

SHRI D. BANDYOPADHYAY (West Bengal): Sir, I also associate myself with the Zero Hour submission made by my colleague.

**Failure in completion of bridge on National
Highway at Sopore, Kashmir**

PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ (Jammu and Kashmir): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the Border Roads Organisation has become entirely defunct in its operations in the field. This Organisation is so defunct, it saddens us to realise that in ten years they have not been able to complete a bridge on the National Highway at Sopore. The entire north Kashmir is in difficulty. This partly happens because the retired Army officers are put in charge as Chief Engineers. The present person goes to office without accomplishing any business. The Chief Minister of the State also went public on this issue and he said that we shall lead a protest march on the road against the Border Roads Organisation. I have been in touch with the Government of India, but nothing seems to move. One of the most senior leaders of the Government of India, the Leader of the House is present here and I request him to kindly investigate why a bridge on the National Highway at Sopore could not be completed in ten years. This is on record. On flimsy grounds, it is not being completed. The entire Governments in Jammu State is in difficulty and the people in north Kashmir are being put to a great hardship.

I would like to have a statement from the Leader of the House, who is present here, as to why it has happened. The retired Major General should be removed and somebody should investigate why the Government money, the tax-payers' money has been wasted in Jammu and Kashmir on the construction of this bridge, which could not be completed in ten years.

**Overcharging of patients by the hospitals for medical devices
like stents, implants and pace-makers**

SHRI SHANTARAM NAIK (Goa): Sir, the hon. Health Minister is in this House and I request him to pay some attention to the issue I am raising. The cost of medical devices like stents and pacemakers is enough to give anyone a heart attack, says a newspaper report. According to 'The Times of India' report, "Patients were being forced to pay double or even triple the price for medical devices at hospitals. As most of these are not available in the open market, patients can't check prices and are held hostage by hospitals, which force them to buy at the price they quote."

It is said that margins on devices is very high. And profits with respect to sale of these devices, which include stents, implants and pacemakers to artificial joints, titanium plates

for fractures, and valves could range as high as 30 per cent. In fact, devices, medicines and diagnostics could account for as much as 70 per cent of a hospital's profit. Some very reputed doctors, as per the reports, are confirming this aspect. Experts feel that making it mandatory to declare the maximum retail price on each device could help cap the price and make companies compete, to offer lower prices.

However, doctors point out that having an MRP has not prevented profiteering in medicines with the MRP being fixed high enough to accommodate commissions, since there is no limit on what the MRP can be. Moreover, while MRP is mandatory on everything manufactured in India, many devices are imported, and escape this stipulation. Medical device like an implant is of the same level, as a syringe or bandage. If those can be bought in pharmacies, why not devices?

Giving permission to hospital to trade in these devices with no control on pricing, adds to the financial agonies of patients, who cannot afford high medical costs. Many Government hospitals in the country require patients to buy even normal medicines from outside. India is also known for medical tourism but rates which are charged for patients who come to India for taking medical treatment in the country. However, the charges made for Indian patients should be reasonable and affordable to Indian patients.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Naik. Mr. Sharad Yadav, I will give you time. This time is now for association. There is ample time available. I will call you. Now, Shri Bhupinder Singh. ...*(Interruptions)*... What is the matter? ...*(Interruptions)*... You stand up and say, "I associate". ...*(Interruptions)*... Those who want to associate should stand up and say that they associate themselves with the subject. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. M.S. GILL (Punjab): Sir, I associate myself with it.

श्रीमती विप्लव ठाकुर (हिमाचल प्रदेश): महोदय, मैं इस विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करती हूँ।

श्रीमती रजनी पाटिल (महाराष्ट्र): महोदय, मैं इस विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करती हूँ।

डा. विजयलक्ष्मी साधौ (मध्य प्रदेश): महोदय, मैं इस विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करती हूँ।

श्री शादी लाल बत्रा (हरियाणा): महोदय, मैं इस विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करता हूँ।

श्री प्रवीण राष्ट्रपाल (गुजरात): महोदय, मैं इस विषय से स्वयं को संबद्ध करता हूँ।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Kindly note all those who are associating themselves with it. However, our Minister himself is a doctor. This point raised by Shri Shantaram Naik is very important because every patient who goes to the hospital experiences high costs and high charges. Mr. Minister, can you do something about it?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. HARSH VARDHAN): Sir, the new Government is in the process of formulating a new Health

[Dr. Harsh Vardhan]

Policy, and I can assure the Members that we are going to address all these very serious concerns of the Members. They will certainly be addressed in the new Health Policy.

Omission of sprinter Dutee Chand from Commonwealth Games squad

SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH (Odisha): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, as you know the Commonwealth Games are going to be held at Glasgow. A girl from a poor family of Odisha, Dutee Chand, for no fault of her, has been denied the permission to participate in the Commonwealth Games. It is good that the hon. Railway Minister is also present here because she is an employee of the railways. Sir, this poor girl brought laurels not only for Odisha but also for the country in the Asian Games. She has been denied the chance to participate in the Commonwealth Games because of the genetic study which was taken on her. Her genetic study was undertaken without her knowledge. She has not been taken into confidence for this genetic study. There are norms as to how such cases are examined. After the examination, she made her statement in newspapers and to the public that she was taken to a doctor, but she did not know for what test she was taken there. After the test was over, those reports should be kept confidential. The report was to be shown to the coach, the athlete and her family members. But, no family member was present when she was taken for that examination by a doctor.

Sir, the most unfortunate thing is that she was forced to sign on an undertaking after all the tests were made and their reports came. When she asked as for what reason she should give an undertaking, she was told by others that if she did not give that undertaking, then, she would be debarred from participating in the Commonwealth Games.

Sir, our hon. Chief Minister, Shri Naveen Patnaik, sent two lady coaches to Bangalore to know as to what was really happening there because she was totally depressed. Suppose, something is wrong in her genetic tests, then, that should have been rectified. I want to know whether there was some complaint against her. Who has complained against her? On whose complaint was that test conducted? All these things are not known to the athlete. This is another unfortunate part. ...*(Interruptions)*...

Sir, from our Government. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay; time over. ...*(Interruptions)*... What is your demand? You say that and finish. ...*(Interruptions)*... Shri Derek O'Brien, Shri Tapan Kumar Sen and all others are associating themselves with it. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH: Sir, she is going to be P.T. Usha in future. ...*(Interruptions)*...