



Achyutananda Samanta

Member of Parliament, Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Kandhamal, Odisha

Parliamentary and Constituency Performance Report

July - September 2021, 17th Lok Sabha, Monsoon session

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Personal Message to the Chief Minister

Member of Parliament's Personal Message to the Hon'ble CM

Most Respected Shri Naveen Patnaik ji,

We have overcome the toughest part of the challenge posed by the second wave of Covid Pandemic. Odisha has set examples in terms of performance and compassion. Under your leadership, Odisha has become battle-hardened. Your visionary initiatives of providing free Education to the wards of Covid 19 deceased, assuring financial assistance package that covers almost all sections of society - Warriors, Journalists, Farmers, increasing social security package, including the disaster and pandemic management course in Curriculum are praise worthy and next to none, appreciated by one and all.

Despite Covid related challenges, you have carried on with two massive interventions - Mo School revamping Infrastructure and provision of BSKY Smart cards under 5T framework making Odisha an example for all. Sir, keep guiding us and leading us from front.

Thanking you,
Sincerely,

Achyutananda Samanta
I.C.298

Debates

Participated in Lok Sabha

10 August 2021:

The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Seventh Amendment) Bill, 2021

Speech of Hon'ble MP, Kandhamal

On behalf of my party Biju Janta Dal, I would like to support 127th Constitution Amendment Bill, as it restores powers of the state governments to identify backward classes in the state, which has been a demand by many regional parties and bolsters India's position as a strong federation.

The reality of castes is states specific. Some communities are dominant in one state but poor in the other. Caste is a relational category which means that it is state specific. The constitutional status will ensure that their backward status will get legitimacy and hence policies for their uplift are tailored well.

Without this amendment, many social and economically backward communities will lose access to reservations in educational institutions and job appointments. If the state list gets abolished, nearly 671 OBC communities would lose access to reservations in educational institutions and in appointments. This would adversely impact nearly one-fifth of the total OBC communities. It will wash away decades worth of efforts to empower OBC/SEBC communities across India.

The US, like most multi-racial societies, enumerates race in its census. Britain does it for immigrants by their origin. But we do not count the category for which we have major affirmative action programmes. Our state government under the leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik Ji has approached the Centre in the past demanding that a socio-economic caste survey be conducted simultaneously with the general census in 2021. However, since that proposal is not being currently acted upon by the Central government, the next best step is to give the power to identify OBC/SEBCs to the states themselves. This will allow states like Odisha, where a large portion of the population belongs to the OBC/SEBC, communities (almost 54%) to conduct surveys and frame policies of affirmative action and quotas based on the outcome of such surveys. It can go a long way in evolving and fine-tuning evidence-based social policies.

To sum up, I would like to say that this bill will have a transformative impact on the backward classes of the state and ensure provision of social justice and political empowerment in an efficient manner and thus, this bill be passed.

Committee Meetings

S.No.	Date of Sitting	Committee	Subject Considered
1	23/09/21	Privileges	(i) Oral evidence of Shri Vijay Rao, Superintendent of Police (Rural), Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh in the matter of Notice of question of breach of privilege dated 03 February, 2020 given by Shri Jayadev Galla, MP against certain Police Officials including the Superintendent of Police, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. (ii) Oral evidence of Shri K. Shanmugam, the then Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu in the matter of Notices of question of breach of privilege dated 14 and 16 May, 2020 given by Shri T. R. Baalu and Dr. Kalanidhi Veeraswamy, MPs against the Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu for alleged disrespectful and insulting behaviour.
2	28/07/21	Railways	Briefing by the representatives of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) on the subject "Suburban Train Services of Indian Railways".
3	13/07/21	Privileges	(1) Oral evidence of the following officials in the matter of Notice of question of breach of privilege dated 05 March, 2020 given by Shri Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, MP against the Delhi Police officials posted at Vijay Chowk, Delhi, for allegedly obstructing him from proceeding towards Parliament House for attending the session and a further notice dated 6 March, 2020 against News18 Network News Channel and an unnamed senior Delhi Police Official for allegedly misreporting the matter:- (i) Shri Krishna Murari, Assistant Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Delhi Police, New Delhi; and (ii) Shri Dinesh Kumar, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Parliament Street, Delhi Police. (2) Oral evidence of the following officials in the matter of Notice of question of breach of privilege/complaints dated 18 September, 2019, 24 October, 2019, 01 November, 2019, 10 February, 2020 and 05 March, 2020 given by Shri Raju Bista, MP alleging subversion of democracy and safety of elected representatives in West Bengal and non-cooperation and inaction on the part of the Police and Administration of the Government of West Bengal for not arresting the perpetrators (supporters of AITC) who attacked him on 22 October, 2019:- (i) Shri Amar Nath K, the then Superintendent of Police, Darjeeling (presently posted as Superintendent of Police, Purba Medinipur District, West Bengal); and (ii) Shri S. P. Yadav, the then Superintendent of Police, Kalimpong, West Bengal.

Questions

Raised in question Hour (16 Questions)

No	Q. NO.	Q. Type	Date	Ministry	Subject
1	9	UNSTARRED	19.07.2021	Education	Kendriya Vidyalayas and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas
2	23	UNSTARRED	19.07.2021	PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS	Taxes on Petroleum Products
3	338	UNSTARRED	20.07.2021	AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE	One District One Focus Product Scheme
4	512	UNSTARRED	22.07.2021	PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS	State Maritime Board
5	757	UNSTARRED	23.07.2021	ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE	Eco-tourism Projects
6	1104	UNSTARRED	26.07.2021	LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT	Equal Opportunities for Women
7	1345	UNSTARRED	27.07.2021	CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION	Food Grain for Poor
8	1571	UNSTARRED	28.07.2021	COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY	Spices Park in Odisha
9	1821	UNSTARRED	29.07.2021	YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS	Target Olympic Podium Scheme
10	175	STARRED	30.07.2021	INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING	News in Sign Language
11	2145	UNSTARRED	02.08.2021	Education	Safety in Online Education
12	2471	UNSTARRED	03.08.2021	FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING	Livestock Feed and Fodder
13	2959	UNSTARRED	05.08.2021	CIVIL AVIATION	Flight Connectivity from Bhubaneswar
14	3061	UNSTARRED	06.08.2021	WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT	Poshan Tracker Application
15	3412	UNSTARRED	09.08.2021	FINANCE	Cryptocurrency Transactions
16	3649	UNSTARRED	10.08.2021	HOME AFFAIRS	Marine Police Stations

Details of Questions Framed and Answers received from the respective Ministries is enclosed as Appendix- I

Letters to the Ministers

1. Minister of Railways



Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw,
Hon'ble Minister of Railways,
Government of India,
New Delhi.

Subject: Lack of Rail Connectivity to Phulbani and Request for Annexe

Most Respected Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw Ji,

I write this letter to you, reiterating my requests during the Zero Hour in Lok Sabha on 27 June, 2019, and subsequent correspondence with your ministry regarding lack of railway connectivity in my constituency - Kandhamal in Odisha.

Kandhamal is a region, located 250 kms from the state capital in Bhubaneswar and is blessed with dense forests, scenic waterfalls, towering mountains and hospitable people. However, as mentioned by me on the floor of the House, one of the primary problems is connectivity - of the district headquarters (Phulbani) with the rest of Odisha and between the ports and important productive areas.

To give you a clearer picture, the only means of public transport for passengers to reach there is via buses and for movement of goods is via trucks. Many of my constituents haven't seen a

railway line in their lifetime, just on television. The long standing dream for a railway link to Phulbani in Kandhamal district is yet to turn into a reality for the people.

