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Magha 19, 1939 (Saka)

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(English Version)

Fourteenth Session

(Sixteenth Lok Sabha)

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LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

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LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, February 08, 2018/Magha 19, 1939 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[**HON. SPEAKER** *in the Chair*]

[English]

...(Interruptions)

11.02 hrs

(*At this stage, Shri Thota Narasimham, Shri Y. V. Subba Reddy and some other Hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.*)

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please go back to your seats, I have an Obituary Reference to make.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: It is better if you go back to your seats because we have to pay homage to our departed ex. Members. I request you that at least we must give that much honour.

11 03 hrs

(At this stage, Shri Thota Narasimham, Y. V. Subba Reddy and some other Hon. Members went back to their seats.)

11.03 ¼ hrs

OBITUARY REFERENCES

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have to inform the House about the sad demise of two former Members, namely, Shri Narsingh Narain Pandey and Shri Raghunath Jha.

Shri Narsingh Narain Pandey was a Member of the 5th Lok Sabha representing the Gorakhpur Parliamentary Constituency of Uttar Pradesh. He was also a Member of the Rajya Sabha from 1980 to 1982. He was a Member of the Committee on Absence of Members from Sittings of the House. Earlier, Shri Pandey was a Member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly from 1962 to 1967. Shri Narsingh Narain Pandey passed away on 8 January, 2018 in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh at the age of 88.

Shri Raghunath Jha was a Member of the 13th and 14th Lok Sabhas representing the Gopalganj and Bettiah Parliamentary Constituencies of Bihar. Shri Jha was Union Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises from April, 2008 to May, 2009. He was a Member of the Committee on Agriculture; Committee on Ethics; Committee on Home Affairs Railway

Convention Committee; House Committee and also the Public Accounts Committee. Shri Jha was a Member of the Bihar Legislative Assembly from 1972 to 1998. He also served as Minister in the Government of Bihar.

Shri Raghunath Jha passed away on 15 January, 2018 in New Delhi at the age of 78.

We deeply mourn the loss of our two former colleagues. I am sure the House would join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved families.

The House may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed souls.

11.04 hrs

(The Members then stood in silence for a short while.)

11.05 hrs

*ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

HON. SPEAKER: Question 81, Shri Chandrakant Khaire – Not present.

(Q. 81)

...(Interruptions)

11.06 hrs

(*At this stage, Shri Varaprasad Rao Velagapalli and some other Hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.*)

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Question Hour should not be disrupted. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VINAYAK BHAURAO RAUT: Hon. Speaker, Madam, in this era of advertisements, various kinds of advertisements keep coming and going, and we have no objection to that. However, there

* **For Questions, please visit** https://sansad.in/ls/questions/questions-and-answers .

are several advertisements which have a direct adverse impact on health and on the people. In the advertisements of McDonald's, it is said that one should eat chicken burgers; for pizza, it is said that one should eat pizza, eat Domino's pizza. As a result, we have forgotten the humble vada pav; we have forgotten idli vada sambar; we have forgotten masala dosa. There are many such advertisements which influence children to a great extent. Consumption of junk food leads to adverse consequences at a very young age. ... *(Interruptions)* Several years ago, an expert group had suggested that food items high in fat, sugar and salt should be banned or regulated. Through you, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister what steps the Government is going to take to impose restrictions in this regard. ... *(Interruptions)*

COL. RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (RETD): Hon. Speaker, Madam, I believe there would hardly be any Member in this House who did not eat jalebi or kachori in childhood, but excess of anything can be harmful. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India did constitute an eleven-member Committee. After conducting a comprehensive study, the Committee has made certain recommendations. ... *(Interruptions)* For instance, the Advertising Standards Council of India self-regulates advertisements. In coordination with them, the FSSAI has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding under which companies have voluntarily agreed

not to issue such advertisements that may be misleading or that may excessively attract children towards a particular food product. You will be pleased to know that nine food business operators, including Coca-Cola, General Mills, Ferrero, Nestle, Mars, Pepsi and Hindustan Unilever, have decided that they will not broadcast such advertisements on children's channels or programmes that could mislead children.

Organisations such as the Food and Beverages Alliance of India have also accepted that they will voluntarily refrain from issuing such advertisements. The Cable Television Act contains an Advertising Code, which provides that if any advertisement shown is in violation of the law of this country, it will be prohibited. Just as the Ministry of Health has enacted laws relating to tobacco or alcohol, if such a law is enacted in this context, further restrictions will also be imposed accordingly.

SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE: Hon. Speaker, Madam, this question particularly concerns the impact on the health of small children. Adults and elderly persons are aware of the harmful effects of cigarettes, bidis and alcohol, yet they still consume them. However, the health of our children and youth is being severely affected. Small children do not know what the adverse consequences are. There should be a direct ban on this. Moreover, some products have come to light recently, such as Kurkure and the like, in which plastic is allegedly used. Will the Government consider this matter seriously or not? ... *(Interruptions)*

COL. RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (RETD): Madam, the Ministry of Health deliberates and frames laws on this subject. If, in the future, such laws are enacted, then our Ministry, which monitors advertisements, and the Advertising Standards Council of India, which is a self-regulatory body, will certainly be able to take appropriate action. I would like to inform the Hon. Member and the entire House that the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has also launched awareness campaigns. These awareness campaigns have been conducted in all schools, and efforts have been made to ensure that wholesome food products are available in school canteens and that junk food is not available in excessive

quantities. Awareness campaigns have also been carried out in this regard. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI PARTHA PRITAM RAY: Madam, I thank you for allowing me to ask a supplementary. *...(Interruptions)*

Now-a-days, as you know, more and more children are spending time using online Apps and social media rather than watching TV. Recently, the World Health Organisation warned that the Governments should protect children from targeted junk food advertisements appearing in Apps, social media, video blogs as well as on TV. *...(Interruptions)*

I would like to ask the Hon. Minister, through you, what are the Government initiatives in regard to restricting the advertisements in online Apps, social media, video blogs as well as on TV. *...(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

COL. RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (RETD) : Madam, although the question is similar, I would nevertheless like to add that the **Advertising Standards Council of India**, which self-regulates advertisements, has also, on its own initiative, cautioned all companies that while airing advertisements directed at children, due care must be taken to ensure that they are not misleading. As I

have already stated, an awareness campaign is also being carried out in this regard. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI BAIJAYANT JAY PANDA: Despite much progress in our country, we still have high levels of malnutrition. More than 40 per cent of our children are malnourished. *...(Interruptions)* Even in urban areas, almost 25 per cent children are malnourished. It is not just due to shortage of food; it is due to eating bad food, junk food with trans-fats, high salt and high sugar, as has been discussed. *...(Interruptions)*

The Hon. Minister has talked about self-regulation by the industry which is a necessary first step, but it is never going to be adequate because money is a very strong motivator. So, despite self-regulation, there are going to be violations of such advertisements. *...(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: It is not allowed. Please keep it in.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: No, nothing doing. Do not speak to them. Do not entertain such things.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI BAIJAYANT JAY PANDA: The Hon. Minister has stated that if a law is passed, as we have done for tobacco, then they would also implement those kinds of laws for food safety. *...(Interruptions)* I would urge the Hon. Minister that pending such a law to be passed, his Ministry could take steps to insist that when such companies are advertising junk food, they should also, as a voluntary health warning, point out that excess eating of high salt, high sugar and trans-fats is bad for health. If the Hon. Minister could give such an assurance, it would be very good for the children of our country. *...(Interruptions)*

COL. RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (RETD.): Madam, the point is very well noted. However, I would like to bring this to the attention of the House that there is a Food and Safety Standards Act, 2006 which clearly states that all packaged food items need to be marked and labelled. *...(Interruptions)* It also states that in case there is any misleading or a deceptive claim, then there will be a penalty leading up to Rs. 10 lakh. *...(Interruptions)* However, to assure the Hon. Member, I would also go to the extent of saying that the FSSAI and the Health Ministry are also considering the case

where the amount of salt or sugar content in that product is also there on the label of the packaged item so that the person who is consuming it, would be more aware. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Question number - 82, Shri Santosh Kumar - Not present.

(Q. 82)

SHRI HARI OM PANDEY: Madam, India is a country of villages. ... *(Interruptions)* In the history of democracy, this has been the system of our country, wherein village panchayats, block panchayats, municipal panchayats and district panchayats have been progressively developing. ... *(Interruptions)* As per the reply given by the Hon. Minister, in Ambedkar Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh, out of 1,735 Gram Sabhas, this facility has so far been extended through laptops to only 96 villages. ... *(Interruptions)* Through you, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether any provision has been made for satellite-based online monitoring to ensure proper implementation of schemes being carried out at the Gram Panchayat level. If so, what are the details thereof?

SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR: Madam, panchayats are certainly very important for the democracy of the country. ...

(Interruptions) Particularly, if this institution of democracy is strengthened, a great deal of good work can certainly be achieved. ... *(Interruptions)* It is within the knowledge of the entire country that Narendra Modi accepted the recommendations of the Fourteenth Finance Commission, and the amount of Rs. 65,000 crore that used to be provided over five years to about two and a half lakh panchayats was increased to Rs. 2,92,000 crore. ... *(Interruptions)* The Union Government is continuously concerned that panchayats should be financially empowered, but also technologically enabled, that they should function with transparency, receive technical support, and be properly trained. ... *(Interruptions)* With the objective that all panchayats should be developed as e-Panchayats, we have implemented the e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project. ... *(Interruptions)* Work under this is continuing on a sustained basis. ... *(Interruptions)* At present, about 81,000 panchayats remain where arrangements such as computers could not yet be made. We are steadily addressing this as well, and in addition, the Government of India is prepared to provide whatever further technical support is required. ... *(Interruptions)* State Governments are also working in this direction, but since this programme did not exist earlier, progress is taking place gradually. ... *(Interruptions)* As I have also stated in my reply, the Prime Minister directed the Department of Telecommunications to lay

optical fibre. ... *(Interruptions)* In the year 2014, when we came into Government, optical fibre had been laid in only 56 panchayats. ... *(Interruptions)* Now, more than one lakh panchayats have been connected with optical fibre. ... *(Interruptions)* Connectivity is being expanded, and the Government is making every possible effort to ensure that this becomes one hundred per cent by the year 2019. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: If you wish to ask a second supplementary, you may get an opportunity today.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI HARI OM PANDEY: Madam, we would like to ask a second supplementary. ... *(Interruptions)* India is a country of villages, and our Mahatma had envisaged the concept of Gram Swaraj. ... *(Interruptions)* From the reply given by the Hon. Minister, I am satisfied that by the year 2019 all villages will be connected with the Internet; however, Ambedkar Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh is the most backward district, where, from Independence till today, the rays of development have not reached. ... *(Interruptions)* Since the coming of the Bharatiya Janata Party Government, whatever work is being carried out is progressing at a

very slow pace, whereas it is the dream of Narendra Modi that India is a country of villages, and unless villages develop, unless farmers, workers and soldiers develop, how will the country derive the full benefit of connectivity? ... *(Interruptions)* Through you, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister as to by when the fortunes of Ambedkar Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh will change. ... *(Interruptions)* I would like to ask this question. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR: Hon. Speaker, Madam, the priority of the Prime Minister is that inequality among individuals in the country should be eliminated and that the imbalance which has arisen in the country from the perspective of development should also be fully corrected. ... *(Interruptions)*

Madam Speaker, through you, I would like to inform the Hon. Member and also the country that for nearly a year the Prime Minister had been concerned that there are certain districts in the country which have lagged behind in the race of development and on other parameters as well. ... *(Interruptions)* Therefore, recently, he selected 115 such districts. With a view to bringing these 115 districts to an equal level, one officer of the Union Government has been assigned to each district; Union Government Ministers have also been requested in this regard, and coordination is being carried

out with the State Governments as well. Efforts are being made to create a situation in which every district, in a sense, can stand at an equal level in the race of development. ... *(Interruptions)*

From the perspective of strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions, providing them with technical support, making them financially empowered, and guiding them so that they can prepare their own Gram Panchayat Development Plans, the Government of India is committed and is making earnest efforts. ... *(Interruptions)*

I would like to assure the Hon. Member not to worry and to remain in contact with his Government. The State Government is also making efforts in this direction, and I can say with confidence that the days of Ambedkar Nagar will change soon. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY: Madam, whenever panchayats are discussed, we must inevitably remember the late Rajiv Gandhi. ... *(Interruptions)* It was he who gave birth to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. It is due to the Information Technology revolution that we are today in a position to speak about e-Panchayats. This e-Panchayat initiative was started by Manmohan Singh in the year 2011. ... *(Interruptions)*

Madam, I would like to draw the attention of Minister Tomar to a fundamental issue, namely that Panchayati Raj Institutions are based on the three Fs. One is funds, the second is functions, and the third is functionaries. Today, the situation is such that panchayats are increasingly dependent on the State Governments and the Union Government. However, under the Eleventh Schedule, which was prescribed for Panchayati Raj Institutions under the Seventy-third Constitutional Amendment, 29 kinds of powers were conferred upon these institutions. What does this Government think about those powers? What is the approach of this Government towards ensuring that the Panchayati Raj Institutions actually obtain and exercise the powers that were conferred upon them? ... *(Interruptions)*

Madam, the Parliamentary Standing Committee concerned has also advised in this regard that - *[English]* "The Committee strongly recommended that if necessary, the Minister should go for a constitutional amendment for doing away with the discretionary power of the State Legislatures without compromising the spirit of the federalism enshrined in the Constitution."

[Translation]

What is this Government contemplating with regard to conferring powers upon the Panchayati Raj Institutions? ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR: Hon. Speaker, Madam, Adhir Ranjan ji has asked fewer questions but delivered a longer speech. ... *(Interruptions)* Through you, I would like to state that the concept of Panchayati Raj in India did not originate only through Rajiv Gandhi. Even in ancient India, there existed the concept of the panchayat, the idea of 'Panch Parmeshwar', where decisions of the village were taken within the village itself, and even major issues were resolved through this mechanism. ... *(Interruptions)*

As far as e-Panchayat is concerned, I would like to say to Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury ji that till the year 2014, it was your Government that was in power. What happened in this field from the perspective of e-Panchayat prior to 2014 need not be explained by me to you. From the perspective of optical fibre as well, as I have already stated earlier, optical fibre had reached only 56 panchayats. Owing to the firm resolve of Narendra Modi, efforts have been made to extend optical fibre connectivity to more than one lakh panchayats. ... *(Interruptions)*

I would like to state that when the report of the Thirteenth Finance Commission was submitted, it was during your Government, and an amount of Rs. 58,256 crore was provided. ... *(Interruptions)* When the report of the Fourteenth Finance Commission came during our tenure, we began providing Rs. 2,92,000 crore to the panchayats. ... *(Interruptions)* With a view to ensuring that Panchayati Raj is strengthened, that panchayats develop as institutions of self-government, that they become self-reliant, that panchayats are able to levy taxes and generate their own income, the Union Government and the State Governments are continuously working together with the panchayats in this direction. ... *(Interruptions)* I am fully confident that in the times to come, panchayats will develop as institutions of self-government. Thank you. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: I am requesting all of you to please think about the Lok Sabha staff also. Keep distance from them as they are working for you and if something happens to them, it will not be proper. So, please keep distance from them.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: No, I am sorry.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

COL. SONARAM CHOUDHARY: Madam Speaker, through you, I would like to inform the Hon. Minister that my parliamentary constituency is Barmer, where the facilities relating to e-Panchayat and the Internet are very weak. ... *(Interruptions)* I would like to state that there are 19 blocks, of which two blocks fall in my area, Kheda and Kheda block, and even within these blocks there is no Internet connectivity. ... *(Interruptions)* If there are panchayats there, then out of 581 panchayats, Internet connectivity is not available in 377 panchayats. ... *(Interruptions)* There are about 3,258 villages there, out of which only 1,986 villages have Internet connectivity. The Hon. Minister has rightly stated that 115 districts have been identified as backward districts. ... *(Interruptions)* For this, I express my gratitude to the Modi Government. Because of this, both our districts, Barmer and Jaisalmer, have been included in that list; however, the services there are extremely poor. ... *(Interruptions)* Even now, about 60 per cent of Gram Panchayats do not have Internet connectivity and do not have e-Panchayat facilities. You will be surprised to know that under the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, a Member of Parliament is required to adopt

three villages. I have adopted three villages, and out of these three villages, two do not have Internet facilities. ... *(Interruptions)* In such a situation, when I met the Hon. Minister, he stated that only limited budgetary provisions were available. ... *(Interruptions)* I acknowledge that many facilities have been enhanced; however, my only request is that, by instructing the concerned Ministry, Internet facilities should be provided in those 65 per cent Gram Panchayats. ... *(Interruptions)* I would like to ask that a time-bound programme be taken up to extend Internet facilities to these Gram Panchayats. By when will this be selected, taken up, and completed in a time-bound manner? Kindly give me a reply in this regard. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR: Hon. Speaker, Madam, through you, I would like to inform the Hon. Member ... *(Interruptions)* that I have no hesitation in accepting this, and I have stated earlier as well, that there are still many areas where optical fibre lines have not yet been laid. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: What is happening? I will have to take action against you. This is not proper. What is it? No, I am sorry.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet again at 11.45 a. m.

11.29 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Forty Five Minutes past Eleven of the Clock.

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11.45 hrs

The Lok Sabha re-assembled at Forty Five Minutes past Eleven of the Clock.

(Hon. Speaker *in the Chair*)

...(Interruptions)

11.45 ¼ hrs

(*At this stage, Shri Malyadri Sriram and some other Hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.*)

...(Interruptions)

11.45 ½ hrs

(*At this stage, Shri Y. S. Avinash Reddy and some other Hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.)*

...(Interruptions)

11.46 hrs

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS . . . Contd.

(Q. 82)

HON. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, you may reply.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR): Hon. Speaker, Madam, the supplementary question of our Member of Parliament, Sonaram ji, was under consideration. ... *(Interruptions)* I would also like to inform him that the Government is initiating the restructured National Gram Swaraj Abhiyan. ... *(Interruptions)* A provision of Rs. 7,255 crore has been made for this. This programme is being launched. ... *(Interruptions)* As a result of this, Gram Panchayat buildings which are still pending will certainly be constructed. At present, there are about 52,000 Gram Panchayats in the country which do not have their own Gram Panchayat buildings, and these will be constructed. ... *(Interruptions)* The capacity of Panchayati Raj Institutions will be developed and training will be imparted to them. ... *(Interruptions)* Provision has been made under the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan for distance learning through satellite

communication, DTH and Internet Protocol-based technology, for enhancing the e-capability of panchayats, increasing their financial income, enabling preparation of small projects at the Gram Panchayat level and their proper implementation, providing technical assistance to panchayats, effective implementation of the e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project, and incentivisation of panchayats. ... *(Interruptions)*

Through you, I would like to inform the Hon. Member that in Rajasthan, Internet connectivity has reached the service-ready stage in 8,117 panchayats. ... *(Interruptions)* The total number of Gram Panchayats in Rajasthan is 9,294. Out of these 9,294 panchayats, Internet connectivity has already been provided in 8,117 panchayats, and the remaining ones will also be completed soon. ... *(Interruptions)*

(Q. 83)

SHRI A.P. JITHENDER REDDY: ... *(Interruptions)* Hon. Speaker, Madam, first of all, today I am worthy of congratulations. For the first time in three and a half years, my Starred Question has been listed. ... *(Interruptions)* I was apprehensive whether it would be taken up today or not. ... *(Interruptions)* Because after you adjourned the House, I thought that my Question had been dropped today as well. ... *(Interruptions)*

I have read the reply given by the Hon. Minister. Hon. Minister, I have great faith in the work of Nitin Gadkari. He is doing very good work for the country and taking it forward at a fast pace. In Telangana, within three years, 3,007 kilometres of roads have been provided. For this, I also congratulate him on behalf of the Telangana Government. ... *(Interruptions)* However, the speed at which roads are being constructed is not being matched by adequate attention to safety. ... *(Interruptions)* The very first reply states, *[English]* "No, Madam, there is a marginal decline of four per cent in the number of road accidents in 2016, which is prepared based on data furnished by the police departments of the States and UTs."

[Translation]

Madam, this is not correct. ... *(Interruptions)* Your own figures show that in the year 2014 there were 4,89,400 accidents, and in the year 2015 there were 5,01,432 accidents. This clearly indicates that accidents are increasing. Many steps have been taken and several awareness programmes have also been introduced. In your own report, under the heading *'Details of funds utilised under the Scheme of Awareness Generation and Publicity regarding road safety'*, on the last page it is stated that in the year 2014–15, an amount of Rs. 37 crore was utilised, while in the year 2016–17, Rs. 32 crore was spent on road safety awareness. When the amount for awareness itself is declining, ... *(Interruptions)* road accidents are increasing. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister that while you are earning a name in road expansion and in transportation, your record on accidents is very poor. I have repeatedly raised the issue of Mahabubnagar district during Special Mentions and Zero Hour, and I have also written several letters to you. Every day, at least one person dies in road accidents there. ... *(Interruptions)* What suggestions would you like to make in this regard? Kindly provide information on this.

SHRI NITIN GADKARI: Hon. Speaker, Madam, it is true that accidents are a very serious problem for our country. I have placed all the details from the year 2014 to the year 2016 before the House. ... *(Interruptions)* I would like to inform the House that in the year 2015 there were 5,01,423 accidents, in which 1,46,133 persons lost their lives. In the year 2016, there were 4,80,652 accidents and 1,50,785 deaths. I also have the data for the year 2017. In that year, there were about 4,60,000 accidents. There has been a reduction in accidents, and deaths have decreased by nearly four thousand, with 1,46,000 fatalities recorded. However, I am not satisfied. Our country records the highest number of accidents in the world. In order to prevent accidents, we have focused on four important aspects. About 68 per cent of accidents involving two-wheelers occur due to not wearing helmets, and we are continuously carrying out awareness campaigns regarding helmet use. ... *(Interruptions)* Our policy is based on the four 'Es', namely Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Emergency Care. With regard to road engineering, as mentioned by the Hon. Member, many of these roads were constructed a long time ago, when our Government was not in office. ... *(Interruptions)* We have started work to improve the black spots that have been identified. Along with this, 786 black spots have been identified and action has been taken thereon.

I would like to congratulate the Hon. Member for being sensitive about accidents. He has referred to his district, where there are a total of 32 black spots. Out of these, 19 are under short-term remedial measures and 13 have been rectified under permanent measures. Orders have been issued to improve all these spots.

Madam, I would like to make an appeal to the House that we have constituted a committee, under the chairmanship of every Member of Parliament, for the eradication of accidents. ... *(Interruptions)* Some black spots are on National Highways, some are on State roads, some on district roads, some on Municipal Corporation roads, and some spots are on village connectivity roads.

Directions have been issued for improving accident-prone spots. If this work is carried out, the number of accidents will reduce on a large scale. I appeal to all Hon. Members of Parliament that, on the basis of the orders we have issued, committees should be constituted immediately. On the basis of these committees, initiatives should be taken in your respective districts, accident-prone spots should be identified, and meetings should be convened by the Collector with the concerned agencies. If this is done, there will certainly be a reduction. ... *(Interruptions)*

It is unfortunate that we have the highest number of accidents in the world. I myself have met with an accident. Many people are injured in accidents. I would like to assure the House that this is the highest priority of the Government and we will fulfil it. I feel pained that I was asked why funds are not being spent. The Road Safety Bill was passed by this House on 10 April, 2017. Before it was introduced, I had to struggle for one and a half years. A committee of Transport Ministers of all States was constituted, unanimity was achieved, and thereafter the Bill was introduced. The Bill was passed by this House and sent to the Rajya Sabha, where it was referred to the Standing Committee. The Secretary appeared before the Standing Committee nine times and I appeared twice. Now the report of the Standing Committee has come. Three Sessions have passed and the Bill is pending. Work is not progressing because the Bill has not been approved, and I am unable to enforce the law. ... *(Interruptions)*

I would like to appeal to the House that this is not a political issue; it is an issue of saving lives and of reducing accidents. If, in a democracy, such an important matter remains stalled for three years, how will work progress? In this manner, people will continue to lose their lives and we will not be able to save them. This is my anguish. ... *(Interruptions)*

Through you, I appeal to all public representatives that if cooperation is extended in this matter, a Road Safety Authority will be established, law enforcement will be strengthened, driving training centres will be started, intelligent traffic systems will be introduced, violations will be recorded through cameras, and fines will be enhanced. At present, there is neither adequate respect for the law nor fear of it in the minds of people; these measures will achieve both, and we will succeed in saving lives. ... *(Interruptions)*

I appeal to the entire House to cooperate in saving lives. I am confident that with the cooperation of all of you, when the next five years are completed, we will be able to save at least 50 per cent of lives. I request all of you to extend your cooperation in this endeavour. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A.P. JITHENDER REDDY: Hon. Speaker, the Hon. Minister has given a very detailed reply. A proposal has been made for Members of Parliament to hold meetings in the districts. We have conducted meetings with the Collector and the RO Officer. We have carried out inspections along with them on National Highway 44. You have stated that **32** black spots have been identified. However, the work there is not complete. Whatever work has been done is merely an eye-wash. There are no ROBs, RUBs or

slip roads there. I do not know why the National Highways Authority is giving sites to contractors. We have two contractors, GMR and L&T. *[English]* I think when they start construction work of a road, they are supposed to take care of all these precautions and see that these ROBs, RUBs and slip roads are constructed at that particular time. But till date that has not been done. *[Translation]* Inspections have already been carried out. There are frequent accidents at Kottavatta, Janampet village, Jadcherla and Shadnagar. You have stated that accidents occur due to not wearing helmets. *[English]* When a person comes out of his village to reach a road, he does not travel on a motor cycle or on any other vehicle. He travels on foot from his village to the road, *[Translation]* and a truck runs over him. There are no proper barricades there. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Reddy ji, you have to ask only a question and not make a speech.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI A. P JITHENDER REDDY: Hon. Speaker, Madam, I would like to state that at locations where accidents are occurring, namely on NH-44 at Kamareddy and NH-65 at Zaheerabad, ROBs

are required. The road from Jadcherla to Mahabubnagar, which has been pending for many years, also needs to be developed. It should be developed at the earliest. Recently, there was an accident in which nine persons lost their lives.

