RAJYA SABHA

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***SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE**

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(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

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Wednesday, February 11, 2026/ Magha 22, 1947 (Saka)

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MATTERS RAISED WITH PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

1. Need for Awareness and Safeguards on Digital Safety and Mental Health

SHRI BABUBHAI JESANGBHAI DESAI: In recent times, harmful activities and online challenges being circulated on various online platforms have emerged as a serious challenge to the mental health and life safety of our teenagers and youth. Through Digital India, the country has made significant progress in the field of information technology, but this has also led to an increase in the misuse of digital platforms and the risks they pose. Recently, some social media content was driving adolescents towards self-harm, risk-taking behaviour, and severe mental distress, and alarming incidents have been reported from various states. Therefore, I urge the Government to establish a robust regulatory framework to identify, continuously monitor, and promptly remove harmful online content, conduct digital safety and mental health awareness programs for schools and parents, and implement stringent and effective punitive provisions to ensure accountability of social media companies, so that digital progress can be balanced with the safety and mental health of children.

2. Need for Establishment AIIMS in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh

DR. LAXMIKANT BAJPAYEE: I would like to draw the attention of the Government of India to the establishment of an AIIMS in Meerut. This is essential given the health needs of the approximately 70 million people in the 24 districts of Western Uttar Pradesh. Despite the presence of AIIMS in Rae Bareli and Gorakhpur, approximately 21 percent of patients from Western Uttar Pradesh are arriving at AIIMS Delhi daily, placing a significant burden on the Delhi AIIMS. Lala Lajpat Rai Medical College in Meerut has 52 acres of land available, but due to lack of beds, vacant doctor positions, and outdated equipment, patients with cancer, cardiology, respiratory, neurology, and complex surgeries have to rely on Delhi, impacting the golden hour of treatment. Therefore, I urge the establishment of an AIIMS in Meerut. If this is not immediately possible, approval should be given for a PGI, satellite centre, or cancer institute. I would like to request through you that AIIMS should be established for the health care of the people of Western Uttar Pradesh.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

3. Demand for Urgent Measures to Control Rising Population of Monkeys and Stray Dogs

SHRI JAVED ALI KHAN: Keeping in mind the suffering of the people of my state and the country, I want to raise the serious issue of increasing stray dog and monkey attacks, which has now become a serious and epidemic-like situation. Thousands of people have been attacked by stray dogs in several districts of Uttar Pradesh— Baghpat, Hathras, Chandauli, Sant Kabir Nagar, Bijnor, Jalaun, and Lucknow. In my own district, 100 to 150 people are receiving anti-rabies vaccinations every day. In 2024, approximately 2.7 million attacks were reported nationwide, most of them in rural areas. I believe that the situation has been exacerbated by factors such as the removal of monkeys from the

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Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and the reduction in food sources for dogs. Therefore, I urge the Government to take concrete and coordinated steps to permanently address this problem.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

4. Demand for Development of Darbhanga Airport as an International Airport

SHRI SANJAY KUMAR JHA: Darbhanga Airport in Bihar is the most successful airport under the "UDAN Scheme" and has handled over 3 million passengers in the last 4-5 years. The Bihar government has submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Civil Aviation to declare Darbhanga Airport an international airport. Currently, the airport is under the control of the Indian Air Force, which requires coordination with the Central Government for its expansion. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) stated need for additional land to develop the runway. The Ministry of Defence granted in-principle approval on 09.12.2024, and the land acquisition process is in the final stages. Currently, Darbhanga Airport has become a major air connectivity hub for citizens of North Bihar and Nepal. Granting international status would significantly boost regional trade, especially the export of globally sought-after products like makhana. Therefore, I urge the Government to coordinate with all relevant ministries and expedite the process of declaring Darbhanga Airport an international airport, thereby giving a new direction to the development of Mithila and Eastern India.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

5. Need for Unified Export & Manufacturing Zones (UEMZ) Framework to Strengthen India's Manufacturing & Exports

SHRI MASTHAN RAO YADAV BEEDHA: I would like to draw the House's attention to the urgent need for a national policy on Unified Export and Manufacturing Zones (UEMZs) in India, particularly in the context of Andhra Pradesh's emerging industrial and port-based ecosystem. The integrated industrial-export model in East and Southeast Asia has increased competitiveness by reducing logistics costs, while logistics costs in India still remain at 13-14%. I would particularly like to highlight that Andhra Pradesh, with its 974 km coastline, major ports, and industrial corridors, is an ideal state for a UEMZ pilot project. Therefore, I would also like to know whether the Government is considering a national UEMZ policy, and whether coastal states like Andhra Pradesh will be given priority.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

6. Need for Reconsideration of Water-Sharing Provisions under Indus Waters Treaty

SHRI GHANSHYAM TIWARI: I would like to express my appreciation through this House for the indomitable courage and strong will of the Hon'ble Prime Minister for taking the historic and tough decision of suspending the Indus Waters Treaty after the Pahalgam attack. This treaty, signed between Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Ayub Khan in 1960, allocated approximately 80 percent of the waters of the western rivers—the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab—to Pakistan, while India received only 20 percent. Furthermore, despite the provision for regular review of the treaty, it remained unreviewed for decades. I also request that a plan to divert the waters of the Chandra and Bhaga rivers into the Sutlej through a tunnel be seriously considered. This could provide approximately 3 MAF of additional water to India's share, greatly benefiting Punjab, Haryana, and especially the drought-prone areas of Rajasthan—Sikar, Jhunjhunu, Churu, and Nagaur.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

