

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Monday, February 10, 2025/ Magha 21, 1946 (Saka)

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, pleased to extend greetings to hon. Member of Parliament, Shri Sanjay Seth, on his birthday today.

Shri Sanjay Seth is in his third term in the Rajya Sabha since April, 2024. He had previously served in this august House from 2016 to 2019 and from 2019 to 2022. As a Parliamentarian, Shri Sanjay Seth bears a polite, suave and persuasive temperament and imparts inventions in the House after due diligence.

In industry, Shri Sanjay Seth has made infrastructure development as his forte. His tenure as President of Confederation of Real Estate Developers Association of India, Uttar Pradesh, was significant, heralding impactful reforms in the sector.

Shri Sanjay Seth has keen interest in sports. As Vice-President of Uttar Pradesh Olympic Association and Uttar Pradesh Badminton Association, he initiated promotional sponsorships for sports. He continues doing it currently as well. Shri Seth has widely travelled and represented our Parliament at the Asian Parliamentary Assembly in Bahrain in December last year and made contributions that evoked positive response.

Shri Sanjay Seth is married to Shrimati Reena Seth and the couple is blessed with son, Kunal and Daughter, Riya.

Hon'ble Members, on my own and your behalf, I wish him a long, healthy and happy life and extend greetings to his family members.

MATTERS RAISED WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

1. Demand for Timely Updation of Aadhaar Details

DR. AJIT MADHAVRAO GOPACHADE: Misuse of Aadhaar card, which is mandatory for legal and financial transactions in India, not only endangers the security of individual identity but also undermines the credibility of the entire system. The UIDAI has recently advised individuals to update their Aadhaar card information. But this updatation is not mandatory. During investigations into fraud in various electoral processes of the country, it has come to light that Bangladeshi infiltrators are engaged in casting votes. This situation affects the fairness of the democratic process and also puts the rights of citizens jeopardy. There is a need for strict monitoring and appropriate action on issues related to identity and citizenship, so that the security and law and order of the country can be ensured. The Central Government should enact a law, under which it is mandatory for Aadhar card holders to

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update their Aadhar card information regularly. It should also be ensured that the information of all citizens is updated and accurate. The Government should also impose a fee for the updation. This fee will not only help in managing the Aadhar updatation process, but will also ensure that these people take their Aadhar card information seriously. The Government should take concrete steps in this direction and make the Aadhar card system more effective and secure.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

2. Concern over the People Deprived of Entitlements under the National Food Security Act, 2013

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI: The National Food Security Act introduced by the UPA Government in 2013, was a landmark initiative aimed at ensuring food and nutritional security for the country's 140 crore population. This legislation played a crucial role in protecting millions of vulnerable households from starvation, particularly, during the Covid-19 crisis. It is this Act that provided the basis for the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. Under the Act, 75 per cent of the rural population and 50 per cent of the urban population are entitled to receive subsidized foodgrains. However, the quota for the beneficiaries is still determined based on the 2011 Census. Around 14 crore eligible Indians are thus being deprived of their rightful benefits under the Act. It is imperative that the Government prioritizes the completion of the Census as soon as possible, and ensure that all deserving individuals receive the benefits guaranteed to them under the Act.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

3. Need to Nurture All India Radio (AIR) to Make it World-Class National Broadcaster

SHRI MOHAMMED NADIMUL HAQUE: India has a great tradition of cricket commentary on the radio. This Government is killing that tradition. In the years gone by, radio cricket commentaries had some legends like Berry Sarbadhikary, Pearson Surita, Dicky Rutnagur, etc. Why is Indian cricket commentary on radio now in such a poor shape? There is a huge potential for Akashvani to create good content and reach larger audiences by producing world-class cricket commentary. The BBC and ABC only use the best commentators always. Akashvani is India's national broadcaster. With its massive reach, it has huge potential to lead in this space. Still, the BCCI and channels don't give radio rights to Akashvani. And Akashvani does not even send commentators to the venues, citing lack of funds. Further, one cannot hear cricket commentary on the medium wave. My Party suggests that there must be dedicated channels for each language. To create a pool of top-notch commentators is essential to have an impartial and professional judging system. From the Akashvani panel of commentators, it is essential to select those who have a thorough understanding of cricket and the style to engage the listeners.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

4. Need to Expedite Railway Connectivity in Kalahandi, Sambalpur & Sonepur Regions of Odisha

SHRI SUJEET KUMAR: I request the Hon'ble Railway Minister to expedite and prioritize the final location survey for four critical projects in Western and Southern Odisha. These projects are extremely important to enhance connectivity, boost regional economic development and bring out balanced development of the entire State, and, of course, the entire country. The first project is the Bhawanipatna-Kesinga Railway line, which is in aspirational district of Kalahandi. It will be an alternative to the National Highway-26, which

is now teaming with heavy vehicles and help ease the traffic. The second project pertains to the Sambalpur-Sonepur 77 kilometre railway line and this will again help ease the traffic and it is also of strategic importance because it will connect the Jharsuguda-Sambalpur industrial zone to the coastal areas of Paradip, etc. The third project pertains to the 115 kilometres Kantabanji to Koksara railway line in Kalahandi, Nuapada and Balangir districts. All these three are the aspirational districts. This project will not take up a lot of resources or time and would also be the lifeline of Western and Southern Odisha. The final project pertains to the Bhawanipatna– Phulbani railway line. This is an LWE-affected region in Western-Southern Odisha and heavily populated with the tribal population. This would also facilitate faster movement of goods.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

5. Demand to Retain the Height of Polavaram Multi-Purpose Irrigation Project in Andhra Pradesh

SHRI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE PILLI: The Polavaram Project is the lifeline of Andhra Pradesh. The proposal to lower the height of the dam is deeply concerning. This reduction would cut the water storage capacity drastically undermining the objectives of the project. It will severely impact farmers, disrupt water security and betray the commitments made during the State's bifurcation. The Centre must uphold the original plan and ensure full storage capacity. The Union Budget 2025-26 has allocated grossly insufficient funds to meet the 2026 deadline of the project. The Centre must immediately release all pending funds to prevent project cost overruns and ensure its timely execution. I request the Government to make Pollavaram Project its priority.

(Shri R. Girirajan associated.)