Existing Network and Delays

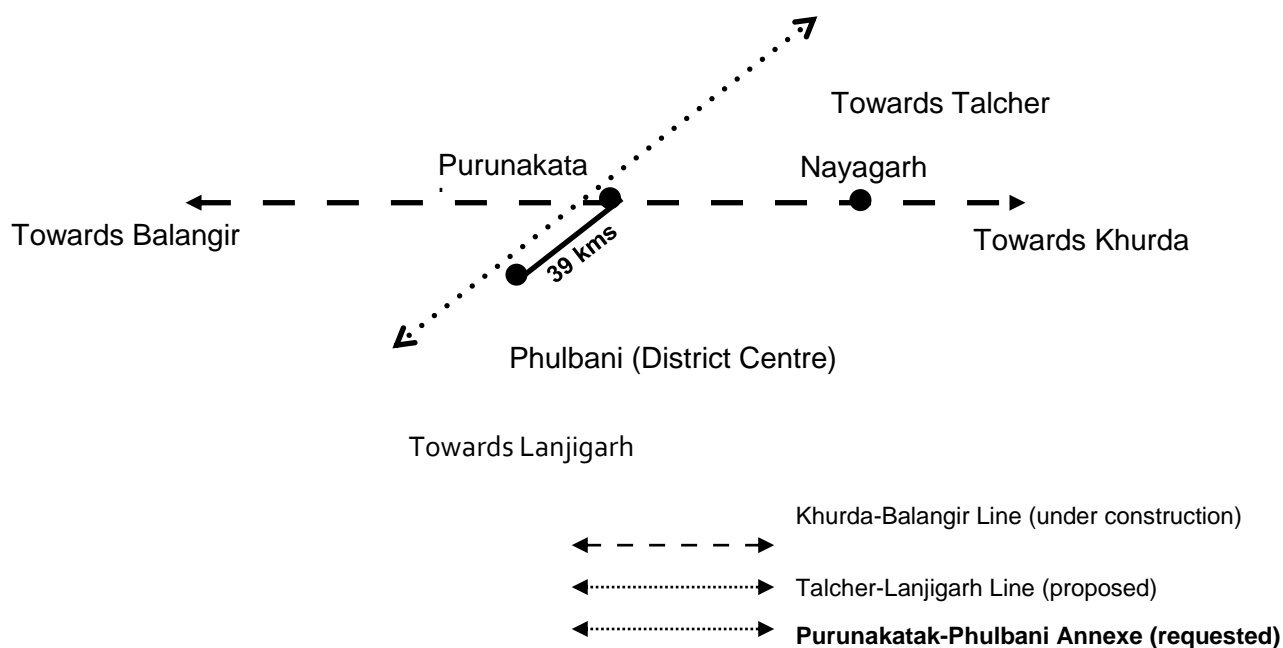
The 298 km Khurda-Balangir railway line project is getting delayed. The deadline has been set for 2021. The rail link has reached till Nayagarh, (at a distance of 66km) which is 99 kilometers from Phulbani. 2 passenger trains run from Nayagarh and that is all, even though passenger movement is ever-increasing. Further connectivity to Dasapalla, Banigochha, Purunakatak and on to Balangir has to be expedited.

The State government is partnering with the Ministry of Railways and is bearing 50 per cent of the construction cost. While I understand that construction has challenges like forest terrain, land acquisition, and environment clearances, there still seems to be an inordinate delay in completion of this construction and connection to Phulbani.

Requirement of an Annexe

As the tracks are getting laid till Banigochha, Purunakatak upto Balangir, it is important to lay an annexe from Purunakatak to Phulbani at the earliest. Purunakatak is the nearest railhead from Phulbani and lies merely 39 kms from Phulbani. It is vital to connect Phulbani as it is the district headquarters and a nerve center of the region.

This extension can later connect with the Talcher Lanjigarh line, as per existing plans. A rough sketch of the under-construction Khurda-Balangir line, the proposed Talcher-Lanjigarh line, and the annexe construction from Purunakatak to Phulbani, which I am currently requesting for, is pictured below.



Importance of improved railway connectivity in Kandhamal

As you may already be aware, Kandhamal is one of the poorest districts in India, with approximately **70 per cent** of its population belonging to the Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes. Even while being part of NITI Aayog's "Transformation of Aspirational Districts" programme, Kandhamal ranks a lowly **90th** and among the **20 Least Improved districts** in the programme. The development of many areas has been **seriously hampered** due to the lack of railway connectivity. This project can **boost the market** for forest and organic agricultural produce (including Kandhamal Haldi, which has recently obtained a GI tag) of tribal people and dalits. It is vital that these areas are connected directly to a port or to urban areas via Khurda. The proposed track can **improve prospects of tourism and eco-tourism** in places like Daringbadi, known as the Kashmir of Odisha, as well as give an impetus to industrial growth in southern Odisha. Further, better railway connectivity can also **ensure reduction of Left Wing Extremist (LWE)** activities in the area.

It is very saddening to know that Kandhamal does not have a railway link even after 70 years of independence. Connectivity is the cornerstone of development and it seems to be a far flung dream for my Kandhamal. I would urge you to take note of this and request you to expedite the current construction of the Khurda-Balangir line, as well as help Phulbani connect through an extension rail line for passenger movement to Purunakatak or add it to the proposed Khurda-Balangir line, if feasible.

Details - Appendix II

Kandhamal Constituency - Efforts and Roadmap

Guided by the words and direction of our Hon'ble Chief Minister, in accordance with the 5T's philosophy specified by him, I am proud to have worked humbly for the people of Kandhamal these past few months.

July 2021

05/07/21

Signing of MoU between MCL and Dist. Admn. Kandhamal for modernization of 19 Schools under the initiative of Hon'ble MP Dr. Achyuta Samanta



17/07/21

Hon'ble MP Dr. Achyuta Samanta attended meeting of 10th session of Zilla Parishad, Kandhamal



August 2021

18/08/21

Hon'ble MP visits the construction site of medical college at Phulbani, Kandhamal



18/08/21

Hon'ble MP inaugurated the Gram Panchayat office at Pikaradi GP under Tikabali block in Kandhamal district



18/08/21

Hon'ble MP inaugurated the Anganwadi centres at different GPs under Tikabali block in Kandhamal district



18/08/21

Hon'ble MP addressed party workers



18/08/21

"Hon'ble MP inaugurated libraries under G.Udayagiri block in Kandhamal district"



19/08/21

Inauguration of Smart park at Phulbani Municipality



19/08/21

Hon'ble MP addressed party workers at Phulbani



19/08/21

Hon'ble MP inaugurated Biju Patnaik Market Complex at Tikabali block in Kandhamal district



19/08/21

Hon'ble MP addressed party workers at Baliguda



19/08/21

Inauguration of Open Gymnasium at Mini Stadium, Baliguda NAC



19/08/21

Inauguration of Drinking Water Projects at, Baliguda NAC



19/08/21

Inauguration of Development of the renovation works done in the periphery of Town hall at Baliguda NAC



19/08/21

Inauguration of Electronic Information Wall at Baliguda NAC



19/08/21

Inauguration of Road and street light system on the road Connecting NH-59 and Jara Niwas at Baliguda



30/08/21

Attended the inaugural ceremony of the schools transformed under 5T school transformation programme at Hinjili



September 2021

15/09/21

Hon'ble MP Dr. Achyuta Samanta addressed the extended executive body meeting of BJD at Ganjam District



21/09/21

Hon'ble MP Dr. Achyuta Samanta reviewed different developmental works of Kandhamal district at Phulbani



21/09/21

Hon'ble MP Dr. Achyuta Samanta offered his divine offerings to the holy wheel of Taladhwaaj Chariot on its arrival at Jagannath Temple, Phulbani



21/09/21

Hon'ble MP Dr. Achyuta Samanta visited different schools transformed under #5T school transformation initiatives at Kandhamal Parliamentary constituency



21/09/21

Hon'ble MP Dr. Achyuta Samanta paid floral tribute to late Pramod Mallick, Husband of Ms. Punam Kanhar, Dist. President of Biju Mahila Janata Dal of Kandhamal District



21/09/21

Hon'ble MP Dr. Achyuta Samanta met newly elected office bearers of District Journalist Union at Phulbani



Appendix-I

Questions raised during Question Hour and Answers received from the respective Ministries.

Questions 1 : Q 9

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY**

LOK SABHA

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.9
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19.07.2021**

Kendriya Vidyalayas and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas.

†9. **DR. DHAL SINGH BISEN:
SHRI. RAMESH CHANDRA MAJHI:
SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:
SHRI MAHESH SAHOO:**

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas opened in the country from 2014 onwards till date, Constituency-wise including Nabarangpur Parliamentary constituency of Odisha ;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to set up new JNV in every district/ sub-division/ block headquarters of Odisha in the coming years and if so, the details of the timeline therefor ;
- (c) whether any memorandum has been submitted for a new KV in Talcher District and if so, the reaction of the Government thereto ;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to upgrade the existing KV and JNV by providing digital libraries and modernized laboratory equipments etc. and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether the JNV in Odisha are running with teachers on contract basis to meet the shortage of teachers and if so, the details thereof and if not, the details of teacher strength in these schools?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF EDUCATION
(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)**

- (a) 158 Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) and 61 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) have been opened in the country from 2014 onwards till date. KVs and JNVs are not opened constituency-wise. State/UT-wise details of KVs and JNVs opened from 2014 onwards till date including State of Odisha are annexed.
- (b) The Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme envisages opening of one JNV in each district of the country. All the 30 districts of State of Odisha have already been covered with Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme and an additional JNV has also been functional in Scheduled Tribes concentrated Malkangiri district.

(c) Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) has informed that the proposal for opening of a new KV in Talcher was received from the State Government of Odisha. The proposal has been referred back to the State Government for removal of discrepancies.