7. Need for Welfare Measures for Soyabean Farmers in Gwalior Region, Madhya Pradesh

SHRI ASHOK SINGH: I stand in this House as the voice of millions of soybean farmers in Madhya Pradesh. The situation of the farmers who made our state the "Soy State" is extremely worrying today. The recent India-US deal has deepened the crisis for farmers due to the import of cheap soybean oil and grain. The Government declared an MSP of Rs 5,300 per quintal, but farmers in Dewas, Indore, and Sehore are forced to sell their produce for Rs 3,000. Costs are rising, but they are not getting a fair price. If cheap imports continue, not only will farmers' incomes be affected but

more than 150 processing plants will also be at risk. I demand the Government reconsider this agreement and protect farmers' interests. On the one hand, the Government promotes self-reliance, but on the other, the food provider is being sacrificed. I demand that the soybean imports, as agreed upon in the agreement, be immediately halted.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

8. Need for Right to Recall Legislators in the Country

SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA: Just as Indian voters have the right to elect their representatives, they should also have the right to recall. If an MP or MLA fails to perform their duties, becomes distant from the public, or forgets their promises, voters have no choice but to wait for five years. The right to recall is not against democracy, but rather a means of safeguarding it. Our Constitution should ensure accountability for public representatives. This system is in place in many democratic systems around the world, and examples of it exist at the Panchayat level in some states in India. To prevent its misuse, necessary safeguards, minimum signature limits, and conditions such as an initial term should be established. This will make democracy more accountable, transparent, and people-centered.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

9. Need to Design and Implement Comprehensive Scheme in line with 'Naan Muthalvan' Scheme to Solve Unemployment Crisis in the Country

SHRI R. GIRIRAJAN: I raise serious concern over the growing unemployment crisis, particularly among youth and educated individuals. There is a clear mismatch between education and industry requirements, insufficient large-scale job creation, and emerging threats from artificial intelligence. I urge the Union Government to strengthen MSMEs, expand skill development, promote industry-academia collaboration, and implement a comprehensive national employment scheme on the lines of Tamil Nadu's '*Naan Muthalvan*' model with adequate financial support.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

10. Demand for Introduction of Vande Bharat Express Service from Gandhinagar to New Delhi

SHRI MAYANKKUMAR NAYAK: I request the introduction of a Vande Bharat sleeper train from Gandhinagar to New Delhi via Himmatnagar, Shamlaji, Udaipur, and Jaipur. This service will benefit North Gujarat, Southern Rajasthan, tribal regions, and important religious and tourism centres. It will enhance connectivity for administrative, educational, medical, and business purposes. I urge the Railway Minister to take an early and positive decision.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

11. Concern over Rising Mental Health Crisis among Adolescents in the Country

SHRIMATI JEBI MATHER HISHAM: I express deep concern over the rising mental health crisis among adolescents, including suicides influenced by social media, online content, and cyberbullying. Many young people are struggling to distinguish between reality and the virtual world. I urge the Government to prioritize adolescent mental health, integrate it into school curricula, and implement awareness and preventive measures.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

12. Need to Fill Vacancies in National Commission for Minorities

SHRI P. WILSON: I highlight the prolonged vacancies in the National Commission for Minorities at a time when minority communities face increasing violence and hate speech. The absence of leadership has weakened the Commission's functioning. I urge the Government to immediately fill the vacant posts, grant it constitutional status, and strengthen its powers to effectively safeguard minority rights.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

13. Need for Fixing Accountability of Public Servants to Curb Administrative Apathy

DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL: I draw attention to repeated tragic incidents caused by administrative negligence, including deaths due to poor infrastructure and delayed response. While private individuals are held accountable, public servants often escape responsibility. I urge the Government to enact a clear law enabling victims to directly approach courts and ensure strict accountability through fast-track mechanisms.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

14. Concern over Curtailment of Rights of Backward Classes and other Forest Dwellers under Forest Rights Act, 2006

SHRI KHIRU MAHTO: I demand amendment of the Forest Rights provisions that require 75 years of land possession for eligibility. This condition deprives backward classes and other forest dwellers of rightful benefits while industrial expansion continues. I urge the Government to reduce this requirement to 15 years to protect their livelihood and rights.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

15. Need for Establishment of a National Millets Processing and Export Centre in Hamirpur District of Uttar Pradesh to Strengthen 'Shri Anna' Mission

SHRI BABURAM NISHAD: I request the establishment of a National Millets Processing and Export Centre in Hamirpur, Bundelkhand. Although the region is well-suited for millet cultivation, farmers lack processing and value addition facilities. Such a centre will enhance farmers' income, create employment opportunities, and strengthen the 'Shri Anna' mission. I urge the Agriculture Minister to approve this proposal.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

16. Demand for the Installation of Busts of Revolutionaries Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Ullaskar Dutta and Hemchandra Kanungoe in the Andaman Cellular Jail

