

to the commercial viability of the proposed new railway line from Bolangir to Nuapada via Khaprakhol. Therefore, Sir, I would like to seek your kind intervention... (*Time-bell rings.*)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you Niranjan Bishiji, time is over. ...(*Interruptions*)... The following hon. Members associated themselves with the matter raised by the hon. Member, Shri Niranjan Bishi: Shri Subhasish Khuntia (Odisha), Shrimati Sulata Deo (Odisha), Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Dr. Sasmit (Odisha) Patra, Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla (Tamil Nadu), Dr. V. Sivadasan (Kerala) and Shri Sujeet Kumar (Odisha).

Shrimati Jebi Mather Hisham, 'Demand to allocate more funds for development of railways in Kerala'.

Demand to allocate more funds for development of Railways in Kerala

SHRIMATI JEBI MATHER HISHAM (Kerala): Sir, I would like to draw the attention to the neglect of the State of Kerala regarding the Railway development of the State. Despite Kerala being the key generator for revenue for Railways with eleven railway stations being in the top 25 railway stations of the Southern Railway, with the highest revenue generation in the Fiscal Year 2023-24, the allocation in the Union Budget is very, very disproportionate for Kerala with Kerala ranking third lowest among the Indian States. I repeat, Kerala ranks third lowest in Railway allocation as far as Union Budget is concerned. Some of the important projects such as the Angamaly-Sabari Railway Line which is the connecting line to the Sabarimala Shrine remains a distant dream with no sufficient allocation for it. Sabari Railway Line is the priority for Kerala and all the MPs from Kerala, across party lines, have been requesting for it but stands ignored. The Kochuveli Master Plan, for the Fourth Stage, there is no allocation for it. The Ernakulam-Kayamkulam Doubling has no fund allocation. The Trivandrum-Kanyakumari Doubling has less allocation when compared to previous Budgets. The location survey of the Ernakulam to Shoranur, the third track is still not completed. Kerala has only two Vande Bharat Services where other States have five to six services and the temporary Ernakulam to Bengaluru Vande Bharat may be made permanent and should be made permanent with services making it regular. Also, Sir, the trains are jam-packed with over-crowding and, recently, the social media is flooded with pictures of over-crowded trains. Eighteen ladies fainted in the train due to over-crowding. There is a significant shortage of Super-fast Express and Passenger and MEMU services. The urgent requirement is to have services originating

from Trivandrum- Kottayam and Ernakulum. I am privileged that both the Union Minister of Railways and the Finance Minister are here.

I urge the Central Government to address these disparities and also to allocate sufficient and additional funds so that these issues can be addressed and also prioritise passing of the projects which are already announced. It is important to ensure adequate and sufficient funds across India, it should be made so that India progresses. Thank you very much.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The following hon. Members associated themselves with the matter raised by the hon. Member, Shrimati Jebi Mather Hisham: Dr. Sasmit Patra (Odisha), Shri Niranjan Bishi (Odisha), Mahua Maji (Jharkhand), Shri Haris Beeran (Kerala), Dr. Kanimozhi NVN Somu (Tamil Nadu), Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla (Tamil Nadu), Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Shrimati Phulo Devi Netam (Chhattisgarh), Shri Neeraj Dangi (Rajasthan), Shri Ashok Singh (Madhya Pradesh), Shri Saket Gokhale (West Bengal) and Shri Sant Balbir Singh.

Now, hon. Shri Ajit Kumar Bhuyan, 'Demand to re-examine the Special Category State status of Assam according to the current economic situation of the State'.

Demand to re-examine the Special Category State status of Assam according to current economic situation of the State

SHRI AJIT KUMAR BHUYAN (Assam): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, for allowing me to raise an important issue about Assam. The Special Category States came into being in 1969 upon the recommendations of the National Development Council which made the provisions of allocating 30 per cent of the total fund available under the head of normal plan assistance to State plans of three States, viz., Assam, Nagaland and Jammu & Kashmir. It may be noted that normal plan assistances to the Special Category States (that is, 30 per cent of the total fund set aside for three States) were provided through 'negotiations' between the concerned State Government and the Planning Commission while the remaining 70 per cent was divided among the other 'general category' States using an objective criterion known as Gadgil-Mukherjee formula. Now, the question is, why should Assam continue to be a Special Category State? There are three fundamental reasons for this and they are the following. Assam is one of the three States to be accorded as a Special Category State in 1969 upon the recommendation of the National Development Council. The 14th Finance Commission did not and cannot revoke the status simply