

RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 22nd March, 2021 / 1 Chaitra, 1943 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,

MR. CHAIRMAN *in the Chair.*

REFERENCE BY THE CHAIR

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, today, i.e., 22nd March, is the World Water Day, a day that is observed to advocate sustainable management of fresh water resources. This year, the United Nation's theme for 'World Water Day' is 'Valuing Water' which highlights the value of water going beyond its mere numerical price. Water has enormous and complex value for our households, food, culture, health, education, economics and integrity of our natural environment. By overlooking these multi-dimensional values, we risk mismanaging this finite, irreplaceable resource and will be unable to save it for the benefit of everyone and for generations to come. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please, Mr. Sanjay, some observation is being made by the Chair, so, nothing should be there, you can do it later; no problem. With the ever-growing population, the demand for water has increased manifold, fulfilment of which is already putting enormous pressure on our limited natural resources and is eventually degrading the environment. The situation has further been exacerbated by the reckless exploitation and imprudent consumption of water. Conservation of water and preservation of our water resources is of utmost importance for our country, given the fact that our country has 16 per cent of the global population, but, only 4 per cent of the world's fresh water.

Almost all civilizations had flourished on the banks of rivers indicating how vital water is for our survival. For us Indians, water is an intrinsic part of our lives and ceremonies from birth to death. We revere rivers as our mothers. The many Vedic hymns like '*Nadi Sukta*' and '*Apah Suktam*' from Rig Veda invoking 'Water' as the bestower of vigour and strength, the nurturer of farmlands, the refreshing presence and the cleanser of both body and spirit, stand testimony to our close association with water. We need to carry this legacy forward by preserving and nurturing our rivers and freshwater resources like lakes, ponds, *etc.*

In line with this year's theme for 'World Water Day', we also need to acknowledge and at the same time develop an active consciousness for the multi-dimensional value that water holds for us as it will help us develop a holistic and integrated perspective on water conservation.

As parliamentarians, it is our bounden duty to act as role models and trailblazers in water conservation, by adopting sustainable water management practices both in personal and public life and sensitize one and all in inculcating water conservation techniques like rain water harvesting, afforestation of river banks to prevent soil erosion and reduce annual rainwater runoff.

I hope the entire House will join me in supporting the conservation of water resources and ensuring judicious use of water so that while fulfilling our needs, enough is left for our future generations.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have one appeal to all, whatever you want to talk, you can complete it before entering into the House and whatever you have to talk in the House, i.e., on subjects where you are permitted, that can be performed here. Other responsibilities can be performed in the Lobbies; the Lobbies are meant for that purpose also. So, keep that in mind and particularly when the Chair is making some observation, it is not fair on the part of anybody to disturb the other man, when he is keenly hearing the observation, is not a good thing to follow; please keep this advice in mind.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

- I. **Reports and Accounts (2017-18 and 2018-19) of the Bharat Wagon and Engineering Company Limited, Patna and related papers**
- II. **MoUs between Gol and various Corporations**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN): Sir, on behalf of Shri Piyush Goyal, I lay on the Table, a copy each (in English and Hindi) of the following papers:-

I. A copy each (in English and Hindi) of the following papers, under sub-section (1) (b) of Section 394 of the Companies Act, 2013:-

- (i) (a) Thirty-ninth Annual Report and Accounts of the Bharat Wagon and Engineering Company Limited, Patna, for the year 2017-18, together with the Auditor's Report on the Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India thereon.
- (b) Review by Government on the working of the above Company.