SHRI RITABRATA BANERJEE: I demand the installation of busts of Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Ullaskar Dutta, and Hemchandra Kanungoe in the Andaman Cellular Jail. These revolutionaries endured severe torture for India's freedom but have not received due recognition. Honouring them will ensure that their sacrifices are properly acknowledged.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

17. Need to Divide Ahmedabad Postal Division into Two Divisions

***SHRI NARHARI AMIN:** The Government is providing citizen-centric services to every village, every household and every person through approximately 1,64,000 Post Offices. The Modi Government has opened about 5,000 new Post Offices and sanctioned 5,746 new Post Offices during 2014 to 2024. About 1,28,000 new jobs have been created in the postal network. In 2026, the population of Ahmedabad is estimated to be about 8.85 million. This includes the population of the city and the newly developed areas around it. Ahmedabad is the fifth most populous city in India and the seventh largest urban agglomeration. The present postal division is facing a heavy workload due to the increase in postal services and development and population growth, resulting in delays and inefficiencies in operations. To overcome this problem, the existing Ahmedabad Postal Division can be divided into two or three divisions, reducing the workload of the post offices under each division and improving the quality of service by focusing more on specific areas. Dividing Ahmedabad Postal Division into smaller units can also (1) lead to more efficient resource allocation and management. (2) The demand for postal services in specific areas can be better met. There is a need to divide Ahmedabad Postal Division into two (2) divisions. I request the government to take urgent necessary action in this regard.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

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*Spoke in Gujarati.

18. Demand for Change of Name of the Kanjad (Kanjhar) Community

PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV: I request the Government to change the name of the 'Kanjhar' community listed under Scheduled Castes, as the term carries historical stigma and social humiliation. This derogatory perception affects their education, employment, and dignity. Renaming the community with a respectful title will help remove stigma and ensure social justice.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

19. Concern over Neglect and Vulnerability of Elderly Citizens Living Alone with Children Settled Abroad

DR. RADHA MOHAN DAS AGRAWAL: I raise concern about elderly parents living alone in India while their children are settled abroad. Many face neglect and tragic deaths due to isolation. I urge the Government to strengthen legal safeguards to ensure financial support, caregiving responsibility, and regular communication from children living overseas.

(Several hon'ble Members associated.)

20. Demand for Extending Rs. 25 Lakh DICGC Deposit Insurance Cover and Enabling UPI Services for Urban and Rural Cooperative Credit Societies in Maharashtra and Rest of Country

SHRI DHANANJAY BHIMRAO MAHADIK: I demand extension of deposit insurance coverage up to ₹25 lakh for cooperative credit societies and inclusion of these institutions under UPI services. Millions of depositors, including senior citizens and middle-class families, lack adequate protection and digital access. I urge necessary amendments to ensure financial security and digital inclusion across the country.

GENERAL DISCUSSION-*Contd.*

The Union Budget, 2026-2027

SHRI HARIS BEERAN: I raise four key concerns regarding the Budget. First, I question whether honest taxpayers are being denied refunds to manage the fiscal deficit and sought clarity on the total refunds held back and their impact on deficit projections. Second, I point out that while industrial sectors receive strong support, farmers and fishermen lack adequate measures to compete globally. Third, I express disappointment over the absence of meaningful projects for Kerala and requested clarity on the proposed rare earth project. Finally, I highlight the poor implementation of previously announced schemes, noting that many remain at the consultation or drafting stage, and stress that without timely execution, governance becomes merely a slogan rather than meaningful action.

DR. KAVITA PATIDAR: I would like to say in support of this historic Budget that it symbolizes the resolve of a Developed India and the confident spirit of a New India. I congratulate Finance Minister Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman for presenting the Budget for the ninth consecutive time, which reflects her commitment and is a strong example of women's empowerment. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Modi, India continues to move forward strongly with a growth rate of over 7 percent despite global uncertainties. We successfully faced challenges like COVID-19 and took concrete initiatives in areas such as Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the semiconductor mission, biopharma, and renewable energy. This Budget is not merely an account of income and expenditure, but a decisive step toward achieving the goal of a Developed India by 2047. I would like to say that this budget clearly defines our duties—accelerating economic growth, fulfilling the aspirations of the nation, and ensuring opportunities reach every region and every section of society. The record capital expenditure of ₹12.2 lakh crore, increased allocations for education and healthcare, and the removal

of customs duty on life-saving medicines for serious diseases like cancer reflect a strong commitment to public welfare. We aim to empower our youth through AI and innovation so that they become not just consumers, but creators. The 15 percent increase in the defense budget sends a clear message of India's proactive defense approach and commitment to self-reliance—our policy is now focused not on imports, but on making, exporting, and taking pride in our capabilities. Despite criticism from the opposition, the country continues to move steadily toward development and the goal of a "Developed India," and I express my gratitude to the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister while calling for everyone's participation in this mission.