I would like to ask the Hon. Minister as to how soon these roads will be completed.

SHRI NITIN GADKARI: Hon. Speaker, Madam, the Hon. Member has given me 32 suggestions relating to NH-44. I have the complete list with me. The local MLA, the Deverkadra area representatives and the National Highways Authority of India officials themselves visited the locations, and meetings were also held with me. For carrying out works within the scope of work, proposals are sent and approvals are granted. For this purpose, we have also enhanced the powers of the Project Directors.

I would like to assure the Hon. Member that we will take immediate action in this matter. Thereafter, to reduce the delay occurring in relation to accident-prone spots, directions will be issued to implement the enhanced powers of the Project Directors. I assure him that all the works will be completed at the earliest.

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12.00 hrs

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have received notices of Adjournment Motions from some Members on various issues. Although these matters are important, it is not necessary to disrupt today's proceedings for them. These matters can be raised on other occasions.

Therefore, I have not granted permission for any notice of an Adjournment Motion.

*WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Starred Question Nos. 84 to 100

Unstarred Question Nos. 921 to 1150

* **For Questions, please visit** https://sansad.in/ls/questions/questions-and-answers .

12.01 hrs

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: Now, the papers laid on the Table.

THE MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA SANJAY GANDHI): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Women and Child Development for the year 2018-2019. *...(Interruptions)*

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8721/16/18]

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA): I beg to lay on the Table a copy ofthe Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for the year 2018-2019. *...(Interruptions)*

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8722/16/18]

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Textiles for the year 2018-2019. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8723/16/18]

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP (SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8724/16/18]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DR. SUBHASH RAMRAO BHAMRE): On behalf of Shrimati Nirmala Sitharaman, I beg to lay on the Table a copyeach of the following papers (Hindi and English versions): -

(1) Detailed Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Defence for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8725/16/18]

(2) Defence Services Estimates for the year 2018-2019.

...(Interruptions)

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8726/16/18]

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): A copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Labour and Employment for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8727/16/18]

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF AYURVEDA, YOGA AND NATUROPATHY, UNANI, SIDDHA AND HOMOEOPATHY (AYUSH) (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of theDetailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of AYUSH for the year 2018-2019. *...(Interruptions)*

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8728/16/18]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (COL. RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (RETD.): I beg to lay on the Table:-

(1) A copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8729/16/18]

(2) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi, for the year 2016-2017, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi, for the year 2016-2017.

(3) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (2) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8730/16/18]

(4) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Sports Authority of India, New Delhi, for the year 2015-2016, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Sports Authority of India, New Delhi, for the year 2015-2016.

(5) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (4) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8731/16/18]

(6) A copy of the Press Council (Amendment) Rules, 2018 (Hindi and English versions) published in Notification No. G.S.R. 43(E) in Gazette of India dated 19th January, 2018 under sub-section (3) of Section 25 Press Council Act, 1978.

…(Interruptions)

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8732/16/18]

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (SHRI R. K. SINGH): I beg to lay on the Table:-

(1) A copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8733/16/18]

(2) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions) under sub-section (1) of Section 394 of the Companies Act, 2013:-

(i) Review by the Government of the working of the Solar Energy Corporation of India, New Delhi, for the year 2016-2017.

(ii) Annual Report of the Solar Energy Corporation of India, New Delhi, for the year 2016-2017, alongwith Audited Accounts and comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(3) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (2) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8734/16/18]

(4) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the National Institute of Solar Energy,

New Delhi, for the years 2013-2014 to 2015-2016, alongwith Audited Accounts.

(ii) A copy of the Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the National Institute of Solar Energy, New Delhi, for the years 2013-2014 to 2015-2016.

(5) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (4) above. *...(Interruptions)*

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8735/16/18]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI PON RADHAKRISHNAN): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Shipping for the year 2018-2019. *...(Interruptions)*

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8736/16/18]

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION (SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA): Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8737/16/18]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SUDARSHAN BHAGAT): Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for the year 2018-2019.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8738/16/18]

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI JAYANT SINHA): Madam, I beg today on the Table:-

(1) A copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Civil Aviation for the year 2018-19.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8739/16/18]

(2) (i) A copy of the Annual Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi, Rae Bareli, for the year 2016-2017, along with Audited Accounts.

(ii) Statement regarding Review (Hindi and English versions) by the Government of the working of the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi, Rae Bareli, for the year 2016-17.

(3) Statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (2) above.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8740/16/18]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION (SHRI

ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL): Madam, on behalf of Shri Babul Supriyo, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises for the year 2018-19.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8741/16/18]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION (SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL): Madam, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation for the year 2018-19.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8742/16/18]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI MANSUKH L. MANDAVIYA): Madam, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways for the year 2018-19.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8743/16/18]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI

GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT): Madam, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare for the year 2018-19.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT 8744/16/18]

12.05 hrs

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC UNDERTAKINGS

22nd Report

[Translation]

SHRI SHANTA KUMAR (KANGRA): Madam, I beg to present the Twenty-second Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Public Undertakings on 'Financing of Renewable Energy Projects by Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) based on performance Audit Report No. 12 of 2015'.

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HON. SPEAKER: Item number 21,

Shri Virendra Singh - Not present.

Shrimati Veena Devi - Not present.

12.05 ½ hrs

JOINT COMMITTEE ON OFFICES OF PROFITS

24th to 26th Reports

SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA (DEORIA): Madam, I beg to present the Twenty-fourth, Twenty-fifth and Twenty- sixth Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Joint Committee on Offices of Profit..

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12.06 hrs

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(i) 20th Report

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): Madam, I beg to present the Twentieth Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Standing Committee on External Affairs on Action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Fifteenth Report on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2017-18.

(ii) Statement

[Translation]

DR. SHASHI THAROOR: Madam, on the observations /recommendations contained in the 12th Report on the subject of Union Public Service Commission separate examination for cadre, Recruitment 'Structure and Capacity-Building' of the Indian Foreign Service Cadre, including mid-career entry and in-service training and orientation requirements, I lay on the Table a statement (Hindi and English versions) showing further action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Seventeenth Report.

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12.07 hrs

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377*

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, the matters under rule 377 shall be laid on the Table of the House. Members who have been permitted to raise matters under rule 377 today and are desirous of laying them may personally hand over text of the matter at the Table within 20 minutes. Only those matters shall be treated as laid for which text of the matter has been received at the Table within the stipulated time. The rest will be treated as lapsed.

* Treated as laid on the Table.

(i) Need to exempt handicraft and handloom industry from Goods and Services Tax

[Translation]

SHRI AJAY MISRA TENI (KHERI): It is necessary to grant complete exemption from GST to handicraft and handloom products in their own industry and system, in the interest of weavers and artisans. Granting such exemption for self-production will be beneficial for their livelihood. After agriculture, this constitutes the second major source of income for ordinary families, and under the earlier tax regime, these activities were exempted in several States. I would also request the Government to consider the option of providing subsidy and refunding the GST amount collected directly to artisans and handicraft workers through DBT.

(ii) Need to ensure setting up of assistance cell and office by Insurance companies under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana in every Tehsil headquarters in the country

SHRI RAMDAS C. TADAS (WARDHA): I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister for Agriculture to the fact that under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, it is mandatory for the insurance company to establish a help desk and an office at each tehsil headquarters. This decision has been taken keeping in view the interests of farmers; however, this decision is not being complied with at many places.

I would like to urge the Union Government to kindly issue immediate directions to all District Collectors across the country to ensure that, for the better convenience of farmers, insurance companies establish help desks and offices at each tehsil headquarters under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

(iii) Need to introduce Mobile Soil Testing Centres in the Country

SHRI JANARDAN SINGH SIGRIWAL It is a matter of great satisfaction that today the Union Government is making serious efforts at every level to double the income of farmers by the year 2022. In this context, there is also a need to promote agricultural produce to the maximum extent. With a view to promoting agricultural produce, the Union Government launched a very important scheme, namely the Soil Health Card Scheme. Farmers across the country are deriving benefits from this scheme.

In continuation of this, there is a need to launch another scheme through which farmers can access soil testing facilities at the Panchayat level. For this purpose, mobile soil testing units equipped with modern facilities need to be operated. Once initiated, this will ensure the availability of quality soil testing facilities in various regions of the country, including Bihar, thereby enabling farmers to enhance crop production and move forward in the direction of doubling their income.

Therefore, I would like to request the Union Government to take the necessary action to initiate the said scheme, beginning from

the Saran, Siwan and Gopalganj districts of the Saran Division under the State of Bihar.

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(iv) Need to release prisoners who have served their prison terms and still languishing in jails in the country

SHRI VINOD KUMAR SONKAR (KAUSHAMBI): I would like to submit that in prisons and Central Prisons across all States of the country, including Uttar Pradesh, several prisoners continue to remain incarcerated even after completion of their sentences. There is a need for the Union Government to take necessary steps to formulate a special scheme for the release of such prisoners, after due verification in State prisons and Central Prisons, who are suffering from incurable diseases, who are above the age of 55 years, and who are not wanted in cases of sedition. There are many prisoners who continue to remain in jail even after completion of their sentences due to lack of information or because they are unclaimed. Moreover, elderly prisoners suffering from incurable diseases often die due to lack of proper care and treatment. As prisons are housing inmates far beyond their sanctioned capacity, I demand that, on humanitarian grounds, the Ministry of Home Affairs issue necessary directions to all State Governments and Central Prisons to take appropriate action in this regard.

(v) Need to renovate heritage buildings of Chaudhary Charan Singh University in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh

SHRI RAJENDRA AGRAWAL (MEERUT): In my parliamentary constituency there is Meerut College, which is affiliated to Chaudhary Charan Singh University. Spread over nearly one hundred acres, this historic college was established 125 years ago in the year 1892. During its golden period, it was among the premier colleges of India and produced several eminent personalities, including former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh, former Union Minister Murli Manohar Joshi, and the present Governor of Bihar, Satya Pal Malik.

Constructed during the British period, this college is a historic heritage site with buildings of unique architectural value. However, at present, the condition of this historic legacy is not satisfactory. The building from which the college was originally founded is in a very poor state. It has become dilapidated, with shrubs growing around it and heaps of garbage lying nearby. Similarly, other buildings dating back to the British era within the college premises are also in a dilapidated condition.

I would like to request the Government to take cognisance of the present deplorable condition of this historic heritage and to take appropriate steps for its conservation and development.

(vi) Need to set up shelter homes for 'Anna Pratha' cattle in Banda and Chitrakoot districts, Uttar Pradesh

SHRI BHAIRON PRASAD MISHRA (BANDA): In my parliamentary constituency, including the districts of Banda and Chitrakoot, as well as across the entire Bundelkhand region, there is a serious problem of stray cattle. Crops of farmers are being destroyed and the situation is grave. Therefore, I would like to request the Government to kindly take necessary steps to resolve this serious problem by establishing a cow shelter in each Nyaya Panchayat area and ensuring proper arrangements for fodder and drinking water for the animals.

(vii) Need to set up IIT, IIIT and AIIMS in Kota city, Rajasthan

SHRI OM BIRLA (KOTA): Kota is known across the country as an education hub. Every year, thousands of students from all over India come to Kota to obtain high-quality education in order to secure selection in Indian Institutes of Technology, National Institutes of Technology and medical colleges. Therefore, the residents here remain committed to keeping their city as a ray of hope for students from across the country. It is indeed unfortunate that demands for the establishment of premier higher educational institutions such as Indian Institutes of Information Technology and All India Institute of Medical Sciences continue to be neglected even today.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Government to fulfil the long-pending demand of the developing city of Kota by establishing a premier institution of higher education such as an IIT, IIIT or AIIMS here, so that the people of this region may receive quality technical and medical education, along with enhanced employment opportunities.

(viii) Need to provide residential plots to residents of border districts of Jammu & Kashmir forced to vacate their houses due to shelling from across the border

SHRI JUGAL KISHORE (JAMMU): I would like to draw the attention of the Union Government to the border areas of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, where firing from the Pakistani side takes place on a daily basis, and our soldiers respond effectively. However, due to the shelling from across the border, the people residing in the border areas are suffering heavy losses, resulting in significant damage to life, property and livestock. Along the India–Pakistan border, where firing takes place, people are compelled to migrate, and in order to save their own lives and the lives of their children, they are forced to abandon their homes and hearths and live as displaced persons.

I would like to request the Government to allocate plots of five marlas to such affected persons and to construct community centre sheds so that they may take shelter during emergency situations. This will help in maintaining the morale of the people living in the border areas and prevent migration from the border regions.

(ix) Need to provide financial assistance to drought affected Karnataka under NDRF

[English]

SHRI B. N. CHANDRAPPA (CHITRADURGA): Karnataka has been subjected to severe drought successively for the last six years. This year deficit and scarcity in rainfall has put the State in very bad condition. This year, 139 out of 176 Taluks in the State have been declared as drought affected Taluks. This has caused huge economic loss to the State in general and agrarian community in particular. Deficit rainfall consecutively for more than six years has resulted in very poor or no storage in minor irrigation tanks and also depletion of groundwater level in the State which is an important source for drinking water for rural population and livestock.

The total estimated loss due to drought in the State is 17,193 crores. The central team has also studied the ground realities. Government of Karnataka has sought assistance from the Union Government under NDRF to the tune of Rs. 4702.54 crore, in addition to special assistance of Rs. 967.76 crores.

Hence, I urge upon the Union Government to sanction the financial assistance sought for by the Government of Karnataka

under NDRF to the tune of Rs. 4702.54 crore and special assistance of Rs. 967.76 crore at the earliest.

(x) Need to provide financial assistance to people affected by cyclone 'Ockhi' in Kerala

PROF. K. V. THOMAS (ERNAKULAM): The 'Ockhi' thunder storm which created havoc in the coastal region of my Parliamentary Constituency Ernakulam, from Chellanam to Munambam has made a large number of fishermen and the local people homeless. The fishermen lost their fishing equipment including couniry boats and mechanized boats. One fisherman died in this natural calamity at Chellanam. The toilet and water supply system has been damaged. Immediate assistance has to be extended to the coastal area of my parliamentary constituency by Central and State government authorities. The long pending demand by the fishermen in the area is to construct sea wall and pulimuttu (wave breaker). At present no assistance has been rendered by government of India for the construction of sea wall and wave breakers. Hundreds of houses have been very badly damaged and central assistance needed for construction and renovation of these damaged houses. The central team has visited this area and a report is submitted to both the Union and State Governments. Immediate assistance is needed from the Union Government for these affected fishermen and other people staying in the coastal area.

(xi) Regarding problems faced by people of North Kerala due to laying of pipeline by Gas Authority of India Limited

SHRI M.I. SHANAVAS (WAYANAD): In the northern parts of Kerala people are agitating against the laying of pipes by GAIL authorities in the thickly populated areas. The compensation announced by the GAIL is very meagre. Scores of persons are losing their land, houses, cultivation etc.

I urge upon the Centre Government to take steps to relocate the pipes from populated areas and also to give compensation to the affected persons according to the Land Accusation Act i.e. four times the market value.

(xii) Need to expedite release of funds for various Centrally Sponsored Schemes in Tamil Nadu

SHRI C. MAHENDRAN (POLLACHI): I would like to urge upon the Government to release Rs. 6,655 crore for various centrally aided schemes for Tamil Nadu. Education Department has not received Rs. 4,474 crore from the Centre under various schemes for the last few years. Many education schemes, including post-matric scholarship for SC/ST students had suffered as the State was denied central funds on the ground of exhausting the budgetary allocations. A sum of Rs.1,547 crore is pending towards the post-matric scholarship scheme for Scheduled Castes and Rs. 27 crore for Scheduled Tribes for over a year.

The Union Government has to pay arrears of Rs 1,312 crore for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the 'Education for All' scheme to Tamil Nadu. Under the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) scheme, which is implemented to provide secondary grade education, an amount of Rs 1,588 crore is due to the State.

Apart from this Rs.342 crore are still pending for flood management programme and Rs.217 crore for Family Welfare programme. The Centre had not paid Rs.108 Crore for the National

Handloom Development Programme and Rs.107 crore for the construction of fishing harbours.

I, therefore, urge on the Union Government to expedite the release of funds to Tamil Nadu without any further delay.

(xiii) Regarding installation of Doppler Weather Radars in Odisha

SHRI RABINDRA KUMAR JENA (BALASORE): At the instance of Government of Odisha, the Government of India in 2006 had decided to install 4 Doppler Weather radars at Paradeep, Gopalpur, Sambalpur and Balasore. Land for the same has already been provided and the state government has even completed construction of buildings for Doppler Weather Radar stations at 3 of these locations out of its own funds, and the one at Paradip has been built by CPWD. In spite of there being no typical hurdles, Doppler weather Radars have not been procured by the government for the radar station at Balasore and Sambalpur. In this House, I have time and again raised the issue relating to avoidable deaths due to lightning in my constituency and state. Weather radar system would not only aid us getting timely information about the weather, but also save lives and prevent damage to property.

(xiv) Need to improve promotion avenues for Store - Khalasi in Railways and permit them to appear in departmental examination for the purpose

SHRI KRUPAL BALAJI TUMANE (RAMTEK): Due to the absence of a promotion channel for the position of Store Khalasi in the Railways, employees holding these posts are not eligible to participate in promotional examinations for positions such as Clerk, Commercial Clerk, Ticket Collector, etc. As a result, the prospects for these employees are bleak.

Recently, the Railway Board has decided that employees in the sanitation category of the Medical Department will also be included in the promotional examinations for positions such as Clerk, Ticket Collector, and Booking Clerk in the Commercial Department. This decision is now being implemented and complied with across Indian Railways.

Therefore, I request the Government that the employees working on the post of store khalasi should be included in the promotion examination for the post of clerk, commercial clerk, T.C. etc. and a better promotion opportunity should be provided to the store khalasi employees in the traffic department (operations and commerce department), so that the future of these employees can be bright.

(xv) Need to provide stoppage of certain trains at Kondapalli Railway Station in Andhra Pradesh

SHRI KESINENI SRINIVAS (VIJAYAWADA): Kondapalli is a rapidly developing village with a population of nearly 50,000. This area is economically and culturally important. Industries like HIL, HPCL, BPCL, IOCL etc. and power plants like Dr. Narla Tatarao and Lanco operate in and around Kondapalli.

Archeological survey of India is currently restoring the Kondapalli fort. It is a 14th-century fort that has great historical significance and attracts tourists from all over the country.

The village is also famous for handcrafted wooden toys. The industry is being revived using the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI).

Railway connectivity greatly helps in fast-tracking growth of economy and tourism. I request the government to provide halts at Kondapalli Railway station to the following trains —

1. 17205/17206 — Kakinada - Shirdi express
2. 17213/17214 &17231/17232— Narasapur - Nagarsol express

3. 18503/18504 — Vishakhapatnam - Shirdi express
4. 17207/17208 — Vijayawada - Shirdi express

I appeal to the Government to issue necessary orders to this effect request.

(xvi) Regarding discrepancies in NRC Part Draft published in Assam

SHRI RADHESHYAM BISWAS (KARIMGANJ): NRC Part Draft publication in Assam published on 31/12/2017 Mid Night had serious anomalies. In many cases, it is found that only the name of one child which was registered in the last serial no of the family list of the applicant as per legacy data of his parents is included in the part draft, paradoxically, the authority excluded whole family members of the applicant. So how it is possible to declare that child is Indian excluding the rest of the family members.

On being served notice while the head of family appeared before the authority with all the required documents & satisfied the verification team but ironically they were not included in notified part draft. Even those who were not been issued any notice on verification were not included in part draft. In some districts only 30 to 35% people were included in the first draft list, especially Bengali speaking districts.

Therefore, undoubtedly it may be concluded that there were serious lapses in the entire NRC process which may cause unnecessary harassment to the genuine citizens.

As we are always in favour of correct NRC list, I request the Ministry of Home Affairs to look into the matter seriously so that none of the Indian citizen be excluded from the final list and we demand that correct NRC List be published as soon as possible to resolve the long pending issue once forever.

(xvii) Need to formulate a comprehensive policy to improve the condition of farmers in the country

[Translation]

SHRI KAUSHALENDRA KUMAR (NALANDA): The distressing condition of farmers across the country is not hidden from anyone. The very food provider of the nation is compelled to live a life of hunger and hardship. The farmer himself often goes to bed hungry, yet he is constantly worried about feeding others. It is the duty of the Government to find appropriate solutions to the problems of our farmers. Our country is agrarian in nature. While we have become self-sufficient in foodgrains, farmers are becoming poorer with each passing day. This is a matter that calls for serious reflection.

About 68 per cent of agriculture in the country is dependent on rainfall, and any deficiency or excess in rainfall has a direct impact on farming. Adequate irrigation facilities have still not been ensured. Farmers remain perpetually burdened by debts taken from middlemen and moneylenders. In large parts of the country, floods occur, while in other vast areas drought prevails. Natural calamities continue to occur. Fertilisers and seeds are not available on time. Good quality seeds are scarce and are priced so high that farmers

are unable to purchase them. Pesticides have also become extremely expensive. The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana has failed to prove its effectiveness in providing meaningful assistance to farmers. Farmers do not receive proper prices for their crops and vegetables, nor adequate facilities for storage. When crops are produced, buyers are often not available, forcing farmers to sell their produce to middlemen at low prices. Once the produce leaves the hands of farmers, market prices double. This is a tragic irony.

I believe that in every Session, there should be discussion on one issue or another concerning farmers, yet the problems remain exactly the same. Therefore, a concrete initiative and a comprehensive action plan should be formulated to ensure a prosperous and dignified life for the food providers of the nation.

(xviii) Need to provide financial assistance to cotton growers in Maharashtra

SHRI RAJU SHETTY (HATKANANGLE): There is always scope for improvement in any research, and the same applies to agricultural research as well. No technology, in itself, is bad; however, earning excessive profits by exploiting the public, particularly farmers, through the use of such technology is always wrong. Such profits are often given the attractive name of 'royalty'. Collecting excessive royalty by exploiting the public, without taking responsibility for the consequences, is always objectionable.

All Hon. Members of the House would be aware that in Maharashtra, following protests, Bt cotton seeds were distributed to cotton-growing farmers of Vidarbha and Marathwada for cotton plantation. Certified Bt cotton seeds were promoted for bollworm-free production. Such assurances were given to farmers by the seed-producing companies. While this was claimed, the reality has been quite different. In nearly 90 per cent of the cotton-growing area, the spread of bollworm has been widely observed. Due to this infestation, cotton-producing farmers have suffered heavy losses. On the other hand, the companies concerned have washed their

hands of responsibility. As a result, there has been a significant increase in the number of suicides among cotton-growing farmers.

We are not opposed to technology. However, while providing such technology to farmers, if the seed-producing companies had made specific claims through advertisements, then, in accordance with those claims, appropriate compensation should be provided to farmers if the promised production is not realised. In this context, it is extremely necessary to conduct field trials at the time of seed production. Only after the seeds successfully pass field trial testing in the prescribed manner should they be brought to the market for sale to farmers. Due to the functioning of these cotton seed-producing companies, farmers in Maharashtra have suffered losses amounting to lakhs of rupees. There is an urgent need for the seed-producing companies and the Union Government to provide financial assistance to the affected farmers at the earliest.

12.08 hrs

UNION BUDGET (2018-2019) – GENERAL DISCUSSION – Contd.

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: Now, we will start general discussion on the Union Budget. Shri Ganesh Singh.

.... . (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI GANESH SINGH (SATNA): Hon. Speaker, Madam, I had commenced my speech on the Budget yesterday, and today you have once again given me the opportunity to speak. For this, I express my heartfelt thanks to you.

I would like to thank the Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who, while in Government, has begun fulfilling, one by one, all the promises made to the people of the country. Today, he has emerged as an international leader, and his growing influence is something that the Indian National Congress is unable to accept. Members of the Congress Party are portraying his good work in such a manner as if he were doing something wrong. I would like to state that yesterday, when the Hon. Prime Minister was replying to the Motion of Thanks on the Address by the Hon. President, he raised before the people of the country several issues about which they

were not previously aware. The Congress Party should respond to those issues. However, instead of listening to him in the House, they are choosing to speak outside.

I would like to ask Shri Rahul Gandhi, who is today the President of the Congress Party, to answer the questions that the Hon. Prime Minister placed before the nation yesterday. He says that the Rafale issue should be discussed. Shri Rahul Gandhi, before that, you should first explain who will answer for Bofors and the submarine deal. Who will answer for the scam of Rs. 12 lakh **crore**? Who will answer for the fact that the country was pushed so far backwards? Your grandfather had said that every citizen of the country would be provided food, clothing and shelter. Who will answer for that? Thereafter, your grandmother had said that poverty would be eradicated. Answers to all these questions will have to be given by you alone. You are criticising the Hon. Prime Minister. I find this very surprising. There is a saying in villages that how can a sieve criticise another when it itself has thirty-six holes. Today, the Congress has thirty-six holes and is in no position to comment on anyone.

