

Need to expedite approval of applications of pensioners who opted for enhanced coverage under Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) Pension-laid

**SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE (BARAMATI):** In November 2022, the Supreme Court passed a judgement allowing eligible employees who had not opted for enhanced Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) pension coverage prior to the 2014 amendments to EPS-95 to jointly do so with their employers within the next four months, and this deadline was extended multiple times until the end of May 2024. The EPFO received a total of about 17.5 lakh such applications. However, as of December 2023, 11.7 lakh of them are still pending, and there is no timeline on how long it will take to process them. The retired employees of the Pune District Cooperative Milk Producers Union are among the many pensioners who continue to be excluded from the revised pension scheme due to this extended delay. It is deeply disappointing that the Government has not made any announcements regarding this issue in the Union Budget 2024-25. These pensioners are reliant on their pensions to meet their needs, including medical expenses, and face significant financial hardship due to the delay. I urge the Government to approve their applications at the earliest and ensure that they, along with all other senior citizens eligible for increased pensions, receive the full amounts they are due.