

2. Consideration and passing of the following Bills, as passed by Lok Sabha :-

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| (a) The National Waterway (Lakhipur Bhanga Stretch of the Barak River) Bill, 2007. | 2 hours |
| (b) The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Bill, 2009. | 2 hours |

2. The Committee recommended that there will be no Private Members' Business (Resolutions) on Friday, the 20th February 2009.

3. The Committee also recommended that the House may sit beyond 5.00 p.m., as and when necessary, for transaction of Government Legislative and other Business for the remaining part of the current Session.

INTERIM BUDGET (RAILWAYS) 2009-10 (Contd.)

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, in the development of Indian economy, Indian Railways is playing an important role. That is the reason why it is considered as the nation's lifeline. Sir, the Indian Railways is known as the largest and the busiest rail network in Asia. The Indian Railways runs over 11,000 trains everyday. It transports more than 1.8 crore passengers and over 20 lakh tons of freight everyday. It gives employment to more than 14 lakh people. Indian Railways has nearly 7,000 stations over a total route length of more than 63,000 kilometers. Sir, its revenue was more than Rs. 70,000 crores in the year 2008, and 70 per cent of its profit is from the freight sector. The Indian Railways serves every person, from rich to poor, by way of travelling or by way of goods being brought to our cities and towns. Sir, any decision taken with regard to the Railways is bound to affect the masses, not only the 14 lakh people that are working in this sector. Sir, the Railways was rarely a profitable venture until Lal Prasad Yadav took over as Union Minister. Sir, his tenure has become a turn around. Till recently, the Railways was seen as a social service institution in India, catering to the needs of the people. Sir, I would like to concentrate on two aspects. One, when the hon. Minister presented his Budget, he tried to project one important idea, *Aam Aadmi* idea.

By reducing either one rupee or two rupees on passenger tickets, he tried to project that masses were not burdened. In reality, during his five years' tenure, he burdened the passengers. I would like to put things straight.

On five aspects, our Railway Minister has burdened the masses, the common people. Sir, Tatkal tickets is one of the methods of burdening the people. Two, by increasing the number of super fast trains. Three, he increased the number of berth in a coach.

7.00 P.M.

It had not taken place in the last sixty years. Fourth, to increase the income of the IRCTC, he adopted a method — e-ticket and i-ticket — wherein for each ticket Rs.15 is levied. Fifth he enhanced the freight rate. Just 15 days before the Budget, freight rate had been enhanced by 8.33 per cent.