I would like to state that today the eyes of the country are fixed on the Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and on what he is doing for the nation. The farmer of the country works day and night, yet does not receive a fair price for his produce and does not get

adequate assistance during natural calamities. He is looking towards the Government. Farmers have always existed in this country. India is an agrarian nation. Governments were formed earlier as well, but never before has such seriousness been shown towards farmers. Today, however, the Hon. Prime Minister has stated that we want to double the income of farmers, and a time frame has been fixed for this purpose. The Government has taken measures to ensure that farmers' income is doubled. First and foremost, the Hon. Prime Minister has addressed the issue of how farmers can be protected from natural calamities. In this very House, this subject was discussed on numerous occasions earlier, when Congress Governments were in power. Under the rules framed at that time, it was provided that only if there was a loss of 50 per cent of the crop would it be treated as a natural calamity. However, after the coming of the Government led by the Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the rules were relaxed and the threshold was brought down to 33 per cent loss.

When Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the Prime Minister, he initiated the scheme of providing Kisan Credit Cards to farmers and reduced the rate of interest to 7 per cent. Today, loans are being made available to farmers at concessional rates of interest. A provision of Rs. 11 lakh crore has been made for this purpose.

Earlier, farmers did not receive remunerative prices for their produce. The report of the Swaminathan Commission had recommended that the price of crops should be fixed at one and a half times the cost of production or the input cost. The Minimum Support Prices fixed for various crops so far were not adequate. Our Government has made an announcement in this Budget in this regard.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANTHKUMAR): I would like to say something about Andhra Pradesh.…*(Interruptions)* Madam, I would like to request all the Members from Andhra Pradesh, especially our TDP Members, to kindly go back to their seats as in both the Houses of Parliament our Hon. Finance Minister has assured that he is going to address their concerns while replying to the debate on the Budget.

Madam, your kind self knows that today at 5.00 or 5.30 p.m. the debate on the Budget will conclude and the Finance Minister is definitely going to give the reply….*(Interruptions)* Therefore, I would request all the Members of Parliament belonging to TDP as well as YSR Congress Party to go back to their seats and facilitate the debate on the Budget.

[Translation]

SHRI GANESH SINGH: Hon. Speaker, Madam, I would like to thank the Hon. Finance Minister and the Hon. Prime Minister. It has been decided that whether it is the Rabi crop or the Kharif crop, Minimum Support Prices will be announced for both, and the price will be fixed at one and a half times the cost of production. The Union Government has also conveyed to the State Governments that tie-ups will be made and a mechanism will be developed to ensure that farmers' produce is not sold in the market below that price. Undoubtedly, this is a very bold step. The Government of Madhya Pradesh has set an example in this regard. Our Government has decided that if commodities for which Minimum Support Prices have been declared are sold in the market at lower prices, the difference will be paid from the State exchequer. Certainly, this is a very important and revolutionary step. This is precisely what farmers wanted, namely, assistance during natural calamities and a remunerative price for their crops. Not only this, neem-coated urea, which earlier used to be sold in the black market and diverted to factories, is today being made available to farmers across the country in a timely manner. Earlier, there used to be long queues; today, those queues have disappeared.

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I would like to submit that our farmers have been given the right to have their soil tested, and sowing will be carried out on the basis of Soil Health Cards. Announcements have also been made regarding the construction of cold storage facilities. When crops such as tomatoes, onions and potatoes arrive in the market, farmers often do not receive remunerative prices. Our Government has decided to establish cold storages. The Government has also decided to promote medicinal farming, floriculture, vegetable cultivation, milk production, fisheries, poultry farming and animal husbandry. All these activities have now been brought within the ambit of agricultural credit. There are farmers who do not possess land titles and cultivate land on lease. Earlier, such farmers could obtain loans only from moneylenders. However, in this Budget, provision has been made to extend loans to such farmers through Kisan Credit Cards for crop cultivation.

Today our Government has worked to fulfil every need of farmers. Similarly, how long had the poor been waiting? The poor person toils day and night, yet is unable to build a house of his own. Those poor people who do not even have proper arrangements for two meals a day have been waiting for decades. Generations have passed. The Indira Awas scheme was in operation, but under it, even today, a Panchayat in the country could not receive more than two to four, six to eight, or ten houses. However, when the Socio-

Economic and Caste Census was conducted in the year 2011, it revealed that, on the basis of the survey conducted by the Planning Commission, Narendra Modi found that there were six crore people who did not have a house of their own, five crore people who did not have cooking gas, and about four crore families across the country who did not have an electricity connection. I would like to ask, whose responsibility was this?

Today the Hon. Prime Minister has resolved that by the time the year 2022 comes to an end, every poor person in this country will have a pucca house of his own. Recently, we attended *Griha Pravesh* programmes. We visited villages where houses have been constructed. While Shri Rakesh Singh was speaking on the Motion of Thanks on the Address by the Hon. President, he mentioned that he had visited tribal households in his area. In the same manner, all of us Members of Parliament visited *Griha Pravesh* programmes in our respective constituencies. Indeed, when an eighty-year-old elderly man saw his own pucca house for the first time, his joy knew no bounds. He said that he had earned throughout his life with the hope of building a house of his own, but he could never do so. I would like to thank the Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has ensured that today a pucca house has been provided at a cost of Rs. 1.5 lakh. Today, I would also like to thank the Government of Madhya Pradesh in particular, which has started providing wheat

and rice at Rs. 1 per kilogram and salt at Rs. 1 per kilogram to every poor person. Provision has also been made to provide medicines free of cost to the poor. Further, in the Budget, the Hon. Prime Minister has ensured that about ten crore families, who were genuinely dying without access to treatment, have now been guaranteed healthcare. Treatment up to Rs. 5 lakh can be availed in any hospital, thereby bringing about fifty crore people within its ambit. Indeed, every Hon. Member present here would, at some point or the other, have written to the Hon. Prime Minister seeking medical treatment for a BPL beneficiary from his or her constituency.

I would like to cite an example from my constituency. So far, I have sent 44 letters to the Hon. Prime Minister, and assistance has been provided to 44 persons from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. Such a sensitive Prime Minister truly realised that a large number of letters were being received from Hon. Members of Parliament seeking treatment for people, and that assistance had to be ensured from some source. He has taken a truly historic step by ensuring free medical treatment up to Rs. 5 lakh for the poor. This is a very significant decision. Perhaps, when Barack Obama introduced the 'Obamacare' scheme in the United States, about 28 per cent of the population was covered. I would like to thank Narendra Modi, who, through 'Modicare', has made arrangements for treatment by

covering about 40 per cent of the population. He truly deserves congratulations for this achievement.

Hon. Speaker, Madam, through you, I would like to state that today a new hope has arisen among the poor. Electricity connections are being provided to the homes of the poor; education of poor children is being made free; medical treatment for the poor is being ensured; arrangements for two meals a day are being made; roads and drains are being constructed in poor neighbourhoods. This was the dream of the poor. When Independence was attained, it was first said that our country would work for the poor, that it would work for those who had been left behind. If any Government has worked to bring them on an equal footing, if anyone has delivered social justice, it is the Government of India under Narendra Modi.

The Congress Party always raised slogans that it would eradicate poverty, win votes and form the Government, and then forget everything thereafter. I would like to thank the Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has worked to fulfil, one by one, every promise made before the people. He had said that poverty would be eradicated, that farmers would be fully supported, and that work would be done for the youth. Today, schemes such as the MUDRA Bank are in place for the youth, and Skill Development Centres have been opened to provide training to young people.

Hon. Speaker, Madam, through you, I would like to state that those youths were educated, they held degrees in their hands, yet they were unable to find employment anywhere. Today, they are learning one skill or another. I myself have opened a Skill Development Centre in my constituency, through which I am providing training to local youth.

HON. SPEAKER: Please conclude.

SHRI GANESH SINGH: Their placement is taking place at a very fast pace. About ten and a half crore youths have received loans under the MUDRA Bank scheme to undertake business and self-employment. The Government has provided Rs. 4 lakh crore through the MUDRA Bank. In this year's Budget as well, provision has been made for Rs. 3 lakh crore. Hon. Speaker, Madam, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to certain issues relating to Madhya Pradesh.

HON. SPEAKER: You have been speaking since yesterday. Your time is over.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI GANESH SINGH: Through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Finance Minister to Madhya Pradesh. Recently, there was drought in the State, and 18 districts were

affected. A Central Study Team visited the area and, in its inspection report, recommended that more than Rs. 4,000 crore is required. I would like this provision to be made and the amount to be released to the Government of Madhya Pradesh. Under the Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana also, a demand of Rs. 4,000 crore was made. For urban housing, a project amounting to Rs. 2,608 crore was approved,

Of which the Central share was Rs. 1,758 crore, but only Rs. 757.76 crore has been received. In the drinking water sector, we have received only Rs. 135.91 crore, whereas our requirement is much higher. Under MGNREGA as well, Rs. 997.75 crore has been received, whereas Rs. 1,650 crore should have been provided. Under the AMRUT scheme too, Rs. 282 crore has been received, whereas we should have received Rs. 500 crore.

Hon. Speaker, Madam, I would like to say a few things about my Lok Sabha constituency. In our region of Chitrakoot, Lord Rama had visited, and Maihar has the sacred abode of Maa Sharda. Satna has been included in the Ramayana Tourist Circuit. We have submitted a project for the 84 Kosi Parikrama, and we desire that funds be provided for the development of these pilgrimage sites. Satna has been declared a Smart City. The Union Government has announced the establishment of 24 colleges and has undertaken the upgradation of district hospitals. I have repeatedly requested that,

since Satna is an industrial area and a very large region is connected with it, the hospital here should be upgraded and a medical college should be sanctioned. Similarly, we have demanded an indoor stadium in the college. We have also submitted certain proposals under the Central Road Fund, and I request that these be approved and funds released.

Madam, I also have a submission regarding Railways. There is a demand for a train from Satna and Rewa to Mumbai. I would like this to be provided for in this Budget. Trains such as Rewa–Anand Vihar and the Mahakaushal Express should be brought under the category of modern trains. A MEMU car shed should be established at Satna. The Satna airport should be developed and air services should be commenced from there.

In conclusion, I fully support this Budget. This Budget is truly historic and will take the development of the country forward. For this, the Hon. Prime Minister deserves heartfelt congratulations. Indeed, for the first time in India's democracy, it has been seen that a Prime Minister not only makes promises outside, but, after coming to Government, also fulfils them by making concrete provisions in the Budget. …*(Interruptions)*

*__SHRIMATI RANJANBEN BHATT (VADODARA):__ I support the Budget presented by the Hon. Finance Minister. At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Hon. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, as they have announced the establishment of a Railway University in my parliamentary constituency, Vadodara, in the State of Gujarat. Along with this, the Ahmedabad–Mumbai Bullet Train project that has been initiated, and the decision to operate the Bullet Train and establish a training centre for the Bullet Train at Vadodara to provide information on its various facilities, for which the foundation stone has also been laid, is a matter of great pride. For this, the people of Vadodara express their gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister, and I also convey my thanks. I would also like to commend both of them because, in this New India Budget, despite placing significant emphasis on inclusive development and the agricultural sector, no compromise has been made with the fiscal deficit target.

In this entire Budget, the maximum number of announcements have been made for farmers, so that they may receive better prices for their produce. With a view to irrigation in agriculture, a scheme amounting to Rs. 1.5 lakh crore has been formulated for replacing

* Speech was laid on the Table.

agricultural pumps, under which it has been planned that by 2022, three crore pumps across the country will be operated on solar energy instead of electricity or diesel. This will prove to be a game changer in the times to come, as farmers will be able to generate additional income by producing surplus solar energy, the environment will benefit due to the discontinuation of diesel-operated irrigation pumps, the politics of providing electricity subsidy to agriculture will come to an end, and the practice of levying additional charges on urban electricity consumers will also be discontinued.

From agriculture to infrastructure, equal attention has been given to all sectors. This Budget is farmer-friendly, helpful to the common man, and conducive to improving the business environment in the country. Overall, if viewed comprehensively, it will accelerate the pace of development.

Along with farmers, the poor have also been provided the benefit of health insurance in this Budget. With the objective of providing better medical facilities to the weaker sections, the Budget proposes health insurance cover of up to Rs. 5 lakh per family per annum, which will benefit 50 crore people across the country.

The women of the country have been given a major benefit by expanding the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. Under this Scheme, the target for providing gas connections has been increased from 5 crore to 8 crore. The target of providing 5 crore gas connections will itself be achieved by September this year.

In this Budget, women employees have been given substantial relief. As their Provident Fund contribution has been reduced to eight per cent, they will receive higher take-home pay. Through this Budget, the Government has taken several beneficial steps to encourage women employees. The Government has worked to take women forward in every field, and the long-term impact of these measures will be visible.

As there has been no increase in the prices of essential commodities in this Budget, homemakers are feeling greatly relieved. The Budget has taken into account the interests of homemakers belonging to all sections, from the lower strata to the higher strata of society.

Amid questions being raised on the employment front, emphasis has been laid on creating new employment opportunities in both the organised and unorganised sectors, and steps have been taken in the direction of providing equal education to all.

In this Budget, special attention has also been given to the industrial sector. The Government has announced an investment of Rs. 3,794 crore, with a focus on promoting indigenous production. With the establishment of industries, greater employment opportunities will be created for the youth. This will help in fulfilling the objective of Make in India, and at the same time ensure that the country's resources remain within the country.

I would like to state that in this Budget, a major relief has been provided to salaried persons by announcing a standard deduction of Rs. 40,000.

The Government has promised to provide training to 50 lakh youth and employment to 70 lakh youth. Along with employment, the Government has also focused on skill development training. This will particularly benefit those who, despite being well educated, have not been able to secure employment. There is no doubt that this will not only reduce unemployment but will also bring prosperity to the country.

In this Budget, special emphasis has been laid on education. With the opening of 24 new medical colleges, the shortage of doctors will be addressed. Similarly, the implementation of an integrated B.Ed. programme for teachers will help in ensuring the availability of quality teachers. Through the Eklavya Model

Residential Schools scheme, tribal children will be able to receive good quality education.

In my view, if the entire Budget is reviewed holistically, it clearly emerges that the Hon. Finance Minister has provided something or the other to everyone, from farmers to the President of the nation. If this Budget is implemented in its true spirit, it will certainly lead to the creation of a New India, where villages will stand shoulder to shoulder with cities, migration from villages will become a thing of the past, and the country will be freed from the unfortunate curse of incidents such as farmers' suicides.

Thus, once again, while expressing my gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Hon. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, I strongly support the Budget presented.

Thank you, Jai Hind.

[*]**SHRI HARI OM SINGH RATHORE (RAJSAMAND):** I would like to express my gratitude to the Hon. Finance Minister for laying, under the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the foundation for building a strong India through this Budget. This Budget strengthens the concept of *Jai Garib, Jai Kisan*. It is a Budget of positive commitments. It is development-oriented, reinforces the vision of New India, and will help in realising the dream of a New India.

In the General Budget, the Hon. Finance Minister has focused on the mission of strengthening agriculture and rural development, health, education, employment, MSMEs and infrastructure sectors. Owing to several structural reforms undertaken by the Government, India is poised to be counted among the fastest-growing economies in the world. With manufacturing, services and exports returning to the growth trajectory, India has now moved firmly towards achieving an economic growth rate of over 8 per cent. Like most Rabi crops, the MSP of all previously undeclared Kharif crops will be fixed at one and a half times their cost of production. Increasing institutional credit to the agriculture sector from Rs. 8.5 lakh crore in 2014-15 to Rs. 11 lakh crore in 2018-19 will prove to be a milestone in the progress of farmers. For safeguarding the interests

[*] Speech was laid on the Table

of 86 per cent small and marginal farmers, the development and upgradation of 22,000 rural haats into rural agricultural markets will make it easier for farmers to sell their produce in the market. In the interest of both farmers and consumers, the launch of Operation Greens to address the issue of sharp price fluctuations in essential commodities such as potatoes, tomatoes and onions will provide significant relief to producers of these crops.

I would like to state that fisheries and animal husbandry can also play a significant role in enhancing the income of farmers engaged in the agricultural sector. From this perspective, the announcement in the Budget of two new funds amounting to Rs. 10,000 crore will establish new dimensions in this sector. Bamboo can become an important source of income for farmers. At present, bamboo worth thousands of crores of rupees is imported for paper manufacturing and other uses. I would like to express my gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi for amending the law and providing relief to farmers by redefining bamboo, which earlier fell under the definition of a tree and whose cutting was treated as an offence, by bringing it under the category of grass. By making a provision of Rs. 1,290 crore for the restructured National Bamboo Mission, new opportunities have been created for bamboo producers. This Budget provision will certainly encourage bamboo growers.

To promote women empowerment and Self-Help Groups, the amount of loans provided, which stood at Rs. 42,500 crore last year, has been enhanced to Rs. 75,000 crore in this Budget, thereby clearly reflecting the Government's commitment towards women.

For providing free LPG connections, electricity and toilets to the lower and middle classes, higher targets have been fixed under the Ujjwala, Saubhagya and Swachh missions. The expenditure for health, education and social security will be Rs. 1.38 lakh crore. For tribal students, one Eklavya Residential School will be established in every tribal block by the year 2022, and welfare funds relating to Scheduled Castes have also been strengthened.

On the lines of the Obamacare scheme of the United States, the world's largest health protection scheme has been launched through *Namo Care*, with a coverage limit of Rs. 5 lakh per family. Under this scheme, 10 crore poor and vulnerable families will be covered, that is, about 45 to 50 crore people will receive the benefit of this health insurance scheme.

I would like to state that the fiscal deficit has been fixed at 3.5 per cent, and it is estimated to be 3.3 per cent in the year 2018-19.

The other important highlights of the General Budget for the year 2018-19 are as follows-

- An allocation of Rs. 5.97 lakh crore has been made for the infrastructure sector.
- Ten prominent sites will be developed as iconic tourist destinations.
- NITI Aayog will launch a national programme on Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Centres of Excellence will be established in the fields of robotics, AI, Internet of Things and related technologies.
- Disinvestment has crossed the target of Rs. 72,500 crore and reached the level of Rs. 1,00,000 crore.
- Preparations are underway to formulate a comprehensive Gold Policy to develop gold as an asset class.
- It has been proposed to allow 100 per cent deduction for a period of five years, starting from 2018-19, on profits earned from such activities by Farmer Producer Companies registered as companies having an annual turnover of up to Rs. 100 crore.
- Under Section 80JJAA, the eligibility period for availing 30 per cent deduction on total wages paid to new employees has been relaxed to 150 days for the

footwear and leather industries, in order to generate more employment.

- No adjustment will be made in respect of transactions in immovable property where the circle rate value does not exceed 5 per cent of the total consideration.

- It has been proposed to extend the benefit of the existing reduced corporate tax rate of 25 per cent, currently available to companies with turnover of less than Rs. 50 crore (in financial year 2015-16), to companies reporting turnover of up to Rs. 250 crore in financial year 2016-17, so as to benefit Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

- In place of the existing exemption for transport allowance and reimbursement of miscellaneous medical expenses, a standard deduction of Rs. 40,000 has been provided. This will benefit 2.5 crore salaried employees and pensioners.

- Reliefs proposed for senior citizens:

- The exemption in respect of interest income on deposits with banks and post offices will be increased from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000.

- Under Section 194A, there will be no requirement to deduct TDS. This benefit will also be available on interest received under all fixed deposit schemes and recurring deposit schemes.

- Under Section 80D, the deduction limit for health insurance premium and or medical expenditure has been increased from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 50,000.

- Under Section 80DDB, the deduction limit for medical expenditure on specified serious diseases has been increased from Rs. 60,000 in the case of senior citizens and Rs. 80,000 in the case of very senior citizens, to Rs. 1 lakh for all senior citizens.

- It has been proposed to extend the period of the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana up to March 2020. It has also been proposed to increase the present investment limit from Rs. 7.5 lakh per senior citizen to Rs. 15 lakh.

- Further concessions have been proposed for International Financial Services Centres to promote trading in stock exchanges located in International Financial Services Centre.

- In order to keep the cash economy under control, trusts and institutions will not be permitted to make cash payments exceeding Rs. 10,000, and such payments will be liable to tax.

- A tax at the rate of 10 per cent will be levied on long-term capital gains exceeding Rs. 1 lakh, without the benefit of indexation. However, all gains accrued up to 31 January 2018 will be grandfathered.

- It has been proposed to levy tax at the rate of 10 per cent on income distributed by equity-oriented mutual funds.

- It has been proposed to increase the cess payable on personal income tax and corporation tax from the existing 3 per cent to 4 per cent.

- With a view to ensuring greater efficiency and transparency in direct tax collection, it has been

proposed to introduce e-assessment across the country, so as to almost completely eliminate physical interface.

- It has been proposed to rationalise customs duties in order to promote greater employment generation in the country, while also encouraging Make in India and domestic value addition in sectors such as food processing, electronics, auto components, footwear and furniture.

On the basis of these provisions contained in the Budget, it can certainly be stated that in the times to come, India will emerge as a nation with a strong economic foundation. I would like to congratulate and express my gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister for presenting a Budget with such far-reaching outcomes.

*__SHRIMATI DARSHANA VIKRAM JARDOSH (SURAT):__ I would like to state that I support the General Budget presented by the Hon. Finance Minister.

Ever since, under the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the people have, with a clear majority, entrusted the responsibility of national development to the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance, the Opposition, having lost power, has been acting in a state of anxiety and has gone to the extent of criticising not only the Government but also the country. The manner in which the President of the country's oldest political party is criticising the nation in an attempt to belittle the Government is deeply unfortunate. In such an atmosphere, for presenting a development-oriented and inclusive Budget that reflects the real aspirations of the people at the grassroots level, the Hon. Prime Minister, the Hon. Finance Minister and the Government deserve to be congratulated.

The most important parameters of the nation's development are road connectivity, transportation facilities, education, health and economic stability. In all these sectors, after the present Government came to power, progress has taken place at a rapid pace, which cannot be denied. If I speak about Gujarat, during the

* Speech was laid on the Table.

recent elections, Rahul Gandhi perhaps undertook the maximum travel he has ever done in any election. Most of this travel was through road connectivity. I would like to ask him whether, during the rule of the Indian National Congress, any of their Presidents ever travelled so extensively by road. The answer would clearly be in the negative, because in earlier times, their leaders hardly visited Gujarat, and even when they did, their visits were largely confined to cities such as Surat, Ahmedabad, Rajkot and Vadodara. The main reason for this was that during the Congress rule, Gujarat did not have adequate road connectivity. This facility has been developed by the Bharatiya Janata Party ever since it assumed office in Gujarat, and lakhs of villages have been connected by roads. I believe that even after undertaking such extensive travel, if it is still being stated that no development has taken place, then it is nothing but an unsuccessful attempt to blindfold the people. This is what I firmly believe.

The difference between the condition of healthcare in the country prior to 2014 and the situation today is something that the people are clearly experiencing. Through the Ayushman Bharat scheme, a Healthy India can be built at the grassroots level. Even today, there are many families in the country who are deprived of healthcare facilities due to financial constraints. Through this scheme, even the person standing at the very last rung of society

will genuinely be able to avail good healthcare facilities. As soon as the Government formulated this effective scheme, the Opposition, which claims that such schemes were conceived during the Congress regime, instead of focusing on its implementation, has begun worrying about its budget. This clearly shows that they have no substantive grounds to oppose this scheme. The Government has also assured that patients suffering from tuberculosis will be provided Rs. 500 per month, which will not only give them financial relief but will also significantly help in improving their health. Twenty-four new medical colleges will be opened in the country, which will provide us with a new and ambitious generation of youth in the healthcare sector and further strengthen it. The second important sector is education. The education system that we inherited requires more time and sustained efforts to be fully corrected. However, the priority accorded to education by the Government after assuming office will help in making education universal. By formulating a common education policy from Class I to Class XII, a major concern of students and parents alike will be addressed. An allocation of Rs. 1 lakh crore has been made for education over a period of four years, which will bring about gradual but meaningful improvement. We inherited a legacy where, under Congress Governments, schools did not even have teachers, and in many cases, facilities such as toilets for girl students and even

blackboards were not provided. The present Government has gone beyond blackboards and has placed before the people a roadmap for extensive use of technology in education and for taking education to the remotest areas through technology. Training of over 13 lakh teachers, promotion of digital portals, installation of digital boards in schools, establishment of Eklavya Model Residential Schools in tribal areas, creation of Institutes of Eminence, establishment of a Railway University at Vadodara, setting up of 16 new Schools of Planning and Architecture in Indian Institutes of Technology and National Institutes of Technology, and the introduction of an integrated B.Ed. programme are such initiatives through which significant achievements can truly be realised in the field of education.