6. Need to Preserve Coastal Culture of Goa

SHRI DEREK O'BRIEN: The coastal culture of Goa is basically made up of two communities. One is the fishing community with and the other is the toddy-tapping community. The vibrant communities in these fishing villages have a great tradition, but now they are going through an existential crisis, for a variety of reasons. It is primarily because of the Coastal Regulation Zones. As a result, these fishermen cannot build homes, cannot park their boats and face all kinds of problems. Worse than that, the trawlers are coming and robbing them of their livelihood. So, the issue here is affecting 20,000 fishermen and about 1 lakh people in this community. There is also one more issue in Goa relating to salt pans. This is an old Goa tradition of using salt pans. From salt pans, they extricate salt. That too is under trouble. These should be preserved as heritage sites. We appeal to the Government to save the fishermen and to save Goa.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

7. Demand to Start Train Services of Rajdhani Express from Darbhanga to Delhi

SHRIMATI DHARMSHILA GUPTA: Darbhanga in my State Bihar is one of those railway stations which come under the 'Amrit Bharat Yojana'. Darbhanga is called the 'cultural capital of Mithila' and it is the second largest region of the State after Patna. Many other businesses including Makhana are also done at national-international level in Darbhanga. So, a superfast train like Rajdhani or Vande Bharat from Darbhanga to Delhi should be run, so that the local residents here can easily travel for business or treatment. Apart from this, not a single train is run from Darbhanga to Guwahati. Dibrugarh Rajdhani train running from Delhi to Guwahati via Samastipur-Muzaffarpur runs 5 days a week. I

request the Hon'ble Railway Minister to kindly run this train via Samastipur-Darbhanga for two days a week, so as to save the time of the local residents and alleviate their problems.

8. Demand to Counter Hostile Drone Activity on the India-Pakistan Border

SHRI SANDEEP KUMAR PATHAK: Punjab shares a nearly 550 km long border with Pakistan, and drones have been seen along this border for the past several years. The most worrying thing is that the number of these drones is constantly increasing, and the number of drones shot down by security forces is still very low. Pakistan is using drones, which indicates a serious situation. Pakistan is importing drones mostly from China and Turkey, and anti-drone technology is not yet advanced in our country. It should be acquired immediately. Along with this, we also have to focus on the training of security forces, because the BSF is in the first line on the border and the state police is in the second line. Is the BSF fully prepared from both technical and training point of view? I want to say that not only national security, but also the lives of people living near the border should be kept in mind. The drugs that are sent through drones seal the entire village and house-to-house searches are conducted, which is necessary for security reasons. Unless we adopt a 'zero tolerance' or 'zero intrusion' policy for this problem, this problem will continue. Whatever conventional technology we have works at high altitudes, but drones fly at low altitudes, so our technology needs to be upgraded. Pakistan or any other country will use drones only for strategic purposes, it will send information, drugs, weapons and ammunition instead of dropping bombs, so that its activities remain out of the eyes of the government and it continues its activities. This is a kind of proxy war, which the government should solve once and for all. Especially in the border areas of Punjab, like Amritsar and Tarntaran, the activities of drones have increased a lot. I request the government that this is completely possible from the technical point of view and it should be implemented soon.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

9. Issue of Misleading Facts Related to Indian History Mentioned in the Museum of Union Public Service Commission, New Delhi

DR. SIKANDER KUMAR: The portrayal of historical facts in the UPSC museum, New Delhi, regarding the contributions of great warriors and administrators has been misrepresented. Invaders such as Alauddin Khalji, Sher Shah Suri, and the Mughals are depicted as the greatest warriors and administrators in Indian history, while the significant contributions of Indian warriors and administrators—such as the Gupta emperors, Chola emperors, Vijayanagara emperors, and Maratha emperors—are entirely overlooked. This misrepresentation of historical facts is leading both Indian and foreign visitors to accept incorrect history as truth, thereby sending a misleading message to future generations. Such distortion of cultural and historical facts could have a lasting impact on India's future. I respectfully urge the Government of India to immediately rectify the historical inaccuracies presented in the UPSC museum and highlight, based on authentic historical facts, the immense contributions of India's great warriors and administrators.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

10. Concern over Damage Caused to Crops by Wild Animals in Morni Hills Area of Haryana

SHRI KARTIKEYA SHARMA: Destruction of crops by wild animals has become a major challenge in Haryana's Morni Hills region. Farmers have been battling this problem for years, but now the situation has become so dire that it is becoming difficult for farmers to do farming. There are about 393 villages, 26 panchayats and 22,000 people live in these areas. About 65% of them cultivate vegetables like turmeric, tomato and potato. Being a hilly area,

the farmers here are already troubled by water shortage and they have to do farming despite facing these problems. After that, when the crop is ready with great difficulty, they fear damage from wild animals. There is an urgent need to formulate a national prevention policy to protect the interests of both farmers and wild animals, so that the crop can be saved before it gets destroyed. Solar fencing can be a very effective solution to solve this serious problem. A detailed plan should be made in collaboration with the Forest Department and Agriculture Department of the Government for special wildlife management, so that the increasing number of wild animals can be controlled and their problem can be taken cognizance of in coordination with the administration. Along with this, there is a need to provide alternative food etc. for wild animals and also to enable the local monitoring system of community participation. This is not only the problem of the farmers of Morni Hills region, but the farmers of the forest areas around which farming is done also have to face the same problems.

(Shri A.A. Rahim, Shri Ram Chander Jangra, Dr. John Brittas and Shri R. Girirajan associated)

11. Demand to Revoke Delisting of Indian Seafood Companies from European Union, and, Export Restrictions to the Customs Union (Russian Federation) and United Kingdom

SHRI MASTHAN RAO YADAV BEEDHA: For decades, the Indian shrimp industry has been a substantial contributor to the India's economy. The European Union remains one of the most promising markets for Indian seafood, particularly, the shrimp, with its steady demand playing a crucial role in securing valuable foreign exchange for India. Seafood Exporters Association of India has appealed several times to the Government, explaining all the facts for relaxing Indian seafood companies from 'suspension orders' imposed since 2017 by the European Union authorities on Indian seafood exporters. It is to inform that no further action has been taken by the EU authorities to restore the EU status for the delisted Indian shrimp companies. Some of the companies were already approved to export to the Customs Union (Russian Federation) by the Export Inspection Council (EIC), India. The said companies are not yet listed in the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (FSVPS) approved establishment list at Customs Union (Russian Federation). On account of this, the approved companies are unable to export to Customs Union. Some of the companies previously delisted by the EU have been re-listed by the United Kingdom Health Authorities on their official website as of January 30, 2023. However, these re-listed companies have not yet been authorized to export to the UK, as the decision is still pending further clearance from the UK Government. We respectfully request compassionate and urgent intervention to resolve the delisting issue, allowing the reinstated shrimp export companies to resume exporting shrimp consignments to the European Union, UK, and Russia. This will help enhance market opportunities, strengthen the industry's global reach, and support the sustainable growth of Indian seafood exports, with a particular focus on shrimp.

