARAJ PATIL: I welcome the Bill. A number of such Bills of national importance of Ministry of Education have come in this House within these 3-4 years. We have supported these Bills with great pleasure cutting across party lines. But, in the global competition we are far behind. Government should consider it seriously. While opening such new institutes Government should ensure that such institutes have perfectness and the benefit of this perfectness reaches to entire countrymen.

Has any of these institutes been opened in the areas falling under 371? The people of Hyderabad which is a part of Karnataka are reeling under misery. They had dreamt of IIT there, but this dream did not materialize. Government should keep all these things in mind while opening such new institutes. This is called social justice. I welcome the private participation, but I want to make the Government acquainted with the fact that if we will not pay attention towards ethics etc., we would become animal. It is very difficult to get admissions in such institutes. But, only around 44 per cent students out of those who take admissions are able to pass the examinations. If after so much competition they are unable to complete their studies, it is important to see where the defect lies. Government should think about this seriously.

Today there are 55 lakh engineers who are jobless. They are compelled to work for 5-10 thousand rupees. Have we opened engineering colleges for this only? To ensure that such a situation does not arise in IITs, whenever these institutes are opened at new places, this aspect should be considered seriously. Our Ministry of Education should prepare some special programmes with a view to provide jobs to these promising youths.

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***Supplement covering rest of the proceedings is being issued separately.