The public was greatly misled regarding GST. In order to portray the Government as anti-people and to misguide traders, all kinds of fair and unfair tactics were adopted to incite agitation. In my parliamentary constituency of Surat, a conspiracy was hatched to cause extensive damage to both public and private property. However, in the recent Assembly elections, in Surat city, which has 12 Assembly constituencies and from where lakhs of traders conduct business across the country and abroad, the people gave a decisive mandate by electing the Bharatiya Janata Party with an overwhelming majority in all the 12 constituencies. The people

have seen Governments which merely built castles in the air in the name of respecting women. In contrast, the present Government has formulated and effectively implemented schemes through both word and deed, so that women receive real dignity in the country. Be it the construction of toilets, which is directly linked to women's dignity, health and family honour, or the Swachh Bharat initiative, earlier women were compelled to cook on firewood stoves, adversely affecting their health and harming the environment. So far, crores of women have been provided free gas connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, with a target of distributing 8 crore free LPG connections. I firmly believe that this will genuinely benefit 8 crore families. The schemes placed before the people by the present Government in the field of women empowerment will have a positive impact on the future of the country, on public health, and on overall prosperity. By reducing the EPF contribution of women employees, participation of women in the organised sector will increase, and they will also be able to take home a higher salary every month. Under the MUDRA scheme, a continuous and perhaps the largest share of beneficiaries comprises women entrepreneurs, which is a very significant step in the direction of women empowerment.

This is a Budget which takes concrete steps in the direction of health-oriented, people-oriented and development-oriented growth, and upholds the dignity of women. I congratulate the Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Hon. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, and the entire Government, and I support the Budget.

*__SHRIMATI JAYSHREEBEN PATEL (MEHSANA):__ I would like to support the General Budget presented by the Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley.

Four years ago, the Government had promised the people of India an honest, clean and transparent Government, and leadership capable of taking difficult decisions and restoring confidence in the Indian economy.

This time, a budget of Rs. 24.42 lakh crore has been presented. This General Budget focuses on the mission of strengthening agriculture, rural development, health, education, employment, MSMEs and the infrastructure sector. Our Government is focusing on improving the living standards of the poor and the middle class and on making it easier to do business.

Owing to structural reforms, India will also be counted among the fastest-growing economies in the world. With growth in the manufacturing, services and export sectors returning to the right track, India is now firmly moving towards achieving an economic growth rate of more than 8 per cent. I congratulate the Government for this.

Agriculture is the backbone of our country's economy. Like most Rabi crops, the Minimum Support Price of all unspecified

* Speech was laid on the Table.

Kharif crops will be one and a half times their cost of production. This will lead to an increase in farmers' income.

If the agriculture budget of the UPA Government during the years 2009 to 2014 is examined, it stood at Rs. 1,21,082 crore, which has increased to Rs. 2,11,694 crore during the five years of the Hon. Modi Government from 2014 to 2019. This reflects an increase of 74.5 per cent. Institutional credit to the agriculture sector has been proposed to be enhanced from Rs. 8.5 lakh crore in 2014-15 to Rs. 11 lakh crore in 2018-19.

In order to safeguard the interests of 86 per cent small and marginal farmers, 22,000 rural haats will be developed and upgraded as rural agricultural markets. Further, the MSP for various commodities will be provided to farmers at one and a half times their cost of production. During the last four years of the Modi Government, there has been an unprecedented increase in the procurement of pulses, oilseeds and crops.

In the interest of farmers and consumers, Operation Greens has been launched to address the problem of sharp price fluctuations in TOP crops, namely potato, tomato and onion. For this purpose, an allocation of Rs. 500 crore has been made. State-of-the-art testing facilities will also be established in 42 Mega Food Parks. The Government has paid special attention to farmers. Bamboo, which

is green gold, was earlier classified as a tree by the previous Government, making its felling an offence. However, the Bamboo Mission has now been proposed in a new form with an allocation of Rs. 1,290 crore. Through this, not only will small industries be established, but new employment opportunities will also be generated.

In this Budget, all types of FPOs, including Farmer Producer Companies, have been granted the benefit of income tax exemption. Small and marginal farmers will be able to avail themselves of this benefit by forming FPOs or FPCs. At the same time, this will also help address the problem of small landholdings and fragmentation of land.

Generous provision has been made in the Budget for agricultural development. Under the KUSUM Scheme, a proposal has been made to run three crore solar pumps, which will bring self-reliance among farmers.

It has been proposed to allow 100 per cent deduction, for a period of five years beginning from 2018-19, on the profits earned from such activities by companies registered as Farmer Producer Companies having an annual turnover of up to Rs. 100 crore. Twenty-two thousand haats will be equipped with basic infrastructure. The Government has fulfilled its commitment to

keeping rural India clean, and under this, the Gobardhan Scheme has been announced for the utilisation of animal waste.

For obtaining more accurate weather information, the Mihir supercomputer will update farmers with weather-related messages by July 2018. Two new funds of Rs. 10,000 crore each have been announced for the fisheries and animal husbandry sectors. This will promote the livestock and fisheries industries.

Special focus has been placed on women by increasing the amount of loans provided to Women Self-Help Groups from Rs. 42,500 crore last year to Rs. 75,000 crore in the year 2019.

In order to provide greater employment opportunities to women and to enhance their take-home salary, the EPF contribution for newly employed women has been reduced from 12 per cent to 8 per cent for a period of three years. However, the employer's contribution will continue to remain at 12 per cent. This is a very important step towards the empowerment of working women. This step is commendable.

Higher targets have been set under the Ujjwala Scheme, the Saubhagya Scheme and the Swachh Mission to provide free LPG connections, electricity and toilets to the lower and middle classes. Under the Saubhagya Scheme, electricity will be provided to four crore households. Under the Ujjwala Scheme, free gas connections

will be provided to eight crore poor women. This will especially benefit poor women. I appreciate this initiative.

To realise the dream of a modern India, to enhance the ease of living of the common people and to lend sustainability to development, next-generation infrastructure is extremely essential in India.

Considerable emphasis has been laid in the Budget on the development of infrastructure related to rail and metro systems, highways and i-ways, ports and airports, power grids and gas grids, and initiatives such as Sagarmala, Bharatmala and Digital India. For these, an allocation of approximately Rs. 6 crore has been made. This is nearly Rs. one lakh crore more as compared to the previous year. These schemes will create immense employment opportunities in the country.

Apart from providing Rs. 14.34 lakh crore for strengthening infrastructure, six crore toilets have been constructed under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. In view of its success and importance, two crore new toilets will also be constructed in the year 2018-19. The outlay for health, education and social protection will be Rs. 1.38 lakh crore. For tribal students, one Eklavya Residential School will be established in every tribal block by the year 2022. Welfare outlay relating to Scheduled Castes has also been enhanced.

With the establishment of 24 new medical colleges across the country, people will have better access to medical treatment and youth will also find it easier to pursue medical education. There will be at least one medical college for every three parliamentary constituencies. This is commendable. The world's largest health protection scheme has been launched for secondary and tertiary care, with a coverage of up to Rs. 5 lakh per family, under which more than 10 crore poor and vulnerable families will be brought within its ambit.

Centres of excellence will be established in areas such as robotics, artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things. Special emphasis has also been laid on the development of technologies such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing.

An allocation of Rs. 520.9 crore has been earmarked for Khelo India to promote sports. This reflects a positive approach towards the welfare of sportspersons. Disinvestment has crossed the target of Rs. 72,000 crore and reached the level of Rs. 1 lakh crore. This is commendable.

Tourism has been accorded the status of an industry, and a policy has also been formulated to increase employment through skill development in this sector. The proposal to upgrade tourism

facilities at the Adarsh Monuments of the Archaeological Survey of India is commendable.

Under section 80JJAA, the relaxation in the 30 per cent deduction on the total wages paid to new employees will be extended to 150 days for the footwear and leather industries, in order to generate more employment. It has also been proposed to extend the benefit of the reduced tax rate of 25 per cent, presently available to companies with a turnover of less than Rs. 50 crore, to companies reporting turnover of up to Rs. 250 crore in the financial year 2016-17. This will benefit micro, small and medium enterprises.

A standard deduction of Rs. 40,000 has been proposed in lieu of the existing exemption for transport allowance and reimbursement of miscellaneous medical expenses. This will benefit 2.5 crore salaried employees and pensioners.

Relief proposed for senior citizens: the income tax exemption limit on income earned from bank interest for senior citizens has been increased from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000. Under section 80D, the deduction limit for health insurance premium and medical expenditure has been enhanced from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 50,000. Under section 80DDB, the deduction limit for medical expenditure on certain specified critical illnesses has been increased from Rs.

60,000 in the case of senior citizens and Rs. 80,000 in the case of very senior citizens to Rs. 1 lakh for all senior citizens. This will ensure better medical treatment for senior citizens and, at the same time, they will not have to depend on anyone for support.

It has been proposed to extend the period of the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana till March 2020. The proposal to enhance the existing investment limit per senior citizen from the present ceiling of Rs. 7.5 lakh to Rs. 15 lakh is commendable.

The exemption relating to interest income on deposits in banks and post offices has been increased from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000. No TDS will be deducted under section 194A. The benefit will also be available on interest earned under all fixed deposit schemes and recurring deposit schemes.

Further concessions have been proposed for IFSCs in order to promote trading in stock exchanges located in International Financial Services Centres. A proposal has been made to levy tax at the rate of 10 per cent on income distributed by equity-oriented mutual funds. It has also been proposed to increase the existing cess on personal income tax and corporation tax from 3 per cent to 4 per cent.

The proposal to introduce e-assessment across the country, with the objective of ensuring greater efficiency and transparency

in direct tax collection by almost completely eliminating personal interface, is a good step.

With a view to promoting the creation of more jobs in the country, as well as encouraging Make in India and domestic value addition in various sectors such as food processing, electronics, auto components, footwear and furniture, it has been proposed to rationalise customs duties.

The Sankalp Scheme has been announced to provide skills training to youth. This will confer special benefits on young people and make it easier for them to earn a livelihood. Along with this, 70 lakh employment opportunities will be generated. Emphasis has also been laid on increasing women's participation in employment. This is commendable.

An amount of Rs. 48 lakh crore will be invested in the Railways for the expansion of the railway network, which is regarded as the lifeline of the country. The proposals to convert the entire Indian Railways to broad gauge, to provide Wi-Fi and CCTV facilities at stations, to modernise 600 stations, and to convert unmanned railway crossings into digital crossings are commendable.

This Budget also brings the message of prosperity along with health. It is a progressive Budget and commendable economic

decisions have been taken therein. It will strengthen the foundation of our economy. It provides significant relief to small companies. With an Indian economy of Rs. 160 lakh crore, India is the world's seventh largest economy and will soon progress to the fifth position. The ambitious Smart City Mission has been accorded the highest priority.

During the tenure of the UPA Government, the Supreme Court had directed the setting up of an SIT to curb black money, but no action was taken for three years. Immediately upon assuming office in May 2014, the Modi Government constituted the SIT. Benami properties amounting to Rs. 3,500 crore existed, yet the UPA Government did not make any legal provisions for years. Aadhaar is not merely a contribution of the Congress; it has its origins in the concept of a universal identity card envisaged during the Government of Atal Ji. The Modi Government has linked 411 schemes with Aadhaar, thereby curbing leakages amounting to Rs. 57,000 crore that were earlier siphoned off by middlemen.

Ninety-nine projects initiated during the UPA Government had remained pending for years. The Modi Government took these up and has completed 50 of them. By enacting the RERA law, it has ensured the protection of the housing interests of the middle class.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, schemes for affordable housing for urban and rural middle-class families are progressing through low-interest loans and subsidies.

By securing the election of an Indian judge to the International Court of Justice for a second term and by obtaining international recognition for Yoga as the International Day of Yoga, India's standing has been enhanced. In the case of Kulbhushan, who had been awarded the death sentence by Pakistan, significant success has been achieved by obtaining a stay from the International Court.

The recognition accorded to India at the Davos World Economic Forum, and the enhancement of India's stature in international relations through balanced diplomacy pursued by the Hon. Prime Minister between Israel and Arab States, are highly commendable.

This Budget will fulfil the dream of a New India and will also strengthen the economy. Gujarat, which is a role model State for the country, has witnessed development initiatives under the Modi Government, including a Railway University at Vadodara, a Tribal Museum, an Exhibition and Convention Centre at Dwarka with an allocation of Rs. 700 crore, Central assistance for the Statue of Unity, the Ahmedabad–Mumbai Bullet Train project, the

Ahmedabad Metro Rail, and Central assistance for the construction of National Highways and bridges.

My constituency, Mehsana, does not have any direct train connectivity from North Gujarat to Surat and Mumbai. This facility may kindly be provided.

Mehsana is known as an oil, industrial and milk city. Halt facilities for four trains, similar to the Garib Rath, may be provided there.

Overall, from food to fibre optics, from roads to shipping, from youth to senior citizens, from rural India to Ayushman Bharat, and from Digital India to Start-up India, this Budget is one that strengthens the hopes and aspirations of the country's 125 crore people.

Therefore, while appreciating this Budget, I support it.

Thank you.

[English]

[*]**SHRI P. KUMAR (TIRUCHIRAPALLI):** I congratulate the Finance Minister for presenting a Budget with renewed focus on agriculture, rural development and health sector.

The country is going through a critical phase of economic development and it was necessary that that the Budget provided momentum to stabilize the benefits of such growth. This is also the first Budget post GST and the last full budget of the present Government and all of us expected a populist Budget, but he believed all the expectations.

It is clear that we are in the midst of an agrarian crisis that has taken a toll on the rural economy. The budget has addressed part of this - the farm crisis, by promising returns of 50 per cent over the cost of production. In this regard, the enhancement of the minimum support price (MSP) for all crops to cover at least 1.5 times that of the production cost will prove to be a game changer for the farmer community. However the implementation of such a move will remain a big challenge and the success of such a scheme will depend on how the Government micromanages the scheme.

But as far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, we need water for irrigation. In the absence of Cauvery water, the farmers of the delta

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

region are facing huge distress and taking this opportunity, I request the Centre to constitute the Cauvery Management Board immediately, which will be in tune with the verdict of the Tribunal.

While I appreciate the constitution of the Fisheries & Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund and Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund with a total corpus of Rs.10,000 crores which will provide a significant impetus to the agriculture and allied sector, I request the Finance Minister to grant Rs.1650 crore for diversification of fisheries, as was demanded by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, in his Memorandum to Hon. Prime Minister a year ago.

I also appreciate the launching of 'Operation Green' with initial allocation of Rs. 500 crores and Bamboo Development Fund with allocation of Rs. 1290 crores. We also welcome the proposed liberalization of exports of Agricultural commodities and are hopeful that the State of Tamil Nadu will also be given the benefit from the Mega Food Parks scheme that the Union Finance Minister alluded to in his speech. Doubling the allocation to the agro processing industry will bring more stability and enhance farmers' income.

The Government of India has given special focus on expanding the capacity of suburban train systems in Mumbai and

Bengaluru. Chennai is expanding faster and needs strengthening of its suburban train system. This has been left out in the Budget. I hope the Union Government will also improve the suburban train system of Chennai, by granting more money.

This budget announces the ambitious launch of Universal health Insurance, the world's largest public health insurance programme upto 100 million poor families. This can improve the quality of life of poor families and help increase productivity.

In this regard, I would like to proudly inform the Government that the Government of Tamil Nadu has been a pioneer in implementing the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme and providing universal healthcare across the State. I commend the Union Finance Minister for announcing the National Health Protection Scheme on similar lines that would provide health cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary hospitalization. This programme would definitely augment the efforts of the State Government in providing health security to the poor and achieve the Mission of universal health care in the country.

For the benefit of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, the Union Budget has reduced the rate of corporate tax to 25 per cent to companies with turnover of less than Rs.250 crores.

However, the expectations of the MS&ME are far greater and they need to be supported more, as they are the significant contributors to new employment generation.

The Government has increased to Rs. 50,000 the exemption of interest-income of the senior citizens. The Government has already reduced the interest on deposits in the banks very significantly; and so, the middle class pensioners hardly get interest worth mentioning, and so, this raising of limit would, in no way, help them.

Our Government has been requesting the Government of India to reduce the taxation burden on salaried individuals. We had hoped that they would reduce tax on salaried individuals to boost consumption demand and economic growth. While we welcome the standard deduction of Rs. 40,000 announced in the budget speech, we feel that this falls short of the expectations of the public.

We were hopeful that the allocation on the National Social Assistance Programme would increase considerably, but it has remained stagnant. We had made an appeal to the Government of India to enhance the pension under the scheme from the meagre Rs. 200 or Rs. 300 per month to atleast Rs. 1000 per month. However the budget has not addressed this important scheme designed to provide social security to the poor.

Though the Budget has given considerable importance to agriculture, rural development, health etc., the reduction in allocation in some of the sensitive and important schemes like post-matric scholarships for Scheduled Castes, Pradhan Mantri Mathru Vandana Yojana, Skill Development and Livelihood Mission could have been avoided. The requirement of funds under the post-matric scholarship at the national level is very high, but this reduced allocation would further tighten the release to the State Governments. Here, I would like to mention that large amounts of money are still pending to be reimbursed by the Centre to the State Government of Tamil Nadu; I request that the Centre may kindly reimburse those amounts immediately.

Moreover, the higher fiscal deficit and the increase in minimum support price could result in higher inflation which, in turn, could cause the Reserve Bank of India to increase the policy rate.

The country is going through a difficult phase of economic development. It needs acceleration and stabilization of the growth momentum. The budget should give a boost to increase investment, generate more jobs.

Given these circumstances, this budget is addressing the critical issues effectively and the Union Finance Minister has put

his best efforts to present a balanced and growth oriented budget. I hope that this budget will bring fiscal stability to the country and accelerate the economic growth.

With these words, I conclude. Thank You.

[Translation]

*__SHRI SHRIRANG APPA BARNE (MAWAL)__: Like last year, this year too the General Budget of the country was presented in Parliament on 1 February. Considerable expectations were attached to this Budget by salaried employees, industrialists and farmers alike. In today's times, the Budget has become a subject on which every individual wishes to express an opinion.

As in the previous year, this year as well the Budget is being described as a farmers' Budget, since the Government has decided to fix the support price for all crops, whereas earlier only a few crops were covered under the support price mechanism. Farmers had often complained that they did not receive a fair price for their produce. The Government has also presented data relating to record agricultural production, but how farmers' income is to be doubled has still not become clear. This was stated in last year's Budget as well, but no significant progress appears to have been made. Even today, farmers across the country are committing suicide. The Budget does not mention what measures will be taken to prevent farmers' suicides. Along with this, there is no mention in the Budget regarding farmers' education or about removing middlemen between farmers and the market and permitting farmers to sell their

* Speech was laid on the Table.

produce directly in the market, whereas in the present circumstances, firm decisions are required on these issues as well.

In the Budget for 2018-19, a total allocation of Rs. 63,836 crore has been made for the agriculture and allied sectors. Last year, an allocation of Rs. 58,663 crore was made for this purpose. This means an increase of Rs. 5,173 crore as compared to the year 2017-18. The Budget has provided for agricultural credit amounting to Rs. 11 lakh crore, and the provision to fix the Minimum Support Price of most Rabi crops at one and a half times the cost of production is a welcome step.

Provision has been made under this Budget to bring 10 crore poor families across the country under the National Health Insurance Scheme, under which an amount of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year will be provided for medical treatment. This is a welcome step by the Government. Undoubtedly, providing such medical assistance to poor families across the country will bring relief and will lead to progress in the health sector. Such programmes will also generate employment. I thank the Government for proposing an allocation of Rs. 600 crore under the Budget to overcome deadly diseases such as tuberculosis. The Government has also proposed an allocation of Rs. 1,200 crore for health and wellness in this Budget. As we all know, treatment of serious diseases involves expenditure running into lakhs of rupees, and the poor in our

country are not in a position to bear such heavy expenses. Therefore, this is a necessary step taken by the Government.

The Hon. Prime Minister had launched the Ujjwala Scheme, under which free LPG connections were provided to poor women in the country. Initially, the target was fixed at five crore beneficiaries, which has now been increased to eight crore. However, it has also been reported that, in the name of providing free gas connections, an amount of Rs. 1,500 is being collected from these poor women across the country. The Government needs to pay attention to this issue as well.

Through this Budget, the Government has proposed to improve warehousing facilities so that farmers may receive the right price for their produce. The Budget also proposes the development of rural haats as agricultural markets, and under this proposal of Rs. 200 crore, it is envisaged that the work will be carried out by March 2019. As we all know, there are certain crops which perish quickly, such as potatoes, tomatoes and onions. Due to farmers not receiving a remunerative price for these vegetables, they are often compelled to dump them on the roads. Therefore, proper arrangements will have to be made for farmers for the storage and preservation of such vegetables.

In the area of road infrastructure, the Government has achieved the National Highway target with an outlay of Rs. 9,000 crore. Work is underway under the Bharatmala programme to connect remote and border areas. Emphasis is being laid on road connectivity in border regions. However, even today, in many parts of the country, National Highway projects that have remained incomplete for years are yet to be completed. In several places, the work has not even commenced. The Government should have completed these long-pending National Highway projects, but these works still remain incomplete. National Highway No. 4 passes through my constituency. During the tenure of the previous Government, the work of National Highway No. 4 from Dehu Road to Satara was awarded to a private company. Despite the passage of many years, the company has not completed the work till date. Owing to the incomplete work, accidents frequently occur on this stretch and people lose their lives. Why no action is being taken against the concerned company is a matter of concern.

The National Highway from Panvel to Goa is also progressing at a very slow pace, due to which people are facing several difficulties. I would like to urge the Hon. Minister to ensure that the work on this National Highway leading to the Konkan region is completed at the earliest so that relief may be provided to the people.

In order to promote the tourism sector, the Government makes announcements from time to time. In this context, there are two ancient and historical caves, namely Karla and Bhaja, located in my parliamentary constituency of Maval, which are under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India. The Karla Caves are situated near Lonavala in my constituency. Near the Karla Caves is the famous ancient temple of Goddess Ekvira. This temple, which is protected by the Archaeological Survey of India, is surrounded by the Karla Caves. Lakhs of devotees visit this temple. The steps on the approach road to this temple are in a dilapidated condition. I have repeatedly raised the demand for improvement of these steps and had also suggested the utilisation of MPLAD funds, but difficulties arise in obtaining approval from the Archaeological Survey of India. The officials of the Archaeological Survey do not themselves undertake improvement works and, by citing legal provisions, also create obstacles in other works. Now that the Government is permitting construction near such protected heritage sites, I would request the Government to first take necessary steps to safeguard such heritage.

The Government has launched the Smart City Mission across the country and has selected 99 cities under this Mission. However, in the cities that were earlier selected as Smart Cities, no development work has commenced so far. Before selecting new

cities, the Government should initiate development works in the cities that were earlier selected under the Smart City Mission.

At present, the common man of the country is facing a double burden. On the one hand, rising prices are disturbing household budgets of homemakers, and on the other hand, due to declining interest rates offered by banks, the middle class of the country is under strain. Recently, the Government has also reduced interest rates on small savings schemes such as NSC and EPF. In this context, this section had expectations of tax relief from the Government. Had the Finance Minister increased the income tax exemption limit from Rs. 2.50 lakh to Rs. 3 lakh, taxpayers would have benefited by approximately Rs. 5,000 annually. However, the Government paid no attention to this aspect. Salaried employees in the country, who were expecting relief in the form of higher tax exemptions, have received no such relief from the Government. Instead, by increasing the cess by one per cent, an additional burden has been placed on the middle class.

From the very beginning, the Government has been speaking about bringing back black money stashed abroad, and it was on this assurance that the people elected this Government. However, even after nearly four years have passed, neither have the names of those involved in black money been made public, nor has the country been informed about how much black money has been brought

back. I believe that in doing so, the people of the country are being kept under a misconception.

The Union Government will spend 12.10 per cent of its total expenditure on defence. In the proposed Budget, an amount of Rs. 2,95,511.41 crore has been provided under this head. This is 7.81 per cent higher than the previous Budget Estimates, while it is 5.91 per cent higher than the Revised Estimates. However, defence expenditure as a proportion of the country's GDP has been continuously declining. In 2013-14, defence expenditure was 1.79 per cent of GDP, which is estimated to have declined to 1.62 per cent in 2017-18. It is now proposed to be reduced further to 1.57 per cent. This is the lowest level since the 1962 war. Although the economy is expanding, this figure has been consistently declining in percentage terms. Defence experts are of the view that, in view of the increased threat from Pakistan and China, this figure should be more than 2.5 per cent. Therefore, the Union Government should pay attention to this matter and further enhance the defence budget.

The modernisation of the Armed Forces is carried out under capital expenditure. This time, it has been fixed at Rs. 99,563.86 crore. Last year, it was fixed at Rs. 86,488 crore. This time, no amount has been surrendered. In the previous Budget, it was found that an amount of Rs. 6,886 crore could not be utilised. Payments such as salaries are made from revenue expenditure, which will

amount to Rs. 1,95,947.55 crore. Separate provision has been made for defence pensions, amounting to Rs. 1,08,853 crore.

In this year's General Budget, an allocation of Rs. 1.48 lakh crore has been made for the Railways. For the fourth consecutive year, there has been no increase in fares, which has certainly provided relief to railway passengers. While it has been stated that freight movement will be expedited, the strategy being adopted for this purpose should be clearly spelt out.

In the Budget, the Government has laid the maximum emphasis on safety and track maintenance. Under this, the Railways will convert all narrow gauge lines in the country into broad gauge. However, the time frame within which this work will be completed and the target date for its completion need to be clarified. The Budget has also decided to close all the 4,267 unmanned railway crossings in the country. The demand for installing CCTV cameras in trains has been pending for a long time, and the Government has approved this in the present Budget, for which I thank the Government. Along with this, the gross budgetary support to the Railways has been increased to Rs. 3 lakh crore. This is certainly a commendable step.

Through this Budget, an announcement has been made to lay 36,000 kilometres of new railway lines across the country.