(d) e-Granthalaya, a digital platform developed by National Informatics Centre provides a complete ICT solution with integrated library management software, a digital library module and cloud hosting environment. e-Granthalaya software has been installed in the libraries of the KVs and 603 Navodaya Vidyalayas in the country. e-Granthalaya software is being used for issue and receipt of library books and maintenance of records of books in digital mode. Upgradation and modernization of laboratories in the KVs and JNVs is a continuous process and the work is taken up in a phased manner as per requirement.

(e) Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti has informed that 206 teachers are engaged on short-term contract basis to fill up the vacant teaching posts immediately to avoid any academic loss of students.

ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) OF THE LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 9 RAISED BY DR. DHAL SINGH BISEN, SHRI RAMESH CHANDRA MAJHI, SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA & SHRI MAHESH SAHOO, HON'BLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO BE ANSWERED ON 19/07/2021 REGARDING KENDRIYA VIDYALAYAS AND JAWAHAR NAVODAYA VIDYALAYAS

NUMBERS OF KENDRIYA VIDYALAYAS AND JAWAHAR NAVODAYA VIDYALAYAS OPENED IN THE COUNTRY FROM 2014 ONWARDS TILL DATE

Sl. No	Name of the State/UTs	KVs	JNVs
1	Andhra Pradesh	8	0
2	Andman & Nikobar Island	0	1
3	Arunachal Pradesh	5	1
4	Assam	3	0
5	Bihar	4	0
6	Chhattisgarh	10	11
7	Delhi	3	0
8	Gujarat	1	11
9	Haryana	8	1
10	Himachal Pradesh	2	0
11	Jammu & Kashmir	2	5
12	Jharkhand	9	2
13	Karnataka	13	3
14	Kerala	3	0
15	Madhya Pradesh	20	4
16	Maharashtra	7	1
17	Manipur	2	0
18	Meghalaya	0	4
19	Mizoram	0	1
20	Nagaland	1	0
21	Odisha	10	0
22	Punjab	2	2
23	Rajasthan	14	2
24	Tamilnadu	3	0
25	Telangana	7	0
26	Tripura	0	4
27	Uttar Pradesh	15	7
28	Uttarakhand	2	0
29	West Bengal	4	1
TOTAL		158	61

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 23
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19TH JULY, 2021

Taxes on Petroleum Products

23. SHRI M.K. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL:
SHRI THIRUNAVUKKARASAR SU:
SHRI PARTHIBAN S.R.:
SHRI UTTAM KUMAR REDDY NALAMADA:
SHRI VIJAYAKUMAR (ALIAS) VIJAY VASANTH:
SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:
MS. S. JOTHIMANI:
SHRI RAVNEET SINGH BITTU:
SHRIMATI MALA ROY:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

- (a) the price of petrol, diesel, LPG and other fuels in all the States/UTs during each week since 2019, along with the amount of price that is comprised of Central and State duties in each State, State-wise especially in Telangana including the taxes being levied by the Government on various petroleum products in the country;
- (b) the details of the number of times the petrol/ diesel prices have been increased in the last two years along with the quantum of increase in prices and the reasons for continuous increase in the prices of petrol/ diesel etc. across the country including Rajasthan inspite of drop in the prices of crude oil in the international market;
- (c) the details of monthly average price per barrel of international crude oil during the last three years, year-wise and month-wise along with the details of price at which petrol has been imported into the country since 2019;
- (d) average excise duty along with the other cess, duties levied on petrol and diesel during the last three years, year-wise and month-wise including the total amount collected by the centre from taxes on fuels since 2019, year-wise;
- (e) whether it is a fact that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by the Reserve Bank of India Government has recommended for cutting the taxes on petroleum products, if so, the details thereof and the reasons for non-implementation of these recommendations by the Government;
- (f) whether the Government proposes to introduce any concrete policy or take any decision to reduce the rising prices of petrol/diesel/LPG by discontinuing or reducing various types of taxes levied on the same to provide relief to the people of the country, if so, the time by which it will be implemented, if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (g) the details of hike in per litre dealer commission along with the total amount of tax/excise duty collected from oil company during the last 18 months, company-wise and month-wise?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL
GAS (SHRI RAMESWAR TELI)**

(a) to (d) & (g): Prices of petrol and diesel are market-determined with effect from 26.06.2010 and 19.10.2014 respectively. Since then, the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have been taking appropriate decision on pricing of petrol and diesel on the basis of international product prices and other market conditions. The OMCs have increased and decreased the prices of petrol and diesel according to changes in international prices and rupee dollar exchange rate. Effective 16th June, 2017, daily pricing of petrol and diesel has been implemented in the entire country. The prices of petrol in the States across the country varies due to freight rates, VAT/local levies etc.

The details of the Retail Selling Price (RSP) of petrol and diesel at Hyderabad, Telangana are at Annexure-1.

The details of number of times the prices of petrol, diesel and LPG have changed at Delhi from 1st July, 2020 to 9th July 2021 are at Annexure-2.

The average monthly price of Indian Basket of crude oil since April, 2018 is at Annexure-3.

The details of total central excise duty including cesses on petrol and diesel and details central excise collected from petroleum products in the last three years are at Annexure-4.

The State wise actual rates of VAT on petrol and diesel as on 1st April 2021 are given as Annexure-5.

The details of hike in dealer commission on petrol and diesel during the last 18 months is given below:-

Rs./KL

Effective date	Petrol	Diesel
1-Aug-17	2674.74/KL + 0.859% of billable product price	2031.38/KL + 0.257% of billable product price
19-Feb-19	2637.80/KL + 0.859% of billable product price	2000.60/KL + 0.257% of billable product price

(e): Monetary Policy is dealt by Reserve Bank of India.

(f): The excise duty rates on petrol and diesel have been calibrated to generate resources for infrastructure and other developmental items of expenditure keeping in view the present fiscal position.

X-X-X-X-X

Annexure-I

Annexure referred to in reply to parts (a) to (d) & (g) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 23 asked by Shri M.K. Raghavan, Shri Hanuman Beniwal, Shri Thirunavukkarasar Su, Shri Parthiban S.R., Shri Uttam Kumar Reddy Nalamada, Shri Vijayakumar (alias) Vijay Vasanth, Shri Achyutananda Samanta, Ms. S. Jothimani, Shri Ravneet Singh Bittu and Shrimati Mala Roy to be answered on 19th July, 2021 regarding “Taxes on Petroleum Products”.

Product	01- April, 2019	01- April, 2020	01- January, 2021	01- February, 2021	01- March, 2021	01- April, 2021	01- May, 2021	01- June, 2021	01- July, 2021
Petrol	77.26	73.97	87.06	89.77	94.79	94.16	93.99	98.20	102.69
Diesel	71.81	67.82	80.60	83.46	88.86	88.20	88.05	93.08	97.20
LPG	762.00	796.50	746.50	771.50*	871.50	861.50	861.50	861.50	887.00

* As on 4th February, 2021

Annexure-2

Annexure referred to in reply to parts (a) to (d) & (g) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 23 asked by Shri M.K. Raghavan, Shri Hanuman Beniwal, Shri Thirunavukkarasar Su, Shri Parthiban S.R., Shri Uttam Kumar Reddy Nalamada, Shri Vijayakumar (alias) Vijay Vasanth, Shri Achyutananda Samanta, Ms. S. Jothimani, Shri Ravneet Singh Bittu and Shrimati Mala Roy to be answered on 19th July, 2021 regarding “Taxes on Petroleum Products”.

2019-20

Particulars	Petrol	Diesel
Increase	89	79
Decrease	124	119
No change	153	168
Total	366	366

2020-21

Particulars	Petrol	Diesel
Increase	76	73
Decrease	10	24
No change	279	268
Total	365	365

2021-22

Particulars	Petrol	Diesel
Increase	39	36
Decrease	1	2
No change	64	66
Total	104	104

*Data for 2021-22 is upto 13-Jul-21

Annexure-3

Annexure referred to in reply to parts (a) to (d) & (g) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 23 asked by Shri M.K. Raghavan, Shri Hanuman Beniwal, Shri Thirunavukkarasar Su, Shri Parthiban S.R., Shri Uttam Kumar Reddy Nalamada, Shri Vijayakumar (alias) Vijay Vasanth, Shri Achyutananda Samanta, Ms. S. Jothimani, Shri Ravneet Singh Bittu and Shrimati Mala Roy to be answered on 19th July, 2021 regarding "Taxes on Petroleum Products".