(Dr. Fauzia Khan, Shri R. Girirajan , Dr. John Brittas, Shri Prakash Chik Baraik and Shri A.A. Rahim associated)

12. Concern over Social and Economic Conditions of Sick Workers of Coal India

SHRI SANJAY SINGH: Under a provision in Coal India's Act, workers who fall seriously ill due to their work—such as with cancer or severe liver or kidney diseases—are entitled to have their dependents provided with jobs. Additionally, the company's Medical Board is responsible for conducting medical examinations for these conditions. However, it is

deeply unfortunate that, despite more than seven years having passed since November 18, 2017, this Medical Board remains non-operational. I respectfully urge the government to thoroughly investigate this matter, hold the responsible parties accountable, and address the grave suffering of those workers who have even appealed to the President for euthanasia. Furthermore, I request that the dependents of these workers be granted jobs under the compassionate appointment scheme, following their medical examination.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

13. Demand for Including Lepcha, Bhutia and Limbu Languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India

SHRI DORJEE TSHERING LEPCHA: The Government of Sikkim, since its merger with the Union of India, has taken a bold step towards promotion of languages in the State. It is to place on record that the first democratically elected State Government had passed a historic Sikkim Official Languages Act, 1977 on 25th October 1977 and adopted Nepali, Bhutia and Lepcha Languages as the State Official Languages of Sikkim and, thereafter, Limbu language was also adopted as the Official State Language of Sikkim through the Sikkim Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 1981. Moreover, with the introduction of Lepcha, Bhutia and Limbu languages in the school curriculum in the State, this language has been further extended to the Post-Graduate courses and presently further extended to Ph.D. under Sikkim Central University. News bulletin in All India Radio, Gangtok, are being aired in these three languages. Similarly, Sikkim Herald, a weekly newsletter, is also being published in these languages edition through Information and Public Relations Department, Government of Sikkim. In addition, the Sikkim Legislative Assembly had also adopted the Resolution in the year 2008 for inclusion of Lepcha, Bhutia and Limbu languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. With this background, I take this privilege to request the Government of India to kindly examine the proposal of the State Government for early inclusion of these three languages in the list of Eighth Schedule of the Constitution on top priority.

(Shri R. Girirajan, Shri Devendra Pratap Singh, Shri Khiru Mahto and Shri Dhananjay Bhimrao Mahadik associated)

14. Demand to Include Traditional Kitchen Tips for Home Remedies in Education System of the Country

DR. KALPANA SAINI: I want to present a very sensitive and important topic before you. This topic is related to our health, tradition and the future of the coming generations. In today's modern era, we are forgetting our traditional kitchen remedies. We are becoming dependent on medicines for minor diseases and problems, whereas our Indian kitchen has always been a treasure trove of natural medicines. The traditional spices used in our kitchen are not only for enhancing the taste, but they also work as a Sanjeevani for our health. For example, turmeric, ginger and garlic are natural antibiotics, which protect the body from infections. Fenugreek, cumin and coriander contain abundant amounts of vitamins, minerals and fibers, which improve digestion. Asafoetida and carom seeds are a panacea for stomach problems. I urge the Government to include traditional kitchen recipes in the education system, conduct practical cooking sessions in schools and colleges and teach students how they can improve their health using traditional recipes. If we make our traditional spices and recipes a part of education, we will be able to protect future generations from disease, nourish them and empower them mentally. This will be a revolutionary step towards natural and sustainable health.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

15. Need to Address the Problem of Substandard Medicines in the country

SHRI PRAMOD TIWARI: I want to raise a question in the context of increasing number of substandard medicines in the market, due to which crores of people are getting affected and even dying. These medicines are now being manufactured of substandard quality, ranging from paracetamol to blood pressure, cough, multivitamins and calcium medicines, which are used by millions of people daily. The network of substandard and fake medicines is spreading rapidly in the country, and this problem is even more severe in rural areas. A report published in 2022 revealed that more than 15 percent of the medicines manufactured by small drug manufacturers have failed the quality test. These manufacturers usually focus more on rural areas, where there is a huge demand for cheap medicines. Substandard medicines are not only endangering lives, but have become a serious problem for public health. Consuming these drugs can even lead to death. It is estimated that 12 to 25 percent of the medicines produced may be adulterated, substandard or fake. As per the amendment made in the 'Jan Vishwas Bill' in 2023, the punishment for medicines not falling under the standard quality (NSQ) is now allowed to be changed to compounding offences, allowing manufacturers to escape by paying a fine. This is aggravating the problem as the culprits do not fear punishment. The prescription of substandard drugs in government hospitals is the highest, up to 38 percent. I request the government to run a massive awareness campaign on this issue as well as ensure quality in the manufacture of medicines. This is a serious matter, which directly affects 140 crore people, especially the rural population.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

16. Demand to Expedite Railway Projects under Ambala Railway Division

SHRIMATI REKHA SHARMA: On February 26, 2024, the hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, virtually laid the foundation-stone for seven Rail Over Bridge and Rail Under Bridge projects with a total investment of Rs.150.48 crore. These projects are aimed to eliminate manned level crossings, enhancing railway safety and improving operational efficiency. One of the key projects is in Yamuna Nagar and many regions are eagerly waiting for the timely completion of the crucial infrastructure development. I wish to ask the current status of these projects? Are they progressing as per planned timeline? What steps are being taken to ensure that these projects are completed on time to provide safer and more efficient rail and road connectivity? I urge the Government to expedite these projects and ensure that the people benefited from improved transportation infrastructure at the earliest.

17. Demand to Establish a Centre of Excellence in Nursing Education in Kerala

SHRI SANDOSH KUMAR P: Kerala is always known as the best State of professional nurses. Our institutions are also well-known. As far as training is concerned, our institutions are always keeping a very high standard. But, the problem is that there are only 7,300 seats in Kerala for nursing education. So, comparing with demand, these seats are very less in number. Our request is to give more and more seats to Kerala, start more and more colleges, and to start a Center of Excellence in Nursing profession. The migration of Kerala nurses to other countries, especially the European Union, GCC started long ago, way back in 1960s. Even now this demand is at a rise, always. But, we are nowhere to adjust to the aspirants in this field. And, our students are compelled to take this education from other States, especially neighbouring States and institutions, where the standard is not that much high. In this field, private institutions are not offering that much standard. I request to take it very seriously. This also contributes to our economy in a bigger way. Hence, I urge upon the

Government to increase more and more seats in Kerala and start a Center of Excellence in Nursing field.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

18. Demand for Declaring Puri Ratha Yatra as a National Holiday

SHRI DEBASHISH SAMANTARAY: I am sure, all of us here have visited or heard about Puri Ratha Yatra. It is very surprising that there is a national holiday on Mahavir Jayanti and on many other functions. This is the international Ratha Yatra where, over a period of 7-8 days, lakhs and lakhs of devotees attend. It is a spiritual movement of India. And, this happens not once in 100 years, but every year. And, the Ratha Yatra is not only held in Puri, but held everywhere in this country, right from Delhi to Ahmedabad to West Bengal, London, Los Angeles and Paris. Therefore, in the interest of the whole nation, let Puri Ratha Yatra be declared a National holiday.