SHRI ASHOKRAO SHANKARRAO CHAVAN: I would like to say that the budget presented under the leadership of the Prime Minister strengthens the country's rapid economic growth and the resolve of a Developed India. This budget aims to empower youth, women, farmers, and marginalized sections of society and is based on the spirit of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas". For Maharashtra in particular, this budget is historic. A record provision of ₹23,926 crore has been made for railway development, and there has been large-scale expansion of new railway lines, electrification, and infrastructure in the state. Projects such as the Mumbai–Pune and Pune–Hyderabad bullet trains will bring revolutionary changes to the transport sector. At the same time, I urge that the Wardha–Yavatmal–Nanded railway line in the Marathwada region be expedited and that the Nanded–Bidar new railway line project be completed at the earliest. I would like to say that projects like the Nanded-Bidar railway line and the Nanded-Latur new railway line are extremely important for the development of Marathwada and Karnataka. These projects should be approved quickly and advanced on a 50:50 cost-sharing basis. Additionally, starting trains like the Nanded-Pune Vande Bharat, Nanded-New Delhi Vande Bharat, and other superfast trains is also a strong demand from passengers. Through the Budget, Maharashtra has received substantial financial support, including tax devolution and incentives for high-value crops. I also urge that the Price Stabilization Scheme (Bhavantar Payment Scheme) be implemented nationwide to help farmers during adverse weather or market price drops. This Budget is not just on paper but represents practical implementation and continuity of schemes across the country, which will certainly lead India towards progress. Finally, I would like to say that an excellent Budget has been presented. At a time when the global economy is unstable, this Budget of India provides economic stability and strength.

SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA: I rise to speak on the Union Budget 2026 at a crucial moment for India's growth journey. I welcome its strong focus on manufacturing, MSMEs, infrastructure, export competitiveness, and ease of doing business, which will strengthen investment and India's global position. However, I also raise constructive concerns that growth alone is not sufficient. Employment must remain central to policy, and investment success should be measured by the creation of dignified jobs, particularly for youth in smaller towns and rural India.

While I welcome tax simplification, I emphasize that certainty and taxpayer confidence are equally important. Any changes affecting cash flows or reopening settled matters must include safeguards so that honest taxpayers feel protected, not anxious. India's future will be shaped in its cities and districts. Therefore, urban governance, water security, climate resilience and balanced regional development need greater focus. Growth must not leave behind farmers, informal workers and backward regions. I have repeatedly urged the formation of separate Boards for jackfruit, tamarind, and jamun, which are organically grown, require minimal water and greatly benefit small and marginal farmers. I welcome the Makhana Board in Bihar and hope similar support will be extended to these crops in southern States. The Government's encouragement to high-value crops like coconut, cocoa, sandalwood and cashew is commendable. However, coconut, the lifeline of coastal farmers, deserves a higher allocation—at least five per cent of the agriculture budget. We must also develop reservoirs, strengthen inland fisheries, and improve value chains with the involvement of start-ups and women's groups. I further reiterate my request to expand industrial corridors, particularly connecting Bengaluru to Mangaluru and linking major ports, to boost economic activity. Finally, "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" must mean inclusive, sustainable, and just growth. With this spirit, I support the intent of the Budget and hope its implementation reflects the aspirations of every Indian.

SHRI SUJEET KUMAR: I rise to say that this Budget is not merely an annual financial statement but a 25-year civilizational roadmap for a Viksit Bharat. It embodies *Kartavya Rajniti*—a politics of duty—focused on empowering aspirations, accelerating growth, and ensuring *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*. Rooted in our ancient wisdom of Rajdharma, this Budget reflects the principle that the welfare of the people is the true welfare of the nation. I see this Budget resting on key pillars. First, *Surakshit Bharat for Viksit Bharat*—because development is impossible without security. The defence allocation has risen significantly, reflecting our commitment to modernization and Atmanirbhar Bharat. Defence exports have grown manifold since 2013-14, and we are moving towards becoming a major exporter. This sends a strong message that the nation stands firmly behind its Armed Forces. Second, *Shikshit Bharat*—education is as the engine of growth. With substantial allocations for education, Samagra Shiksha, PM SHRI schools, Eklavya Model Residential Schools, and Content Creator Labs, we are investing in youth as national assets. The Budget advances NEP 2020 and ensures that no child or tribal student is left behind. Third, *Stree Shakti*—placing women at the centre of development. Significant gender-focused allocations, girls' hostels in every district, SHE Marts, and the Namo Drone Didi initiative demonstrate our shift from women's development to women-led development. Further, investments in sports under Khelo India aim to prepare India for global events like the Olympics. For Odisha, initiatives like the Rare Earth Corridor, enhanced railway allocations, National Waterways-5, and reduction of TCS on Tendu leaves will benefit lakhs of tribals. This Budget is a call to every Indian to march confidently towards 2047—a secure, educated, empowered, and prosperous India.

SHRI SAT PAUL SHARMA: I speak in support of this Union Budget, not just an annual economic document, but a concrete step towards a developed India. This is not a budget of populist announcements, but one based on public welfare, self-reliant India, structural reforms, fiscal discipline, and targeted public investment. Its objective is to accelerate economic growth through job creation, increased agricultural productivity, and cutting-edge technologies, especially AI. This is a budget based on three duties, which will work towards providing equal opportunities to every family, every sector, and every section. The Prime Minister has pledged to make India a developed nation by 2047. Many of us may not be around then, but our future generations will surely see a developed India. Today, India's economy has grown from $20 billion in 1950 to a trillion-dollar economy. Per capita income has increased from Rs. 265 to nearly Rs. 270,000. We are moving up from 10th to 11th place and joining the world's leading economies and are soon poised to reach the third spot. This is a changed India. With regard to Jammu and Kashmir, I also want to clearly state that a new era of peace, development, and stability has begun there after August 5, 2019. Today, stone-pelting and terrorism have decreased, and children have books and laptops in their hands. This budget has allocated ₹43,290 crore for Jammu and Kashmir, an increase from last year. Finally, I say with confidence that India will become a developed nation by 2047. This is not just the government's resolve, but the entire nation's resolve.