However, such announcements are made in almost every Budget. In many places, surveys are conducted for laying railway lines, but no further work is undertaken thereafter. I urge the Government that if work is initiated on the railway line surveys conducted in the past, it would be a significant achievement. Under this Budget itself, an announcement has also been made to double 18,000 kilometres of railway lines in the country, and a target has been set to lay three or four lines on about 4,000 kilometres of track.

The Budget has proposed to double 90 kilometres of railway track that connects the city of Mumbai with other parts of the country, at an expenditure of Rs. 11,000 crore. In addition, a new suburban railway network of 150 kilometres will be developed in Mumbai. Elevated corridors will be constructed at certain stations, for which a fund of Rs. 40,000 crore has been earmarked. I congratulate the Government for this.

As we all know, 2,342 local trains operate on the Mumbai suburban railway network, carrying about 75 lakh passengers every day. Keeping this in view, a proposal to expand local railway tracks has been made for the first time through this Budget. Taking into account the needs of patients and senior citizens, the Government has also announced the installation of escalators at platforms with a footfall of more than 25,000 passengers.

In my parliamentary constituency, the old Pune-Mumbai railway line runs from Lonavala via Karjat and Kalyan up to CST. Several trains from Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and other parts of South India operate on this route. This railway line is old, and every year during the monsoon season, landslides occur in this ghat section. Moreover, this route to Mumbai is longer and more circuitous. A new airport is being developed between Panvel and Uran, and railway work is also underway in Uran. A large volume of goods is transported through this route up to Panvel for JNPT. If a tunnel is constructed for a railway line in the Lonavala-Khandala-Khopoli ghat section, travel to CST via Panvel would become much easier. This railway route would not only generate good revenue for the Railways but would also provide this facility to the general public. In future, fast trains could also be operated on this route. Through this Budget, I demand that a new railway line be constructed by developing the Lonavala-Khandala ghat section.

While many issues have been mentioned in the Budget, there is nothing in it for the welfare of the paramilitary forces. At present, paramilitary forces are deployed in various security duties. However, it is a matter of regret that the Government has so far not taken any concrete steps for them. No medical facilities are provided to these paramilitary personnel and their families, nor are they given any time-bound promotions. I would urge the Union

Government to pay attention to this issue as well and, by formulating an appropriate policy, take care of the interests of the paramilitary forces.

As in the previous Budget, even in this year's Budget, several important aspects relating to the Railways have not been mentioned. Earlier, in the Railway Budget, it was clearly stated what the financial condition of the Railways had been, but now no detailed account of railway expenditure for the coming year has been provided. The Budget also does not clearly state the progress made on the new trains and new railway tracks that were announced in the financial years 2016-17 and 2017-18. In the Railway Budget, there was no mention of how much money was received under various heads in the previous year and where it was spent. Therefore, the Finance Minister has made no announcement regarding how transparency in the functioning of the Railways will be ensured.

[English]

*__SHRI A. ARUNMOZHITHEVAN (CUDDALORE):__ I express my hearty gratitude and indebtedness to our beloved immortal Leader Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA, before I place my view on the General Budget 2017-18.

The new India Budget aims at an enhanced ease of Living. The Ayushman Bharat is envisaged to given health insurance cover of Rs.5 Lakhs to around 10 crore families is laudable. But I would like to record here that similar health insurance scheme for poor households implemented by Government of Tamil Nadu.

1.5 Wellness Centres to provide improved healthcare for people in rural villages. 2 crore toilets to be constructed under Swachh Bharat is the need of the hour. But I wish to emphasize that adequate supply of water is very crucial and it is the duty of the Union Government to provide a financial component for adequate water supply for the better maintenance of toilets. Otherwise instead of providing hygiene and good health the very same can become a haven for diseases through unclean toilets.

The target for Ujwalla Yojana raised to 8 crore beneficiaries in this budget. I urge upon the Government to maintain an equiTable share on the population of the States in the country

* Speech was laid on the Table.

otherwise the better performing states will have lesser number of beneficiaries.

In the letter written to the Hon. Prime Minister, on 11th February 2016, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had stated that the Tamil Nadu State Government had prioritized 3 projects for implementation through SPV, with the joint participation of the Railways. 1. Chennai-Thoothukudi Freight Corridor; 2. Chennai-Madurai- Kanyakumari and 3. Maduri- Coimbatore High Speed Passenger Rail Links.

The Tamil Nadu State Government had also indicated its willingness to enter into an MoU. I request the Railway Minister to consider the MoU for early implementation, with the participation of the State and the Railways. It is heartening to see that the Government will partner with Tamil Nadu for developing suburban systems in Chennai by innovative financing mechanism. Since the land is typically provided by the State Government, this should be treated as part of the State Government's equity contribution to the SPV at market value.

Chennai, under the visionary rule of Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA has become the Automobile Manufacturing Hub in India. The establishment of the first ever Rail Auto Hub at Chennai is really appropriate and commendable. But Tamil Nadu particularly the fast

developing tier-II cities like Coimbatore, Madurai, Tiruchirapalli, Tirunelveli, Tiruppur, Erode, Salem, Vellore, Thanjavur and Thoothukudi deserve more attention as far as the railway projects are concerned.

Our beloved Leader, Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA had demanded many railway projects out of which 10 are very important and needs to be implemented at the earliest.

1.	**Completion of doubling for Chennai - Kanniyakumari**
2.	**Sriperumbudur - Guindy freight line**
3.	**Chennai - Thoothukudi freight corridor**
4.	**High speed passenger rail link - Chennai - Madurai - Kaniyakumari**
5.	**High speed passenger rail link - Madurai to Coimbatore**
6.	**High speed passenger rail link - Coimbatore to Chennai**
7.	**Chennai - Bengaluru high speed rail link**
8.	**Chennai - Bengaluru freight corridor**
9.	**Avadi - Guduvancheri rail link**
10.	**Avadi / Tiruvallur - Ennore port link**

In the same letter, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had mentioned 22 Railway Projects which have been announced in the earlier Railway Budget, but works have not commenced due to want of funds. I request the Government to allocate sufficient funds for early completion of these projects.

Thank You.

*__SHRI C. MAHENDRAN (POLLACHI):__ I express my hearty gratitude and indebtedness to our beloved immortal Leader Puratchi Thalavivi AMMA, before I place my views on the General Budget 2017-18.

Total Expenditure for 2018-19 estimated to be over Rs. 24. 42 lakh crore. The total income expected is pegged at about Rs.24 lakh crores. The total debts and other liabilities of the Government expected is about 90 Lakh Crores by the end of this financial year.

I would like to lay emphasis on the pressing needs of the people of the Kongu region of Tamil Nadu comprising my Pollachi Constituency. Coconut farming is an important occupation of people of Pollachi Parliamentary constituency. Coconut oil is the healthiest of edible oils. It is much healthier than Palmolein. There is a misconception that Coconut oil is high in cholesterol. There is a growing demand for supply of coconut and coconut oil through Public Distribution System. Instead of importing palmolein, indigenous production of coconuts has to be encouraged. By providing a good Minimum Support Price (MSP) for coconuts and to levy import dumping taxes for imported edible oils, indigenous production of coconuts will increase.

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

Tamil Nadu stands first in the production of coconuts (6917. 25 Million Nuts) and productivity (14872 nuts/Ha). Tamil Nadu comes in third in terms of area cultivated under coconut. However the State faces challenges in maintaining the productivity of coconut groves due to severe pest and disease attacks and senile and unproductive palms. To increase yield, coconut palms have to be replanted.

Government of Tamil Nadu has proposed a special package with a total outlay a Rs.3397.80 crores including subsidy of Rs.757.95 crores to improve existing gardens, remove old/ senile palms and replant coconut seeding. The project covers 161 lakh palms in 92,000 hectares. As this scheme would raise yield and increase edible oil production the Government of India may kindly consider early sanction of scheme for the Rejuvenation and Replanting of Coconut Palms in Tamil Nadu. Farmers in my Pollachi Parliamentary Constituency depend mainly on a reasonable Minimum Support Price of Copra to ensure good income. But they are not getting the adequate support price for their Milling Copra and Ball Copra.

I have urged the Union Government to provide a support price of Rs.140 per Kilogram for Milling Copra. But the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for "Milling Copra" has been fixed by the Cabinet Committee at Rs.75 per kilo as per the recommendations

by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). This is inadequate at the time when Coconut farmers are already suffering a lot due to various factors like pest and insect problems, disease in coconut plants and poor yield.

The repeated requests of the Coconut farmers in the country for fixing the adequate MSP for Milling and Ball copra has left unaddressed by the Union Government. I urge upon the Union Government to fix the MSP at Rs.140 per Kilo for the Milling and Ball Copra to enable them to earn a decent income and to come out from the clutches of the existing financial burden.

As far as Railways need of Kongu region, the expediting the completion of pending projects in Tamil Nadu must get the due attention of the Hon. Railway Minister. Sufficient funds may be allocated to increase the pace of ongoing railway projects in Tamil Naidu.

The gauge conversion work between Pollachi and Pothanur, Pollachi and Palakkad needs speedy completion. This will facilitate the restoration of all the trains which were in operation prior to the commencement of gauge conversion work.

Palani - Chennai Express Train, Palani - Tiruchendur Passenger Train and Palani - Madurai Passenger Train have been extended up to Pollachi. In order to overcome the rail traffic

congestion from Coimbatore to Chennai, I would like to suggest and request the Hon. Minister for Railways to introduce two new express trains. This will benefit the people of Valparai, Pollachi, Palghat, Anamalai, Kinathukadavu, Udumalai, Madathukulam and also Palani.

These two new express trains may be introduced as Amma Express between Pollachi and Chennai Via. Dindigul and Trichy and as Anamalai Express between Pollachi and Bangaluru Via. Udumalai, Madathukulam, Palani, Dindigul, Karur, Salem, Dharmapuri and Hosur. This is necessary because the private and omni bus operator on these routes have fixed very high fares beyond the reach of the common people. The operation of these trains will greatly help the passengers while earning additional revenue for the railways.

The sections like Coimbatore - Pollachi - Udumalpet and other such sections that presently come under the Palaghat Division may kindly be transferred to Salem Division to enhance operational efficiency.

In order to overcome the problem of road traffic congestion in the areas under Coimbatore Corporation, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma took initiative to move away Ukkadam, Singanallur at Gandhipuram bus terminals. An integrated centralised bus stand to

Vellalore at a cost of Rs.300 crore is to come up. In order to integrate rail service facility also at this place Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, has taken up with the railways to establish a new railway station at Malumachampatti which is very nearer to Vellalore village. Since gauge conversion work is in progress in the Pollachi - Pothanur section of the railways, establishing a new railway station at Malumachampatti is immediately possible with the shifting of bus terminals from Coimbatore city and with the increase in the number of travelling public. Malumachampatti shall grow as an important country town.

The other important factor is that NH 147 and 209 and also State Highways No.162 and 163 pass through Vellalore village. Vellalore and Malumachampatti are growing in size with many educational institutions and industrial units including MNC entities. A very big Truck Depot is to come up much near to Vellalore. Hence it is very much necessary to establish a new railway station at Malumachampatti with loading and unloading facility.

*SHRI T. G. VENKATESH BABU (CHENNAI NORTH): At the outset, I would like to thank for giving me this opportunity to place my views on the Union Budget for 2018-19.

This budget concentrates on areas hitherto neglected. For example, agriculture was neglected from 1991, when the nation as a whole plunged into the mantra of neo-liberalization and market reforms. There had been big ticket slogans on attracting FDI and ease of doing business, apart from boosting manufacturing and services sectors, relegating agriculture sector to the backburner.

But after a long period, now the Union Government has realized, it seems, to focus on agricultural and allied growths. The Indian economy depends mainly on the agricultural sector which is the primary sector, without depending on which the manufacturing sector which is the secondary sector and the services sector which is the tertiary can sustain and grow. But successive governments were doing the opposite. Even this government was neglecting the agriculture sector to the effect that it could divert the workforce redundant in agriculture to other sectors. But the realization has dawned on this government at least at the fag-end of its rule.

This budget is a model budget in sink with the TN Government's budget under the AIADMK rule enabled by our

* Speech was laid on the Table.

visionary, the great Amma, the former CM of TN, though it might have arrived with the ensuing election in mind. This budget is focused in uplifting the underprivileged, which constitute 60% of our population, mostly, living in rural areas, depending more on agriculture.

The distress of farmers has been perennial because of low prices for their produce, suicides due to indebtedness, non-availability of irrigation and formal loan facilities. This budget has rightly focused on these areas of distress. This budget seems to have addressed the canons of taxing which spells that the strata of society who has the capacity to pay has to be taxed.

The long pending demand of the farmers for a reasonable price for their produce is addressed in this budget, where almost all the 23 produces will get 1 ½ times of their cost of production as MSP (Minimum Support Price). As a result food subsidy is upped by a modest Rs. 29,041 Cr. Apart from this the allocation of Rs. 2000 Cr. for rural market fund and Rs. 500 Cr. as Operation Green Fund to preserve perishables through increased warehousing facilities, doubling the allocation for food processing, easing restriction on exports of agricultural produce and products to reach their full potentiality of 100 billion dollars a year, crop credit to increase by 10% to Rs.11 lakh crores. Lesser farmers will now have access to bank credit. Kisan Credit Cards to be given to Dairy and

fisheries, the non-agriculture sector, by which the persons engaged in these sectors, will attain more credibility. The use of futures and options to forecast the demand and prices in the agricultural sector will enable farmers to bargain effectively. The creation of Gramin-Agri Markets, electronically linked e-NAM (National Agri. Market) and exempting them from APMC regulation are forward looking. The new MSP announced is to take off immediately covering the ensuing kharif season may be an initiative with an eye on elections. But these initiatives have come up because of the loud voices of the empowered farmers, who were hitherto voiceless. The farmers only aspire as to why elections can't be conducted every year, since every time a new Government takes over the centre, it neglects them for 3 years consecutively and at the end of the road in its last full budget takes care of the deprived including the farmers. But whatever may be reason behind, for the first time this budget addresses the problems of the farmers. This will boost agricultural production and ensure food security.

The National Health Protection scheme may be the first big ticket and pioneering scheme in the world. But our Tamil Nadu Government has effectively implemented this scheme for many, many years benefitting lakhs of people. Much of the Insurance premium paid to the nationalized insurance company was diverted to government hospitals, strengthening the infra facilities in

government hospitals, a clear shift from the previous DMK Government which engaged a private insurance company and siphoned off major funds to private hospitals. The NITI Aayog which is entrusted to work out the modalities for this scheme should turn a page from the Health Insurance scheme implemented in Tamil Nadu. Further, this is a centrally sponsored scheme devised by the centre for which the Centre takes the whole credit. But 40% of the expenditure has to be borne by the States under this scheme. How can a State like ours which has been effectively implementing this scheme share the expenditure? This is unfair and unjust. Further the fund allotted in this budget to this scheme is meager and grossly insufficient apart from the modalities not spelt out. There is an inherent danger in this scheme that instead of strengthening the primary and secondary health sectors, resources may be moved away to the tertiary health sector, where the private players will be benefitted enormously.

The massive investment of Rs.14.34 lakh crore proposed for the development of rural infrastructure is another welcome scheme for road connectivity between urban and rural areas that will boost up employment potentialities in rural area.

Free gas connection to 3 crore households, free electricity connection to 4 crore houses, 2 crore new toilets, higher micro-irrigation coverage will enable the poor to lead a decent life. But

out of the net worth of Rs.14. 34 lakh crore to be allotted to this scheme, it is stated in the budget that 11.95 lakh crore is to be mobilized from the extra-budgetary resources. This casts a shadow on this project.

The investment towards overall infra development is slated to be Rs.5.97 lakh crores, may boost up overall growth. But nearly Rs. 1 lakh crore of this investment is to be derived from the sale of public sector undertakings. The government is bound to lose one of its assets when newly acquiring another asset. This is a malady.

This budget has billed around Rs.1 lakh crore for 5 years. This will not suffice the growth of education. Our Amma's Government has spent nearly Rs.1 lakh Cr. for education from 2011 to 2016 within the State. The Centre's allocation, when compared to ours pales into insignificance.

MSMEs (Medium, small and micro industry) is the worst hit due to demonetization and GST. Tamil Nadu tops the number of MSMEs in the whole of India. MSMEs contribute to nearly 90% of the employment potential. It is one area to which Amma gave utmost care and consideration. But due to demonetization nearly half of the industries vanished. The revival of them has become remote. The 5% Corporate Tax reduction offered to them in this budget Rs. 3 lakh crore loan to be extended to them under the mudra

plan may not be sufficient to ease out. More care and help have to be extended to these industries, so that they come out of their problem and help in the nation building activity. Further raising the cap of sales from Rs.50 crores to Rs. 250 crores is aimed at enabling a section of the big business also. Instead MSMEs are to be extended more facilities.

This budget, despite the buoyancy in the budgetary receipts expected is still relying more on extra budgetary resources and on external agencies. If they fail to deliver, that it will lead to a gap between promises and delivery.

This budget has belied the expectation of the salaried class who contribute about 90% of the direct taxes. The Rs. 40,000 relief given to them, without increasing the tax slab, will be offset by the increase in Education Cess by 1%. They have to pay Rs. 3000 crore additionally from their pockets.

There is nothing in this budget for Tamil Nadu. No fund has been allotted to be ongoing railway projects in the state. The Madurai-Kanyakumari and Tuticorin doubling project inaugurated by the Minister of State for Railways 10 days back is not funded. The 2nd phase of Metro and 4th terminal of Tondiarpet proposed by the Southern Railway Administration were also neglected.

During the year the Government has made a highest ever allocation of Rs. 1.48 lakh crore to the Railways and there was also mention about strengthening of Mumbai and Bangalore Railway network. During 2018-19, Tamil Nadu has been allotted a mere Rs. 2,548 crore for the ongoing doubling, electrification, new lines, gauge conversion and other development works of railways. The major omission is the long pending demand of converting the Tondiarpet Railway Station into Chennai's fourth Railway terminal. Earlier Railways proposed to convert the historic Royapuram railway station into a terminal but this project found to be not feasible due to space constraints and geographical restrictions. Now the Southern Railway plan to convert Tondiarpet railway station, 7 km. north of Chennai Central into fourth railway terminal as there is ample land on the western and eastern side of the existing station. It will drastically ease the congestion and burden on the Chennai Central and Egmore stations. I urge upon the Union Government to expedite the proposal to allocate adequate funds during this fiscal year.

The construction of AIIMS hospitals proposed and sanctioned to Tamil Nadu has also not been funded. The Centre is to start new hospitals over India at the rate of one in 2 MP constituencies. In Tamil Nadu, we have already got one hospital in each district. Many of them are upgraded as Medical College hospitals. None of

the schemes in TN, viz. the Athikadavu-Avinashi Water project to which the Centre has given approval has been allotted with funds. TN has got the largest GST data base and pay a lot of tax to the centre but it is neglected in the centrally and State sponsored schemes.

The river linking was once a pet programme of BJP. But not a single project was taken up by BJP in the last 4 years of its rule. Tamil Nadu's persistent demand for linking peninsular rivers and for linking intra-state rivers did not find favour with the Centre. The Centre could allot funds for Mumbai and Bangalore suburban but is grossly neglecting the Chennai suburban rail traffic.

How the resource crunch affects the ambitious projects of this Government can be understood in the establishment of 99 Smart Cities, out of which one percent only is completed, 10% is going on and the remaining are yet to take off. No Smart City project in TN is funded so far. This malady extends to other projects also despite the buoyancy in tax collection.

The performance of this Government in generating employment opportunities is dismal. Out of the promise of generating 2 crore jobs every year, they could not reach that one year target even after more than 3 years of rule.

Every Government has to choose between populism and fiscal prudence. This Government is averse to violate the FRBM Act to limit its fiscal deficit within 3% of GDP, but has failed marginally. But to abide by the fiscal consolidation policy, it has to forgo public expenditure and social welfare schemes, which are essential to boost up the economy, when the private operators are hesitant to invest.

This Government has to be still credited that it exercises several options to stem the tide and is constantly experimenting but fails miserably. Take for example, the newly introduced 10% Capital Gain Tax on the equity shares of Rs.1 lakh held for more than one year but has to grandfather it by fixing the period upto 31st January 2018 as non-taxable. Still there were some turmoil in the stock market initially but arrested due to grandfathering.

Likewise, the Government is dithering as to whether to increase the import duty or to reduce it. In the last budget, it reduced the import duty for reasons prescribed, but this year it has increased the duty on reasons specified. The government has reasons for both.

"Growth is never by choice, it is the result of forces working together" is the famous quote in economy. In UPA, the growth was by choice but in NDA it is optional.

With these words, I conclude my speech.

*__SHRI S. P. MUDDAHANUME GOWDA (TUMKUR):__ The Budget presently by the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, for the year 2018-19 is, to some extent, disappointing. Lot of Members of Parliament have participated in the discussion and have stated many factors with regard to the General Budget 2018-19. Few Members have welcomed the Budget and majority of the Opposition Members who spoke from the Opposition side have opposed the Budget. I oppose the Budget for the following few reasons.

The Budget does not address any concern of the country. That is why, we find here that manufacturing sector is not growing up. Unemployment is just knocking our doors afflicting the economy, society and the country. The Public sector investment is coming down and not taking up. Private investment is just coming down in the last three years. The need of the hour is to accelerate the economy and to promote the consumption but this Budget does not have anything substantial on this.

This Budget is not providing any immediate relief to farmers. Farmers are committing suicide as they are debt-ridden. The facility of crop insurance is given to only those farmers who have taken loans from banks. That means in the event of any natural calamity,

* Speech was laid on the Table.

the banks will get benefitted from the crop insurance. Farmers should be given 100 per cent subsidy for micro irrigation. The subsidy meant for farmers should directly be given to the farmers not to the companies. Similarly, the benefit of crop insurance should directly go the farmers. Farm loans of all the farmers should be waived off.

The Budget even does not mention minimum support price to farmers which is absolutely essential. There is meager increase in the budgetary allocation for MGNREGA. There is no increase or less increase in allocation for PMGSY and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana and Smart Cities Programme.

The Hon. Finance Minister has not made anything about the underprivileged, dalit, minority and poor classes of the people.

The Budget allocation for Railways is not upto the expected lines. For this, the Hon. Railway Minister could not even protest and he should have asked for more Budget from the Hon. Finance Minister. Due to the very meager allocation to the Railways, the Railway safety will, most probably, be compromised.

Hon. Finance Minister has failed to announce any relief to the middle-class and salaried class people. The announcement of Standard Deduction of Rs.40,000/- and removing Transport Allowance and Medical Allowance, which comes to Rs.34,200/-

from the income tax relief is an just eye-wash announcement of the Hon. Finance Minister, without changing tax slabs. The announcement of the Finance Minister, instead of giving happiness to the salaried and middle class people, irritated them a lot. The people, especially salaried middle class people, expected more from the Hon. Finance Minister on the individual tax rates. But, they are very much disappointed with the announcement of the Hon. Finance Minister. I urge upon the Finance Minister to keep the tax rate of 5 per cent, 15 per cent and 25 per cent as against the present 5 per cent, 20 per cent and 30 per cent, which will help the middle class people on their tax liability.

Allocation for schemes relating to rural roads, rural drinking water, education, mid-day meal programme and urban development are stagnant. Initiatives related to job creation for the youth is an area of serious concern where adequate focus is not given.

Lastly, I request the Hon. Finance Minister to increase the MPLADS funds to Rs.15 crore so that the Members of Parliament can take up more developmental activities/ works in their Constituencies and to help the people.

Thank you.

*SHRI R. DHRUVANARAYANA (CHAMARAJANAGAR): I would like to convey my sincere thanks for providing an opportunity to place my views and concerns on Union Budget 2018. The union budget 2018 addresses packages of ambitions, dreams and many more new promises in Rural development, Education, Health Care, Agriculture sectors. But, it's just a bubble on water.

I would like to call this budget yet another budget of false promises and unfaithful commitments on development, employment. Government is lack of long term result-oriented goals for the welfare of this nation.

During 2014 general election campaign both Hon. Prime Minister of India and Hon. Finance Minister of India of current union government, have promised Indian citizens on increasing the personal tax exemption limit to Rs. 5 lakh. Even after four years in ruling and even after four budgets. Union government was unable to fulfill the promise made for citizens of this great nation. This is one of example on record how government is lacking in delivering its own promises.

Every year Government is coming up with new schemes and programs in the name of development and promise of change. But in real time, Government is becoming utterly failed in meeting the

* Speech was laid on the Table.

goals, which has set for itself. As an evidence Swatch Bharat initiative. If you look at the figures, the current year budget allocation for this program has gotten reduction of 7. 3% (Rs. 1,405 crores less) budgetary allocation. This is one simple example on how Union Government is misleading the citizens of this nation.

This year Union Government has come with a new program of Health Insurance for poor people. But what is bothering us is budget needed to implement this program into reality. Target to provide promised health cover for 80 crores poor people up to Rs. 5 1akhs. Total cost is going to be incurred for successful implementation of this program is Rs. 12,000 crores. Government doesn't have a clear vision on how required money will be generated.

Government has made an announcement on increase of MSP by 1.5 times for agriculture crops. The fact is government has not reserved/allocated the sufficient required fund for effective implementation of program. It is yet another example of lack of vision on farmer’s welfare.

Since 2014, Hon. Prime Minister is keep saying about distressed farmers that the income of farmers will be doubled by 2022. Even after four budgets, there is no clarity on how union government is going to achieve this goal. Not even a single program which is aimed to facilitate the farmers to gain revenue till date.

