

**Need for Converting Unmanned Level Crossings in Andhra Pradesh into Manned Level Crossings**

DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, my Special Mention is for drawing the attention of our Railway Minister to the unmanned level crossings in Andhra Pradesh.

Sir, as per the information furnished by the Ministry of Railways, there are 1,478 unmanned level crossings in my home State, Andhra Pradesh, falling within the jurisdiction of Southern Railway, South-Central Railway and South-Eastern Railway. Based on train vehicle unit, visibility and regular plying of motorised vehicles, etc., at the unmanned level crossings of the State, the Railways have identified as many as 389 level crossings as hazardous and accident-prone in Andhra Pradesh. Though the Railways pass on the responsibility to the road-users stating that they do not follow the road signs, etc., the main reason is that these crossings are unmanned. So many lives are lost, apart from the other economic losses in the form of vehicles, etc., at these crossings at regular intervals. Therefore, it is necessary to convert, at least, these 389 level crossings, which the Railways themselves have declared hazardous and dangerous, into manned level crossings so that the innocent lives, which are being lost at these level crossings, are saved.

Hence, I request the hon. Minister of Railways to direct the Railway Board to convert the 389 unmanned level crossings, which are identified as hazardous, into manned level crossings, without further loss of time, in the interest of the public and the nation; and give top-most priority to this job. Thank you.

**Need for setting up of a Pre-Cyclone warning systems in coastal areas of Orissa**

SHRIMATI SUSHREE DEVI (Orissa): Mr. Chairman, Sir, my Special Mention relates to the need for setting up pre-cyclone warning systems in coastal areas of Orissa.

Sir, the Central Government is fully aware of the fact that the coastal areas of Orissa are the most vulnerable and cyclone-prone areas. The Super Cyclone of 1999 had pl3yed havoc with the State. Floods and cyclones do not occur suddenly. They give some warning. Cyclones can be monitored and pre-warning can be issued, as is being done in USA and China, to the residents of the coastal areas so that loss of lives and

property can be controlled. Orissa is a poor, backward, illiterate and cash-starved State. It neither has the wherewithal nor the resources for setting up pre-warning systems or other infrastructural facilities. The State is wholly at the mercy of the Centre or the world agencies for financial, material and other correlated help. Though belated, I would like to make a humble request to the Centre that it should immediately get in touch with the State authorities, formulate short-term and long-term plans and set up pre-cyclone warning machinery and other infrastructural facilities at the earliest. Any kind of slackness or delay may cost us very heavily, which we may not be able to recoup or recover at a later date. Thank you.

SHRI B.J. PANDA (Orissa) : Sir, I associate myself with what Shrimati Sushree Devi has stated.

SHRI BIRBHADRA SINGH (Orissa) : Sir, I associate myself with what Shrimati Sushree Devi has stated.

MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR (Orissa): Sir, I associate myself with what Shrimati Sushree Devi has stated.

**Problems of hard wood (Subabul) farmers in Andhra Pradesh State due to recent abnormal hike in Railway Freight**

SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, my Special Mention relates to the problems of hardwood (Subabul) growers due to the recent abnormal hike in railway freights.

Sir, the Chief Commercial Manager, South-Central Railway, Southern Railway, vide Circular No. 14 of 2002 had changed the classification of timber waste, firewood and wood pieces of Subabul, Casurina wood, Eucalyptus and other species from Class 110 to Class 130. This reclassification has resulted in an increase of 17.5 per cent in railway freight charges with effect from 15.2.2002.

Due to this increase, the paper mills and the suppliers of wood to the paper mills have stopped purchases from the growers, as the paper industry cannot bear such a huge increase in the freight charges. This has directly affected the farmers, who grow Subabul and Casurina plants, in Andhra Pradesh, particularly, in Prakasam district. The farmers are distressed and agitating against the increase in freight charges.

I request, through you, Sir, the Government of India to kindly revise the orders reclassifying the wood from Class 110 to Class 130 in the interest