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: I would like to say that this is the Finance Minister's ninth budget, but this time the budget has not had the impact that was expected. There are no notable announcements that deserve special praise. While there is talk of increasing capital expenditure, on the other hand, there are visible cuts in important areas like rural employment and agriculture. I would like to urge the government to introduce a revised or supplementary budget in view of the massive $500 billion economic deal signed with the United States after the budget was presented. When additional expenditure and imports of approximately ₹45 lakh crore are being expected over the next five years, the country should be clearly informed about its financial impact, how spending priorities will be determined, and which direction the economy will take. My concern is that, given such a huge economic responsibility, the budget outline should undergo necessary revisions so that both Parliament and the country can understand the actual situation.

I wish to state that the figure of 500 billion dollars does not include defence purchases; those are over and above this amount, which is a very serious matter. Therefore, the Government should present a revised Budget. There is a repeated attempt to project something as correct through constant publicity, whereas the reality is different. During Dr. Manmohan Singh's tenure, the tariff was below

3 per cent, at 2.92 per cent, and during Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee's time it was around 3 per cent, for which he also deserves due credit.

Today, an 18 per cent tariff is being projected as an achievement, whereas there is a provision of zero per cent for India and 18 per cent for America, along with the continuing threat of penalties regarding the purchase of Russian oil. Other developed nations such as England, Japan, and Korea face lower tariffs. Several economists have also written that this agreement is tilted in favour of America. Therefore, the Government should clarify why it is being described as the best possible deal. I wish to state that the American administration itself is saying that this agreement is in its major interest, particularly in the agriculture and textile sectors. If countries like Bangladesh and Vietnam receive American cotton and agricultural products at a 5 per cent tariff while India faces an 18 per cent duty, how will our textile industry, garment sector, and farmers compete? This will severely impact our exports and cause significant losses to our farmers. I also express serious concern over the compulsory purchase commitment of 500 billion dollars and the restrictions being imposed on procuring oil from Russia. If we are compelled to import expensive and heavy crude oil from Venezuela, the high transportation costs and refining challenges will inevitably increase petrol and diesel prices. Additionally, the import of genetically modified fodder raises questions about its impact on our livestock and dairy production. I further submit that we must have the freedom to decide from whom we purchase oil, and the Government should clarify who is accountable for these decisions. In foreign policy, we describe ourselves as a 'Vishwaguru', but on the international stage, who is truly standing with us? On sensitive issues like Bangladesh, we must adopt a clear, balanced, and nationally driven position.

I wish to state that after a great struggle, we had divided Pakistan and created Bangladesh, but today our policies are pushing Bangladesh closer to Pakistan again, which is not in the national interest. The achievement secured during the time of Indira Gandhi should not be weakened. In matters of diplomacy, the Government should adopt the path of dialogue. The most serious issue is unemployment. Around 15 per cent unemployment means that crores of young people are without work. Government vacancies are not being filled, small industries are shutting down, and the tax burden on small traders is increasing. Adequate attention has not been given to skill development, even though a large number of youth enter the job market every year in search of employment. The Government should give priority to skill development and entrepreneurship in a revised Budget. Rural development and agriculture are the backbone of our economy, yet there has been a reduction in the rural development budget. Youth are described as the strength of the nation, but the manner in which they were treated during the COVID period has left them feeling insecure even today. They need employment opportunities, a stronger health budget, and effective schemes, as the current provisions are not adequate.

SHRI SAKET GOKHALE: Sir, I wish to state that the Government constantly shifts between speaking about 1947 and making promises for 2047, but says very little about the present challenges. In my view, there was a time when policies mattered more than personalities, but today the discourse and even the Budget appear personality-driven rather than policy-oriented, making it difficult for the youth to relate to it. I congratulate the Finance Minister on presenting her ninth Budget, but I must ask: what is the "great Indian dream"? I believe the Government has not clearly defined it and often confuses aspiration with illusion. For me, the great Indian dream must begin with education. Yet, increasing numbers of Indian students are going abroad because developed nations promote innovation, critical thinking, and strong research ecosystems. Our universities, unfortunately, lack that enabling environment. In this Budget, ₹55,000 crore has been allocated to higher education, but only 0.7 per cent is earmarked for research and innovation. I submit that without adequate funding, freedom, and encouragement for research, we cannot expect our youth to build cutting-edge ideas here, which is why many talented Indians pursue opportunities overseas.