Government is doing nothing for the welfare of vulnerable, depressed class people welfare. Government does not have visionary views, plans for upliftment of these societies. As an evidence government has reduced the budgetary allocation for welfare of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes. As per the population ratio, government supposed to be made an allocation of Rs.1,43,415 crores for Schedules Caste component program as per the population but it has allotted only Rs. 56,690 crores, which is nearly 40% reduction. Similarly, for Schedule Tribes component it has allotted only Rs. 39,135 crores instead of Rs. 74,299 crores.

Herewith I strongly appeal the Union Government to make the corrections of budgetary allocation for welfare of Schedule Caste and Tribes as per the population ratio.

The most affected class in the society due to the adverse actions of Union Government are common man, middle class salaried people. The increase in cess (Education + health) from 3 to 4% will not only impact the in-hand salaries but also adversely impact the economy and will escalate the inflation rates. As on date the common man/salaried people paying four different taxes on their hard earned money i.e. GST, Long Term Capital gain Tax, Income Tax and Increased Cess on Income tax. But it had promised them Acche Din.

The Government who came to power with a promise of Acche Din, Change and Development, even after four years in power except burden of new taxes, surcharges, cess, people got nothing in return for their welfare.

Union Government has promised for shelter or house for every poor people of this nation. But in adverse the budgetary allocation for Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) has got the reduction of 5.3% (Rs. 1,538 crores less). This is yet another evidence of how difference in his speech and actions in delivering his promises and in welfare of common man.

Government made promise to concentrate on welfare of Rural India. In contradiction, its budgetary allocation for Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana which is aimed at strengthening the rural agriculture and rural electrification has got reduction of 29.63% (Rs.1,600 crores). These facts reveal how much Union Government is incompetent.

Government is not committed for the welfare of the nation and its people, but it works to facilitate few corporate families. The common man, farmer, middle class salaried people are in great distress, protesting in streets. Small scale businessmen have closed their business. Middle class salaried people are fighting to save their honest earnings, struggling to save their earnings against increased

inflation, unable to provide good education and required health facilities for their dear once. The rate of farmers' suicide has kept increasing year by year.

The Government has no vision on protecting the farmers and their dependents, agriculture production. Agriculture sector is facing a greater threat due to climate change. Government has done nothing to establish early warning system of monsoon rainfall to avoid crop loss.

I would like to make kind appeal to the government to come up with more growth oriented, inclusive budget for the welfare of all sections of the society. Make a special attention towards agriculture sector, welfare of depressed class people.

[Translation]

***SHRI RAJKUMAR SAINI (KURUKSHETRA):** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in the discussion on the Budget. Our Hon. Finance Minister has made a very substantial provision for the Railways in the Budget, which also includes a programme for laying new railway lines. I come from the Kurukshetra Lok Sabha constituency, which has been accorded special priority under various schemes by the Hon. Prime Minister for promotion as a tourist destination. Tourists visit this region from all over the country. Therefore, there has been a long-standing demand for laying a new railway line from Patiala in Punjab through Guhla Pehowa, Kurukshetra, Ladwa and Yamunanagar. Recently, a train has been introduced to Haridwar via Kaithal, Kurukshetra and Ambala Cantonment. However, this does not constitute a direct route and causes inconvenience to passengers. Hence, this railway line from Patiala to Guhla Pehowa, Kurukshetra, Ladwa and Yamunanagar should be laid so that direct connectivity can be established between the holy city of Kurukshetra and the holy city of Haridwar, thereby promoting tourism.

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* Speech was laid on the Table

I was given the opportunity to place my views on the Budget. The Hon. Finance Minister has made substantial provisions in the Budget to improve the economic condition of farmers, and several efforts aimed at doubling farmers' income have been mentioned. Farmers and labourers are two sides of the same coin. A large portion of the funds paid to labourers under the MGNREGA scheme falls prey to corruption, and therefore does not contribute to the development of the country. The traditional infrastructure required for national development is created through the tender system, but these labourers are left without any work. Through fake muster rolls, money is withdrawn in their names. If these labourers are linked with farmers, and if the amount paid under the MGNREGA scheme is matched by an equivalent payment from farmers to labourers, the income of labourers will be doubled and farmers will get labour at half the cost. This assistance in meeting labour expenses will make agriculture cheaper. Income will be doubled, and when the people of the country start working in a practical manner, both farmers and labourers will prosper and the economy will be strengthened.

[English]

*__SHRI G. HARI (ARAKKONAM):__ I express my hearty gratitude and indebtedness to our beloved immortal Leader Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA, before I place my view on the General Budget 2017-18.

The new India Budget aims at an enhanced ease of Living. The Ayushman Bharat is envisaged to give health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakhs to around 10 crore families is laudable. But I would like to record here that similar health insurance scheme for poor households is already implemented by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

1.5 Wellness Centres to provide improved healthcare for people in rural villages, 2 crore toilets to be constructed under Swachh Bharat is the need of the hour. But I wish to emphasize that adequate supply of water is very crucial and it is the duty of the Union Government to provide a financial component for adequate water supply for the better maintenance of toilets. Otherwise instead of providing hygiene and good health the very same can become a haven for diseases through unclean toilets.

The target for Ujwalla Yojana raised to 8 crore beneficiaries in this Budget. I urge upon the Government to maintain an equiTable share on the population of the States in the country

* Speech was laid on the Table.

otherwise the better performing states will have lesser number of beneficiaries.

This budget aims to create a New India where agriculture and farmers welfare is given top priority and lion's share. A record allocation of Rs.14.34 lakh crore for Rural Development and Agriculture and providing one and half times of their production cost as MSP to Farmers are very significant. But here too the State-wise allocation of the funds for Rural Development and Agriculture need to be equiTable to both population and number of rural villages. The creation of 22,000 Gramin Agriculture Markets to help farmers to sell their produce directly is praiseworthy. The target for Public Sector Banks to provide loans for farmers is raised to Rs.11 lakh crores. This is really welcome. But here too the Government and Banks should benefit genuine needy farmers. There should not be any denial or delay in disbursement of loans to deserving poor farmers irrespective of their land holdings and in fact priority should be accorded to micro, small and marginal farmers instead of big landlords having vast empire of landholdings.

I would like to bring to the notice of the Government the important long pending demands of the People of my Arakkonam Constituency with regards to Railway. The Tindivanam - Nagari New line has been sanction long back, but due to the non-allocation of sufficient funds it has remained incomplete for a long period. I

would urge upon the Government to take necessary action to benefit lakhs of the people from my Arakkonam Constituency.

The Arakkonam and Katpadi are very important Railway Junctions in Southern Railway. These two Railway Junctions need Modernization with all facilities with state of art technology. There is an urgent need for Railway Over Bridge at Katpadi and requires immediate sanction and execution.

The Marudalam and Itchiputhur Railway stations need to be upgraded. Platforms need to be extended and provided with all amenities. All trains have to be stopped at these two stations. The Shilinghur, Banavaram and Tiruttani EMUs need more frequency as large number of rail passengers are using this sectors.

I would like to bring to the notice of the Government about an important and long pending demand of people of my Arakkonam Constituency for extending the Arakkonam -Velachery EMU fast rain (Train No. 43936) up to Tiruttani Station.

Due to insufficient frequency of EMU Train in the Morning hours between 7.00 am to 8.50 am, most of the train commuters are facing huge hardship travelling to and from Chennai. There is an urgent need for extending the said train up to Tiruttani for the benefit of train passengers in this area.

If the above said train starts from Tiruttani instead of Arakkonam it will be beneficial for many train passengers living in and around Arakkonam Parliamentary Constituency.

The Trivandrum Mail Train No.12624 towards Chennai crossing the Arakkonam Junction at 5.45 am does not stop at Arakkonam but stops at Avadi only. Since the train has not having a stoppage at Arakkonam the passengers who want to get down at Arakkonam have to travel upto Avadi and catch a train to come back to Arakkonam. This is unnecessary and lot of passengers, particularly elderly people and women with children are suffering a lot because of this.

To avoid the inconvenience, I request the Hon. Minister to direct the concerned authorities in Southern Railway to provide stoppage for the Train No. 12624 - Trivandrum Mail at Arakkonam Junction.

*__SHRI LADU KISHORE SWAIN (ASKA):__ It is high time to remember that this government was elected with the mandate in reducing corruption, gaining employment opportunities to youth and women, and reducing the gap of rich and poor while ensuring and sustaining higher economic growth. Union Budget 2018-19 is the fifth and the final full-year budget of the incumbent government. In this regard, it was expected a number of progressive welfare measures that would be announced by the Finance Minister in his budget speech 2018-19 with adequate budget support. Like business as usual, current budget again betrayed all the hopes of millions, including the expectations of the farmers, corporate giants, youths and particularly the marginalised sections of the society.

The focus of the Union Budget 2018-19 missed the golden opportunity of gaining the confidence of the rural community, especially the farmers' and youths. The current budget has several heatless announcements for agriculture and rural infrastructure development, generating employment opportunities in the formal sector, providing quality healthcare for underprivileged and senior citizens and improving the provisions for education. The emphasis on generating productive and gainful on-farm and non-farm

* Speech was laid on the Table.

employment for the farmers and landless families has not adequately been backed by the union budget allocations for the year 2018-19.

The Union Budget 2018-19 could have been clearly marked with higher budget allocations for education, health, social welfare measures for women, children, SCs and STs. However, the Union Budget 2018-19 only offers lofty of promises for the farmers in this country without having a clear roadmap of strategies in doubling the farmers' income by 2022. This budget not only disappointed, but also showed the high degree of arrogance that this government has by not taking care of the pledges of the millions.

The presentation of the Union Budget 2018-19 on the floor of Parliament by the Finance Minister again lost the confidence of the millions by not prioritizing allocations that was expected for the sectors like rural employment, agriculture, rural connectivity and for creating employment opportunities for the youths, including rural housing programme. The MGNREGA allocations maintain a status quo at 55,000 crores. The emphasis on MSMEs to generate entrepreneurship opportunities and create employment in the economy has not been adequately budgeted for Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, hailed as a success as more than 10 crore beneficiaries last year, indicates employment challenges have been tackled through creation of self-employment programmes rather

than wage employment programmes. The target for skill development for 50 lakh youth in 2018-19 through skill India without adequate budget support would remain as promises of this government.

Government announced 'Housing for All' and a target for 1 crore houses to be built by March 2019, with 51 lakh in FY 2018 and 51 lakh in FY 2019. As per Government's achievement report, only 12.6 lakh houses have been constructed, which is only 12. 6% of the total target of 1 crore households. Moreover, budgetary allocation to Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojana Grameen decreased by 9% in the current budget from the previous year.

The allocation for National Social Assistance Programme to the tune of Rs. 420 crores in 2018-19 (BE) as compared to 2017-18 BE. The main focus here has been the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension scheme. The allocation for Rashtriya Swastha Bima Yojana has increased to Rs.2000 crore and it promises the health care for millions through the insurance model without focusing on improving the health care institutions and addressing the concern of human resource shortages. The announcement of National Health Protection Scheme for 10 crore poor and vulnerable families (50 crore beneficiaries) is not backed by any budgetary allocation.

The budget for education has increased from Rs.79686 Crore in 2017-18 (BE) to Rs.85010 Crore in 2018-19(BE); a 6.7 percent increase; however the share of education budget in Union budget has decreased from 3.7 percent in 2017-18(BE) to 3.5 percent in 2018-19 (BE). This shows the Government's commitments towards improving the standard and quality education in the country.

The Government has still not come up with a revised framework for earmarking under Scheduled Caste Sub Plan, which dilutes the implementation of the strategy. Budget allocation for Post Matric scholarship for Scheduled Castes has declined from Rs. 3,348 crore in 2017-18 (RE) to Rs.3,000 crore in 2018-19 (BE). This reduced allocation comes at a time when the department has been asking for a one-time package to clear the accumulated arrears under the same amounting to Rs. 8,000 crore at the end of 2016-17. No revised framework for earmarking under Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) has been formulated and ministries continue to report under TSP from scheme allocations. This fails to ensure need-based planning and budgeting for the Scheduled Tribes and what gets reported in TSP is a largely incidental benefit accruing from general schemes.

To promote best quality education to the tribal children in their own environment Government of India has decided that by the year 2022, every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons, will have an Ekalavya Model

Residential School. The allocation for this year is Rs.1800 crore, an increase from Rs.1500 crore in 2017-18(BE), is a welcome step. Allocations for Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, Swadhar Grih and National Créche Scheme have witnessed a decline in 2018-19 (BE) in comparison to 2017-18 (BE). Poor progress is witnessed on ensuring that legislative frameworks for anti-corruption, grievance redress and whistle-blower protection. There has been great focus on positioning Aadhar and DBT as a means of reducing corruption thereby enhancing savings of the public exchequer. However, the verdict is contested as the methodology of computing savings earned due to Aadhar based DBT in social sector schemes has not been shared. Currently, no Ministry is allocating dedicated funds for investing in processes that enhance public accountability. It is therefore recommended to provide 0.5 % of budget to institutionalize mechanisms for transparency, grievance redress and citizen accountability across development schemes.

*__SHRI ANTO ANTONY (PATHANAMTHITTA):__ First of all, I would like to express my profound sorrow over the Union Budget 2018 as it failed to overhaul the damages incurred to the national economy due to the economic mismanagement of the NDA Government. This Government has caused irreparable damages to the economy in a short span of time.

A comparison of two Economic Surveys released by the present NDA Government will tell what has happened to our economy during the last four years. The Economic Survey of 2014-15 presented by this NDA Government stated that the economy was performing well during that time as its fundamentals were very strong. But the recent Economic Survey states that the economy has been weakened. It does not require much knowledge in economics to reach a conclusion that the economic mismanagement of the present NDA Government and its anti-poor policies have pushed our economy into this dangerous situation.

Father of our great Nation, Mahatma Gandhi rightly opined that “India lives in villages". The valuable advice he had given to the future statesmen was to frame pro-poor policies so that the poorest of the poor in the country could be empowered. It should be noted that the Instruction bequeathed by the Mahatma has been well

* Speech was laid on the Table.

considered by the First Union Government to the previous UPA-II Government. Through various programmes and policies ranging from the Five Year Plan to the bank Nationalization and the recent Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), these governments were building a new nation brick-by-brick from a colony looted by the British. These governments led by the Congress Party, kept well the advice of Mahatma Gandhi that India lives in villages and agriculture is its backbone. These governments were keen to bolster agriculture sector and rural economy through novel experiments such as Green Revolution, Bank Nationalization etc. The thriving economy at the grass-roots level, especially in the agriculture and rural sector, helped to maintain a high growth rate when the global economy was undergoing a recession.

The positive impacts of the UPA-II Government on economy have continued even during the first two years of the present NDA Government. The recent Economic Survey released by this Government also acknowledges this truth that the Indian economy was strong till 2016. The only thing this Government had to take care of was to keep the pace of the economic growth. Instead of doing that the present Government has been trying to destroy the economy ever since it assumed the power in 2014. The present crisis is the result of the economic mismanagement and foolishness

on the part of the Government. Among them the decision to demonetize high-value currencies and the poor implementation of GST has wreaked havoc on the lives of farmers, small traders and people depend on small scale-cottage industries and informal sector for their livelihood.

The Budget 2018 was the last opportunity for the present Government to revive Indian economy, however, the Government miserably failed in this mission. The Budget Speech of the Hon. Finance Minister was the repetition of the hollow promises made by the Government. Moreover, Hon. Minister has declared certain ambitious schemes. However, the meager outlays to these ambitious schemes reveal that the Government is aimed at only making publicity. For instance, the Government claims that the income of farmers will be doubled by 2022. The committee constituted by the Government to set forth recommendations for doubling farmers' income estimated that an amount of Rs. 63990000 lakh crore was required for achieving this ambitious target. However, the Government has nothing done to fulfill this promise, as only four years left to 2022. For instance, Total outlay for agriculture during the Financial Year 2018-19 is only Rs. 42211 crore. Out of this, the outlay for the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna is Rs.13000 crore, and Interest Subsidy for short term credit to farmers is Rs.15000 crore. The outlay for the irrigation project,

named as Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojna is Rs. 4000 crore. Target of the allocation for the mechanization of agriculture during 2018-19 is Rs. 1100 crore. Hon. Minister also declared an outlay of Rs.3100 crore for the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana. This Scheme is for the development of infrastructure such as cold storages, godowns and labs etc. and the amount in this regard is only Rs. 3100 crore. These are the outlay for 2018-19 for advancing the Government's mission- the doubling of farmers' income by 2022.

Hon. Minister in his Budget Speech reiterated the Government's commitment to ensure farmers a return of one- and -a- half times of the cost of their production. However, the fund is not earmarked for the procurement of crops at this enhanced rate. Then how can the Government ensure a return that is one-and-a-half times of the cost of production. Not only that, the Food Corporation of India is gradually withdrawing from the procurement of food grains as per the new policy of the Government. Then how can the Government ensure that the farmers are getting reasonable prices for their produces?

Hon. Finance Minister has declared on outlay of Rs.13000 crore for the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna during 2018-19. The Scheme is claimed to ensure crop insurance for the farmers in the country. However, the reality is that this Scheme helps only the insurance companies as they have already collected a large amount

of premium from the Government and poor farmers. However, only 20 percent of the farmers got the benefits of this Scheme and about 80 percent of claims were rejected. According to reports, the private insurance companies amassed an unlawful dividend of Rs.994 crore from this Scheme last year alone.

Irrigation projects are vital for the agriculture sector of the country. At present, the irrigation projects in the agriculture sector are implemented under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojna and the Government has declared an outlay of Rs.4000 crore for the Financial Year 2018-19. The amount is meager compared with the requirement. Lack of the fund is one of the reasons for the delayed irrigation projects. It should be noted that only four out of 23 large irrigation projects in the country will be fully operational by March 2018. The delay in this regard is actually affecting the growth of agriculture sector in the country.

The Government is repeating the hollow promise of 'doubling income' at a time the nation witnesses the growing tide of farmers' protests. The Government failed to arrest declining income of farmers, and prevent the farmer suicides. The Government also failed to convince not only the farmers, but also its allies, supporters and even its elected representatives. Recently, one Member of Parliament, who got elected to the Lok Sabha on the BJP ticket, resigned due to the anti-farmer policies of the Government. Instead

of correcting its erring policies the Government is cracking down on the farmers' protest with its coercive apparatus.

If we compare the outlay for rural infrastructure with the growing pace of inflation, we will realize that this sector is gaining nothing. The outlay for the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) is Rs.19000 crore. This amount is to realize 57,000 km of rural roads and 28.35 crore man-days.

Like that of agriculture Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are also playing a major role in generating employment. Demonetization and GST have already affected MSMEs. However, the outlay for reviving MSMEs is a meager Rs.2908 crore.

Spiral hikes in the prices of petroleum products and food items contributing to the inflation in the country, which may cross 5.2 per cent. However, the Budget Speech kept silence on the inflation and steps to arrest it. In order to control inflation the then UPA Government provided subsidy for petroleum products at a time the price of crude oil was high. It should be noted that the price of crude oil per barrel was $ 100 in January 2014. However, the price of the crude oil, halved by the end of November 2014, and it remains at the lowest ebb in recent history. However, the Government is not ready to bring its benefits to the common people in the country. As a result, inflation has also marked an all-time high rate. If the

Government could reduce the duty on petroleum products, inflation in the country could be arrested to a great extent. It is learnt that the Government has already collected an amount of Rs. 1.6 lakh crore as a duty.

The rate of fiscal deficit is also alarming in the country. The Government has opted for wider fiscal deficit at 3.5 per cent of GDP for the year 2018-19. Higher rate of fiscal deficit will adversely affect foreign investment in the country. The Government may also take note of the declining foreign investment in the country. Declining investment will definitely affect employments, production and, naturally, the economic growth. A responsible Government will enhance the public investment to offset the shortage of private and foreign investment. However, what is alarming is the Government's reluctance to take up its responsibility in this regard.

Even though the youth in the country is badly in need of skill training, the Government's outlay for the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) is only Rs.1171 crore. Not only that the number of beneficiaries curtailed down drastically to 18. This also shows the Government's lack of determination to create the promised rate of two crore employments per annum.

While the Government claims that it is dedicated to empower women, its allocation in this regard is minimal. For instance, the Government has curtailed outlay for the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana from Rs.2700 crore in 2017-18 to Rs.2400 crore in 2018-19. Even though, atrocities against the women is on the rise, the outlay for the Nirbhaya Fund Schemes is Rs.500 crore and there is no increase from last year. In the same manner a meager increase is marked in the outlay for the Child Protection Scheme in 2018-19, Rs.725 crore compared with Rs.648 crore in 2017-18.

The Budget ignored the welfare of the persons with disabilities as various Schemes for the employment of Persons with Disability. Last year it was Rs.855 crore and increased to Rs.1070 crore in 2018-19. It should be noted that the Government has stopped funding for the insurance scheme for the disabled due to the acute financial crunch. In the same manner, the Government also ignored the welfare of the senior citizens, as the allocation for the National Social Assistance Programme is also very poor.

The plight of the Anganwadi workers may continue without much change as the outlay is only Rs.16335 crore in 2018-19. The outlay for Higher Education is also a meager amount of Rs.35010 crore, and still the Government claims that is will erect world class institutions of higher education and research in the country.

Since school education in the country is vexing with the problem of whopping number of dropout, outlay is not enough to address this issue. The amount is located in this regard is Rs.50000 crore, and out of this Rs.26129 crore is for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Rs.4022 crore is for Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan. Outlay to the mid-day meal scheme is also meagrely increased from Rs.10000 crore in 2017-18 to Rs.10500 crore in 2018-19.

Even though the claims over the Schemes such as the Make in India, the Start-Up India, Digital India, Skill India Programme, Stand Up India, etc. are very high, the outlays to these schemes are comparatively minimal. The Government launched the Mudra Scheme with much fanfare and publicity, the average amount of Mudra loan is Rs.43000.

The middle class starting from the annual income of Rs.25000 expected a revision in the income tax. However, the Budget brought them disappointment. If the Government could provide the tax relief to them, then it could stir the demand in consumer goods. That could have stimulated the markets, but due to the reluctance on the part of the Government that did not happen.

They ignored the public health sector as the allocation for Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana is increased by Rs.672 crore. The reality is that it will take a minimum of Rs.60,000 crore for the

implementation of this Scheme. Despite the meager allocation for Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, the Government is promising a National Health Protection Scheme which will cover 10 crore poor and vulnerable families. The coverage will be upto Rs.5 lakh. Having considered the hollow promises of the Government this should be considered as another ambitious Scheme never to be fulfilled.

The Budget also neglected the Defence Sector, at a time the national security is under threat by the moves of our neighbouring countries. This Sector witnessed a meager increase of 7.8 per cent and not in touch with the current realities. The allocation to Defence is less than 1. 8 percent of the GDP. Number of security personnel losing their lives in fight against terrorists and cross-border firings are also increasing in the country. We have to ensure the safety of our security personnel, who are protecting our nation from domestic and external threats. However, the Budget also ignored the plight of our defence personnel.

In short, the Budget could bring only disappointment as it ignored and neglected the key sectors of economic growth, human resource development, social security, and also requirements for domestic and external security.

*__SHRI IDRIS ALI (BASIRHAT):__ The United Nations has awarded the West Bengal Government the first place for Public Service for its 'Kanyashree' scheme. The award ceremony was held at the World Forum, the Hague. A total of 552 projects from 62 countries were nominated for the award. Launched in 2011 soon after Ms.Mamata Banerjee came to power in West Bengal this scheme has helped more than 60 lakh female students in the state through 16,000 institutes and schools across West Bengal which have already enrolled more than four million adolescent girls where the state government transferring a sanctioned some of money directly to the beneficiaries' bank account.

Ms. Mamata Banerjee an idol Chief Minister is a symbol of Peace, Strength of Poor, Security of Women, and admirable leadership in the federal Government, undisputed administrator, architect of social Harmony having all amiable, courageous, empathetic, inventive personality.

I demand upon the Government to confer Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award of the country on Ms. Mamata Banerjee without any delay.

* Speech was laid on the Table.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES (SHRI Y. S. CHOWDARY): Madam Speaker, this august House knows how unscientifically the AP Reorganisation Bill was passed and the wound is very big.

On behalf of the Government of India, I would like to make a suggestion and request to my colleagues. Definitely, there is no doubt that we should respect the Members and not the numbers. We cannot have cooperative federal system partly and selectively. We are running a cooperative federal democratic system.

In this Bill, there are some pending issues, namely, special category status, resource gap for the first year, Polavaram Project, Steel Plant at Cuddapah, formation of a Railway Zone at Vizag, establishment of greenfield oil refinery and petroleum complex, support to capital, Vizag-Chennai Corridor and Bengaluru-Chennai Corridor. Of course, other issues are also there.

My suggestion and request to my colleagues is like this. There will be a reply by the Finance Minister to the debate on the General Budget. I would like to request the Government that within 15 days, the Finance Minister may ensure to resolve all these issues. I request

the Government to agree for my request and I also request my colleague Members to see that the House functions smoothly.

This is my suggestion on behalf of the Government of India to my colleagues. ...*(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: The Finance Minister himself has said it.

...*(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANTHKUMAR): Madam Speaker, my dear colleague and Hon. Minister, Shri Y.S. Chowdary, has raised the issue of Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Bill and its impact in the State of Andhra Pradesh. He has also mentioned that there are many pending issues regarding the Bill.

