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A statement circulated by Shri Ram Naik, BJP leader and former Minister of State for Railways (Independent Charge) in a Press Conference held at Mumbai on 15th February, 2014

Interim Railway Budget violates Rules and Conventions: Ram Naik

Mumbai, Tuesday: "Lok Sabha witnessed an unprecedented chaos by four Ministers when they did not allow Railway Minister Shri Mallikarjun Kharge to present his interim budget - vote on account. Added to that the Railway Minister also committed a serious blunder by violating parliamentary rules and conventions in his speech", criticized Shri Ram Naik, former Minister of State for Railways (Independent Charge) and BJP leader in a press conference held today at Mumbai.

Shri Naik while briefing on procedure of vote on account said,"Instead of complete budget; vote on account is presented when General Elections are at the doorsteps. The Parliament's sanction is obtained for the expenses of 2-4 months of the next financial year vide vote on account. As per rules no new services or projects are included in the vote on account. However, the Railway Minister has clearly flaunted these parliamentary rules and conventions. Since prior sanction of the cabinet is obtained before presenting vote on account in the parliament; not only the Railway Minister but the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and his entire cabinet is responsible for this deliberate breach", criticized Shri Naik. "Shri Subhash Kashyap, former General Secretary of Lok Sabha and the imminent expert on the parliamentary proceedings and rules has also endorsed my opinion", informed Shri Naik.

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"Under the title 'New Services' 17 premium trains, 38 express trains, 10 passenger trains, 7 Memu-Demu trains and 6 extendent trains are included in this vote on account alongwith surveys for 19 new lines and 5 double lines. These announcements not only violate the rules but are meant for appeasement as General Elections are at the doorsteps", criticized Shri Naik.

"As per parliamentary convention, vote on account speech includes review of previous year's budget. While the paragraph of Metropolitan Railway which include Mumbai Suburban Railway system is totally missing, there is no indication of the projects like Churchgate-Virar elevated corridor under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) through which the then Railway Minister has said that he expected investment of Rs. one lakh crore. Moreover, in the previous budget the then Minister has said that a proposal for Rail Tariff Authority has been formulated and is at inter-ministerial consultation stage; while this speech says the Rail Tariff Authority is being set up to advise the government on fixing fares and freights. There is no indication as to why it could not be established during the year", added Shri Naik.

Chief Minister Shri Prithviraj Chavan and Dy Chief Minister Shri Ajit Pawar have also joined the Railway Minister in misleading the people. In their response to vote on account speech of the Railway Minister, both of them have said that the Railway Minister has approved Pune Metro. However, the word 'Pune Metro' can not be found in the full speech of the Railway Minister. "This is a cheap attempt to hoodwink the people in view of coming Lok Sabha election", commented Shri Naik at the end.

(Office Secretary)