I wish to submit that while the Government speaks about becoming a developed nation by 2047, its commitment to research and innovation remains inadequate. The United States spends over 6 per cent of its GDP on research, South Korea nearly 5 per cent, and China 2.5 per cent, whereas in this Budget we are allocating only 0.7 per cent. Nearly 50 per cent of Indian graduates are considered unemployable, youth unemployment is around 15 per cent, and many others are under-employed or

paid far below their worth. Despite launching multiple employment schemes, the Government continues to deny the seriousness of the unemployment crisis and ignores the issue of quality of jobs, long working hours, stress, and job insecurity. Though India is described as the world's fourth largest economy, in per capita terms we rank much lower, and many young Indians face poor living standards, polluted cities, lack of clean drinking water, and high out-of-pocket health expenses, with only about 3 per cent of GDP allocated to healthcare compared to 6 to 9 per cent in developed nations. I submit that without substantial investment in education, research, employment quality, healthcare, and basic public services, the promise of a developed India will remain disconnected from the realities faced by our youth.

Sir, I wish to state that even after allocating ₹3.10 lakh crores for roads and highways, citizens continue to pay tolls, yet 1.7 lakh people die in road accidents every year — nearly 500 deaths daily — raising serious concerns about quality and accountability. The Government also failed to spend 40 per cent of last year's housing allocation, while urban rents consume nearly 30 per cent of a worker's salary and affordable housing remains scarce. Despite ₹1.64 lakh crores spent on 100 Smart Cities, I question whether we can truly claim to have created cities of global standards. I therefore ask the Finance Minister what this Budget does to ensure quality jobs, healthy work conditions, affordable housing, clean water, clean air and reliable healthcare for young urban Indians, and where the "great Indian dream" truly lies for them.

♦**SHRI R. GIRIRAJAN:** This Budget is purely for America. Through an unfair trade deal, this Government has sold India to the U.S.A. In recent times, whether it is about a trade deal, any defence matter, or other important issues, announcements are being made by the U.S. President, Mr. Trump, and this Government does not have the courage to refute what is being said about India. There is a growing apprehension among the people that this Government has surrendered before the U.S.A., compromising our self-respect, sovereignty, and integrity. I strongly expressed that the Union Government has been giving step-motherly treatment to Tamil Nadu, with no special schemes or adequate financial allocations being provided. Prestigious projects like Sethusamudram, implemented by the UPA Government, have been shelved on political grounds. Between 2004 and 2014, the UPA Government gifted 16 major projects to Tamil Nadu, but such support is absent now. Our Chief Minister, Shri M.K. Stalin, has consistently urged that the devolution from the divisible tax pool be increased to 50 percent, yet the Union Government continues to restrict it to 41 percent. The cess and surcharges, which are not shared with the States, should either be abolished or included in the divisible pool. The important projects like the Madurai and Coimbatore Metro Rail have not been approved, while projects in other cities have been cleared. Funds amounting to Rs. 3,012 crores under the Jal Jeevan Mission and allocations for long-pending railway projects have not been released. The excuse of land acquisition delays is misplaced, as funds for acquiring 931 hectares have not been provided. Tamil Nadu's State Domestic Product has grown by 16 percent and that the per capita income stands at Rs. 3.28 lakhs, nearly 60 percent higher than the national average. This reflects the success of the Dravidian model under the dynamic leadership of Shri M.K. Stalin. I must say that the vision of Viksit Bharat can only be achieved through genuine partnership with States, respecting federal principles.

SHRI RAJINDER GUPTA: I come from the sacred land of Punjab and congratulate the Hon'ble Finance Minister on presenting her ninth consecutive Budget. This Budget reflects stability and commitment. A fiscal deficit of 4.4 per cent, capital expenditure of Rs. 12 lakh crore, tax reforms, and steps toward women's welfare are commendable. I also congratulate the Government on the India–EU trade deal. However, if we aspire to become the third-largest economy in the world, greater public expenditure on education, healthcare, and infrastructure is essential. An allocation of Rs. 1.3 lakh crore for education is positive, but it is only 4 per cent of GDP against the 6 per cent target. Despite having 14 lakh government schools, public confidence has declined, 19,000 schools have been closed, and unemployment is around 20 per cent. We must make education affordable and transform government schools into centres of excellence. Our health expenditure stands at only 1.5 per cent of GDP, compared to 18 per cent in the USA, 12 per cent in Germany, and 5 per cent in

♦Spoke in Tamil also.

China. Public hospitals are under immense pressure; therefore, strengthening public healthcare and expanding the coverage of Ayushman Bharat is necessary.

Senior citizens above 75 years of age should be given greater tax relief. For women's empowerment, safe workplaces and increased government procurement from women-led enterprises are essential. The MSME sector, which provides employment to 11 crore people, needs affordable credit support. Punjab should be given at least a Rs. 10,000 crore package to promote semiconductor and manufacturing industries, creating employment opportunities for youth. Ultimately, the true success of the Budget lies in ensuring that its benefits reach classrooms, hospitals, farms, and homes, and that 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas' is realized in spirit and action.

SHRI S NIRANJAN REDDY: This Budget comes at a time of global headwinds, trade volatility, and slowing global business. In that context, it reflects resilience and cautious maturity. That is appreciable. I assess the Government under two heads: policy processes and policy reforms. On processes, I would give 9 out of 10. Procedural improvements have supported a 6.5 to 7 per cent growth rate. But on major structural reforms, I would give 5 out of 10. To utilize our demographic dividend, India must grow at 8 per cent or more. For that, we must unlock and unleash India's potential.

