

LOK SABHA

SYNOPSIS OF DEBATES (Proceedings other than Questions & Answers)

Friday, November 29, 2019 / Agrahayana 8, 1941 (Saka)

SUBMISSION BY MEMBERS

Re: Remarks made by a Member in the House glorifying the assassin of the Father of the Nation.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS; MINISTER OF COAL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI) *responding to the issue raised by several hon. Members, said:* Our hon. Prime Minister himself has said to all the hon. Members of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha including Ministers from Bhartiya Janta Party about how to celebrate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. We have to take up *padayatra* for 150 kms. We have to share with people about the ideology of Mahatma Gandhi, his sacrifice, perseverance and service which brought him great honour not only in a country but also across the world. All the 380-383 Members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha took up *padyatra*. Not just that, our hon. Prime Minister himself is sensitizing people about the achievements and sacrifices made by Mahatma Gandhi all over

the world. Hon. Minister of Defence has categorically said on the floor of House that let alone terming Godse as patriot, even lending a thought to his deeds is wrong. The hon. Member has also tendered her apology. Nevertheless, we are ready to accept whatever is decided by the Hon. Speaker.

The Speaker also made an observation on the issue.

HON. SPEAKER: Mahatma Gandhi is held in high esteem and reverence not only in India but also in the entire world on account of his thoughts, ideals, his dedication towards the nation, and the movement launched by him through truth and non-violence. Not only the country but also the entire world imbibes his thoughts even today. I believe that we should not politicize this issue because if we do so it will go in the public domain globally. That is why I requested hon. Members that it does not anywhere constitute the part of the proceedings of this House. The House does not allow anybody to be glorified in the matter of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi ji neither inside nor outside the House. That is why the hon. Defence Minister on behalf of the Government put forward the official statement in the House yesterday. I requested the hon. Member to tender her apology and she has done so.

Thereafter, Sadhvi Pragya Thakur expressed her regret.

SADHVI PRAGYA SINGH THAKUR: I did not call Nathuram Godse a patriot during the discussion on the SPG Bill held on 27.11.2019. I did not even

mention the name, however, I regret and apologize if I have hurt anyone's sentiments.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' RESOLUTION - Contd.

Re: Construction of canal through Ken-Betwa river linking project to overcome the problem of water scarcity and stray cows in the Bundelkhand region.

SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH *resuming said:* Mukhya Mantri Jal Swablamban Scheme, MJSA was launched on 27 January 2016 in Rajasthan by the BJP Government. Tanker rentals reduced by approximately 56 per cent since the launch of this scheme. There has also been increase in the water level. This scheme was adopted by the Central Government from Rajasthan. Our hon. Prime Minister has set the target of supplying piped water in every household by the year 2024. People would get safe drinking water and this would also result in decrease of water borne diseases. When we talk about linking of Ken-Betwa, we can also use it as logistics. 44 per cent goods are transported through waterways in China, in European Union its percentage is 47, but in our country only 3 per cent goods are transported through waterways. When the system becomes functional, we would not only get fund for providing water supply in every household, the

logistics work would also gain momentum. There is Parwan dam in my Parliamentary Constituency, which has the capacity of 490 million cubic meters. Out of it, 317 million cubic meter water is for irrigation and 50 million cubic meter water is for water supply for 1821 villages. Besides, there is also provision of 2970 Mega watt electricity. Financial sanction was given in December 2017 and work on the project started at that time. Financial sanction was stopped for the project after new government came into power in December 2018. The work of the project was stopped. I would request the Central Government to provide financial assistance for it and remind the State Government about its responsibility that work should be completed soon. Bundelkhand region should get special package. People are migrating from Bundelkhand region and something should be done to check it.

SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY: As far as scarcity of water is concerned, India is not new to drought. Between 1801 and 2002, the country experienced 42 severe droughts. The problem we are facing is not the availability of water in the country, but how to manage it. Our Honourable Prime Minister, for the first time, thought to tackle the problem of drinking water and has given idea to provide piped water to each household by 2024. It will be realised only after interlinking rivers. The former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji constituted a committee for the linking of rivers with a provision of 6,50,000 crore rupees. The inter linking of

rivers can give water to each field and employment for every worker and will also solve the environmental related problems. The road map prepared for the interlinking of rivers during Modi ji's present tenure will provide the solution of flood and drinking water. My Parliamentary Constituency Pali faces acute shortage of water and get supply from water train. Jawai Dam was constructed in 1947 to overcome the problem of water shortage in Pali. Jawai Dam started to supply water to Jalore and Sirohi districts for irrigation and drinking purpose. The Jawai Dam can be rejuvenated after inter linking of rivers. I request the Government to sanction the DPR prepared for re-charging the Jawai Dam by using excess water of Sabarmati Basin at earliest. It will help Pali district in getting water for drinking and irrigation purpose.

SHRI BHAGIRATH CHOUDHARY: This resolution is for inter linking of rivers. When hon. Shri Atal Bihari Bajpayee ji, became the Prime Minister, he formulated three plans i.e. Pucca roads to each village, government schools for education and drinking water to each household so that this country could come under the category of developed nation. If Atal ji were alive today the dream of linking the rivers would have been fulfilled and the country would have been categorised as developed nation. Today, standing crops of farmers on lakhs of hectares of the country get damaged. Nobody can do anything before the nature. Rajasthan comprises 10 per cent area of the country whereas there is only 1 per

cent water. There are so many states like Rajasthan where there is shortage of water. If every field gets water then every hand will get job. Unemployment will be abolished and farmers will flourish. I would like to request that linking of rivers is essential. Today, the Bisalpur Dam is the only source of drinking water in my Parliamentary Constituency Ajmer. There is only 180 mld of water available in the entire Ajmer district in which more than 300 Gram Panchayats are there. There are several villages where water is not available even for six months together. Ground water is contaminated with fluoride. The height of the Bisalpur Dam must be increased upto 1 metre so that problem of my Parliamentary Constituency can be solved.