Month	Indian Basket of Crude Oil (\$/bbl)
Apr-18	69.22
May-18	75.25
Jun-18	73.83
Jul-18	73.47
Aug-18	72.53
Sep-18	77.88
Oct-18	80.08
Nov-18	65.40
Dec-18	57.77
Jan-19	59.27
Feb-19	64.53
Mar-19	66.74
Apr-19	71.00
May-19	70.01
Jun-19	62.37
Jul-19	63.63
Aug-19	59.35
Sep-19	61.72
Oct-19	59.70
Nov-19	62.53
Dec-19	65.50
Jan-20	64.31
Feb-20	54.63
Mar-20	33.36
Apr-20	19.90
May-20	30.61
Jun-20	40.63
Jul-20	43.35
Aug-20	44.19
Sep-20	41.35
Oct-20	40.66
Nov-20	43.34
Dec-20	49.84
Jan-21	54.79
Feb-21	61.22
Mar-21	64.73
Apr-21	63.40
May-21	66.95
Jun-21	71.98
Jul-21 (till 12 th July)	74.34

The Indian basket of Crude Oil represents a derived basket comprising of Sour grade (Oman & Dubai average) and Sweet grade (Brent Dated) of Crude oil processed in Indian refineries

Annexure-4

Annexure referred to in reply to parts (a) to (d) & (g) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 23 asked by Shri M.K. Raghavan, Shri Hanuman Beniwal, Shri Thirunavukkarasar Su, Shri Parthiban S.R., Shri Uttam Kumar Reddy Nalamada, Shri Vijayakumar (alias) Vijay Vasanth, Shri Achyutananda Samanta, Ms. S. Jothimani, Shri Ravneet Singh Bittu and Shrimati Mala Roy to be answered on 19th July, 2021 regarding "Taxes on Petroleum Products".

Period	Total Central Excise duty (Rs/litre)			
	Petrol (unbranded)	Petrol (branded)	Diesel (unbranded)	Diesel (branded)
W.e.f. 04.10.2017	19.48	20.66	15.33	17.69
W.e.f. 02.02.2018	19.48	20.66	15.33	17.69
W.e.f. 05.10.2018	17.98	19.16	13.83	16.19
W.e.f. 06.07.2019	19.98	21.16	15.83	18.19
W.e.f. 14.03.2020	22.98	24.16	18.83	21.19
W.e.f. 06.05.2020	32.98	34.16	31.83	34.19
W.e.f. 02.02.2021	32.90	34.10	31.80	34.20

Central excise duty collected from petroleum products are as under:

Item	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Petrol	68929	66279	101598
Diesel	144471	112032	233296
ATF	2540	1461	779
Natural Gas	1547	1573	1195
Cess on crude oil	17814	16500	7877
Total	235301	197845	344746

Annexure-5

Annexure referred to in reply to parts (a) to (d) & (g) of Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 23 asked by Shri M.K. Raghavan, Shri Hanuman Beniwal, Shri Thirunavukkarasar Su, Shri Parthiban S.R., Shri Uttam Kumar Reddy Nalamada, Shri Vijayakumar (alias) Vijay Vasanth, Shri Achyutananda Samanta, Ms. S. Jothimani, Shri Ravneet Singh Bittu and Shrimati Mala Roy to be answered on 19th July, 2021 regarding "Taxes on Petroleum Products".

Statement of Actual rates of VAT/Sales Tax levied by various States/ UTs as on 01-Apr-21

Sr. No	State	Petrol	Diesel
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	6%	6%
2	Andhra Pradesh	31% VAT + Rs.4/litre VAT+Rs.1/litre Road Development Cess and Vat thereon	22.25% VAT + Rs.4/litre VAT+Rs.1/litre Road Development Cess and Vat thereon
3	Arunachal Pradesh	20.00%	12.50%
4	Assam	32.66% or Rs.22.63 per litre whichever is higher as VAT minus Rebate of Rs.5 per Litre	23.66% or Rs.17.45 per litre whichever is higher as VAT minus Rebate of Rs.5 per Litre
5	Bihar	26% or Rs 16.65/Litre whichever is higher (30% Surcharge on VAT as irrecoverable tax)	19% or Rs 12.33/Litre whichever is higher (30% Surcharge on VAT as irrecoverable tax)
6	Chandigarh	Rs.10/KL cess +22.45% or Rs.12.58/Litre whichever is higher	Rs.10/KL cess + 14.02% or Rs.7.63/Litre whichever is higher
7	Chhattisgarh	25% VAT + Rs.2/litre VAT	25% VAT + Rs.1/litre VAT
8	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	20% VAT	20% VAT
9	Delhi	30% VAT	Rs.250/KL air ambience charges + 16.75% VAT
10	Goa	27% VAT + 0.5% Green cess	23% VAT + 0.5% Green cess
11	Gujarat	20.1% VAT+ 4% Cess on Town Rate & VAT	20.2% VAT + 4 % Cess on Town Rate & VAT
12	Haryana	25% or Rs.15.62/litre whichever is higher as VAT+5% additional tax on VAT	16.40% VAT or Rs.10.08/litre whichever is higher as VAT+5% additional tax on VAT
13	Himachal Pradesh	25% or Rs 15.50/Litre- whichever is higher	14% or Rs 9.00/Litre- whichever is higher
14	Jammu & Kashmir	24% MST+ Rs.5/Litre employment cess, Reduction of Rs.0.50/Litre	16% MST+ Rs.1.50/Litre employment cess
15	Jharkhand	22% on the sale price or Rs. 17.00 per litre , which ever is higher + Cess of Rs 1.00 per Ltr	22% on the sale price or Rs. 12.50 per litre , which ever is higher + Cess of Rs 1.00 per Ltr
16	Karnataka	35% sales tax	24% sales tax
17	Kerala	30.08% sales tax + Rs.1/litre additional sales tax + 1% cess	22.76% sales tax + Rs.1/litre additional sales tax + 1% cess

Sr. No	State	Petrol	Diesel
18	Ladakh	24% MST+ Rs.5/Litre employment cess, Reduction of Rs.2.5/Litre	16% MST+ Rs.1/Litre employment cess , Reduction of Rs.0.50/Litre
19	Lakshadweep	Nil	Nil
20	Madhya Pradesh	33 % VAT + Rs.4.5/litre VAT+1% Cess	23% VAT+ Rs.3/litre VAT+1% Cess
21	Maharashtra – Mumbai, Thane & Navi Mumbai	26% VAT+ Rs.10.12/Litre additional tax	24% VAT+ Rs.3.00/Litre additional tax
22	Maharashtra (Rest of State)	25% VAT+ Rs.10.12/Litre additional tax	21% VAT+ Rs.3.00/Litre additional tax
23	Manipur	36.50% VAT	22.50% VAT
24	Meghalaya	20% or Rs15.00/Litre- whichever is higher (Rs.0.10/Litre pollution surcharge)	12% or Rs9.00/Litre- whichever is higher (Rs.0.10/Litre pollution surcharge)
25	Mizoram	25% VAT	14.5% VAT
26	Nagaland	25% VAT or Rs. 16.04/litre whichever is higher +5% surcharge + Rs.2.00/Litre as road maintenance cess	16.50% VAT or Rs. 10.51/litre whichever is higher +5% surcharge + Rs.2.00/Litre as road maintenance cess
27	Odisha	32% VAT	28% VAT
28	Puducherry	26% VAT	17.75% VAT
29	Punjab	Rs.2050/KL (cess)+ Rs.0.10 per Litre (Urban Transport Fund) +24.79% VAT+10% additional tax on VAT	Rs.1050/KL (cess) + Rs.0.10 per Litre (Urban Transport Fund) + 15.94% VAT+10% additional tax on VAT
30	Rajasthan	36% VAT+Rs 1500/KL road development cess	26% VAT+ Rs.1750/KL road development cess
31	Sikkim	25.25% VAT+ Rs.3000/KL cess	14.75% VAT + Rs.2500/KL cess
32	Tamil Nadu	15% + Rs.13.02 per litre	11% + Rs.9.62 per litre
33	Telangana	35.20% VAT	27% VAT
34	Tripura	25% VAT+ 3% Tripura Road Development Cess	16.50% VAT+ 3% Tripura Road Development Cess
35	Uttar Pradesh	26.80% or Rs 18.74/Litre whichever is higher	17.48% or Rs 10.41/Litre whichever is higher
36	Uttarakhand	25% or Rs 19 Per Ltr whichever is greater	17.48% or Rs Rs 10.41 Per Ltr whichever is greater
37	West Bengal	25% or Rs.13.12/litre whichever is higher as sales tax+ Rs.1000/KL cess- Rs.17/KL exemption – Rs 1000/KL sales tax rebate (20% Additional tax on VAT as irrecoverable tax)	17% or Rs.7.70/litre whichever is higher as sales tax + Rs 1000/KL cess – Rs 1000/KL sales tax rebate (20% Additional tax on VAT as irrecoverable tax)
Source- (As per details provided by IOCL/HPCL)			

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 338
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 20TH JULY, 2021

ONE DISTRICT ONE FOCUS PRODUCT SCHEME

338. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the One District One Focus Product Scheme, and the agricultural products chosen district-wise across the country, especially in the State of Odisha;
- (b) the details of the support to be provided to selected crops/products by the Central Government;
- (c) whether the products selected under this scheme especially from the State of Odisha will be integrated into the export value chain;
- (d) if so, the details and timeframe thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री

(SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR)

(a) & (b): The One District One Focus Product (ODOFP) programme cover products of agriculture and allied sectors for 728 districts of the country. The district-wise and state-wise products is **Annexed**. The Government has decided to converge resources from ongoing centrally sponsored schemes such as Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), schemes of Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying for ODOFP.

