

मान्यवर, जब स्वर्गीय चौधरी चरण सिंह जी प्रथम बार उत्तर प्रदेश के मुख्य मंत्री बने थे, तब उन्होंने कहा था कि जनहित के जितने कार्य वीतराग स्वामी कल्याण देव जी ने किए हैं, उतने कार्य सरकार भी नहीं कर सकती।

मान्यवर, मैं आपके माध्यम से सरकार को जानकारी दे रहा हूँ कि स्वामी कल्याण देव ने कभी किसी संस्था में कोई पद नहीं लिया और किसी संस्था का पानी तक नहीं पीया। वे जिस भी संस्था में रुकते थे, निरीक्षण के लिए जाते थे, वहाँ बाहर के कुएँ से पानी लाकर पीते थे और पाँच घरों से भिक्षा का आटा माँगकर वहाँ की रोटी खाते थे।

मान्यवर, मेरी आपके माध्यम से भारत सरकार से माँग है कि वीतराग ब्रह्मलीन स्वामी कल्याण देव जी को भारत का सर्वोच्च सम्मान 'भारत रत्न' दिया जाए। इससे करोड़ों लोगों को जनसेवा की प्रेरणा मिलेगी और यह महान संत के प्रति एक सच्ची श्रद्धांजलि होगी।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The following hon. Members associated themselves with the matter raised by the hon. Member, Shri Ram Chander Jangra: Shri Dhananjay Bhimrao Mahadik (Maharashtra), Ms. Indu Bala Goswami (Himachal Pradesh), Ms. Indu Bala Goswami (Himachal Pradesh), Smt. Ramilaben Becharbhai Bara (Gujarat), Dr. Kalpana Saini (Uttarakhand), Dr. Sumer Singh Solanki (Madhya Pradesh), Shri Naresh Bansal (Uttarakhand), Ms. Kavita Patidar (Madhya Pradesh), Dr. Sasmit Patra (Odisha) and Shri Niranjana Bishi (Odisha).

Now, Shri Sukhendu Sekhar Ray - Need for fencing of Indo-Bangladesh border.

Need for fencing of India-Bangladesh border

SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR RAY (West Bengal): Sir, the total length of India-Bangladesh border is 4,096.7 kilometres, out of which 865 kilometres is yet to be fenced and it includes 174 kilometres of non-feasible gaps. West Bengal, among all other States in India, has the longest land border with Bangladesh, which is 2,217 kilometres. One of the major challenges reportedly being faced in completing the feasible stretches of fencing projects relates to unwarranted objections and problems created by the Border Guard Bangladesh. One such recent problem created by the Border Guard Bangladesh at Sukdevpur in Malda District of West Bengal was foiled by the local people with the help of the police and the Border Security Force. In the district of Cooch Behar, miscreants from the other side of the border, at times, infiltrate into our villages and loot the valuables and foodgrains of the villagers. This is an alarming situation in the border of Cooch Behar. With the emerging situation in Bangladesh, the Government is required to be more vigilant and adequate measures should be initiated on war footing to complete the fencing of feasible stretches of

Indo-Bangladesh border. Lastly, the Coast Guard and other authorities should also be more alert in the Sunderbans Delta in the interest of our national security. Enhanced surveillance is needed along the maritime border of Bengal to ensure that no illegal activities go unnoticed.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The following hon. Members associated themselves with the matter raised by hon. Member, Shri Sukhendu Sekhar Ray: Shri R. Girirajan (Tamil Nadu), Shri Ajit Kumar Bhuyan (Assam), Shrimati Priyanka Chaturvedi (Maharashtra), Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Shri Niranjan Bishi (Odisha), Shri Saket Gokhale (West Bengal), Shri Mohammed Nadimul Haque (West Bengal), Shri Prakash Chik Baraik (West Bengal), Shri Samik Bhattacharya (West Bengal), Dr. Sasmit Patra (Odisha) and Shri Sandosh Kumar P (Kerala).

Now, Shri Ravi Chandra Vaddiraju — Request for restoration of train fare concession to accredited journalists.

Need for restoration of train fare concession to accredited journalists

SHRI RAVI CHANDRA VADDIRAJU (Telangana): Hon. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I would like to highlight an important issue affecting journalists due to discontinuation of 50 per cent train fare discount in the Indian Railways. Before the Covid lockdown in March, 2020, the accredited journalists could use this discount, but it was stopped during the pandemic. Even after three years and many requests, it has not been restored. Many journalists come either from low income or middle class families and need to do affordable travel to do reporting. Several journalists' unions from across the country have pointed out that they are suffering financial impact due to discontinuation of the discount. For example, a ticket that used to cost Rs. 50 after the discount now costs them Rs. 100.

Reports also show that the Railways earned an extra amount of Rs. 242 crores in 2022-23 after cutting similar discounts, which shows that it can afford to bring back the benefit which was being given to the journalists. The issue continues because the policy has not been revived even though things have returned to normal after the pandemic experts and law makers agreed that the discount should be restored.

As journalists, who play a key role in making the citizens informed, face financial challenges, I sincerely ask the Ministry of Railways to address this issue and bring back the 50 per cent concession. I am sure that this will greatly help the journalists who work hard to support democracy as its Fourth Pillar.