I want to say that the NDA Government led by Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, is very sensitive to the issues raised by my colleague and the people of Andhra Pradesh. In both the Houses, especially in this august House, my dear colleague, Hon. Finance Minister has already said that he is going to speak about these issues while replying to the debate on the General Budget. When the Hon. Finance Minister himself has said that he is going to reply on these issues, I would request all the Hon. Members of

the Telugu Desam Party led by Hon. Chief Minister, Shri Chandrababu Naidu to please go back to their seats.

I would request other Hon. Members of YSR Party also to go back their seats and facilitate the debate. ...*(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: How can I say it? This is not a debate.

...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI Y. S. CHOWDARY: Madam Speaker, in case within 15 days, these issues are not resolved, I would request you to allot two hours exclusively to discuss these issues in the next Session.

HON. SPEAKER: We will think about all these things afterwards in the Business Advisory Committee or whatever it is. This is not a discussion on Andhra Pradesh going on. They have made a request. We will think about it. It cannot be decided just now.

I am requesting you to go back to your seats. The Finance Minister himself has given the assurance. I am not discussing this issue just now. It is only a request. The Parliamentary Affairs Minister can make a request at any time. I can also make a request at any time. We are only requesting. So, please go back to your seats. Let the debate continue. The Finance Minister has given the assurance.

...*(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Dinesh Trivedi to speak.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: I am not doing anything unruly.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: The Parliamentary Affairs Minister can make a request. He is also a Minister. He can make a request.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: The Parliamentary Affairs Minister can make a request. I have allowed him because I want to get the issue resolved. I want to run the House. I asked his help for that. That is why he has said something.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Dinesh Trivedi to speak.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI DINESH TRIVEDI (BARRACKPORE): *Madam,* I would like to, at the very outset, express my gratitude to you and also thank my party for giving me the opportunity to place my views on this very serious issue.

[English]

I am absolutely thankful. My Party Members are going to meet the Hon. Home Minister. That is why they are leaving. They are not walking out on my speech.

I also want to make a request to you. I know I have 15 or 20 minutes to speak. But since I just got, thanks to you and the Members, the Best Parliamentarian award, can this be treated as my maiden speech as well? On that, I would request you to give me a little extra time. I am sure whatever I am going to speak is going to be agreeable to most of the Members out here.

The Hon. Finance Minister ended his speech very aptly by quoting the rishi and the saint, Swami Vivekananda. So, it will be appropriate for me to start by quoting Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda says, ‘Anything can be sacrificed for truth, but truth cannot be sacrificed for anything.’

[Translation]

Someone once asked Swami Vivekananda what is worse than losing everything. Swamiji replied, “Losing that hope on the strength of which we can regain everything.” This Budget is also a Budget of hope. Such hope should be truthful and honest, and through that hope, all of us and the entire nation should be able to move forward. We are disciples of Swami Chinmayananda and we keep his calendar, as well as that of Swami Vivekananda. There is a different discourse for each date. In today’s calendar, what Swami Chinmayananda had written was- *[English]* ‘Your words will have no effect unless you are able to live it.’

[Translation]

On today’s date in the calendar, Swami Vivekananda says: *[English]* “So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every person a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them!” This was Swami Vivekananda’s quote.

[Translation]

Madam, in our country, the words *‘Satyameva Jayate’* are written prominently everywhere and we often speak of *Satyameva Jayate*. However, the complete aphorism is *‘Satyameva Jayate Na*

Anritam', which means that truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. We should always articulate it in its entirety.

Madam, the Hon. Prime Minister has stated something very significant, and I believe the entire House would agree with it. He said that opposing merely for the sake of opposition cannot be justified. This is indeed correct. I, for one, do not understand why this side of the House, where we are seated, is described as the Opposition. *[English]* Madam, I am sure everybody will agree that our objective here, when we come here, is common, and the objective is, well-being of not only our country, but the entire world. *...(Interruptions)*. That is why, we talk about "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam". But Madam, when we talk about Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, and we talk about that the world is one, then I think it is very important to take some ideas from people's sitting on the right hand side and on the left hand side of you Madam. *...(Interruptions)*. Obviously, the basic ideology of well-being of the country is the same. *[Translation]* Madam, at times, one wonders why there is so much bitterness. *[English]* Why is there so much of anger, as if we do not belong to this country at times? *...(Interruptions)*

Madam, there are good ideas on this side as well, and I am sure you will agree. Whatever is happening today has become very common and unfortunate. Madam, it reminds me of the Constituent

Assembly debates.…*(Interruptions)*. Can we imagine so many people for so many hours? I am sure you would also be thinking that how that Assembly was being managed by the then Hon. Speaker.…*(Interruptions)*. And I fully appreciate that Madam Speaker, you have one of the toughest jobs and I also appreciate that you try your level best to make sure that everybody is heard in a peaceful environment.…*(Interruptions)*. Madam, can we think about Sarvepalli Dr. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Nehru, Shri Kriplani, Shri Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, Netaji. These were the icons. And once Maulana Azad very well said: 'These were our icons, we get inspiration from'. And in that Constituent Assembly debate, they only talked about one thing - spirit of India. So, whatever I am going to talk about is only going to be that of spirit of India.

12 38 hrs

(Hon. Deputy-Speaker *in the Chair*)

[Translation]

There may be differences of opinion, but there should not be differences of heart. Why should there be so much bitterness? Everyone participated in the freedom struggle, and all our leaders have contributed to the nation. If we speak of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*, then unless this bitterness is reduced, *Sabka Saath, Sabka*

Vikas cannot be achieved. I would like to state that whatever the Hon. Prime Minister has said and whatever programmes he has initiated, I do not think that anyone can have any doubt about his sincerity. *[English]* But at the same time Sir, we cannot forget about our two martyrs and we are proud of them.

We may have differences with late Rajiv Gandhi but how can we forget that the Rajiv Gandhi gave life for this country? Similarly, Shrimati Indira Gandhi gave life for this country as well. So, I think, somewhere down the line, while criticising, we also have to keep in mind that we are talking about martyrs as well. We may differ.We differed with the Emergency totally. But at the same time, this is exactly what I want to say; and I am not giving any sermons.

Sir, there are four aspects of this Budget. They are: farmers, health, education and infrastructure.

As far as the farmers are concerned, I would just like to have a couplet:

[Translation]

And today's farmer is saying:

“Maine khaaya hai chiraagon se is kadar dhokha.

main jal raha hoon saalon se, magar roshni nahin milti.”

("I have been deceived so deeply by lamps;
I have been burning for years, yet I receive no light.")

[English]

Sir, when we talk about *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas,* and the reason I talked about is that this side of the House -- on your left hand side, Sir -- we also have some good ideas.

If we talk about GST and *Notebandhi,* it has a lot of reflection on the downfall of the GDP.

Sir, Mamata Banerjee and other leaders were in the forefront that 'please understand, GST is not good for our economy. Everybody is against the black money, we all are.' And, who can be more honest than Mamata Banerjee herself? She said that this is not going to be good for the informal sector, for the poor, for the peasant.

Sir, what was the reason? They did not even want to listen. They had Dr. Raghuram Rajan. He was the one who predicted the meltdown of 2008. But somehow, they did not agree with him, and he had to go. So, all I am trying to suggest is that if they want to have *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas*, then they should look at West Bengal. The other couplets I talked about Swami Vivekananda and all, that if you lose the trust of the people, then everything is lost.

Somewhere down the line, a lot of things have been written about this Budget. So, I am not going to get into the figures. But I must tell them that in West Bengal we live with this slogan; and we deliver with the slogan of *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas*. If they want to see it, then I would request them to please come to West Bengal. How does it matter? They can call the Hon. Chief Minister of West Bengal or Mr. Amit Mitra, the Finance Minister of West Bengal and take ideas from them as to how they have been able do all this.

Sir, you compare West Bengal with any parameters, West Bengal today is Number one in Ease of Doing Business. I understand that this is not a West Bengal Budget. But I am just trying to tell them what West Bengal has done, they can replicate that in India. As the saying goes, what West Bengal thinks today, the rest of the country thinks tomorrow or the world thinks tomorrow.

Sir, when we talk about 100 days work, again we talk about West Bengal.

Sir, agriculture has been the focus of this Budget. Again, I have to tell them that the average annual family income of the farmer has more than doubled in West Bengal. Here, we are talking about doubling it in the next five years! But I am very proud to say and I am to say that the House will also be proud that West Bengal has

already doubled the income of the farmers. It was only Rs.91,000 in 2010-11, which has gone up to Rs.2,36,000, at present. So, in five years, the farmers' income has more than doubled in West Bengal. More than 69 lakh of farmer families have been provided with *Kisan Credit Cards*.

Sir, the State Government of West Bengal, during 2017-18, has provided relief of Rs. 1,200 crore from the State coffers.

Sir, again health is a very important issue in this Budget and I fully appreciate that it is just on paper. It can never be implemented. Again, you have to take the example of Bengal. There are free medicines. There are free treatment and diagnostic centres. Medicines are provided to each and every poor person. The State of West Bengal has already given a coverage of Rs.5 lakh per person. They have provided Rs.1,200 crore for 60 lakh people. So, I wonder when this Government talks about only giving Rs.2,000 crore of budget which is also not directly connected to this scheme. How are you going to do it? That is why, unfortunately, everybody, not only Members of Parliament here from different parties but the entire community of experts, refers it a *jumla* which is not a very good idea for this great country.

Sir, again, I will talk about the health scheme Swasthya Sathi. One of the wonderful schemes which Bengal has done. I would

have been very happy, at least, the Prime Minister would have recognised that achievement of Bengal. The United Nations has already recognised this great Scheme of the Hon. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee which goes by the term of Kanyashree. If you want to see 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', I think, Kanyashree should be taken as a model for the entire country. The incentive is there. We are preventing child marriages as well by giving Rs.25,000 to each and every girl child, so that they do not have early marriages. If anybody has implemented 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', it is West Bengal and we are grateful to our Hon. Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee for that. They have also been provided free cycles. Transportation has also become free.

Sir, when we talk about digitalisation, again, we have to go to Bengal. Every tax collection today is so transparent. For e-governance and digitalisation, again, one has to learn from Bengal. We are grateful to our Hon. Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee and Dr. Amit Mitra who have plugged all the loopholes.

Again, we talked about empowerment of women. This Budget has all the things but implementation has been done successfully in Bengal.

Sir, I will come, directly, to inflation. This Budget is highly inflation-oriented. Today only, the Monetary Policy has come. The

Monetary Policy Committee yesterday left the interest rates unchanged. The RBI has warned again the fiscal slippage and delay in fiscal consolidation and concern over higher borrowings which would lead to increase in bond yields.

Sir, global crude oil prices are expected to rise at 12 per cent. This year, according to the Economic Survey, which will further put pressure on headline inflation. Again, when we talk about the Economic Survey, there is nothing common with this Budget and Economic Survey. The Budget comes out of again – I hate to use the word but I have to – only *jumlas* and nothing else. It does not provide the required.

When we talk about health, what is the basic health? The basic health is primary health. If your primary health is not proper, then your secondary and tertiary health feel more burden. You have got to take care of water. Water is the most important thing. You have to take the impact of pollution. People, who have become very unhealthy, come to secondary and tertiary health because your water requires to be much more potable.

It is surprising that today even when we go to a good place, we ask for a bottled water. *[Translation]* India’s progress can take place only when we are able to drink water from any tap, but that

tap should not be leaking. ... *(Interruptions)* Any farmer should be able to drink water from that tap anywhere. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

We are talking about the climate change. I am sorry, the Budget has not taken climate change into effect. The Budget completely ignored the impact of climate change on agriculture productivity and incomes which have been given due extension in the Economic Survey. It had revealed that an extreme temperature shock in unirrigated areas reduces yields by 7 per cent for kharif and 7.6 per cent for rabi. It warned that climate change was expected to decrease farm income by 25 per cent a year. So, when we talk about increasing the farm income, please take this into consideration. *...(Interruptions)*

Nobody has talked about Railways or pollution in this country. Why we only should talk about Delhi and NCR? The entire country needs a lot of incentive. We should understand, if you do not have pure air, if you do not have pure water to drink, our next generation, who otherwise is so intelligent, will suffer. Every day, we are killing our next generation. Nothing has been mentioned on this in this Budget. It has a very serious effect.

[Translation]

As far as the Railways are concerned, today it appears as though we have completely forgotten the Railways, as if the Railways do not exist at all. ... *(Interruptions) [English]* I remember, earlier we used to spend about three days talking about the Railway Budget. Now, the Railways have gone totally out of the scrutiny of this Parliament. The Railways have gone out of the scrutiny of the Estimates Committee. Without a robust railway system, you cannot control inflation of food either. It is very unfortunate that we are talking about the Railways as a commercial set up. Recently, West Bengal had received a letter that there are eight routes in Bengal which are running at a loss and we would like to withdraw those routes. I think, it is a very sad affair. The Railway always integrates. But, this kind of policy will only disintegrate. What are you going to do with Leh and Ladakh? The places where you have, may be, the Naxal activity, the tribal areas, are you going to tell them that, no, it has to be profitable? *...(Interruptions)* I would also mention that IRFC, which is an arm for giving money to the Railways, now that is going to be a listed company. *...(Interruptions)*

The entire world is changing – this has a very philosophical angle – and the world is getting redesigned. Who is redesigning the world? They are Indians who are sitting in the Silicon Valley.

These are the Indians who require to get into India. Give them some encouragement.

Yesterday, a historical thing has happened. After Neil Armstrong and Challenger, Elon Musk has gone through a satellite which is one of the world's most powerful rocket, under SpaceX, to Mars and they are going to colonise Mars.

Lastly, I would say, there is a very good book which talks about history of tomorrow. I was very sorry to hear yesterday my Hon. Friend Farooq *ji* saying that Muslims are also loyal. It is taken for granted that Muslims are citizens of this country. Obviously, I do not think, you need to repeat this.

I am quoting from the book. It is just one para. The new religion is unlikely to emerge from the caves of Afghanistan, Himalayas or Madarsaas of Middle East, rather they will emerge from the research laboratories just as socialism took over the world by promising salvation through steam and electricity. So, in the coming decades, the new technological religion may conquer the world by promising salvation through algorithms, through genes, through big data despite all the talk of radical Islam and Christian fundamentalism. The most interesting place in the world from the religious perspective is not the Islamic State or the Bible but it is the Silicon Valley and it is the Silicon Valley which is going to

show us tomorrow's religion and who are there in the Silicon Valley - our friends, our Indians are redesigning this world sitting in Silicon Valley. So, I would like to request this Government. Please listen to their ideas because India is the greatest country and it will be remain great. That is why, we have to get out of our arrogance and our ignorance.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, I will take just one minute. Kabir says: *[Translation]* 'Jab main tha, tab hari nahin' (When I existed, Hari was not there.) -*[English]* If I had the arrogance, then God worth not me. *[Translation]* When Hari was there, I was not. So long as the 'I' remains, Hari cannot come; Hari comes only when the 'I' ceases to exist.'

Sir, this is a couplet of Kabir. He also said: "If worshipping stone could lead one to God, I would worship a mountain. Yet no one worships the grinding stone at home, which feeds the entire world." This, Sir, is our Hindustan.

Today, I would once again like to recall Iqbal ji: "There is something about our existence that it cannot be erased. For centuries, the passage of time has been our adversary. Better than the entire world is our Hindustan."

[English]

[*]**SHRI BALBHADRA MAJHI (NABARANGPUR):** While many welcome declarations and achievements of the Government have spoken and declared many issues have not been addressed.

BJP in their Election Manifesto of 2014 had promised many things. Some of those are listed below;

Price Rise:

- To set up special courts to stop hoarding and black marketing
- Set up price stabilisation fund
- Set up Single "National Agriculture Market"

Employment and Entrepreneurship on

- Labour intensive manufacturing
- Agriculture and allied industries and retails through modernisation as well as strong credit & market linkage.

Corruption:

- Bring back black money stashed in foreign banks

Team India:

- Improve Centre-State relation

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

- Cooperative Federalism
- Sabka Saath-Sabka Vikas
- Evolve model National Development driven by states
- Create Regional Council of States
- Encourage cooperation among states on security, interstate disputes, remove inter-regional disparities and promoting tourism.
- Revive Inter-State Council, National Development Council
- Involve States in Foreign trade and commerce.

Integrating the Nation:

- East lacking in development, East to be at par with west.
- Planning based on regional aspiration.

J & K:

- Return pundits to J & K

Good Governance:

- Sabka Sath Sabka vikas
- People Centric
- Time bound delivery
- Minimum Government maximum Governance

Institutional Reform:

I. Judicial:

- Justice for all
- Address high pendency of cases
- Filling Vacancy
- Open new courts Reform in appointments of Judges
- Double judges and courts in Sub-ordinate judiciary
- National Judicial Commission for appointment in Higher Judiciary
- Lok Adalat
- Reduce cases involving Government as litigant

II. Electoral reform:

- Simultaneous election

III. Widen the platform:

- Health and education for all
- Create more jobs (2.00 crore per year during campaigning)
- Infrastructure to all

Poor & Marginalised

- Poverty Alleviation
- 100 most backward district to be taken up for development

SCs, STs, OBCs & Weaker Section:

- Equality, equal opportunity
- Establishing "National Centre for Tribal Research" to preserve tribal culture and language
- Enhance fund allotment

Minorities:

- Education and job without discrimination
- National Madrasa Modernization Programme
- Empower 'Waqf Boards'
- Curate their rich heritage and culture
- Preservation and promotion of Urdu
- Peaceful and secure environment
- Inter-faith consultative Mechanism

Neo-Middle Class:

- Education scholarship
- Middle Income Housing

Rural Area High Priority:

- Bringing urban facilities to rural areas
- Education, Health, Supply chain, broadband, job creating, security and market linkage

Youth:

- Set up 'National Youth Advisory Council'
- Student loans to be made simpler and affordable
- Set up 'Youth Parliament'

Women:

- 33% reservation in Parliament and Assemblies'
- Balika Samrudhi, Ladli Laxmi
- Women healthcare
- Strict implementation of law, particularly in case of rape
- Women SME in each District

- Enhance wage of Anganwadi workers

Primary and Secondary Education:

- Address teachers shortage
- Quality education
- Spending on education to be raised to 6% of GDP

Higher and Professional Education:

- It should not be just for the effluent. Higher education to reach last man in the line
- Raise standard to be at poor with global standard
- Credibility of regulatory bodies to be restored
- UGC to be converted to Higher Education Commission
- Introduce scheme of "earn while learn"

Health:

- NRHM to be radically reformed
- Bring 'New Health Policy'
- Address shortfall of professionals
- Modernise Government Hospitals

- More Medical and Para-Medical Colleges to make India self-sufficient in human resource.
- Population stabilisation
- "National Mosquito Control Board"
- Swachh Bharat

Economic Reform:

- Spur economic growth to be stable and balanced.
- Fiscal discipline
- Banking reform

Taxation:

- Conducive tax environment
- Nationalise and simplify tax regime

FDI:

- Only for job and asset creating, infrastructure and niche technology

Agriculture:

- increase Public investment
- Enhance profit by minimum 50% over cost of production

- Agro food processing clusters with high value export quality & vacuum packed food processing facilities
- Set up 'Regional Kisan TV Channel'

Industry:

- Emphasis on manufacturing
- MSME of Global standard.

Labour Force:

- Issue Identify cards to unorganised sector labourers and arrange good quality health and education. Skill upgradation
- Access to modern financial service with dedicated 'Workers Bank'
- Reform Labour Law
- Pension and Health Insurance to all labourers.

Infrastructure - Better than the Best

Railway:

- Diamond Quadrilateral Project with High Speed Train Network (Bullet Train)
- Agri Rail Network

Science & technology - India Innovates and India Leads.

National resources:

- National Policy on critical natural resources like coal, minerals etc. as to how much to be utilised at what time and space…… to ensure sustainability

Secure India - Zero Tolerance to Terrorism, Extremism and Crime.

Cultural Heritage:

- Ganga - Clean River Programme across the country.

As can be seen, most of the serious issues promised in the Election Manifesto of the BJP during the last Election have not been addressed during last 4 years. For some, the Government has come up with proposals now, in the last budget. Had these issues been taken up from day one of taking over the charge, many of these problems could have been addressed. All these new schemes and proposals cannot be met within a year.

It does not seen to be a one year budget speech. The budget seems to be a Five Year Plan. The tenure of the government is coming to an end within a year. Hence talking 2022 or beyond has no relevance at this point of time. It seems the Government has brought these schemes now to allure the voters, keeping the ensuing General Election in mind.

It is creditable that one Dalit has been elected as the President of India. But, with this only justice to the Dalits and weaker section of the society has not been addressed. The promise of still working towards strengthening social justice and economic democracy to usher ease of living for the common man is far from reality. Many cases of atrocities towards Dalits and weaker section, beating them, lynching them, denying them entry to places of worship, denying them common facilities like drinking water are still reported from across the country.

Banks are denying loans to the Tribals on the plea that their land is not mortgagable. Their children are denied education loans. They cannot afford education in Private Educational Institutes as they cannot afford the exorbitant fees charged by the Private Institutes.

Quality private institutions have been the privilege of a few. This has created a situation of "Reverse & Reservation to the Rich". Talking of establishing Ekalavya Schools in each Tribal Block is too little and too late. There is no regular cadre of teachers in existing schools. The Government's claim of making these schools at par with Navodaya Vidyalas is only an illusion.

The promise of BJP in their election manifesto about equality and equal opportunities is far from the reality. BJP's promise to

establish "National Centre for Tribal Research" has not been addressed.

The demand by various corners for fund allotment proportionate to the population of SC, ST & Other weaker sections has not been addressed. The authors of the Constitution kept certain provisions, including reservation in Government services, with the hope that after some period they will be at par with rest of the people in all fields i.e., socially, economically, educationally and culturally. No visible progress is seen in these fields. They continue to be vote bank for some party of or other with the hope that some party will do justice to them.

Many proposals for inclusions of deserving castes into the Scheduled List of SC, ST and Backward classes are pending with the Government even after 70 years of Independence.

As against requirement of about 13 lakh Doctors, only about 8 lakh registered Doctors are in practice. There is a gap of about 5 lakh Doctors. Opening only 24 New Medical Colleges is not going to the fill the gap. There is large shortage of para-medical staff which has not been addressed. Facilities in the Government Hospitals are far from adequate.

Most of the issues promised in the Manifesto of BJP have not been addressed on health sector.

New Health Insurance Policy is not going to address the real issue. When there is shortage of infrastructure and skilled manpower, insurance is not going to help the common man. It will benefit the Insurance Companies and Private Hospitals. Many people will not be able to avail these schemes as they have no means of reaching to specialised hospitals located at a long distance from the rural area. Bearing all other costs including transportation, stay and food to the patient as well as attendant as part of the scheme for the poor may help to some extent.

Rs. 5.00 lakh insurance for 10 crore families amounts to Rs. 50,000 crore. If we post one Doctor in each of the 2.4 lakh Gram Panchayats of the country it will cost Rs. 28,800 crore per year. Many new Hospitals can be opened every year with the balance fund of Rs. 21,200 crore. If the Government has so much of money to pay to the Private Hospitals and Insurance Companies, why not the Government thinking in direction to strengthen infrastructure and address malnutrition in rural area. Surely, this is an Election gimmick.

3500 Pradhan Mantri Jana Aushadhi Kendra is too less a number to cater to whole of India.

Out of so many schemes proposed in the manifesto only Swachh Bharat scheme is successful to some extent. But, most of

the toilets constructed are not usable for poor quality of construction or for no water.

Nothing has been mentioned about population stabilisation and "National Mosquito Control Board".

Even though some success has been achieved under "Ujjwala Yojana"- it is learnt that as against that total beneficiaries of 3.3 crores, 2 crores beneficiaries were included under this scheme under other name prior to 2014. It is reported that connection are not given free by the “Distributors”. Many beneficiaries are not able to refill for the next time. An impression has been created that gas and all accessories will be given free. But when the reality is realised by the beneficiary, he feels cheated. Hardly any BPL family will have money to refill the gas at more than Rs. 600/- per cylinder. It is apprehended that even those connections which are live may not be utilised by the beneficiary but, may be his employer or may be going to black market.

The initiative taken to eradicate Triple Talak is a welcome step. But the suggestions given by other Members to modify the provisions in the Bill may be agreed to so that the Act becomes effective without further delay. Many issue of the Minority have not been addressed. There is no mention of Education and job without discrimination, National Madrasa Modernisation Programme,

Empower 'Waqf Board', Curate their rich heritage and culture, Preservation and promotion of Urdu, Peaceful and secure environment and Inter-faith consultative Mechanism.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao is more of a slogan than real result at the ground level. While the Government has decided to increase maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks, many issues related to women empowerment have not been addressed. 33% reservation to women in Parliament and Assemblies has never been talked of, so also many promises in the Manifesto BJP related to women. BJP's promise to enhance wage of Anganwadi workers has been kept. The other issues of Balika Samrudhi, Ladli Laxmi, Women Health Care, strict implementation of law particularly in case of rape and Women SME in each District have not been addressed. There are increased incidence of rape and atrocities against women as there is no exemplary and expeditious punishment to the culprit.

The Government's claim of having opened 31 crore bank accounts under Jan Dhan Yojana is appreciated but, it is complained by the public that Banks are insisting for minimum balance of Rs. 5000/- otherwise, they are deducting penalty. The Government should disclose, as to how many beneficiaries have withdrawn how much money as overdraft up to Rs.5000/- on Zero account, as promised.

It would be useful if the data on how many beneficiaries have taken credit for how much amount is shared with the members.