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) provides financial support under Centrally Sponsored Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme (PM FME Scheme) for One District One Focus Product. PM FME provides financial, technical and business support for upgradation of existing

micro food processing enterprises etc. The scheme adopts One District One Product (ODOP) approach to reap the benefits of scale in terms of procurement of inputs, availing common services and marketing of products.

(c) to (d): The identified products have potential for both domestic demand and export. PM FME scheme envisages strengthening backward and forward linkages, provision of common facilities, incubation centres, training, research and development (R&D), marketing and branding. The enhanced capacity of processing and value addition in agriculture and allied sector products is for better price realization by the farmers. This scheme is being implemented for a period of five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25.

The State of Odisha, under the supervision of Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), has prepared Export Policy which envisages integration of ODOFP/ODOP products into export value chain.

(e) Question does not arise.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 512
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22ND JULY, 2021
STATE MARITIME BOARD

512. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:

Will the Minister of PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS be pleased to state:

पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्री

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the setting up of the Odisha State Maritime Board;
- (b) whether the Draft Indian Ports Bill, 2021 does not contain any provision to include a State Maritime Board constituted at a later date by a State enactment and if so, the reasons for such omission; and
- (c) whether the draft Indian Ports Bill amplifies 2021 the powers of the Maritime States Development Council (MSDC); if so, the details and the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
(SHRI SHRIPAD NAIK)

- (a) Yes, Sir.
- (b) The draft of Indian Ports bill, 2021 vide Chapter V requires every State Government to constitute a State Maritime Board for all non-major ports by way of notification in the official gazette within six months from the date of commencement of the Bill.
- (c) The draft of the Bill propose to statutory empower the Maritime State Development Council (MSDC) to become the nodal agency for coordinated development of all ports (major and non-major ports) in India. The Bill is aimed at synergy between Coastal States and Centre through collaborative effort through integrated approach for development of Ports. The proposed legislation is under consultative stage.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 757
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.07.2021

Eco-tourism Projects

757. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government or the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) has eased norms for eco-tourism projects by allowing non-permanent structures to be built in protected areas without permission from the Union Government;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the type of non-permanent structures which can be built in such areas;
- (c) whether the Government has considered that even creation of non-permanent structures can cause ecological imbalance or fragmentation, especially in sensitive forest areas and natural habitats of wildlife; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof along with the steps being taken to ensure that such areas remain protected?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) & (b) Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) is a statutory body constituted under Section 3 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The role of the Committee, inter alia, is to advise on every question upon which the Central Government is required to be advised. The FAC's recommendation with regard to ecotourism is as follows:

“construction of permanent structures for the purpose of ecotourism on forest land shall be considered as non-forestry activity. In such cases Prior approval of the Central Government under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 is required”.

- (c) & (d) Eco-tourism is a form of responsible tourism to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people. It is envisaged that, no permanent structure shall be made/constructed to create ecotourism facility/structure, but temporary structures/facility made of predominantly natural material of local origin shall be allowed in Protected Area or on forest land. Such ecotourism facility/structure is to be part of the approved Working Plan/Management Plan/Working Scheme of that area to ensure that such facility/structure are in consonance with the local ecology, and forests and wildlife remain protected.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1104
TO BE ANSWERED ON 26TH JULY, 2021

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN**

1104. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is a lack of data at the central level about the number of women participating in the workforce, and the manner in which the said number has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and if so, the reasons for such lack of data; and**
- (b) the steps being taken by the Government to ensure that there is increase in quality and quantity of women's employment, equal opportunities for women, reducing gender pay gap and fulfilling other objectives under the G20 Brisbane Goal and the G20 Roadmap Towards and Beyond the Brisbane Target?**

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
(SHRI RAMESWAR TELI)**

(a) to (b): The data on employment/ unemployment is being collected through Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MOSPI) since 2017-18. The survey provides indicators for the employment/ unemployment scenario in the country including for women. As per the results of PLFS conducted during 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20, the estimated Female Worker Population Ratio (WPR) on usual status (ps+ss) for 15 years and above is 22%, 23.3% and 28.7%, respectively.

Government has taken various steps to improve women's participation in the labour force and quality of their employment. A number of protective provisions have been incorporated in the labour laws for equal opportunity and congenial work environment for women workers. These includes enhancement in paid maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks, provision for mandatory crèche facility in the establishments having 50 or more employees, permitting women workers in the night shifts with adequate safety measures, etc.

Employment of women in the aboveground mines including opencast workings has been allowed between 7 pm and 6 am, and in below ground working between 6 am and 7 pm in technical, supervisory and managerial work where continuous presence may not be required.

The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 now subsumed in the Code on Wages, 2019 provides that there shall be no discrimination in an establishment or any unit thereof among employees on the ground of gender in matters relating to wages by the same employer, in respect of the same work or work of similar nature done by any employee. Further, no employer shall make any discrimination on the ground of sex while recruiting any employee for the same work or work of similar nature in the conditions of employment, except where the employment of women in such work is prohibited or restricted by or under any law for the time being in force.

To enhance the employability of female workers, the Government is providing training to them through a network of Women Industrial Training institutes, National Vocational Training Institutes and Regional Vocational Training Institutes.

National Career Service (NCS) Project provides a variety of employment related services like job search, job matching, career counseling, vocational guidance, information on skill development courses etc. on a common platform with efficient use of information technology. In order to promote women empowerment and to encourage skilling and employment amongst females, NCS provides various opportunities and features specifically focused for women candidates.

All these provisions/ initiatives help in fulfilling objectives under the G20 Brisbane Goal and the G20 Roadmap Towards and Beyond the Brisbane Target as well.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1345
TO BE ANSWERED ON 27TH JULY, 2021**

FOOD GRAIN FOR POOR

1345. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य और सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has allocated 78,000 tonnes of rice from Food Corporation of India (FCI) stocks for private distilleries for ethanol blending at subsidised rates, if so, the reasons thereof;**
- (b) whether the aforesaid subsidised rate is lower than the rate at which rice is available to State governments for purchasing, if so, the details thereof; and**
- (c) the steps being taken by the Government to ensure that poorest sections of society receive sufficient food grains, considering that India ranks 94th out of 117 countries as per the Global Hunger Index 2020, and the serious possibility that this will be further exacerbated due to COVID-19, if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor?**

**A N S W E R
MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SADHVI NIRANJAN JYOTI)**

(a)&(b): India imports about 85% of its crude oil requirement. Domestic bio-fuels like ethanol reduce the nation's dependence on imported fossil fuels; in addition, its use reduces vehicular pollution, increases farmers' income, brings new investment opportunity in rural areas thereby helping to achieve goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

.....2/-

Ethanol is being produced mainly from molasses/sugarcane and damaged food-grains; but availability of these feed stocks as well as ethanol production capacity is not sufficient to achieve blending target fixed by the Government.

Therefore, with a view to increase production of fuel grade ethanol for blending with petrol, Government is encouraging distilleries to produce ethanol from maize and also surplus rice available with FCI. Government is providing FCI rice to distilleries producing ethanol at a subsidized rate of Rs. 2000/ qtl which is the same rate at which rice is available under Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic) to State Governments.

For the period of December'2020-November'2021, 78844 MT of FCI rice has been allocated to distilleries for production of ethanol out of which 23660 MT has been lifted by distilleries till 20.7.2021. The competitiveness of the feed stock will determine the preferential use of various feed stocks and at present use of rice from FCI is the smallest segment of feed stock and is expected to contribute 3.28 crore litre in total supply of contracted quantity of 342.70 crore litre of ethanol in ethanol supply year (Dec. 2020 to Nov. 2021) 2020-21.

(c): With a view to ensure that poorest sections of the society receive sufficient food grains, Government is providing subsidized food grains i.e rice/wheat/ coarse grains @ Rs. 3/2/1 per kg respectively to about 79.51 crore persons across the country under National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA). In addition to the entitlement under the NFSA, these beneficiaries are also entitled to receive 5 kg of food grains (rice/ wheat) per person per month, free of cost from May to November, 2021 under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) to mitigate the impact of the Covid pandemic.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1571
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28th JULY, 2021

SPICES PARK IN ODISHA

1571. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:

Will the Minister of **COMMERCE & INDUSTRY** (वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्री) be pleased to state:

- (a) Considering that Odisha is one of the largest producers of spices in the country, including Kandhamal Haldi which has a GI tag, whether the Government is considering to open a Spices Park in Odisha to ensure common infrastructural and processing facilities for a large number of farmers, if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (b) the details of the other steps being implemented by the Government to encourage both domestic and export-oriented uses of the spices from Odisha, considering that a large number of them have proven health benefits and can be marketed under the 'India Organic' brand?

