

Concern over the increasing pollution in the major rivers of the country

SHRI SANT BALBIR SINGH (PUNJABI): &Honorable Deputy Chairman and respected members, Sat Shri Akaal to all. Sahib Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji stated: "*Pavan Guru, Pani Pita, Mata Dharat Mahat*" This means that air is our teacher, water is our father, and the earth is our great mother who nurtures us. Pure air, pure water, and pure food are our fundamental rights, as enshrined in our Constitution. Water is not just essential for human survival but also for the sustenance of flora and fauna.

However, our rivers, which are the lifelines of our nation, are being polluted at an alarming rate. Villages, cities, and industries are the primary contributors, releasing untreated wastewater into rivers and drains. The departments responsible for pollution control—the Drainage Department, Municipal Corporations, and State Pollution Boards—are failing in their duty. The so-called watchdogs, the State and Central Pollution Control Boards, have become mere white elephants, taking no concrete action to curb this crisis.

Rivers are like the blood flowing through the veins of our land. If this lifeline is poisoned, survival becomes impossible. The Water Act of 1974 had strict penal provisions that deterred industries from polluting water bodies. However, amendments have diluted these penalties, emboldening industries that earn in crores but now fear no consequences, as the penalties in lakhs have been removed. This dilution of the law must be reversed.

In our ancient traditions, rivers like the Ganga, Kaveri, Godavari, Ghaggar, and Buddha river were revered and worshipped. Even the sacred Kali Bein River, which was blessed by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, had become heavily polluted due to the wastewater discharge from eight cities and 45 villages. However, through collective efforts of the *sangat* over 25 years, the Kali Bein was successfully cleaned. This proves that with strong will power and public participation, we can restore our rivers.

Therefore, I urge the Government to reinstate the strict penal provisions of the Water Act, 1974, to act as a deterrent against polluters. Ensure strict enforcement of pollution control laws to protect our air, water, and land. Hold municipal bodies and industries accountable for their role in pollution and compel them to install proper treatment plants. Direct the State and Central Pollution Control Boards to fulfill their responsibilities honestly and effectively.

& English translation of the original speech delivered in Punjabi.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The following hon. Members associated themselves with the matter raised by hon. Member, Shri Sant Balbir Singh: Shri Saket Gokhale (West Bengal), Shri R. Girirajan (Tamil Nadu), Shri P. Wilson (Tamil Nadu), Dr. Sasmit Patra (Odisha), Dr. Fauzia Khan (Maharashtra), Shrimati Phulo Devi Netam (Chhattisgarh), Dr. Kanimozhi NVN Somu (Tamil Nadu), Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Shri Niranjan Bishi (Odisha), Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla (Tamil Nadu), Smt. Ranjeet Ranjan (Chhattisgarh), Shri A. A. Rahim (Kerala), Shrimati Jaya Amitabh Bachchan (Uttar Pradesh) and Ms. Dola Sen (West Bengal). धन्यवाद।

Now, Dr. Sasmit Patra on 'Demand to include languages spoken by Tribal Communities in the 8th Schedule to the Indian Constitution.'

श्री संजय सिंह: सर, मेरा भी एक Zero Hour subject था।

श्री उपसभापति: प्लीज़।

श्री संजय सिंह: सर, एक मिनट। मेरी बात सुन लीजिए।

श्री उपसभापति: यहाँ पर जो सूची में है, मैं वैसे ही नाम पढ़ रहा हूँ।

श्री संजय सिंह: मेरा Zero Hour subject 15वें नम्बर पर था।

श्री उपसभापति: मैं इस सूची के अनुसार जा रहा हूँ। ...(व्यवधान)... संजय जी, आप बैठिए। ...(व्यवधान)... पात्रा जी, प्लीज़ आप बोलें। ...(व्यवधान)... मैं इस सूची के अनुसार ही नाम पढ़ रहा हूँ। ...(व्यवधान)... प्लीज़, आप बैठें। ...(व्यवधान)... मैं इस सूची के अनुसार ही नाम पढ़ रहा हूँ। ...(व्यवधान)... प्लीज़। ...(व्यवधान)... डा. सस्मित पात्रा जी, आप बोलें।

Demand to include languages spoken by Tribal Communities in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution

DR. SASMIT PATRA (Odisha): Hon. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I rise today to draw the kind attention of this august House to a long pending and deeply felt demand -- inclusion of Ho, Mundari, Bhumij, Kui and Saora languages in the 8th Schedule to the Indian Constitution. These languages are not just modes of communication, they are lifeblood of millions of tribal people across multiple States. Their recognition is essential for preserving India's linguistic and cultural diversity and upholding the constitutional commitment to protect the rights of Schedule Tribes. Sir, these languages have a rich, oral and literary tradition and are spoken by large tribal