Due to constraint of time, I would mention only two aspect. Due to Tatkal ticket method, now no passenger of RAC is getting reservation. Even Tatkal is put on wait list. Earlier there was a condition whereby you can book a Tatkal ticket only before 24 hours. Now it has been changed. Now you can book a Tatkal ticket five days in advance. It is also wait-listed. It was not there earlier. I surveyed Tatkal method in Andhra Pradesh. The Godavari Express runs from Andhra Pradesh to Visakhapatnam. In these two to and for trains, this Tatkal method is earning money. This Tatkal ticket is a big *aam aadmi*. Through Tatkal, it has collected Rs.2.73 crore in a year. It earned this through only sleeper class. It is good to earn money. But on the one hand, you are saying that you are reducing fares. On the other hand, you are putting more burden on the people. That is taking place. By way of Tatkal, the Indian Railways is earning Rs.350 crore. It is a rough estimate. Just 15 days before we are going to discuss the Railway Budget, freight rate had been enhanced by 8.33 per cent. He is not respecting the Parliament even. democracy. By doing this you are burdened the masses. Because of this 8.33 per cent hike in freight charges, prices of *dal*, rice, and all other essential commodities have gone up, and the people of India are all burdened. I would like to bring this fact to the notice of the hon. Minister and request him to kindly consider this. It is, increasing the number of berths. Sir, there is a serious protest in the trains. Even the emergency gate is occupied. What will happen if accident takes place? Then, Sir, there is increase in number of superfast trains. Sir, regarding facilities there is no difference in express trains and superfast trains. There is no difference as far as the conveniences are concerned. Every train is made superfast and superfast surcharge is collected. Then, regarding e-ticket and i-ticket, burden. People are asking for more reservation counters which are to be opened in each and every area. There is a big demand. Instead of doing that, e-ticket and i-ticket methods are introduced. In the name of e-ticket and i-ticket, they are burdening the people. Sir, this is how they are being burdened. Not only this. Sir, I seek the hon. Railway Minister's intervention to see that Tatkal is removed. This type of Tatkal is proving a big problem for the common person who is reserving his ticket 15 days in advance. The RAC ticket holder is not able to get confirmed berth whereas Tatkal ticket holder who is waitlisted is able to get. It is a euphemistic way of cheating the passenger who may be travelling in anxiety in an emergency. So, making use of his anxiety, Rs.300 and Rs.150 as Tatkal charges are collected. I request our hon. Minister to consider this aspect. **(Time-bell)** Sir, the second aspect which I would like to put forward.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Time is over. ...*(Interruptions)*... That does not mean. You can also give more points.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Sir, I will conclude in 2-3 minutes. In the name of streamlining the railway system, achieving more productivity and reducing expenses, various measures have been taken. Our hon. Minister in his tenure tried to introduce a number of corporate practices. These corporate practices are endangering the very existence of the railway system. I would like to bring this fact to your kind notice. In fact, it is denying additional manpower to meet the ever-increasing workload in the Railways because of introduction of additional trains and assets. Everyday, he is announcing some new train or double tracking or enhancing the speed of trains. Under these conditions, because of the corporate practices introduced by our hon. Minister in the Railways, a big problem arose. What is that? To meet the ever-increasing load of the railway system, more personnel are needed. That is denied. Now, the other step that is introduced is, privatisation of maintenance of track. Many people spoke here how dirty the railway stations are. Why? The maintenance and sanitation of the railway station is handed over to private people. **(Time-bell)** Sir, I am concluding. Maintenance of tracks, equipments, etc. is being done through contractors. They are off-loading many works to private people. ...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, I am concluding. For keeping the capacity of the railway production units, workshops idle and they are hiring and getting most of the materials required for the running of trains and maintenance of track from private companies. ...*(Interruptions)*... I am always saying the truth. आप लोगों के साथ...

श्री रुद्रनारायण पाणि: पिछली बार रेल के बारे में आपने गलत बोला था, इस बार सही बोल रहे हैं। ...*(व्यवधान)*...

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Sir, now, because of this, unsafe conditions arose.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please conclude, Mr. Madhu.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Production units, manufacturing electric diesel loco coaches, were also handed over to the private sector. Wheel and axle workshops were all privatised. Privatisation of all maintenance workshops, employing thousands of employees, in all the nine Zonal Offices has taken place, which is not in the interest of the nation. Printing presses are proposed to be sold out. Hospitals are proposed to be sold out. Schools and colleges are proposed to be privatised. So, fourteen lakh employees are working in the Indian Railways. With their sweat and blood, the Indian Railways have grown. The welfare of the workers is not being looked into. During the last four-and-a-half years, this corporatisation has taken place in a very systemic manner, which is endangering the existing system and the safety of Indian Railways. Our hon. Minister told us that the number of accidents has come down. Is it true. But the same day, an accident took place; ten people died. My submission is this. When we see flights running accident-free, why can't trains be run accident-free? Trains can be secure. When flights are maintained in such a way, why not the trains? It can be done, Sir. It is possible. But because

of the privatisation mechanism, everything is being handed over to the corporate sector, to the private companies. The very existence of Indian Railways, as a big transport service provider, is at stake. This is the problem we are now facing.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Madhu, you have taken the maximum time. Please conclude now.

SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Sir, I am concluding. ...*(Interruptions)*... In railways Recruitment of 50,000 persons, every year, can be done. But it has not been done. Because of these corporate practices, it is being abandoned. So, my submission to the hon. Minister is that he should kindly consider these things. Sir, you have promised us not to privatise the Indian Railways; please keep it up. That is the welfare of *aam admi*. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Madhu. The House is adjourned to meet tomorrow at 11.00 a.m.

The House then adjourned at eight minutes past seven of the clock till
eleven of the clock on Friday, the 20th February, 2009.