ANSWER

वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्रीमती अनुप्रिया पटेल)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)

(a) Presently, there is no proposal to set up a Spice Park in the State of Odisha. However, eligible entities including State Government owned agencies, may apply for technical assistance from the Spices Board and infrastructure support under available schemes of Government of India for this purpose.

(b) The mandate for production, research, development, post-harvest treatment and domestic marketing of spices is vested in the Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, which provides financial assistance to grow horticulture crops, including spices, through various development programmes under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH). The Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development (DASD) also implements certain components like production of quality planting materials of high yielding and export oriented varieties of spices, accreditation of spice nurseries,

technology dissemination through frontline demonstration, National /State /District Level Seminars/Workshops and Farmers training programmes through Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), Bhubaneswar.

The Spices Board undertakes various activities related to export promotion and quality control of spices exported from India. In order to provide the extension support for the development & export promotion of Spices and coordinating various activities in the State, Spices Board has established its office at Koraput, Odisha. The Board organized Buyer Seller Meets (BSMs) to promote export of Turmeric from Odisha, particularly from Khandamal & Koraput districts. Through the BSMs, more than 100 sellers/producers representing Farmers Producer Organisations, progressive farmers, farmer's societies, processors & traders and around 50 buyers from Odisha, were benefitted by establishing direct market linkages. Further, Spices Board is coordinating with the State Nodal Agency, APICOL (Government of Odisha) for implementation of the Agriculture Export Policy for development of Spices clusters in the State.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS & SPORTS
(DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS)
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1821
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29.07.2021**

Target Olympic Podium Scheme

1821. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:

Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the funding provided to potential Olympic medal winners under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), sports-wise;**
- (b) whether the Government has taken any steps to facilitate specialised training camps for the athletes during lockdown considering India has been under frequent lockdowns since last year due to COVID-19 which has adversely impacted the training schedules of athletes and if so, the details thereof; and**
- (c) whether the Government has taken the steps to look after the mental health of athletes during the lockdown and if so, the details thereof?**

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS
[SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR]**

(a): Under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), customized training and allied facilities are being made available to potential Olympic medal winners. 162 athletes and 01 Hockey Men's & 01 Hockey Women's teams are included in the TOPS Core Group and 254 athletes are included in the TOPS Development Group.

In addition to above, Out of pocket allowance (OPA) is paid to TOPS athletes selected in Core Group at the rate of Rs.50,000 per month and to Development Group at the rate of Rs.25,000 per month.

The total expenditure incurred under the TOP Scheme during the last three years and current year is given below:

Expenditure under TOPS Scheme

Financial Year	Total Expenditure
2018-19	Rs. 14,31,60, 496
2019-20	Rs. 12,41,38,012
2020-21	Rs. 15,65,86,361
Current year 2021-22 (As on 20.07.2021)	Rs. 11,87,34,351

The discipline-wise details of the above expenditure are provided at Annexure.

(b): Due to outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, all the conventional training programmes being conducted in all Sports Authority of India (SAI) centres across the country, under various SAI Sports Promotional Schemes were temporarily suspended and the foreign training of Indian athletes were also curtailed. However, the training was resumed in accordance with the guidelines issued by Ministry of Home Affairs.

In the view of the COVID-19 pandemic, inter-alia, the following measures were taken to ensure a smooth training for the sportspersons including those who qualified for Tokyo Olympics, so that their performance is not affected:

- i. The Ministry issued the following Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Guidelines for sports related activities in the COVID-19 environment:
 - a. SOP for resumption of swimming training of sportspersons in COVID-19 environment.
 - b. SOP for Organizing Sports Competitions in the Country in a COVID-19 environment.

c. SOP for opening up of Stadia for Sports events.

d. SOP for operation of Swimming Pools in a Covid-19 Environment.

- ii. In order to implement Non-Conventional Training Methods, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) were laid down by Sports Authority of India (SAI), an autonomous body under the aegis of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports to resume sports activities in the training centres under the name of “Khelo India-Firr Se”. The SOP covers all stakeholders at the training centres including athletes, technical and non-technical support staff, administrative staff, hostel and facility management staff and visitors to the centre.**
- iii. A COVID Task Force Committee was set-up to ensure the guidelines are strictly implemented at the training centre. The committee is responsible for the constant monitoring and management of the health protocols of the government.**
- iv. The SOP categorizes the sporting disciplines into non-contact sports, minimal/medium-contact sports, full contact sports and water sports.**
- v. The athletes were provided with necessary sporting equipment such as (Barbell Rods, weights, Exercise Bicycle etc.), air pellets, target system with the help from SAI Regional Centres, State Governments and NGOs at their homes during the first phases of nationwide lockdown so that they can train within their homes.**
- vi. Regular Online Trainings / Classes were conducted for athletes by the coaches to keep them motivated and fit during lock down period. Athletes were provided with online training module for daily practice.**
- vii. Regular interaction with the athletes was done in order to boost their morale and keep them motivated in these tough times. Seminars and workshops by experts in sports psychology, sports science/medicating, nutrition in COVID 19, strength and conditioning, high performance sports environment, anti-doping have been organized via, video conferencing, social media like Facebook Live, Instagram Live etc., to educate athletes about**

- how to cope with stress and depression during tough times and focusing on their objectives so that the training is not hampered.
- viii. **Athletes & Coach Education Programme and Coach Development Programme (ACEP/CDP) were conducted and lectures were delivered by the Foreign Coaches and Sports Experts in different sports discipline. Total 10483 coaches in various sports discipline session and 3818 coaches' sports science session participated.**
 - ix. **The athletes were provided with necessary sporting equipment to enable them to keep fit. Further, those Olympic bound athletes who could not go back to their places due to lock down were given equipment in their rooms for training in SAI Centres.**
 - x. **National Coaching Camps have been resumed for the Olympic bound athletes. The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been formulated for conduct of safe training.**
 - xi. **One week "Soft Skill Development & Sensitization" programme and COVID-19 awareness programme were conducted for athletes.**
 - xii. **During the second wave of Covid-19, athletes were sent abroad for training or trained in the training camps with social distancing, so that they may remain unaffected by the ongoing pandemic in the country.**
 - xiii. **Vaccination Drive for Olympic bound athletes, National Campers and their Coaches, Support Staff was initiated in the month of April 2021 at Sports Authority of India centres with the help of local authorities. In addition, the Govt. has ensured that few athletes who are training abroad also receive their vaccinations timely.**
 - xiv. **The Government has facilitated relaxation in the travel restrictions for the Indian athletes to the other countries for participating in Olympic Qualifiers and Competitions before the start of the Tokyo Olympics.**
 - xv. **A quick response injury and management rehabilitation cell was established under the Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) comprising expert panel of physicians, physiotherapists, and musculoskeletal experts to monitor the injury prevention protocols of Olympic bound athletes.**

xvi. Considering the fact that Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games is being held under unique circumstances, orientation/sensitization programs for athletes and their support staff in collaboration with the Indian Olympics Association has been conducted as under:

- **Playing Clean: Overview of all the functional information and protocols related to antidoping that are applicable for participation at the Olympics.**
- **Life at Tokyo: Orientation of rules, regulations and protocols that the athletes (and the support staff) would have to adhere to before travel, on arrival and while staying at the Olympic Games village.**
- **From India, with pride: Obligations and expectations of being an ideal ambassador of India with an emphasis on understanding Japanese culture and etiquettes, addressing lingual barriers and realizing the social responsibilities as an athlete.**

(c): Services of support staff/personnel like Physical Trainer, Sports Psychologist, Mental Trainer and Physiotherapist etc. is provided to all the sportspersons under Target Olympic Podium Scheme. Sport Psychology Cell has been established to map the requirements of athletes. Headed by Sr. SAI Sports Psychologist, the Cell is responsible for monitoring the psychological and mental training requirements of the athletes and providing them with necessary assistance where required.

Regular interaction with the athletes was done in order to boost their morale and keep them motivated in the tough times of pandemic. Seminars and workshops by experts in sports psychology, sports science/medicine, nutrition in Covid, strength & conditioning, high performance sports environment, anti-doping have been organized for TOPS athletes via, video conferencing, social media like Facebook Live, Insta Live etc., to educate athletes about how to cope with stress during tough times and focusing on their objectives so that the training is not hampered.

Annexure

Annexure referred to in reply to part (a) of the Lok Sabha UnStarred Question No.1821 for answer on 29.07.2021 regarding Target Olympic Podium Scheme by Shri Achyutananda Samanta, Hon'ble Members of Parliament.

