

Regarding rehabilitation of slum dwellers residing on lands belonging to Railways, MTNL & Defence

SHRI NARESH GANPAT MHASKE (THANE): Honorable Speaker Sir, I rise today to draw the urgent attention of this August House to a critical issue concerning thousands of acres of land belonging to the Railways, MTNL, and the Ministry of Defense in the regions of Mumbai, Thane, Kalyan, Dombivli, and Ambernath in Maharashtra. These lands have been occupied for over 50 to 60 years, with generations of people residing there.

Speaker Sir, to resolve this long-standing issue and facilitate the development of these areas, the State Government of Maharashtra has proposed three specific alternatives to the Central Government. One of these proposals suggests that the State Government would pay 25% of the land value to the Center based on the current Ready Reckoner rates. The remaining 75% of the land would then be developed by the State Government as per SRA norms, and 25% of the developed portion would be handed back to the Central Government. Alternatively, if development on the current site is not feasible, the Central Government should provide 75% of the land's value to the State, allowing the State to rehabilitate the slum dwellers at an alternate location. Furthermore, the State Government is fully prepared to provide complete cooperation if the Center chooses to develop these lands through its own agencies, such as the Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA). However, it is disheartening to note that the Central Government has not yet provided a proactive or positive response to these proposals. While the intent to develop the land is clear, such development cannot and should not happen by displacing or ruining the lives of the people currently living there. These residents have their schools, livelihoods, and entire social ecosystems rooted in these locations for decades.

Speaker Sir, through you, I urge the Central Government to conduct a joint meeting with the State Government to find a humanitarian solution that ensures justice for these residents. We are talking about 2.15 lakh slum dwellings. A collaborative approach will not only benefit the residents but also the Central Government, as it will regain possession of encroached lands and enable organized, high-quality urban development.

I request the Government to consider this demand with empathy and take immediate steps toward the integrated redevelopment of these areas for the welfare of the poor and the growth of our urban infrastructure. Thank you.