(Shrimati Sulata Deo, Shri Saket Gokhale, Shri Prakash Chik Baraik and Shri Ritabrata Banerjee associated)

19. Concern over the Rise in Medical Malpractice that Leads to People Being Overcharged

SHRI SANJAY SETH: I want to draw the attention of the Government towards the unethical loot being done by insurance companies and hospitals. Today, the cost of treatment of insured persons is being increased in collusion between hospitals and insurance companies across the country. For the same operation, the hospital charges Rs 40,000 from non-panel patients, but the same bill is increased to Rs 65,000 with insured persons. Due to this, the insurance companies have to pay more and both the hospitals and insurance companies are taking advantage. There is also a lot of delay in the secrecy of claims by the insurance companies and patients are suffering financial loss with unnecessary deductions. Health insurance claims worth Rs 26,000 crore have been rejected in 2024. It has also been observed that insurance companies take more than six hours to approve cashless claims, whereas as per the guidelines of IRDAI, it should be completed in one hour. Apart from this, medical equipment and medicines are available in bulk at a discount of 25 to 30 percent, while the insurance companies are getting the full MRP from the hospitals, so they get 25 to 30 percent more payment. In view of all this, I would like to draw the attention of the government to fix a standard rate for treatment in all hospitals, so that there is no discrimination between insured and uninsured patients.

(John Brittas and Shri Sujeeet Kumar associated)

GOVERNMENT BILL

The Protection of Interests in Aircraft Objects Bill, 2025 was introduced.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The Union Budget, 2025-26

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: The Budget should have a philosophy behind it, but this Budget lacks any philosophy. It is obvious that this Budget is politically driven. The Hon'ble Finance Minister has requested this House to appropriate Rs. 20,517 crore for the Ministry of External Affairs. Last year, we allocated Rs. 28,915 crore. The Revised Estimate for the current year is Rs. 25,277 crore, which is almost Rs. 3,600 crore less. And for next

year, the Finance Minister is asking for only Rs. 20,517 crore — another Rs. 5,300 crore less. Are we shrinking our global presence? Are we closing down Embassies? Are we closing down Consulates? MEA stumbled badly last week. The United States deportation issue was known to the MEA. I ask the Government: Did the External Affairs Minister raise this matter with Mr. Rubio? Did he know about the SOP which requires them to handcuff, tie the legs with ropes, and mask? If he knew, did he protest to Mr. Rubio? If he did not protest, why not? Another serious matter is the identification of 483 Indians as illegal immigrants. I don't know when their deportation will take place. I ask a specific question: Will the Government send an Indian aircraft to bring back these illegal Indian immigrants?

Income tax cuts are the FM's main thrust in this debate, and she has given a number of interviews. The House should know that only 3.2 crore persons pay income tax, based on the last available figures. The rest file returns, but they pay 'nil' tax. The Government has raised the threshold from Rs. 7 lakh to Rs. 12 lakh, and this applies to all taxpayers, right up to the highest ones. About 80 to 85 lakh taxpayers will be excluded from the tax net from next year, and 2.5 crore people will benefit. This is not only benefiting the middle class, which I welcome, but it is benefiting the very rich and the richest in the world.

The Finance Minister has also claimed that she has foregone Rs. 1 lakh crore. Yet, she claims that the net tax revenues to the Centre will grow by 11.1 per cent in 2025-26. In 2024-25, it grew by 11 per cent as well. Therefore, the number remains about the same. After foregoing Rs. 1 lakh crore in this Budget, how can she claim that the net tax revenues to the Centre will grow by the same 11 per cent? This is pure magic, not mathematics. The Finance Minister says that this Rs. 1 lakh crore will go into consumption, and that consumption will boost the economy. Will not part of the Rs. 1 lakh crore go into savings, into repaying old household debts, into traveling abroad, or for educating children abroad? And will it not go into consuming imported goods? It is only that consumption of domestic goods and services will boost the GDP rate.

My humble advice to the Finance Minister is, do not rely on only one engine of growth—consumption. Look at other engines of growth like exports, capital investment, etc. You cannot rely upon one engine of growth. Most of this consumption will not go into consuming domestic goods and services. In contrast, what she has forgotten is that she remembered the middle class, which I congratulate her for. But what about the section of people she has forgotten? Between 2012 and 2024, food inflation, education inflation, and healthcare inflation were 6.18 per cent, 11 per cent, and 14 per cent, respectively. These have crippled Indian households. What has this Budget done for the average Indian household in the bottom 50 per cent and the bottom 25 per cent? Nothing. She could have done several things. Along with cutting income tax, she could have cut GST. Everybody pays GST. The richest and the poorest are paying GST. She could have cut the tax on petrol and diesel. Everybody uses petrol and diesel, directly or indirectly. She could have increased the MGNREGA daily wage. She could have raised the statutory minimum wage across the board under the Minimum Wages Act. She did nothing, but focused on income tax and the Delhi election.

The gravest challenge facing the country is unemployment. If youth unemployment is 10.2 per cent and graduate unemployment is 13 per cent, how does the Periodic Labour Force Survey, as repeated by the Economic Survey, conclude that the total unemployment rate in India is only 3.2 per cent? I ask the Hon'ble Finance Minister, what is her plan? What is the way forward to create 78 lakh non-farm jobs between now and 2030? What is the difference between the 'Prime Minister's New Employment Generation Programme' and the 'New Employment Generation Programme'? We don't have a new Prime Minister, we have the

same Prime Minister. The Budget allocation for employment generation last year was Rs. 28,318 crore. What will you spend? By March 31, you will only spend Rs. 20,035 crore. Why are you not spending Rs. 8,000 crore on the most pressing challenge the country faces? The PLI Scheme is a spectacular failure.

Incomes are falling; wages are falling; Government expenditure is not keeping pace with the promises; household net savings have fallen; and household debt has risen. There is nothing in this Budget for the bottom 50 per cent. I think we cannot divide this House into one half speaking for the top 50 per cent and the other half for the bottom 50 per cent. In global manufacturing trade, India's share is 2.8 per cent; China's share is 28.8 per cent. So, we are not a big player in manufacturing goods trade. The share of India's manufacturing in the GDP has fallen under this Government. Manufacturing is a spectacular failure, and PLI is a spectacular failure. What has this Government got to boast about after the last 11 years?

The Finance Minister claimed in a number of interviews that she has not only met the fiscal deficit target but has improved upon it. But how did she achieve this? She cut capital expenditure by the Central Government by Rs. 92,682 crore; she cut the grants-in-aid to States for creating capital assets by Rs. 90,887 crore. Total cuts amounted to Rs. 1,83,569 crore. By cutting capital expenditure by such a massive amount, she saved Rs. 43,785 crore on the fiscal deficit. After cutting Rs. 1,83,000 crore, she saved Rs. 44,000 crore. It is not good economics. You cannot cut capital expenditure and reduce your fiscal deficit. The cuts have fallen on health, Rs. 1,255 crore; on education, Rs. 11,584 crore; and on social welfare, Rs. 10,019 crore.