(Amount in Rupees)

		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
S.N	Sports Discipline	Total Sanctioned Expenditure	Total Sanctioned Expenditure	Total Sanctioned Expenditure	Total Sanctioned Expenditure
1	Archery	9832657	6610677	7580000	5625000
2	Athletics	14224266	12511645	17024814	10050262
3	Badminton	3907000	13254740	21394736	9572607
4	Boxing	6917785	3501780	10821858	5582663
5	Cycling	4676707	1687075	1000000	325000
6	Golf	0	0	0	0
7	Judo	2847904	21245	1375000	1150000
8	Para Sports	12888410	30522686	25650744	12937890
9	Gymnastics	7139359	10529	0	0
10	Rowing	0	0	625000	743212
11	Shooting	33709032	19888194	30536169	15969947
12	Table Tennis	5537351	6327253	5309756	3467270
13	Tennis	10969827	7011893	7800511	7078156
14	Weightlifting	4278454	3697849	5594965	9954813
15	Wrestling	11991617	18394356	13979254	8199090
16	Swimming	1210428	690740	6956888	2183213
17	Squash	3274956	0	0	0
18	Hockey	1800000	0	936666	15301666
19	Equestrian	0	0	0	150000
20	Sailing	0	0	0	8473972
21	Fencing	1167223	0	0	2419590
22	Luge Sports	0	0	0	0
23	Wushu	6787520	7350	0	0
	Total	143160496	124138012	156586361	118734351

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**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING**

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *175
(TO BE ANSWERED ON 30.07.2021)**

NEWS IN SIGN LANGUAGE

***175 SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:**

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has issued accessibility guidelines for private TV channels to broadcast news at least once a day in sign language and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has specified any monitoring mechanism to ensure the implementation of these guidelines by private TV channels and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure that information on important issues/official press conferences particularly on COVID19 developments are accessible to people with hearing and other disabilities through sign language?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING; AND MINISTER OF
YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR)**

- (a) to (c) : A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *175 FOR ANSWER ON 30.07.2021**

(a): Yes Sir. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has formulated and issued “Accessibility Standards for Television Programmes for Hearing Impaired” on 11.09.2019 to facilitate accessibility to TV programmes and News for persons with hearing impairment.

The formulated standards, inter-alia, contain provisions to make the TV content, including news programmes, accessible by use of closed captioning, sign language interpretation and subtitling in a phased manner with graded targets. In respect of the accessible news, the formulated standards prescribe that the private News broadcasters may start with daily sign language news bulletins, effective 16.09.2019, with facilitation from Doordarshan which may provide its sign language news bulletin free of cost to the private news broadcasters till 31.12.2020, during which time private news broadcasters may develop their capacity to produce their sign language news bulletins. Keeping in view the unprecedented COVID situation, Doordarshan has agreed to extend the sharing of the feed till 31.12.2021 to give more time to the private broadcasters for making in-house arrangements.

(b): Yes Sir. The implementation of the accessibility standards by the private TV channels is being monitored by the Ministry and monthly reports are generated. The reports are also being updated in the MIS portal developed by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) for the purpose.

(c): Ministry of Information and Broadcasting disseminates information on Governance policies, programmes, initiatives and achievements through various media units like Press Information Bureau (PIB), Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC) and Prasar Bharati, the public broadcaster, through Doordarshan and All India Radio, utilizing various media vehicles like print, electronic media, social media, internet websites, outdoor publicity, live arts and interpersonal media. The above-said accessibility standards contain provisions for dissemination of information related to emergency services, public communications, public service messages, announcements etc. It is

inter-alia prescribed that for the hearing impaired people, emergency information must be provided in formats accessible to such persons, namely open captioning/ subtitling/ Sign language interpretation in appropriate forms of communication to leverage mainstream communication channels.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2145
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02ND AUGUST, 2021
Safety in Online Education**

2145. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether any steps have been taken/ proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure the online safety of young learners and preventing them from falling into frauds, scams or obscenities and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the Government is taking any measures to control or prevent cyber-bullying which has the potential to rise as more group activities move online, as perpetrators can hide behind usernames or handles and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether the Government is taking steps to spread awareness amongst parents and other stakeholders to ensure they are properly equipped to safeguard their wards and if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER
MINISTER OF EDUCATION
(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)**

(a) to (c) Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has launched a 'Cyber Security Handbook' to ensure safe and healthy digital habits among students. This module covers topics in cyber safety, such as cyber bullying, including social exclusion, intimidation, defamation, and emotional harassment, online sexual abuse, cyber radicalisation, online attack and frauds, and online enticement. The 'Cyber Security Handbook' can be accessed at this link: http://cbseacademic.nic.in/web_material/Manuals/Cyber_Safety_Manual.pdf

Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) under Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology has prepared guidelines to handle the security concerns about various video conferencing apps, which can be found at this link:

<https://www.cert-in.org.in/s2cMainServlet?pageid=PUBWEL01>

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has also issued advisory to all secretaries at school education department of all states to ensure safety of students in online classes.

PRAGYATA guidelines for school heads and teachers describe the need assessment, planning and steps to implement digital education while ensuring cyber safety and privacy measures. The guidelines can be accessed at:

https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/pragyata-guidelines_0.pdf

मत्स्यपालन, पशुपालन और डेयरी मंत्री

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. : 2959
(To be answered on the 5th August 2021)**

FLIGHT CONNECTIVITY FROM BHUBANESWAR

**2959. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA
SHRIMATI MANJULATA MANDAL**

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION

ଜାଗର ବିମାନୋତ୍ଥାନ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ

be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether the Government proposes to provide direct international flight from B.P.I. Airport, Bhubaneswar to Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Singapore and other South East Asian countries and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to issue a No Objection Certificate to Rasagovindpur Air strip in Mayurbhanj for its future development for civilian use under RCS-UDAN, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government is considering to introduce more routes in Odisha through RCS-UDAN, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether the Government is considering to include additional routes from Veer Surendra Sai (VSS) Airport, Jharsuguda and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

Minister of State in the Ministry of CIVIL AVIATION

ଜାଗର ବିମାନୋତ୍ଥାନ ମନ୍ତ୍ରାଳୟ ମେ ସଭ୍ୟ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ

(GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD))

(a): Bhubaneswar is already included in the list of 18 destinations from where the Indian carriers and carriers of 5 SAARC countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Sri Lanka) and 10 ASEAN countries (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Philippines and Laos) can operate unlimited frequencies subject to availability of slots at the airport. The Government provides an enabling environment for growth of civil aviation sector but does not interfere in the operational plans of the airlines. Airlines are free to select whatever markets and network they wish to service and operate within the ambit of bilateral agreements. The airlines provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability.

(b) & (c): Rasgovindpur airstrip is included in the UDAN scheme document

and routes connecting Rasgovindpur to Bhubaneswar have been offered in the UDAN bidding round 4.1. Airfields of Odisha included in the UDAN Scheme are Rourkela, Amarda Road, Angul, Barbil, Birasal, Gudari, Hirakund, Jayakpur, Jeypore, Lanjigarh, Nawapara, Padampur, Rairangpur, Raisuan, Rangeilunda, Sukinda, Theruboli, Tushra, Utkela. After four rounds of bidding, AAI, the implementing agency has awarded RCS routes connecting Bhubaneswar, Jharsuguda and Rourkela in Odisha.

(d): Jharsuguda has become a served airport after operationalization of routes connecting Jharsuguda to Bhubaneswar, Raipur, Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Mumbai. Airlines may consider the commencement of further additional routes based on their commercial viability.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3061
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.08.2021

POSHAN TRACKER APPLICATION

3061. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the target set by the Government to reduce stunting and anaemia among children by 2022 and whether such target has been revised due to COVID-19 pandemic, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has paid or plans to bear the cost of mobile phones and expenses related to recharge, for the utilization of 'Poshan Tracker' application in view of poor financial condition of Anganwadi Workers (AWs), if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (c) whether the Government has set up training camps for AWs to use 'Poshan Tracker' application on smartphones, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) POSHAN Abhiyaan aims to reduce malnutrition in the country in a phased manner, through a life cycle approach, by adopting a synergised and result oriented approach. The Programme strives to induce behavioural change through nutrition centric *Jan* Andolans in the form of Poshan Pakhwadas and Poshan Maahs. The target for reducing the prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years is by 2% per annum and anemia among children under 5 years is by 3% per annum.

(b) Poshan Tracker management application provides a 360-degree view of the activities of the Anganwadi Centre (AWC), service deliveries of Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and complete beneficiary management for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children. Simultaneously, the mobile application also digitizes and automates physical registers used by AWWs that helps improving their quality of work.

The AWWs are being provided Smartphones procured through Government e-Market (GeM) for efficient service delivery. A total of 8.66 lakhs Smartphones have been procured by 32 States/UTs. Further, AWW and Lady Supervisor (LS) are being provided ₹200/- per month for recharging of smart phones.

