

SHRIMATI VANDANA CHAVAN (Maharashtra): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI PRASHANTA NANDA (Odisha): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please send your names. The next speaker is Shri Prabhakar Reddy Vemireddy, not present. Now, the next speaker is Shri Jairam Ramesh.

**Urgent need to implement directive of the National Green Tribunal on
protection of Western Ghats**

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH (Karnataka): Sir, I wish to draw the Government's attention to the urgent need to protect the ecologically valuable, but, critically endangered Western Ghats. I hope my good friends, Mr. Sadananda Gowda and Mr. Suresh Gopi will associate themselves with this. In August, 2011, the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP) set up under the Chairmanship of Shri Madhav Gadgil, India's pre-eminent ecological scientist, submitted its recommendations to the Government suggesting that 64 per cent of the Western Ghats area be notified as ecologically sensitive. Thereafter, two years later, another Committee Chaired by the eminent space scientist Dr. Kasturirangan, reduced the area for ecological protection from 64 per cent to 37 per cent. But, more importantly, denied any role to democratically elected local panchayats. The problem is that the Government of India is now using the Kasturirangan Committee in its discussions with the States; Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Now, this is disastrous not only because the area under protection is being reduced, but also, because the local panchayats and Nagar palikas are going to be denied their say, when it comes to environmental issues. Therefore, Sir, I urge upon the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, to reject the methodology and conclusions of the Kasturirangan Committee and go back to the original Gadgil Commission for notifying ecologically sensitive areas. This is very important for livelihood and water security in local areas. Sir, the unprecedented floods in Kerala, last year, and in parts of Karnataka demonstrates very clearly the need to protect the Western Ghats lock, stock and barrel. Sir, my demand is to reject the Kasturirangan Committee and go back to the earlier Gadgil Committee recommendations. Thank you.

SHRI K.C. RAMAMURTHY (Karnataka): Sir, I associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI SURESH GOPI (Nominated): Sir, I also associate myself with the matter raised by the hon. Member.

SHRI VAIKO (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I support the Kasturirangan Committee and not the Gadgil Committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Shri Vaiko to speak on the issue of proposed dumping of nuclear waste in the Kudankulam Atomic Plant.

SHRI VAIKO: Sir, kindly permit me to raise my Zero Hour mention tomorrow.

Need for introduction and passing of the Women's Reservation Bill

SHRI SASMIT PATRA (Odisha): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak in the Zero Hour on the Women's Reservation Bill.

Sir, people might be confused as to why I am raising the Women's Reservation issue. This was the first matter which I raised as my first submission on 8th of July, after I took oath on 4th July. Sir, the reason is that the Session is about to end in the next three days, and, even if it is extended, probably by this week. Sir, we have been passing many historic Bills. Today, we are talking about reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir, we are talking of scrapping of Article 370. We have done a lot of things. We have talked about Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, we have talked about Motor Vehicles Bill, we have talked about Companies Amendment Bill and we have talked about a lot of other things but the fact is that the issue of empowerment of women, on which all the political parties went to election this year, is sadly forgotten. I would take this opportunity to remind the Government, though it is a historic day in terms of Jammu and Kashmir, fifty per cent of India still needs Women's Reservation Bill for the sake of women's empowerment.

Sir, as I also mentioned in my first submission on 8th of July, and, I thank you for your appreciation, how long we will have to wait for the Women's Reservation Bill? Will it again come to the House around the elections in 2024? Therefore, may I request, through you, to the Government, while it wants to create history on various fronts, and, rightly so, I do not deny them that, let them make history by, at least, providing an