First, contract enforceability. India ranks 163rd out of 190 countries. It takes 1,445 days—almost four years—to enforce a contract, with a 31 per cent loss in claim value. This raises the cost of capital and locks up Rs. 8.1 lakh crore of MSME funds, as noted in the Economic Survey 2025–26. A simple CPC amendment mandating higher penal interest in commercial disputes could deter defaults. Fixing this alone could raise GDP growth by 1.5 per cent.

Second, unlocking gold potential. India holds about 30,000 tonnes of gold worth Rs. 420 lakh crore, exceeding our GDP of Rs. 360 lakh crore. Even monetizing 1 per cent of this could significantly boost growth. We should adopt better-designed gold financialization models and address GST input credit issues in the Electronic Gold Receipt system.

Finally, fiscal discipline. While the Centre's path is commendable, it must move faster towards the FRBM target of 3 per cent and incentivize fiscally prudent States. India's 10-year bond yield is 6.7 per cent, higher than Indonesia's 6.3 per cent, reflecting higher capital costs. With stronger fiscal responsibility and targeted structural reforms, we can push growth beyond 8 per cent and truly unlock India's potential.

SHRI SANJAY YADAV: I see the government's helplessness in this Budget. It does not provide relief to the people; instead, it seems to burden the common man and the poor while benefiting the rich. Before the elections, promises of 2 crore jobs and ₹15 lakh were made, yet unemployment is at its peak, and the word "job" appears only twice in the entire Budget. This country belongs to the youth, farmers, and rural population, but their priorities are barely reflected in this Budget. Policies seem to favor corporate interests rather than supporting the poor. Today, a handful of people control the economy, while millions struggle for basic necessities. We talk about becoming the fourth-largest economy, but with a population of 1.46 billion, the per capita income is only ₹2.2 lakh, and 81 crore people still require free grain. The top 10 percent hold 58 percent of the income, and the top 1 percent hold 40 percent of the wealth—this stark inequality is alarming. The government must focus on equitable income distribution rather than just the size of the economy and prioritize the development of poor and backward states. This country was built on the sacrifices of all communities, so policies must also move forward by including everyone.

SHRI K.R. SURESH REDDY: The increase in allocation for skill development from Rs. 6,017 crore to Rs. 9,759 crore is significant. However, only about 43 per cent of last year's allocation was actually spent. Every month nearly 10 lakh youth enter the labour market, and skill development must lead to meaningful employment. The PM-SETU initiative to modernize ITIs and replace outdated infrastructure is promising, and full utilization of funds is essential. When youth development is discussed, education becomes central. Scholarships for minority students—from pre-matric to professional and research courses—have seen severe underutilization and cuts in actual expenditure. Allocations were announced, but spending remained negligible. Students pursuing

MBBS, engineering, M.Phil. and Ph.D. courses have been affected. The principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" must genuinely include minority children.

Agriculture growth has declined to 3.5 per cent, below the decadal average. Crop production has fallen. Allocations for agricultural research, fertilizer subsidy and crop insurance have been reduced despite rising climate risks. Missions for cotton, pulses, vegetables and hybrid seeds were announced but lack visible financial backing. Boards such as Makhana Board and Turmeric Board were announced with expectations of boosting farmer income, yet tangible allocations are missing. Textiles and handloom sectors provide large employment, particularly to women. Telangana's Sircilla Mega Powerloom Cluster and Warangal Textile Park require Central support. Khadi Boards across the country need one-time modernization grants to compete globally. Balanced regional development requires financial backing, not just announcements.

[¥]DR. V. SIVADASAN: Economic growth is repeatedly highlighted, yet the honorarium of ASHA workers has remained stagnant for years. More than 10 lakh ASHA workers receive extremely low daily wages that do not reflect the so-called growth of the economy. Anganwadi workers and helpers receive monthly honorariums that have not increased in nearly a decade. Mid-day meal workers survive on minimal wages. Senior citizens continue to receive Rs. 200 per month as pension for decades. Widows and differently-abled persons receive only Rs. 300 per month, unchanged for years. Growth must translate into dignity and security for these vulnerable sections.

Vacancies in Railways, LIC and other public sector institutions remain unfilled, reducing employment opportunities. Budgetary allocation for education has declined as a share of GDP. Scholarships and fellowships have been reduced. Public schools have been closed, and trained graduates are unemployed. In the health sector, Government hospitals face acute shortages of doctors and nurses. One Government doctor attends to thousands of patients. States bear major responsibilities for education, health and welfare, yet fiscal devolution has declined. Kerala's demand for AIIMS and improved railway connectivity has not been addressed. Promises made to the people must reflect in the Budget. Development cannot remain a slogan; it must ensure fair wages, employment, federal equity and social justice.

SHRI RAMJI LAL SUMAN: The size of the Budget is less important than its direction. The Budget must move towards villages, farmers and the poor. Agriculture continues to provide the largest employment in the country, yet its share in GDP has declined sharply. Farmers face rising input costs and do not receive remunerative prices, forcing them to depend on middlemen. Claims of income growth do not match ground realities. Reports of farmer suicides in regions such as Vidarbha reflect continuing distress. Agriculture must receive priority support, fair pricing and policy attention.