(c) Government has organised training of AWWs to facilitate use of Poshan Tracker by them and till date, more than 6.5 lakhs AWWs have been trained. Further, Ministry has sent a communication dated 2nd February 2021 to States/UTs regarding appointment of Nodal Person for providing technical support and resolving any issue about downloading the new Poshan Tracker application and its functioning.

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FINANCE
LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3412
TO BE ANSWERED ON 09.08.2021

Cryptocurrency Transactions

3412. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE

be pleased to state:

- a) whether the Government is taking steps to regulate cryptocurrency transactions in India, or on platforms based out of India and if so, the details thereof;
- b) whether the stance of the Government is one of a complete ban of private cryptocurrencies or one of regulation and licensing and if so, the details thereof;
- c) whether the Government views cryptocurrency as akin to money or legal tender, and hence regulations such as the Foreign Exchange Management Act will be applicable to cryptocurrency transactions or as an asset class like gold or stocks and if so, the details thereof;and
- d) whether the Government is aware of the enormous environmental impact mining cryptocurrency has and if so, the details of the steps if being taken to combat this issue and reduce cryptocurrency's impact on the environment and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PANKAJ CHAUDHARY)

(a) to (c): It was announced in the Budget Speech for 2018-19 that "The Government does not consider crypto-currencies legal tender or coin and will take all measures to eliminate use of these crypto-assets in financing illegitimate activities or as part of the payment system. The Government will explore use of block chain technology proactively for ushering in digital economy." A High-Level Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Economic Affairs) to study the issues related to virtual currencies (VCs) and propose specific actions to be taken in this matter recommended in its report that all private cryptocurrencies, except any cryptocurrency issued by the State, be prohibited in India. The Government would take a decision on the recommendations of the IMC and the legislative proposal, if any, would be introduced in the Parliament following the due process.

RBI, vide the circular on Customer Due Diligence for transactions in Virtual Currencies dated May 31, 2021, has, inter alia, advised that banks as well as other regulated entities may continue to carry out customer due diligence processes in line with regulations governing standards for Know Your Customer (KYC), Anti-Money Laundering (AML), Combating of Financing of Terrorism (CFT) and obligations of regulated entities under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, (PMLA), 2002 in addition to ensuring compliance with relevant provisions under Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) for overseas remittances.

(d). No, Sir. The Government does not collect data on environmental impact due to mining of cryptocurrency.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3649**

TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 10TH AUGUST, 2021/ SRAVANA 19, 1943 (SAKA)

MARINE POLICE STATIONS

3649. SHRI ACHYUTANANDA SAMANTA:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is considering to sanction two new Marine Police Stations along the coast of Odisha, as there is a huge gap in the coastal areas of Puri and Balasore district, if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor; and**
- (b) whether the Government will sanction the construction of new jetties along the Odisha coast, if so, the details thereof; and**
- (c) whether there are any plans to establish coastal security headquarters or a modern control room in Bhubaneswar to monitor movements of boats in coastal area including boats of Marine Police Stations by using modern communication facilities**
- (d) if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor?**

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

(SHRI NISITH PRAMANIK)

(a) to (d): Based on the vulnerability/gap analysis carried out in consultation with the Government of Odisha, Government of India has provided 18 Coastal Police Stations, 5 Jetties, 15 boats, 23 four wheelers and 41 two wheelers to Odisha under the Coastal Security Scheme of Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. Scheme has no provision for establishment of Coastal Security Headquarters in the Coastal States/Union Territories, including Odisha.

Appendix - II

1. Letters to the Ministers: Minister of Railways

Prof. Achyuta Samanta
Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha)
Kandhamal, Odisha

- Member-Standing Committee on Railways.
- Member-Committee of Privileges



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Ref No: MP-LS/AS/367/21

Date: 03/08/2021

To,
Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw,
Hon'ble Minister of Railways,
Government of India,
New Delhi.

Subject: Lack of Rail Connectivity to Phulbani and Request for Annexe

Most Respected Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw Ji,

I write this letter to you, reiterating my requests during the Zero Hour in Lok Sabha on 27 June, 2019, and subsequent correspondence with your ministry regarding lack of railway connectivity in my constituency - Kandhamal in Odisha.

Kandhamal is a region, located 250 kms from the state capital in Bhubaneswar and is blessed with dense forests, scenic waterfalls, towering mountains and hospitable people. However, as mentioned by me on the floor of the House, one of the primary problems is connectivity - of the district headquarters (**Phulbani**) with the rest of Odisha and between the ports and important productive areas.

To give you a clearer picture, the only means of public transport for passengers to reach there is via buses and for movement of goods is via trucks. Many of my constituents haven't seen a railway line in their lifetime, just on television. The long-standing dream for a railway link to Phulbani in Kandhamal district is yet to turn into a reality for the people.

Existing Network and Delays

The 298 km Khurda-Balangir railway line project is getting delayed. The deadline has been set for 2021. The rail link has reached till Nayagarh, (at a distance of 66km) which

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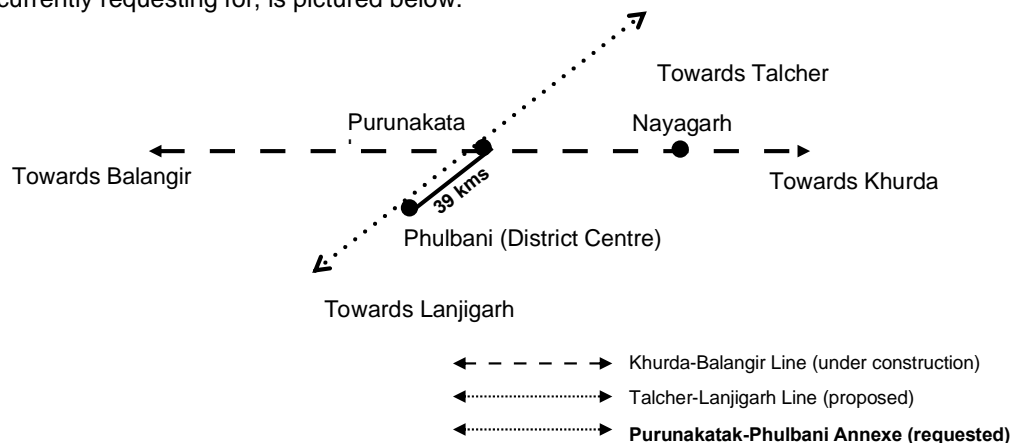
is 99 kilometers from Phulbani. 2 passenger trains run from Nayagarh and that is all, even though passenger movement is ever-increasing. Further connectivity to Dasapalla, Banigochha, Purunakatak and on to Balangir has to be expedited.

The State government is partnering with the Ministry of Railways and is bearing 50 per cent of the construction cost. While I understand that construction has challenges like forest terrain, land acquisition, and environment clearances, there still seems to be an inordinate delay in completion of this construction and connection to Phulbani.

Requirement of an Annexe

As the tracks are getting laid till Banigochha, Purunakatak upto Balangir, it is important to lay an annexe from Purunakatak to Phulbani at the earliest. Purunakatak is the nearest railhead from Phulbani and lies merely 39 kms from Phulbani. **It is vital to connect Phulbani as it is the district headquarters and a nerve center of the region.**

This extension can later connect with the Talcher Lanjigarh line, as per existing plans. A rough sketch of the under-construction Khurda-Balangir line, the proposed Talcher-Lanjigarh line, and the **annexe construction** from Purunakatak to Phulbani, which I am currently requesting for, is pictured below.



2

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Importance of improved railway connectivity in Kandhamal

As you may already be aware, Kandhamal is one of the poorest districts in India, with approximately **70 per cent** of its population belonging to the Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes. Even while being part of NITI Aayog's "Transformation of Aspirational Districts" programme, Kandhamal ranks a lowly **90th** and among the **20 Least Improved districts** in the programme. The development of many areas has been **seriously hampered** due to the lack of railway connectivity. This project can **boost the market** for forest and organic agricultural produce (including Kandhamal Haldi, which has recently obtained a GI tag) of tribal people and dalits. It is vital that these areas are connected directly to a port or to urban areas via Khurda. The proposed track can **improve prospects of tourism and eco-tourism** in places like Daringbadi, known as the Kashmir of Odisha, as well as give an impetus to industrial growth in southern Odisha. Further, better railway connectivity can also **ensure reduction of Left Wing Extremist (LWE)** activities in the area.

It is very saddening to know that Kandhamal does not have a railway link even after 70 years of independence. Connectivity is the cornerstone of development and it seems to be a far-flung dream for my Kandhamal. I would urge you to take note of this and request you to expedite the current construction of the Khurda-Balangir line, as well as help Phulbani connect through an extension rail line for passenger movement to Purunakatak or add it to the proposed Khurda-Balangir line, if feasible, especially as you also come from the same state and understand the problem in greater detail.

Thanking you,
Yours sincerely,

Dr. Achyutananda Samanta,
Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha), Kandhamal.

3

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