

LOK SABHA

SYNOPSIS OF DEBATES
(Proceedings other than Questions & Answers)

Friday, December 3, 2021 / Agrahayana 12, 1943 (Saka)

OBSERVATION BY THE SPEAKER

HON. SPEAKER: Discussion is being held on a sensitive matter concerning women and the hon. Minister has been giving reply but you are standing in front of her. You, the hon. Members represent millions of people. This is very bad on your part.

REFERENCE BY THE SPEAKER

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, today on 3rd December, 2021 World, Disability Day is celebrated all over the world. This is the day to reiterate our resolve to provide them equal opportunity in society and in their lives in regard to the different issues related to them. Today, we salute the indomitable spirit and courage of our disabled brothers by recalling their special achievements in various fields of life.

The whole nation feels proud of the performance displayed by our disabled players during the Olympics recently. On this occasion, I, on my behalf and on behalf of the entire House, extend my heartiest greetings to all the differently abled persons.

OBSERVATION BY THE SPEAKER

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I would like to request you all that mentioning any other House or presiding officers during discussion in the House is not as per our parliamentary decorum and our legislative business. I urge upon you to maintain this decorum as it would be proper not to comment upon presiding officer in the House.

THE CENTRAL VIGILANCE COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY; MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES; MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE; MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS; MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY; AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (DR. JITENDRA SINGH) moved that leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH *opposing the motion for introduction of the Bill said:* I oppose the introduction of the Central Vigilance Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2021 as the Act was taken into legislative consideration through an Ordinance route, without discussion and deliberation in the Parliament. Provision of extensions of the tenure of the Directors is against the spirit of probity. Hence, I oppose the introduction of the Bill.

PROF. SOUGATA RAY: With all the force, I want to mention that this Act, which was brought in the form of ordinance, is meant to extend the tenure of the Director, ED upto a period of five years. Enforcement Directorate has become a major arm of the Government to harass the opposition leaders and different State Government. That period was for two years. What is the great necessity to extend the tenure?

DR. SHASHI THAROOR: The Bill promotes arbitrariness by failing to provide clarity regarding the scope of the term 'public interest' and provides a completely unreasonable discretion to the Central Government in matters pertaining to the extension of tenure.

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: I oppose the introduction of this Bill. First, the Statement of Objects and Reasons is confusing and does not speak anything about the actual provisions of the Bill. Number two is, such an important Bill is being introduced in violation of Direction 19 (b) also. This is undemocratic and sets off dangerous precedent. There were no special circumstances warranting the promulgation of Ordinances because the Parliament Session was scheduled to begin.

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: I strongly oppose the introduction of this Central Vigilance Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2021. The Statement of Objects and Reasons should be in consonance with the provisions of the Bill. Kindly see the Statements of Objects and Reasons. Is it in tune with the provisions of the Bill? The Bill

is not in consonance with the provisions of the Bill. The intention of this legislation is bad. So, I oppose the introduction of this Bill.

DR. JITENDRA SINGH *replying said:* During the past Governments, there have been occasions when the Director, either ED or CBI, was given extension without going through the process. The entire format of criminology has changed in recent years. So, I wish that we go through the content and give it a fair thought.

The Bill was introduced.

**THE DELHI SPECIAL POLICE ESTABLISHMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL,
2021**

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY; MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES; MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE; MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS; MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY; AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (DR. JITENDRA SINGH) moved that the leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.

SHRI GAURAV GOGOI *opposing the motion for introduction of the Bill, said:* I oppose the introduction of this Bill because the Bill proposes to allow extension of term of the CBI Director up to a period of five years. The extensions will be based on the recommendations of the Committee constituted as per the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act and Chaired by the Prime Minister. Such a Committee with its composition and definition of term such as 'public interest', which is undefined will pave way for excessive Executive interference into the agency's independent functioning. So, for the interest of protecting the independence and integrity of the CBI agency and for protecting the autonomy, I oppose the introduction of this Bill.

DR. SHASHI THAROOR: There is flagrant disregard of the Supreme Court's statements on these matters. I repeat, on record that I have the same objections to this Bill as mentioned by another hon. Member.

PROF. SOUGATA RAY: As has been said by the Supreme Court, CBI has become a 'caged parrot'. It is no longer the premier investigating agency of the country.

I find that the Supreme Court – which called CBI a ‘caged parrot’ – is being bypassed and a particular person is being favoured.

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: I am strongly opposing the introduction of this Bill. The reason is that the Government, by bringing this Bill, has accepted that the whole Indian Police Service has become useless. They are accepting that there are no officers in the present system who can take over the post of Director. If the logic of the Government has to be accepted, then that means the post of Director should be made a lifetime post.

SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: This Bill has nothing to do with the Statement of Objects and Reasons. Once again, I would like to repeat that the Statement of Objects and Reasons is contradicting the provisions of the Bill. It is lacking in bona fide intentions. Hence, I strongly oppose the introduction of this Bill.

DR. JITENDRA SINGH *replying said:* The point made about ‘parrot in cage’ had been made with regard to the erstwhile UPA Government. Enforcement authorities and prosecuting authorities should have adequate financial, human and technical resources. Countries should have in place processes to ensure that the staff of such authorities maintain high professional standards, including standards concerning confidentiality. We would talk about this in detail because I don’t want to now delay the introduction of the Bill. In the interest of maintaining confidentiality and keeping in mind the international ramifications, this is being done.

The Bill was introduced.

***MATTERS UNDER RULE 377**

1. **SHRI M.K. RAGHAVAN** laid a statement setting up of AIIMS like Institute at Kozhikode, Kerala.
2. **SHRI SAPTAGIRI SANKAR ULAKA** laid a statement regarding construction of road over Kolab reservoir under CRF in Odisha.
3. **DR. DNV SENTHILKUMAR S.** laid a statement regarding financial aid to construct bridges across Cauvery river.
4. **DR. BEESETTI VENKATA SATYAVATHI** laid a statement regarding Net Borrowing Ceiling of State Government.

* Laid on the Table as directed by the Chair.

5. **ADV. A. M. ARIFF** laid a statement regarding conversion of some Kendriya Vidyalayas from Project sector to Civil sector.
6. **SHRI P. RAVINDHRANATH** laid a statement regarding grant of interim relief to farmers and others affected by excessive rainfall in Tamil Nadu.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

Re: Discussion on Covid-19 Pandemic and various aspects related to it – Contd.

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI MANSUKH MANDAVIYA) *replying to the discussion said:* It is a matter of pleasure that the honourable Members of this august House discussed in detail on the Covid-19 pandemic and various aspects related to it and shared their experiences and views of the Corona period. The workers of all political parties have served the people in their own ways for months. All the Members of all the parties, rising above their party sentiments, appreciated the work of the health workers and frontline workers with open heart and thanked them a lot. According to the data made public by WHO, more than 26 crore cases of corona have been registered worldwide. More than 52 lakh people have lost their lives. In India also 3.46 crore cases of corona were registered and 4.60 lakh people have died which is 1.3 per cent of the total cases. India has recorded about 25 thousand Covid cases and a death rate of 340 per million population, which is one of the lowest rates in the world. In the initial phase of Covid, the Central Government provided things like PPE kits, N95 masks, essential medicines and ventilators to the states. Over time, the demand for ventilators increased in the first wave and second wave and it was found that 75 thousand more ventilators are required. In total, the Government of India placed an order for 58,000 ventilators and 97% of it was given to the big companies of the Government of India. A total of 50,200 ventilators were delivered out of which 48,000 were installed. There was a lack of trained manpower to operate the ventilators. We, therefore, entrusted the responsibility of training the hospital staff to the company itself. Till now, we have received 42,000 certificates from different states that ventilators have been installed and are working properly. Besides ventilators, we provided other essentials like medicines, Covid testing kits, oxygen plants, oxygen concentrators, medical oxygen to all the states. The Government of India provided funds to the states quite liberally during the Covid period. Yesterday, comments were made that the Government did nothing on time. I would like to inform the House that the first case of Covid was reported on 13 January, 2020 from Kerala but the joint monitoring group constituted by the Government of India had held its first meeting on 8 January, 2020. A task force was constituted under the