I would like to say that the farmers of our country have made India self-reliant in the field of food grains through their hard work and agricultural production. However, unfortunately, even today we do not have adequate storage facilities. Countries like China, the United States, and Brazil have storage capacities exceeding their production, whereas in our country, food grains worth nearly ₹90,000 crore are wasted every year. The Government itself has informed this House that farmers are burdened with loans amounting to ₹31.5 lakh crore. While the Government waives loans of corporate houses, it shows no concern for waiving farmers' loans. In my view, loan waiver is essential if we want to save the farmers of this country. I would also like to point out that under the National Health Policy, 2017, there was a target to increase public health expenditure to 2.5 percent of GDP by 2025, but it currently stands at around 1.9 percent. The condition of health services in our country is alarming. An allocation of ₹5,500 crore has been made for AIIMS, whereas only ₹4,200 crore has been allocated for the ambitious Ayushman Bharat scheme. In schemes such as the Jal Jeevan Mission, Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana, and Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, the actual expenditure has been far below the allocated budget. I would like to question the utility of merely announcing large budgets when they are not fully and effectively utilized. It is my clear opinion that the Government's approach is impractical and disconnected from ground realities. I would like to say through you that merely formulating schemes and allocating budgets is not sufficient; it is equally

[¥]Spoke in Malayalam also.

important to ensure that the funds are used properly and transparently. In my view, the Government wants to run the country on the basis of statistics and publicity, whereas in a democracy, governance runs on the trust of the people. I also wish to state that the Government is steeped in corruption and has no real connection with the common man, the poor, the farmers, or the villages. I consider the trade agreement with the United States to be one-sided and against the national interest. In my opinion, this budget favors the rich and corporate houses and is anti-people in nature.

SHRI DEBASHISH SAMANTARAY: I would like to state that although this Budget claims to be inclusive and forward-looking, to me it is merely old wine in a new bottle and reflects continued neglect of Odisha. Odisha is not seeking favours but justice. The much-publicized 'Purvodaya' initiative appears to be only a slogan with no real substance. Even after 75 years of Independence, more than 14 districts in Odisha lack proper rail connectivity, affecting 1.6 crore people, while states with higher rail density continue to receive priority. Projects like the Bhubaneswar Metro, conceived earlier, have been shelved, even as new metros are announced elsewhere. Odisha contributes the largest share of key minerals—50% of bauxite, 25% of iron ore, along with coal—and contributed Rs. 1.4 lakh crore to the national economy last year. Yet, we bear the environmental costs, displacement, and forest depletion, while value addition and revenue benefit other states. Freight corridors and waterways seem focused only on mineral evacuation, not industrial growth within Odisha. I therefore demand inclusion of Odisha in the National Rail Freight Corridors, full development of National Waterway 5, and the establishment of Paradeep as a ship repair hub to ensure balanced and just development.

SHRI RAMJI: I would like to say that this Budget has not lived up to the expectations of the common man. People were hoping for relief from inflation and reductions in the prices of LPG cylinders, petrol, diesel, fertilizers, medicines, and education expenses, but they have only received disappointment. The Government has made no announcement to fill nearly 10 lakh vacant government posts, which has disheartened the youth. Farmers too have received no relief in terms of Minimum Support Price (MSP), agricultural loan concessions, or reduction in the 18 percent GST on pesticides and medicines. I also wish to state that to achieve the goal of a Developed India by 2047, serious work is required in the fields of education and the Skill India Mission. There is a need to increase the number of universities, colleges, and schools, rebuild dilapidated buildings, and move towards a scientific revolution. The country must move away from superstition and towards education and science. While the announcement of rail corridors and highways is welcome, public funds must be used in the interest of the people, not for political purposes. Providing free ration to 80 crore people is not an achievement; making them self-reliant would be the real achievement. I demand zero-fee admission for poor children, that funds meant for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes be utilized exclusively for them, and that a Central University be established in a region like Lakhimpur.

SHRI SANJAY SETH: I would like to say that amid global instability and a war-like environment, this ₹53 lakh crore Budget is a visionary step towards a Developed India and a 5 trillion dollar economy. It is not merely an account of income and expenditure but a blueprint for the nation's future. Maintaining a 7 percent growth rate, India has emerged as the world's fourth largest economy. Over the past years, we have increased the income tax exemption limit from ₹2 lakh to ₹12 lakh, launched Digital India, Swachh Bharat Mission, Jal Jeevan Mission, and Ayushman Bharat. Four crore houses have been provided under PM Awas Yojana, 80 crore people have received free ration, and 25 crore people have risen above the poverty line. This reflects public trust and fulfillment of our promises. This Budget focuses on the poor, women, youth, farmers, middle class, and senior citizens. Special emphasis has been placed on skill development, manufacturing, MSMEs, services, semiconductors, defence, and infrastructure. ₹12.2 lakh crore has been allocated for infrastructure, and the sports budget has been increased by 18 percent. I come from Uttar Pradesh, once called a BIMARU State, but now it has become a growth engine. Data centres, semiconductor hubs, defence corridors, expressways, and airports are rapidly developing. The railway budget has also seen a

significant increase. I wholeheartedly support this visionary Budget and thank the Hon'ble Prime Minister and Finance Minister.

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P. C. MODY,

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