I find it alarming that crucial sectors like agriculture, rural development, and urban development have faced drastic budget cuts, amounting to tens of thousands of crores. Programs aimed at nutrition, clean water, social assistance, rural roads, crop insurance, and welfare subsidies have all seen reductions. The most distressing cuts affect the most vulnerable—Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and scholarship programs for underprivileged students. And yet, the government boasts about managing the fiscal deficit. The Budget is full of grand announcements, but the allocations tell a different story. The much-hyped Urban Challenge Fund of Rs. 1 lakh crore is actually receiving only Rs. 10,000 crore. The Jal Jeevan Mission claims to have provided water to 80% of the population, yet actual spending falls drastically short of the budgeted amount. This disconnect between claims and reality is troubling. The Chief Economic Advisor rightly advocates for deregulation and greater economic freedom, but the government's response has been to introduce more schemes, missions, and funds—without clear financial backing. Governance today feels more like an illusion than a functioning system. In 1991, amidst an economic crisis, Dr. Manmohan Singh led with vision and bold policies that transformed the country. I urge the Finance Minister to embrace the same wisdom and foresight. And I ask, once again—why has the government not yet honored Dr. Manmohan Singh with the Bharat Ratna?

DR. DINESH SHARMA: This Budget marks a historic occasion, with our Finance Minister presenting the Budget for the eighth time in a row. It is not only inclusive of different sections but also prioritises income generation and growth for the low-income groups. Revolutionary changes have been made in areas such as housing, urban development, innovation, research, and women and tribal empowerment. It is a concrete step towards reducing the fiscal deficit and making India the fourth largest economy by 2026. The International Monetary Fund has also praised India's policies, which are turning the country into a growth hub despite the global recession. By making significant changes in the tax structure, the Finance Minister has raised the tax exemption limit to Rs 12 lakh, providing

great relief to the middle class. Investment is being encouraged to promote Ease of Doing Business, which will further boost India's economic progress. Along with strengthening rural and urban infrastructure, adequate provisions have also been made for the education sector. The middle class, which is the backbone of India's economic progress, has been given special importance in this budget. Under this, income up to Rs 12.75 lakh has been exempted from tax. The government's efforts have led to a reduction in the repo rate, which will make loans cheaper and accelerate economic activities. Housing schemes for women, Ayushman Bharat, and social security for the poor have also been given priority. The '*Dharti Aba Janjati Utkarsh Abhiyan*' and other welfare schemes have been implemented for the development of the tribal community. Encouraging start-ups and entrepreneurship, Mudra loans, and employment generation schemes have been expanded. Every section has been taken care of in this budget, whether it be rural, tribal, women, or youth. This government effort is a concrete step towards the goal of a 'Developed India', which will lead India towards becoming economically strong and self-reliant. The Government has decided to open 10 to 30 new medical colleges in tribal areas. Opposition members have used indecent statements for the Hon'ble President, which is inappropriate. In this changed time, our Budget is moving towards a new direction and vision. This Budget has a vision to revolutionize the perspective of artificial intelligence in India. Money has been allocated for all these innovations in line with *Jai Anusandhan*. Now, India is completing its economic journey at a fast pace towards the vision of 'Viksit Bharat'. Women, who are half the population, did not get their rights. Today there is enthusiasm, zeal, and a vision to move forward in the lives of women, and for their development, many initiatives have been taken such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana, Child Marriage Free India Campaign, Matru Vandana Yojana, Lakhpatti Didi Yojana, and the Nari Shakti Vandana Act. A campaign has been run to empower ten crore women through lakhs of self-help groups. Today, they are flying fighter planes, leading. Initiatives for women empowerment have drawn the attention of the whole world towards India. Today the Eighth Pay Commission has been formed for middle-class people. After reducing the repo rate, their loan limit will increase, and they will save.

Income up to Rs 12 lakh has been exempted from income tax. After our Government came to power, the inflation rate over 10 years was 5.1 per cent, whereas it was much higher in previous Governments. Today, during our time, the foreign exchange reserves have reached 619 billion dollars, whereas earlier it was about one-third of this. The rate of unemployment has decreased. Indian Railways has done a wonderful job. Amazing work has also been done in urban development. The new education policy has brought a revolution in the field of education. All languages will get respect in it. Historical improvements have been made in railways, waterways, highways, and bullet trains. Today, this India is challenging the developed nations. Through this budget, the nuances of what Baba Saheb Bhimrao Ambedkar ji had dreamt of are also being realized. The decisions we have taken today will lay the foundation of a developed India. An India that is economically strong, socially inclusive, and technologically advanced, from where the light of progress, prosperity, and innovation will spread across the world.

SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE: Our state Bengal is making remarkable progress. India has a huge youth population. The previous Budget had accorded priority to employment and skill development, given the nature of the election mandate. But this year there is no mention of the same. Youth unemployment rate had gone up to 10.2 per cent and the unemployment rate among graduates was 13 per cent. Surplus labour inundating the job market combined with high food inflation have severely squeezed the real incomes and livelihoods of an overwhelming majority of Indian workforce. Over the last 10 years, frauds have taken away, at least, Rs. 12 lakh crore from our banking system. The rates for loans go

up because banks have suffered at the hands of frauds. You are allowing 100 per cent FDI. Allowing total freedom and greater access to foreign capital could only retard the orderly growth of the insurance industry with the focus more on profits. Our State Government has requested for withdrawal of the 18 per cent GST on life insurance and health insurance policies. The lack of political will is stopping them to roll-back this GST on health insurances. Due to not releasing the funds from the Centre, MGNREGS workers are not being paid. The delay has affected the implementation of critical programmes particularly, in rural areas. I want to present some important figures to this august House. When the unorganized workforce in the country keeps increasing, the health of the economy is not in proper shape. Figures show that in Africa, 86 per cent of the labourers are in the unorganized sector while 14 per cent are in the organized sector; in Asia Pacific and Arab countries, 68 per cent are in the unorganized sector and 32 per cent in the organized sector; in the Americas, 40 per cent are in the unorganized sector and 60 per cent in the organized sector; in Europe and Central Asian countries, 26 per cent are in the unorganized sector while 74 per cent are in the organized sector. Now, we come to *vishwaguru* India. Ninety-three per cent of the workforce has fallen under the unorganized sector; only seven per cent are organized workers. The organized workers definitely have some statutory benefits, but the unorganized workers are deprived of these statutory benefits. Fifty per cent of the contribution to the GDP of our country comes from the unorganized sector. But the Budget has completely neglected them and has said nothing about them. People from the unorganized sector who are covered by the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana (PMSYM) have to contribute every month. In the BMSSY scheme, they need not contribute a single rupee; let the Central Government show the political will and make the entire contribution for the workers. In the 2021-22 Budget, a thousand crores were announced for Assam and Bengal tea gardens. I don't know about Assam, but as far as Bengal's experience is concerned, not a single penny has reached us.

