

Urgent need to revoke the merger of RMS Offices with Speed Post Hubs

SHRI A. A. RAHIM (Kerala): Sir, the recent directive from the Department of Posts to merge Railway Mail Service (RMS) offices with Speed Post hubs and process Registered Post alongside Speed Post has raised serious concerns. Under the new order, 312 RMS offices will be permanently closed and 93 cities, including 12 in Kerala, will lose their sorting hubs or RMS offices. Processing Speed Post and Registered articles in the same hub is likely to cause delays due to back routing, space constraints, and the elimination of 12 mail offices. Additionally, the absence of standardized postage rates means customers are being charged differently for similar services, undermining trust.

This move will force many employees to relocate, adversely affecting their health and productivity. Over 3,000 temporary workers face job losses and skyrocketing unemployment. Additionally, relocating mail offices away from railway premises will increase transit delays and costs.

This merger imposes unnecessary financial burdens. Coupled with the New Post Office Act allowing private players in logistics and communication, the public postal system risks losing its competitive edge.

I urge the Union Government to revoke this order and safeguard RMS offices. Furthermore, new posts should be created in RMS with regular recruitment to strengthen the system and ensure its sustainability.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SASMIT PATRA): The following hon. Members associated themselves with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member, Shri A.A. Rahim: Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla (Tamil Nadu), Dr. Kanimozhi NVN Somu (Tamil Nadu), Shri Sandosh Kumar P (Kerala) and Shri Haris Beeran (Kerala).

Demand for restoring education to State List for a more effective system

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, this is to urge the Government to restore education in India to the State List to empower States to address local needs and uphold federalism. Historically a State List subject, it was shifted to the Concurrent List during the Emergency in 1976 as a centralizing measure. This decision, made under extraordinary circumstances, has since become redundant and increasingly misaligned with India's diverse educational landscape. India's vast diversity — with 26

crore students and the vast gap in the literacy rate of Bihar compared with Kerala and Tamil Nadu — demonstrates the need for localized policymaking.

Centrally-driven education policies overlook regional nuances, leading to inefficiencies. For instance, Eklavya Model Residential Schools, meant for tribal students, face challenges stemming from centralized hiring. Teachers recruited centrally struggle with regional languages, creating a disconnect that hampers learning. Tamil Nadu has consistently opposed NEET, since it restricts students from rural areas and those educated in the State Board syllabus.

States are better equipped to design policies tailored to their specific socio-cultural landscapes. Decentralization allows States to innovate, ensuring systems are responsive to local needs. Returning 'Education' to the State List would restore States' autonomy, enhance accountability, and enable localized strategies crucial for improving educational outcomes in a diverse country like India. Sir, I urge the Government to look into it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SASMIT PATRA): The following hon. Members associated themselves with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member, Shri Tiruchi Siva: Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Shri A.A. Rahim (Kerala), Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla (Tamil Nadu), Dr. Kanimozhi NVN Somu (Tamil Nadu) and Shri N.R. Elango (Tamil Nadu).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SASMIT PATRA): Now, Dr. John Brittas.

Demand for Viability Gap Funding (VGF) by way of non-repayable grant for Vizhinjam International Seaport Thiruvananthapuram

DR. JOHN BRITTAS (Kerala): Sir, Vizhinjam Seaport exemplifies Kerala's success in infrastructure development. As India's deepest port capable of accommodating mother ships, its strategic location along major international shipping routes positions it to compete with global maritime hubs like Colombo, Singapore and Dubai.

This project holds the distinction of being the first port initiative to secure approval for VGF for Rs. 817.80 crores. However, while approving VGF grant in 2015, Centre made a stipulation requiring Kerala to repay the VGF grant later in NPV terms through revenue sharing.

Kerala is investing resources worth Rs. 5595 crores out of the total project outlay of Rs. 8,867 crores. Additional repayment burden of Rs. 817.80 crores in NPV