SHRI GUMAN SINGH DAMOR: A major hurdle in inter-linking of rivers is obtaining clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests. As a matter of fact it takes even 3 to 4 years time in obtaining environmental clearance. The case with Ken-Betwa interlinking project is no different for that matter. We should devise such policy that may provide for certain prescribed time frame for obtaining clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Secondly, since this matter is to be dealt with roping in the stakeholders at interstate level and the consent of both of the State Governments is essential, a committee must be constituted at the national level with absolute rights to look into nitty-gritty involved in the process as well as immediate resolution of the legal complications

impeding inter-linking of rivers. I hail from Madhya Pradesh and this state holds the distinction of inter-linking of rivers. The arrangements made in the run-up to Simhastha Kumbh Mela at Ujjain in the year 2016 could be possible with sustained availability of water which is attributed to the linking of rivers over there. My Lok Sabha constituency is facing a huge problem of ground water. Water can be found only after digging for more than thousand feet and that too containing fluoride which can be used neither for agriculture nor for livestock nor can we drink it. There are no big ponds in that region. In such a situation the water problem can be addressed only by interlinking the rivers. Most of the tubewells become dry in summers and we have to bring water through tankers. We have a target for providing tap water to every house hold by 2024 through Jal Jeevan Shakti Mission. But this can be achieved only when there will be water. Therefore, it is necessary to interlink the rivers to make this mission a success. India is predominantly an agriculture country and we cannot do better agriculture without water. I would request the hon. Minister that water budget should be prepared for drinking water, agricultural and industrial needs and then an assessment should be made about the rivers to be interlinked. This work should be given highest priority. This is the need of the hour.

SHRI JANARDAN MISHRA: Earlier, rains would continue for 3-4 months and the earth absorbed all the water but now we have scanty rains and the

water flows away. Water absorbing capacity of earth has reduced by almost 25 per cent. This is the fallout of indiscriminate use of fertilizers. The entire country is faced with serious water crisis. Livestock is an integral part of agriculture. Inclusive development will improve the agricultural economy of the country. Animals are necessary for us. Per capita availability of water is reducing constantly. We would require more food grains for the increasing population in future. Our agricultural scientists are trying hard to develop more heat resistant crops in view of the climate change. The Government has shown its farsightedness by creating Ministry of Jal Shakti. Before Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji, nobody ever thought of interlinking of rivers. But some NGO etc. are questioning this concept in the name of biodiversity. It is necessary to interlink Ken and Betwa rivers. All the 30 projects of the country should get funds. Besides, stray cattle destroy the crops in our area. All the canal works in our area have been stalled. No cow sheds are being opened and stray cattle are destroying the standing crops. In Madhya Pradesh, the farmers are not getting the Kisan Samman Nidhi of rupees six thousand. The farmers of UP are not getting this benefit. If this amount is made available by the Government of Madhya Pradesh to them, they could at least erect the fencing around their fields.

SHRI RITESH PANDEY: Two rivers are being linked under the Ken-Betwa Project. The surplus water of Ken river will flow into the Betwa river

which will irrigate drought stricken several districts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. In particular, Jhansi, Banda, Lalitpur and Mahoba districts in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh and Teekamgarh, Panna and Chhattarpur districts in Madhya Pradesh will be irrigated. Every big decision has got two dimensions. This project will be a great boon for the farmers. Many people will get employment. It will give a fillip to the economy. But, it has got some drawbacks also and the House ought to ponder over them as well. We should not take any decision concerning our natural heritage owing to which our next generations may have to face its adverse consequences. As many as 20,000 people will be affected by this project and their land will be acquired for the dam. Out of these affected people, 15.5 per cent people belong to the Scheduled Castes and 34.4 per cent to the Scheduled Tribes. We must think about them and their rehabilitation.

SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL: I rise to support this Resolution. As much as 50 thousand hectares of land will be irrigated by linking these two rivers and lakhs of people would be benefited. Late Shri A.B. Vajpayee ji had mooted the river linking project and our hon. Prime Minister has translated it into reality. It will definitely take the country ahead and India will become a developed country. If we are able to make a scheme whereby every field could be irrigated, it will also resolve our problem of unemployment to the extent of at least 70 per cent. People

are migrating from villages to the nearby cities and towns because their lands have dried up. In my state Rajasthan, barring parts of Hanumangarh, Ganganagar and Kota, nowhere lands are irrigated. The water level in my Assembly Constituency and Parliamentary Constituency has gone down substantially. If the proposed dam on the Pancheshwar Sharada River in Nepal is completed, the districts of Sikar, Jhunjhunu and Churu will be greatly benefited. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to advise the Rajasthan Government to submit this project at the earliest, as this will cover about two lakh acres of land under irrigation. (*Speech unfinished*)

The discussion was not concluded.

SNEHLATA SHRIVASTAVA
Secretary General

© 2019 BY LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NOTE: It is the verbatim Debate of the Lok Sabha and not the Synopsis that should be considered authoritative.

English and Hindi versions of Synopses of Lok Sabha Debates are also available at <http://loksabha.nic.in>.