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA: The Budget reveals the priorities of the Government. Our Prime Minister has described this Budget as a roadmap to 'Viksit Bharat'. But the numbers show that the path seems only a mirage. The Union Budget was presented as a proclamation of progress, conveniently hiding the realities on the ground of stagnant growth, growing inequalities, and a sizeable demographic dividend slipping off the fingers into a demographic disaster. This Government's economic policies have always enriched the privileged few, leaving behind a lot of sections of the people into joblessness, inflation, and shrinking opportunities.

We experience that the Union Government is trampling upon the States' fields. In 2020, she quoted Thirukkuralar, "A country's five jewels are: unfailing health, farm productivity, joy, good defence, and wealth." Unfailing health - we are treading behind. Farm productivity - why are one lakh tractors waiting outside the borders of Delhi? If they were contented and productivity was more, or they were given more, it would not have happened. So also is the case with wealth. In 2021, she quoted other lines of Thirukkuralar, "A good king is one who is able to acquire wealth, guard it, and distribute it justly." You collect revenues and you guard it, but the question is: whether it is distributed justly to all the people equally in this country? The answer is, 'No'. It enriched the privileged few and deserted the people who are in the lower rung of this country. Only one per cent of this population is enjoying or controlling 22.6 per cent of the income and 40.1 per cent of the wealth. Whereas, the poor, the people at the bottom, have only 15 per cent of the income and 6.4 per cent of the wealth! It is totally disproportionate.

Tamil Nadu's contribution to the GDP of this country is 9.04 per cent, while what it gets by way of devolution of funds is 4.08 per cent. The 14th Finance Commission

recommended for 42 per cent tax devolution; the 15th Finance Commission reduced it to 41 per cent but, actually, it is only 32 per cent. The contribution of the State of Uttar Pradesh to the country's GDP is 8.19 per cent, while it is getting 17.94 per cent of the devolution. The contribution of the State of Bihar towards the nation's GDP is 2.87 per cent, while it is getting back 10.08 per cent! Why is this discrimination?

In the year 2015, lofty proclamations about Make-in-India were made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister. At the same time, Make-in-China was proclaimed in China. In 2025, the recently-elected President of the United States of America, Mr. Donald Trump, spoke about Make-in-America. China has reached its target, but India has not. Why? It is because the basic things that a nation needs are education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Everything has been achieved by China. But here, the situation is very poor. It has to be admitted. The Union Government is allocating only 2.5 per cent of total expenditure to education. So also is the healthcare. The Union Government allocation is 1.89 per cent. We are having 64 per cent of our population as youth force. How are you going to utilize that? They are suffering because of unemployment.

Madam Finance Minister has announced that up to 12 lakh of income will be exempted? Only one crore of the people are benefited by this. But what about the remaining 139 crore of the people? For the economically weaker section, the slab is 8 lakh rupees per year. That is 75,000 per month. And five acres of land and 1,000 square feet of residential flat or anything which they live in. Those who live in the urban areas, if their income is below Rs. 37, they come under the BPL. And in the rural area, it is Rs. 29. What is actually happening is billionaires are increasing, whereas the basic needs of the people are not fulfilled. If you look at the number of farmers' suicides, there are approximately 31 cases per day. If you look at the number of unemployment-related suicides, there are approximately 9 cases per day. Look at the number of student suicides, there are approximately 36 cases per day. Look at the figure of cyber-crimes, there are approximately 180 cases per day. On enrolment of students in higher education, the national average is 27 per cent, whereas Tamil Nadu's is 47 per cent.

You talk much about infrastructure, and we are asking for metro projects. The metro projects for Coimbatore and Madurai, which have been demanded by the State Government, have not been mentioned in the Budget. The States are not being given their due share by the Union. It is the State Government's choice, whether to accept a policy, which is to the convenience of the Government. The schools are victimized that we are not entitled to have share under SSA from the Government! There were two cyclones, and Tamil Nadu suffered a lot. We have been asking for a relief measure of Rs.30,000 crore from the Government, and we were given only Rs.267 crore. We have to undertake so many things that have been damaged during the cyclone. Disaster relief is not being compensated properly. In the MGNREGA scheme, we do not get what we want. MSME is the largest employment provider next to agriculture. 45 per cent of the exports of this country are from MSME. But, what is the support this Government is extending to MSME? The investment limit for microenterprises, currently, is Rs. 1 crore. Instead of projecting that we have disbursed that much amount of loans, you have to give loans to a greater number of persons in order to generate employment. That is the purpose of the MSME. You have to help the MSMEs to have more enterprises, and in that way, you can generate more employment. The collection of taxes—direct taxes is 56.78 per cent from personal income tax, and the corporate tax has come down! You are favouring the corporates! And indirect taxes remained at 42.68 per cent. 83 per cent of the indirect taxes are from GST. Every individual is paying GST. Why do you not cut down that? You are not doing anything for the common man. You can have your say on Repo Rate or anything of that sort. But, an ordinary person who goes to a bank should not be taxed in the name of interest verification. The MSME, the largest employment provider,

has to be taken care of. But you are trying to make it a corporate. The Government is getting more money by another way, by way of cess and surcharge, and it is keeping that without sharing with the State Governments. My Government in the state is spending Rs. 6 lakhs for constructing a house under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), but the Central Government is contributing only Rs. 1.5 lakh; and even that amount is not being disbursed. Whenever a Budget is presented, everyone is looking. The poor people are expecting the prices to come down. There is a significant disparity in wealth distribution, with wealth being inequitably shared, and in such a situation, the poor people are all disappointed.

SHRI GOLLA BABURAO: The entire Budget, from every angle, has deceived the poorer and vulnerable sections of society. The budgetary allocations are the fuel for the governance of the country. Everything hinges on better financial allocation and the optimal utilization of financial resources. The Government receipts, excluding borrowings, are estimated to be Rs. 34,96,409 crores, which is 11.1 per cent higher than the Revised Budget Estimate. However, it remains a tough task to bridge the gap between receipts and expenditure. The Government has increased the income tax exemption limit to Rs. 12 lakhs, which is considered a great relief to the middle class. However, in the process, the Government will lose Rs. 1 lakh crores. Due to the decrease in the value of money, whatever has been given to the poor is little, and much more needs to be done. A lot more needs to be done to address the basic economic problems facing the citizens, especially the weaker sections of society. The allocation towards the welfare of women is estimated to increase due to the increased allocation for the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, for which the female head of the family must be the co-owner of the house. For the first time, a new scheme has been introduced for SC, ST, and women. Other vulnerable groups have been allocated Rs. 2,523 crores. If you take the combined allocation for women, OBC, SC, and ST welfare, it is not even 2 per cent of the total Budget allocated! This is most unfortunate. 90 per cent of the people in our country are poor, but the entire Budget is meant for the rich.