chairmanship of the Principle Scientific Advisor in 2020 to develop and manufacture vaccine and diagnostics in the country. I am elucidating the proactive measures we had taken. The Government posed faith in the scientists of the country and provided funds for development of Covid vaccine. Earlier, it took 10 to 15 years for a vaccine to reach India after research in the world. India is supplying 70 per cent of the vaccine requirement of the world. There was a time when it took 3 years in approval when a research was conducted on a vaccine which discouraged the researchers. We removed this rule and this facility was given to the country within a year of research. Before Corona, struck India, we used to import essentials like N-95 masks, PPE kits and ventilators but today we are major exporter of all these articles. Ten empowered groups were constituted to expedite decision making. The Government worked in tandem with the state governments during Covid period. India could tackle the crisis because of the collective efforts put in by our frontline workers and young entrepreneurs during the Covid period. 3,829 plants are being installed in the country including 1225 PSA oxygen plants being set up with the PM Cares fund. Besides, state governments and several NGOs are also setting up such plants. These plants are being set up with CSR Fund also. Today more than 3058 Corona testing labs are working in the country with a capacity of more than 20 lakh tests per day. The Government of India provided financial assistance to the states to the tune of Rs. 15,000 crore under ECRP-1 package. More than 4,500 Covid dedicated hospitals, more than 9,300 Covid health centres, five lakh oxygen support beds and several lakh isolation beds as well as about 1 lakh 40 thousand ICU beds have been provided in the country till date. A fund of more than Rs. 23,000 crores was provided to the states in July, 2021 under ECRP-2 package. There is a provision to maintain buffer stock of medicines worth Rs. 1 crore in every district under this scheme. All efforts and arrangements have been made to ensure that in future there is no shortage of all the medicines included in the COVID protocol. Under the able leadership of the Prime Minister, this government is working in the interest of all sections of society. Various Governments, voluntary organizations and people of this country have supported the call for vaccination on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the respected Prime Minister on 17th September. All our health workers have cooperated in this endeavour. The State Governments and Central Government have jointly got a record vaccination done by administering 2.5 crore doses. Today more than 125 crore doses have been administered in the country. Also, we will make the vaccine available in the country in sufficient quantity before December. Today 85 percent of people have taken the first dose and 50 percent of the people have taken the second dose of vaccine. Besides, 97 percent of the vaccine was provided by the government and only 3 percent of the vaccine was provided by the private sector. Moreover, the goal of the government is to provide vaccines to 100% of

the people. I would also like to request all of you to make efforts for vaccination in your Lok Sabha constituencies. Our Prime Minister has launched the 'Har Ghar Dastak' campaign for achieving the 100% vaccination target in the country on November 3, 2021. Many social workers and our party workers are also involved in this work. Today I would like to thank all the people who have joined the 'Har Ghar Dastak' campaign. Many variants of the virus of this Corona pandemic that started in 2019 were exposed to us. A new variant of Covid has just been detected. The WHO has declared this variant as 'Variant of Concern'. In this regard, Hon'ble Prime Minister has held a meeting on Omicron variant with high officials of the Government and has given important guidelines on strategy against Omicron variant. The Revised Advisory of International Travel was issued on 28 November and it has also come into force on 1 December. Random RTPCR tests will be done for 2% of the passengers who are coming from other countries falling under the category of at-risk countries. All the samples found to be Covid positive at the airports are being sent for genomic surveillance. The State Governments have been advised by the Union Government to take all necessary precautions. The Union Government has provided 70 thousand crore rupees to the states to improve the health system and fight Covid. Hon'ble Prime Minister has launched plans to set up Rural Ayush Health and Wellness Centres, Urban Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres, Block Public Health Centers and make various arrangements at a cost of more than Rs.64,000 crores to face any pandemic in future. With this, a modern facility of 50 beds will be made available in every district in future. Also, Rs 100 crore is to be spent in each district in this regard. I would also like to say that our expert team will decide about the vaccination of children and the booster dose. I also expect the House and the country to trust the decisions of the scientists of our country.

The discussion was concluded

PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL

COMPULSORY VOTING BILL, 2019 - CONTD.

SHRI P. P. CHAUDHARY: We all know that India is a democratic country and our democracy is mature. If we see the Constitution of India, Article 19 provides for freedom of speech and expression. The word 'expression' means it is a right to express or not to express. So, if we enforce compulsory voting, then it goes against the mandate of Article 19 of the Constitution of India which specifically provides that it is within the sweet will of the individual and the right to vote or not to vote is a fundamental right of

the citizen. At the same time, Article 21 of the Constitution of India says that no person shall be deprived of his life and liberty except in accordance with law. The word 'liberty', includes both the right to vote and not to vote. So, it cannot be enforced in view of the mandate of fundamental rights which have been provided under Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution. Even under Article 326 of the Constitution, it is a right, not a duty of the citizen to register himself as a voter. If such a law is enacted, then it will not withstand the tide of judicial scrutiny before the court of law. We can only persuade the voters by providing political education and certain incentives. If we want to increase the percentage of voting, the Election Commission should come forward to set up more polling booths. Apart from this, this issue has also arisen a number of times before the Supreme Court and this august House and it was finally decided that 'right to vote' cannot be converted into 'duty to vote'. So, this Bill cannot be passed by this House.

**

**

**

**

**

Utpal Kumar Singh
Secretary General

** Supplement covering rest of the proceedings is being issued separately.

© 2021 BY LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NOTE: It is the verbatim Debate of the Lok Sabha and not the Synopsis that should be considered authoritative.

English and Hindi versions of Synopsis of Debates are also available at <http://loksabha.nic.in>.