SHRI DEBASHISH SAMANTARAY: There is limited focus on wage growth in this Budget. While there are mentions of employment generation and skilling initiatives, there is no clear plan to increase minimum wages or improve labour conditions. The speech discusses boosting MSMEs and manufacturing but does not propose substantial measures to improve working conditions or wages. Unlike the previous budget, this one does not propose new or expanded direct financial support for low-income workers to counter inflation and rising living costs. This Budget, which was expected to bring inclusive growth, has once again failed to address the pressing issues faced by the people of Odisha. It is surprising that the Government has announced a huge amount for urban development. It is a disappointing Budget that ignores the common man. The Budget attempts to shine the surface, but beneath that shine lies disappointment. No measures have been taken so far to control inflation. We have been repeatedly asking for special category status. Other States are receiving special funds because of this Government's political compulsions. Bihar has been given a substantial amount. Odisha contributes significantly to the divisible pool of taxes. Yet it does not receive its fair share. Due to this, the State is losing vital funds that could have boosted infrastructure, strengthened welfare schemes and accelerated income growth. There is exploitation of Odisha's natural resources. The Centre auctions Odisha's mineral blocks, but the State does not get fair share of the revenue. Odisha's rail density is much lower and key railway projects are pending. I request that Orissa be granted Special Category status, fair share of Central taxes and revenues, higher investment in railway and infrastructure, revision of coal royalty, and equitable share from clean energy cess.

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: It was mentioned in the Economic Survey that there is a necessity to promote investment capital and increase domestic consumption to achieve

specific economic growth. It was expected that the Budget would include plans for focusing on the poor, women, farmers, and youth changes. The changes made in the custom duty and in the income tax limits are welcome steps. While Bihar has got more Schemes but the States like Tamil Nadu did not get any major schemes or proposals in this Budget. It is sad to note that there is no project to take care of the irrigation needs of Tamil Nadu. The projects like interlinking of rivers were expected, but there was no mention about that in this Budget. Godavari-Kaveri Interlinking project would benefit Tamil Nadu but it did not find a place in the Budget. There is no mention of metro rail projects, new railway line between Jolarpettai-Bengaluru and a Greenfield airport in Hosur. The request for several National Highway projects was not considered. My request for extension of the road from Karur to Coimbatore under the eight-lane project and a link road from Tiruchi to Karur was also not accepted. The Finance Minister has mentioned to add 10,000 seats for medical students in the next year. I appreciate the same. I also appreciate the demand for more money for Tamil Nadu. Coming to the housing scheme, the money allotted for each house is very less. Poor people are not able to get good houses and are suffering. I request to consider all these points.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: It is a disappointing Budget. It has particularly neglected the rural areas. MNREGA was the only scheme in which the workers of rural areas got work. The budget for MNREGA has been reduced. Our country has more foreign debt than it has forex. About 20 per cent of the budget goes towards interest on foreign debt. About 42 per cent of the people in the country are dependent on agriculture. The budget for agriculture is only 4.8 per cent. Our country ranks 105th in the Hunger Index. One per cent of our people own 44 per cent of the wealth. This is an economic imbalance and this disparity has to be addressed. This is an anti-farmer budget, a budget against the youth, a budget against the rural areas and the general public as a whole has nothing to do with this budget.

SHRI MILIND MURLI DEORA: Reducing corporate tax in this budget will provide equal opportunities to MSMEs, and reducing the burden of compliance will strengthen the business-friendly environment. By investing in logistics and digital infrastructure, India transformed 'Make in India' into 'Export from India'. India's foreign exchange reserves have more than doubled. India has been ranked 63rd in the 'Ease of Doing Business' ranking. The FDI in manufacturing is 165 billion dollars. The number of internet connections has increased four times. The number of UPI transactions has also increased exponentially. In 2024, India has become the world's largest mobile manufacturer. Indian exports have increased. There are 660 medical colleges in the country, of which 23 are AIIMS. We have 23 IITs and 21 IIMs in the country. The number of airports in the country has increased to 157. Multi-dimensional poverty has decreased. The number of Jan Dhan accounts has increased to 50 crore. Renewable energy capacity has tripled to 203 gigawatts. Today, one of the biggest reasons that India has progressed, has been progressing and is able to withstand the global shocks is the decisive leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi ji.

SHRI JOSE K MANI: When it comes to the General Budget, we talk about the whole nation but I am compelled to talk about my State, Kerala. The Budget has completely neglected the State of Kerala. The State has earned a place in the India's growth map. In the case of human development, Kerala is much higher than some of the States in the country. But even then we are being neglected and out of allocation of all the States, Kerala has been given no funds. Talking about devastating landslides in Wayanad, several months have passed but not even a single pie has been allotted. The State is asking for AIIMS for the last 10 years, but deliberately it is not being sanctioned because there is no political gain in Kerala. The Kerala economy revolves around the price of rubber. The price of rubber has now come down to Rs.140 per kilo. It is because of uncontrolled import of natural rubber.

During the last five years, the Government has earned about Rs.5000 crores on the import duty. I request the Government to give 75 per cent of the money to the Rubber Production Incentive Scheme. India received an estimate of Rs.129 billion worth of remittance from NRIs. But the Government introduced an oppressive tax regime on NRIs under the guise of global financial transparency.

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: This Budget is for the economic growth of the country and is a farmer-friendly budget. It is for the poor and the middle-class people of our country and also for the development of the North-Eastern Region of our country, including Assam. This Budget is a historic Budget for the North-Eastern Region. This Budget has provided more for capital expenditure and development. It means money will be invested in the market in a big way. In the Budget proposal, the Railway Minister has proposed to invest about Rs.11,000 crore for the infrastructure development and to improve railway connectivity in the North-Eastern Region. The Railway Minister has announced that by 2025 all the railway routes shall be electrified. This Budget has given proposal to set up urea production in our State. There will be urea industry in Namrup which is going to produce 12.7 lakh metric tonne urea annually. Fertilizers have played a very important role in the socio-economic development of Assam and the North-Eastern region and also for the tea growing industry of our country. Owing to this Urea project Assam Government is going to have a 40 per cent share. The new urea production facility will be a 'game-changer for the entire North-East'. We will go towards 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' in urea production with this project. For this, we will get market from the South-East Asia, Bangladesh and other countries. Many prominent industrialists from many countries of the world including Japan, Korea and nearby countries already have accepted to participate in Advantage Assam 2.0 in 2025. After successful organization of Advantage Assam 2.0, Assam will be one of the major industrial players of our country. With this, I totally support the Budget and compliment our hon. Prime Minister.

DR. MEDHA VISHRAM KULKARNI: Thank you for giving me this opportunity to discuss this budget and express my support. This is a budget dedicated to patriotism and to the nation. Those with an anti-national mindset will find this budget disappointing. I want to congratulate Hon'ble Modi ji and the respected Finance Minister, that she has presented this budget here for the eighth time. This budget is all-inclusive and will fulfil the dreams of every Indian. The resolution of this budget is developed India. This resolution will be fulfilled through reform, execution and transformation. There are four pillars of this budget, namely, agriculture, MSME, investment and export. The objectives of this budget are to get rid of poverty, provide good quality education, provide affordable, better and accessible health system, cent -percent skilled workers, provide meaningful employment and also to include 70% women in economic activities. These provisions, these announcements are going to prove very important and beneficial. Under the leadership of Hon'ble Modi Ji, this government competes with itself. Ample funds have been provided to all sectors. This budget has increased manifold as compared to 2013. Until the Hon'ble Modi Ji's government was not in power at the Centre, not a single work could be done under the Central Government's scheme in Pune and Maharashtra. Today the situation is such that metro network is being developed everywhere in Pune. Ample funds have been provided in the budget for Maharashtra and Pune. I would like to say that kindly welcome this budget, do not make it a political issue and all should contribute in this development.

SHRI AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH: The budget speech of the Finance Minister this time was presented in the media and everywhere as if Bihar has received a huge gift. I want to discuss here through you what Bihar was and how it has been systematically

neglected. When the reorganization bill was being debated in the country's Parliament, the then Home Minister of that time, L.K. Advani ji, while discussing the division of Bihar, had talked about dividing Bihar into Haryana and Punjab and giving a package of Rs 1,80,000 crore to Bihar. Even today the people of Bihar are waiting for that package. The regional imbalance in the country in terms of economic development cannot be resolved until it is resolved. The situation of Bihar in terms of regional imbalance in the last 60 years is extremely worrying in itself. In 1960-61, Bihar's per capita income was 70% of the national average, but today Bihar's per capita income is about 32% of the national average. In 1960-61, Bihar's contribution to the country's total GDP was about 8%, which has now come down to 4%. Per capita expenditure on roads in Bihar is only Rs 44, while the national average is Rs 117. Similarly, per capita expenditure on irrigation in Bihar is only Rs 104, while the national average is Rs 199. NABARD itself has admitted in one of its reports that the distribution of agricultural loans in Bihar is very low compared to the rest of the states of the country, that is, if a state with about 9-10% of the country's population is so far behind on all parameters of economic development, then how can you talk of making the country a developed nation and who can believe in this? According to the report of Niti Aayog, among the 28 big states in the country, Bihar has either been placed at 28th or 27th position in almost all parameters, be it health care, education system or industrialization. On the basis of these figures, I only want to say that the development of Bihar is nowhere in the priority of this government. In this budget, another announcement was made about Bihar that a national institute of food processing will be opened there. We welcome this. Where you come from, bananas are cultivated very well there. Makhana Commission will be formed, when will Banana Commission be formed? You should also form Litchi Commission so that it also gets its benefit. But the most important thing is the establishment of sufficient number of cold storages. The total number of cold storages in Bihar is 313, whereas Gujarat alone has more than 1,000 cold storages and the number of cold storages in Uttar Pradesh is about 2,500. In the financial aid given to the states for setting up cold storage, Bihar got Rs 33 crore in the year 2021-22, again Rs 33 crore in the year 2022-23 and in the year 2023-24 this amount was reduced to Rs 32 crore.

When respected Ravi Shankar Prasad ji was the IT Minister, he had said with great fanfare that IT parks will be set up in Bihar like Bengaluru and Hyderabad and electronic clusters will be opened. 10 years have passed, but in my opinion not even a single call center has been established in Bihar. In 1960, 1961, 1962, this Bihar used to give 27 percent of sugar to the national kitty and now when there is a double engine government, it has come down to less than 2 percent. This time a Greenfield airport was also announced. There is an airport in Purnia and Bhagalpur, which used to work earlier, but could not become functional. Bihar is facing the problem of continuous floods and droughts. Until you give Bihar special status, the economic plight of Bihar will not end. A prestigious university like Patna University, which has produced thousands of officers, thousands of great doctors and thousands of engineers who have contributed to the country, did not get the status of a central university. Bihar is facing this kind of neglect and insult. Bihar had Nalanda University, where people from all over the world used to come to study. Bihar is a symbol of hard work and knowledge and it has been the cultural center of Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. If you will neglect and insult Bihar for a long time, then the people there will teach you a lesson in the coming elections. There are 2% people who are being given a toy of Rs 12 lakhs by saying that no tax will be levied on that much income. It is fine for them, but you should also think about the 98% people who do not pay income tax, those local people.

MS. SUSHMITA DEV: I would like to say that this Budget is an insensitive Budget; insensitive to the people of the country and more insensitive, in particular, to the North-East

of India. when it comes to the North-East, all the things that ail this nation, whether it is price rise, whether it is unemployment, whether it is lack of investment, all these problems multiply as we go towards the North-Eastern States. I would like to say that it has consistently been the vision of the Government of India that they have given the States of North-East special status and special focus The Prime Minister Modi changed the Look East Policy to Act East Policy, but today, till the gateway to the South-East Asia, which is the State of Manipur, continues to burn, the Act East Policy is destined to fail. It is destined to fail, and I would like to say that today, with our security concerns with China, the political situation in Myanmar and the political situation in Bangladesh, I can tell you with great surety that the prospects of the economy of the North-Eastern States growing are rather dismal. I heard the hon. Finance Minister talk about Bihar. I heard the hon. Finance Minister talk about middle-class with the Delhi elections which were due. Today, the Finance Minister should have promised a comprehensive package for the rehabilitation of Manipur. There should have been a comprehensive package because what happens to Manipur impacts all the North-Eastern States. The North-East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme's allocation has been slashed by 39 per cent. Grants under the Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region, have been slashed by 36 per cent. Sir, Grants to Autonomous Councils has been slashed by 96.6 per cent. Grants by Ministry of Home Affairs have been decreased by 45.6 per cent. Then, we were all hoping for a 'New India'. Nobody knows what happened to 'New India'. Now, she says that our new destination is 'Viksit Bharat by 2047'. I do not think, I will be alive and here in this Parliament to see what happens in 2047. This Government has systematically destroyed the public sector enterprises in the State of Assam. Two paper mills owned by the Hindustan Corporation have been shut down. In the North East, for minimal treatments, we have to go to Chennai, Kolkata and Delhi. Let us talk about UDAN scheme. I come from a remote area in Assam called Silchar. I am pained to say that there is not a single route, I repeat, not a single route, from the Silchar airport which is recognized by UDAN. It is an insensitive Budget which does not talk about unemployment, which does not talk about price-rise and which does not address the ailing and burning issues of this country.

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Secretary-General.

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