There is acute shortage of Banks and ATMs in my Parliamentary Constituency, Nabarangpur. The problem has been compounded by the shortage of manpower and short supply of cash. As against cash requirement of Rs. 150 crore per month, cash to the extent of Rs.60 crore is made available in Nabarangpur District. Poor internet service is other reason for people's suffering.

We have been demanding implementation of Swaminathan Commission's recommendation for last 4 years to enhance Minimum Support Price of all agricultural produces. All along our genuine demand was suppressed even though BJP, in its manifesto had committed to implement this. On the other hand, the Government has been promising since 2014 to double farmer's income by 2022. We are talking of 2018-19 budget. The growth in agriculture sector has declined to 1. 9%. There does not seem to be any positive impact on its grounds through "per drop more" crop and "testing soil health". Even if it doubles by 2022 it will be less than a return a fixed deposit would have given.

Record production of food grain and vegetable and fruits is on account of good monsoon and hard work of farmers. Government's policies do not seem to have contributed much in this direction.

The promises of market chain, food processing units, increasing storage capacity has been going on for year after year. The reality is farmers' suicide has increased; there is distress sale of almost all items. Perishable products are thrown on the road. Provision of Rs. 11,000/- crore towards this at this point of time is too late and too little.

Pradhanmantri Fasal Bima Yojana has benefited the Insurance Companies than the farmers.

None of the 99 major irrigation projects lies in Odisha. Tel Integrated Project, Middle Kolab Project and Nabarangpur Irrigation Project in Nabarangpur Parliamentary Constituency of Odisha are pending with the Centre for clearance. Agriculture and forest produces are the only means of survival of the people of this area.

Tel Integrated Project, a tributary of Mahanadi River, is not getting clearance on the plea of Mahanadi Dispute. Union Government is not showing any interest in resolving Mahandi Dispute. It is also not directing Chhattisgarh Government to stop illegal construction of barrages across Mahanadi and its tributaries within Chhattisgarh.

Online Mandi has not benefited the farmers as it is not backed by assured procurement by the Government in case the market fails

to procure at MSP. There is acute problem of internet service in my Nabarangpur Parliamentary Constituency of Odisha. Therefore farmers are hardly able to take advantage of online selling. The promise of setting up 'Regional Kisan TV Channel' has not been fulfilled.

The Government's 'Digital India' has not reached Nabarangpur Parliamentary Constituency in Odisha. As against the requirement of about 250 mobile phone towers only about 120 are working. The towers erected under LWE scheme have become defunct. There is no internet connectivity to any of the Gram Panchayats. Internet and phone service, even in Block headquarters and towns are disrupted frequently. Thus, Digital India is a distant dream for us.

BJP in its Election Manifesto had promised allotment of fund to the extent of 6% of GDP on education. This comes to about Rs. 9.0 lakh crore per year. It is observed that allotment has been made which is hardly 0.56% of GDP.

Uniform and quality education is a dream for the common people. None of the Universities are within top 100 of the world. The worst sufferers are the poor, SCs, STs, & weaker sections of the society.

National Testing Agency is yet to take off even though promised during the last year's budget speech of Hon. Finance

Minister and to conduct Single Entrance for Engineering. Before, that, the National education Policy with uniform and common syllabus across India should be adopted. It was expected that the Government would come up with new Education Policy.

There is a need to expand the scope of syllabus which should include agriculture and Skill Development as a compulsory part to ensure 100% employability of the students.

There is not a single innovation worth world class except the innovation of 'Zero'. Independent India cannot take credit for this. Enhanced fund allotment in innovation and to involve industry in a big way is required to be world leader.

Even though credit is claimed by the Government of hosting international sports event, we are yet to get adequate medals in Olympics compared to our population. Rs.6.00 lakh to 1000 talented sports persons is not enough. We have to create world class infrastructure everywhere. Rural areas are lacking very badly in infrastructure. The promise of Set up ‘National Youth Advisory Council’, Students loan to be made simpler and affordable and Set up “Youth Parliament” has not been fulfilled.

Even though satisfactory progress has been made in road connection, there is a lot to be achieved in improving performance of the Railways. Safety, Punctuality, cleanliness in station and

coaches, amenities at stations and coaches are not at all satisfactory. There is heavy congestion of path and inadequate wagons to meet market demand. The issue of Diamond Quadrilateral Project with High Speed Train Network (Bullet Train) and Agri Rail Network has not been addressed.

Ganga Rejuvenation was started with a lot of fanfare. There is no mention in the speech about its progress. There is no mention of any plan for cleaning all the rivers.

Disturbance along the border is a major concern. There is no mention of 'Zero Tolerance to Terrorism, Extremism and Crime'. Nothing is mentioned in the speech how to tackle the same.

Economy suffered due to demonetisation and irrational GST rates. The promise to 'set up special courts to stop hoarding and black marketing, set up price stabilisation fund and set up Single National Agriculture Market' has not fulfilled.

Job creation is not just about serving 'pakoda' and constructing 'pucca ghar'. In such case the definition of job has to be redefined. Thousands of post graduates, graduates and Engineers rushing for a few post of 'safaiwala' should raise some concern in the Government. We should not be so insensitive towards the youth.

The promise of bringing back black money for foreign Banks seems to have been forgotten.

The promise of “Team India: to Improve Centre - State relation, Cooperative Federalism, Sabka Saath-Sabka Vikas, Evolve model National Development driven by states, Create Regional Council of States, ‘encourage cooperation among states on security, interstate disputes, remove interregional disparities and promoting tourism’, Revive Inter-State Council, National Development Council and ‘Involve States in Foreign trade and commerce’ has been forgotten.

The promise of Integrating the Nation: “East lacking in development, East to be at par with west, Planning based on regional aspiration” and Good Governance through: “Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas, People Centric, Time bound delivery and Minimum Government maximum Governance” has not been honoured.

Odisha's demand for special economic package has not been considered. This would have removed the East-West disparity to some extent. There are instances of the Centre directly interfering in the working of the State. Selection of Districts under Vision India-22, not resolving Mahanadi and Polavaram dispute and sending Secretary from the Centre to review works at the District level are a few examples.

Even though FDI was promised in the areas of job creation, infrastructure etc., it has been open to almost all fields.

There is no mention of Judicial Reform to address:

- Justice for all
- high pendency of cases
- Filling Vacancy
- Open new courts
- Reform in appointments of Judges
- Doubles judges and courts in Sub-ordinate judiciary
- National Judicial Commission for appointment in higher Judiciary
- Lok Adalat
- Reduce cases involving Government as litigant

There does not seem to be clarity on “Simultaneous Election”.

As this is the last full budget before the next “General Election” there was a need to give a report card on all the issues promised in the Manifesto of the BJP than speaking of some achievements selectively.

12.57 hrs

COMMITTEE ON PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

18th and 19th Reports

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, item No. 21 – Shri Virendra Singh.

[Translation]

SHRI VIRENDRA SINGH (BHADOHI): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Reports (Hindi and English versions) of the Committee on Papers Laid on the Table (2017-2018).

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12.58 hrs

UNION BUDGET(2018-19) - GENERAL DISCUSSION …Contd

[Translation]

SHRI RAJAN VICHARE (THANE): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on the Budget. Through you, I would like to congratulate the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, for presenting a Budget that has been welcomed by the people of the country. However, despite this, the middle class of the country is not satisfied with this Budget, as it believes that no special announcement has been made for it. The Government has made an allocation of Rs. 3,073 crore in the Budget for the Digital India programme, which will certainly bring about a digital revolution across the country, and the people of the nation will undoubtedly benefit from it.

Unemployment remains a major problem in the country today. Even after obtaining high educational qualifications, lakhs and crores of young people are sitting at home in despair. In such circumstances, the Government's announcement in the Budget to provide 70 lakh new jobs has indeed generated hope among the

unemployed youth of the country. For this, I would like to congratulate the Hon. Finance Minister.

Even today, there is a section of society for whom air travel is like a dream. Keeping such sections in mind, the Government has decided to increase the number of airports by five times. As part of the initiative to promote air connectivity in smaller cities, the fare for a one-hour flight has been fixed at just Rs. 2,500, so that a larger number of people may be able to avail themselves of air travel.

In the Budget, the Government has stated that arrangements for drinking water will be improved in 500 cities under the AMRUT Scheme, with an expenditure of Rs. 19,428 crore. I would like to request the Hon. Finance Minister to kindly include Thane, Navi Mumbai and Mira-Bhayandar, which fall within my parliamentary constituency of Thane, under the AMRUT Scheme.

13.00 hrs

The Government has also paid attention to farmers in the Budget by announcing an allocation of Rs. 2,600 crore, the benefit of which will directly reach farmers and enable them to carry out agricultural activities in a better manner. At the same time, the Government should also pay attention to those farmers who are committing suicide due to their inability to repay loans. The

Government should waive the loans of such farmers. Every poor person dreams of owning a house, and the Government has clearly stated that every poor person in the country will be provided with a house by 2022. I welcome this announcement.

I would like to urge the Hon. Finance Minister that complete details of the said scheme should be made available to all Members of Parliament so that they may inform the people of their respective constituencies about the scheme to the maximum extent. The Government has also focused on the Smart City Project and has announced the development of 100 new cities, under which Thane city in my Lok Sabha constituency has also been selected as a Smart City. I thank you for this.

I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Finance Minister towards the funds required to construct the Gaumukh to Bhiwandi bypass road in my Thane Parliamentary Constituency, the current cost of which is s. 1,000 crores. With the completion of this bypass road, people living in my Parliamentary Constituency will get an alternative route which will help them to get rid of the problem of traffic jams and will also save time. So please provide funds for this.

The Hon. Minister of Railways has also paid special attention to the Railways in the Budget and has announced the installation of escalators at stations having footfall of more than 25,000

passengers. It has also been stated that Wi-Fi and CCTV cameras will be installed at several stations and in trains. I would like to request the Hon. Minister of Railways to also provide escalators at Mira Road and Bhayandar stations, which fall within my parliamentary constituency.

The Hon. Minister of Railways has paid attention to the expansion of 90 kilometres of double railway tracks in Mumbai at a cost of Rs. 11,000 crore in Maharashtra, and has also spoken about extending the coverage of Mumbai local services. I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister of Railways to the Airoli–Kalwa link on the Central Railway, falling within my parliamentary constituency of Thane, which is a two-kilometre-long project with an estimated cost of Rs. 428 crore. This project has also been mentioned in the Budget. It was announced by the then Minister of Railways, Shri Suresh Prabhu, in the Railway Budget of 2015, and the foundation stone for the project was laid by our Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, on 10 December 2016. However, even after more than three years have passed, the work has not yet commenced, due to which this very important project has remained pending for several years. Immediate attention is required in this regard. Once this project is completed, congestion at Thane station will be reduced by about 30 per cent, and passengers' time will also be saved.

I would also like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister to the proposal by CIDCO for a new railway station named Bonkode on the Thane-Vashi route. All railway stations constructed by CIDCO should be transferred to the Railways at the earliest. This matter has been pending for the last 20 years, and I hope that you will kindly pay attention to it. Along with this, I request that CCTV cameras and escalators be installed at all stations in Navi Mumbai.

I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister of Railways to the parking plaza project in the Thane station premises, which falls within my parliamentary constituency. This project was inaugurated by the then Minister of Railways, Shri Suresh Prabhu, in the year 2016, but only half of the work has been completed so far. I would like to request the Hon. Minister of Railways to kindly ensure that this work is completed at the earliest. Another important project relates to the proposed new Thane station at the site of the Mental Hospital between Thane and Mulund. Approval for this project has already been granted and the required funds have also been deposited. However, due to the non-receipt of approval for land transfer from the Government of Maharashtra, the work on this project has remained pending for the last six years.

I would like to request the Hon. Minister of Railways to kindly take up this matter with the Hon. Chief Minister of Maharashtra and

obtain the approval for land transfer at the earliest so that the work on this station may commence.

I would also like to request the Hon. Minister of Railways to pay attention to railway projects connected with Thane, Navi Mumbai, Mira Road and Bhayandar in my parliamentary constituency, and to start more local train services on the Thane–Panvel Harbour route. Further, I request that the number of toilets and rest rooms for women at all stations may be increased, and that CCTV cameras and escalators may also be installed.

[English]

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please wind up. You are having so many pages to read. I cannot allow it.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJAN VICHARE: Further, long-distance trains should be given a halt at either Mira Road or Bhayandar station, as at present people are required to travel to Mumbai Central, LTT or Thane station for this purpose. There is also a need to increase the frequency of local train services at Mira Road and Bhayandar stations. Train No. 11019, the Konark Express running from Mumbai CST to Bhubaneswar, should be given a halt at Thane station.

[English]

DR. J. JAYAVARDHAN (CHENNAI SOUTH): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Union Budget 2018-19 has been presented by the Union Finance Minister on first of February. This is the first Budget in the post GST regime and the last full Budget for the present Government. The Union Budget presented is fairly balanced and growth-oriented Budget that focuses on development of agriculture, rural development and health sector.

Sir, I wish to bring to the notice of the House several issues regarding my State of Tamil Nadu. It may be recalled that the Government of India had reduced its share in the Centrally sponsored schemes from 75 per cent to 60 per cent on the pretext that the States have obtained additional fiscal space due to increase in the devolution of funds to States from 32 per cent to 42 per cent following the 14th Finance Commission's recommendations.

Unfortunately, Tamil Nadu had lost out badly due to reduction of horizontal devolutionary share from 4.969 per cent to 4.023 per cent. Consequently, the overall devolution to Tamil Nadu has shrunk and impaired the ability of the State Government to finance its own programme. I request the Union Finance Minister to provide a special *ad hoc* grant to our State by way of a special compensation to ensure equity in Central allocation.

Sir, in the report on compliance of Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003, for the year 2014-15, the Comptroller and Auditor General has reported a shortfall of Rs. 81,647.70 crore in the aggregate amount of devolution to the States during the period 1996-97 to 2014-15. The Government of India is duty-bound to settle this shortfall of earlier payments due to the States. It is estimated that dues to the State of Tamil Nadu on this account would be about Rs. 4,500 crore. Hence, the Union Government should allocate funds for these payments due to the State of Tamil Nadu.

Sir, the State of Tamil Nadu has reiterated, time and again, the need to include the revenue received from levy of cess and surcharges in the divisible pool of resources to the States. Further, the levy of surcharge of 2 per cent on the super-rich that replaced the wealth tax, has shifted the fiscal resource from States to the Centre. Therefore, I urge the Union Government to include the surcharge on the super-rich and other surcharges in the divisible pool of resources to the States.

Sir, on the issue of loss due to the roll out of GST, the Government of Tamil Nadu has submitted a CST compensation claim of Rs. 5,572 crore of which the Union Finance Ministry acknowledged that only Rs. 2,420 crore remains to be reimbursed.

I, therefore, request the Finance Ministry to provide Rs. 5,572 crore as CST compensation claim due to the State of Tamil Nadu.

I would also bring it to the notice of the House that GST is levied on projects executed by the State Governments and it is a serious concern as it is a tax on States, paid from the taxes collected from the people and has adversely affected the financing capacity of the States to execute works and therefore the Union Government should exempt the work contracts executed for State Governments from the purview of GST.

Sir, it is unfortunate to note that the Government of India has reduced the budgetary support on year on year basis in some very important schemes like Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Rural Drinking Water Programme, poverty reduction schemes like National Urban Livelihood Mission and National Rural Livelihood Mission for the State of Tamil Nadu. Budgetary allocation for schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan has become stagnant to the State of Tamil Nadu. Funds were not released by the concerned Ministries on the ground that the respective Ministries have exhausted their budgetary support.

Following are some glaring examples:

Under Post-Matric Scholarship scheme arrears are pending to be released to the State of Tamil Nadu.

Under SSA and RMSA, there are pending arrears for projects approved by Project Approval Board.

Under fishing harbour construction on the basis of sharing by the Centre and the State, the release of funds by the Union Government is pending.

Arrears under Marketing Incentive Component of National Handloom Development Programme and National Fishermen Saving-cum-Relief Scheme are a few schemes that need to be mentioned here.

Therefore, there are several schemes for which the Government of India has not released its due share of fund to the States.

Sir, under Green Climate Fund, which is a project for the management of the shoreline of Tamil Nadu coast and for addressing the issue of sea erosion caused by climate change, a proposal was sent to the Government of India for an outlay of Rs.1143.56 crore through NABARD to be implemented under the National Adaption fund on climate change. However, the decision of the Government of India is awaited in this regard.

Sir, Smart City Mission guidelines focus on area-based development which envisages providing infrastructure facility in a selected part of the city whereas rest of the city will be covered in subsequent phases. This ultimately will lead to creating city level imbalances. So, it is imperative that in the Smart City Mission guidelines, flexibility may be provided to the Smart City Special Purpose Vehicle to implement basic infrastructure facility on a pan-city basis instead of an area-based development.

Further, in our State, Tamil Nadu, about 48 per cent of total population live in urban areas. However, only 28 urban local bodies are covered under the Smart City Mission and AMRUT which covers less than half of the total urban population of Tamil Nadu. Hence, a dedicated mission or programme should be launched by the Urban Development Ministry to develop small as well as medium towns and for a comprehensive development of all urban local bodies.

I urge the Government of India to increase the share of funding for Smart City Projects from an equal sharing basis between the Centre and the State to a majority share by the Centre as it is one of the most pioneering and ambitious projects of the Union Government. I also urge the Union Government to increase the allocation of funds for the smart city projects in Tamil Nadu.

Sir, in regard to highways, there have been long pending demands for six-laning of the Koyambedu-Poonamalee-Walayapet road at a cost of Rs.1,500 crore, road safety work on the national highway at a cost of Rs. 2,300 crore, Chennai Peripheral Ring Road Project at a cost of Rs.7,446 crore, upgradation of NH-45A of the East Coast Road into a four-lane road and upgradation of the stretch from Nagapattanam to Kanyakumari under the national highway.

Sir, the Government of India has given special focus on expanding the capacity of the suburban train systems in Mumbai and Bengaluru whereas the suburban train system in Chennai, which needs to be strengthened and expanded, has been left out in the Budget. Several major rail infrastructure network projects identified by our leader, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, in the Mission Tamil Nadu 2023 document need immediate attention by the Union Government. There is no budgetary support by the Union Government for these projects even after several requests by the State Government of Tamil Nadu.

The budgetary allocation for metro projects has been substantially reduced throughout the country as compared to the previous year. I request the Hon. Finance Minister to kindly increase the allocation for rapidly changing the face of urban transportation and allocate sufficient funds for phase II of the Chennai Metro Rail Project.

Sir, under the National Social Assistance Programme, the Government of India has been providing pension of Rs. 200 per beneficiary under the Old Age Pension Scheme and Rs. 300 per beneficiary for widows and differently-abled since 2011. It is obvious that Rs. 200 per month is grossly inadequate for a decent living and the pension has to be increased to Rs. 1,000 per month.

Sir, the Union Government should strengthen the Primary Healthcare Centres and increase its budgetary allocation for National Rural Health Mission.

Sir, budgetary allocation for modernisation of police forces and the Coast Guard organisation should be substantially increased as the current level of funding is grossly inadequate.

I request the Government of India to finalise the location of AIIMS in Tamil Nadu without further delay and allocate sufficient funds to expedite the project.

The constitution of a dedicated affordable housing fund in the National Housing Bank is a welcome move, but the allocation for the Prime Minister Awas Yojana has been reduced in the Budget.

There has also been a reduced allocation of funds for Kamaraj Port Trust compared to the previous year.

Sir, the Government of Tamil Nadu had submitted a memorandum seeking financial assistance of Rs. 5,255 crore for

relief and rehabilitation measures to be taken in the Ockhi cyclone hit areas of Kanyakumari district and Rs. 4,047 crore for mitigation measures to reduce flood vulnerability of Chennai city. However, the Union Government has not provided any financial assistance in this regard in the current Budget.

Finally, one of the fundamental principles of cooperative federalism is the timely fulfilment of the commitments made, and fulfilling the financial commitments of the State forms its bedrock. However, any falter on this commitment will severely deter the socio-economic development of the State as well as the country. So, I urge the Union Government to release its due share of funds to the State immediately for a holistic development of our country.

[*]**SHRI RAM MOHAN NAIDU KINJARAPU (SRIKAKULAM):** From the outset Hon. President in his address covered a plethora of achievements especially in the field of youth empowerment, social as well as economic justice that everyone should rightly be proud of. The Government's actions have endured that women get their deserved maternity leave increased from 12 to 26 weeks. Under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, it is a delight to know that 4 lakh crore worth of loans have been disbursed to encourage self-employment. Further agricultural markets have gone online and already 36000 crore worth of agricultural produce has been traded on e-NAM. The Government's focus on infrastructure has also borne fruit as now 82% villages in the country are connected by roads in comparison to just 56% in 2014, when this Government came to power. I have no doubt that the Government under the leadership of the Hon. President and steered by the Hon. Prime Minister is toiling hard with honest efforts to better the live of every single India.

However, I find it necessary that creation of a separate railway zone for state of Andhra Pradesh should be mentioned as one of the top priorities of the Government this year. Keeping in view the disadvantages imposed on it due to bifurcation of the erstwhile

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

state, under the Thirteenth Schedule as per Section 93 of the Andhra Pradesh Re-organisation Act of 2014 the promise of a separate railway zone for the residual state of Andhra Pradesh was made. Nearly four years down the lane the promise of a separate railway zone still remains merely on paper without any formal announcement over its establishment. We were very hopeful that the creation of the new railway zone would be included in the Government's top priorities and hence be reflected in the Hon. President's Address as well as the Finance Minister's Budget Speech. While I do not doubt the intention of the Government, but as a representative of a region of Andhra Pradesh that is badly affected by a lack of railway infrastructure, it is my duty to take the matter to the highest echelons of decision making and expedite it. Any delay in establishing of the Zone results in direct suffering of the people of Srikakulam as well as the whole of Andhra Pradesh.

The Hon. Railway Minister in the Rajya Sabha gave a clarification regarding the creation of a new Railway Zone by saying that matters were under consideration and interests of other States also have to be kept in the mind. I vehemently express my despair at this statement. The creation of a separate Railway Zone was promised to Andhra Pradesh because of certain exceptional situation that the State was to face post division. At that time it was found essential to include such a provision in the AP

Reorganization Act 2014. Hence Andhra Pradesh has a right over a new Railway Zone and the same should not be subject to deliberations with other States. We have sacrificed our resources in national interest as Parliament passed the Reorganization Act, but now we are told that not even promises made to us at that time would be implemented. We are still kept at the mercy of interests of others.

I strongly request the Government to first officially announce the creation of a new Railway Zone headquartered at Visakhapatnam and only after that look at the procedural requirements. A formal decision has to come. We should not been kept under the apprehension that the Government is still to take a decision on it. It should be officially announced that the Railway Zone will be made and only after that deliberations should be made. This is something that has already been promised to us by both the major national parties, now it should not be made subject to the desires and interests of others. In no way should the Government make the creation of a new railway zone contentious. We want a clear decision on it.

The Andhra Pradesh State Reorganisation should be implemented in letter and spirit and the State should not be made to suffer any longer to shortage of funds from the Union Government.

[*]**SHRI NALIN KUMAR KATEEL (DAKSHINA KANNADA):** I congratulate the Hon. Minister for allocation of Rs.1 crore for Bengaluru Suburban Rail Network Project. It is a welcome step but only a token amount of Rs. 1 crore has been allocated. However, it is a good beginning. But, an allocation of around Rs. 50 crore needs to be allocated to expedite the project. I hope that in the supplementary budget our Finance Minister will allocate this amount.

I would like to state that the big game changer in the budget of 2018-19. It is considered as 'Modicare', among the people of the country. For poor families with large health costs that can knock families back into poverty, this scheme can be a big boon to poor people. The Government has set aside Rs.10 lakh crore for the scheme to be financed by a 1% income-tax cess.

Health is considered as the most important thing for a human being. It is a well-known concept that health is wealth. As far the National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS), announced in the budget, to provide health cover up to Rs. 5 lakh per family for Fifty thousand poor and economically weak families. I would like to say that it is very good programme under UJALA Scheme, 28.73 crore LEB Bulbs have been distributed. More than Rs.14,926 crore has

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

been saved per year and 7,740 MW of peak demand has been reduced. This year the target is increased to cover 8 crore women under the scheme.

Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, has given a farmer and people friendly budget. It clearly reflects the commitment of the Government towards agriculture and farmers welfare as well as Prime Minister's pledge to double farmers income by 2022. The budgetary allocation of Agriculture And Farmers Welfare Ministry was Rs. 51,576 crore for the year 2017-18 which has been increased to Rs. 58,080 crore for this year.

The Government is continuing the reforms made in the last 2 budgetary years and Rs. 10,000 crore allocated for Fisheries and Aquacultures Infrastructure Development Fund and Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund. Through this, State Governments, Cooperatives and individual investors will get loans at cheap rates for fisheries and animal husbandry infrastructure. This will help to speed up the pace of construction of fish landing centres, cold storages, ice plants, transport facilities, processing units and hatcheries etc. I welcome the steps taken in the regard by the Government.

This Budget embarks to bring new reforms in agriculture markets with the objective to provide right value of the yields to the

farmers. In this budget, an announcement of Rs.2000 crore for Agri Market Development Fund has been made which shows the importance of retail market in the sector of agriculture marketing. These markets have been called as GRAM (Gramin Retail Agriculture Market). Through these markets infrastructure of 22,000 Rural Haats and 585 AMC markets will be developed.

Tomatoes, Onions, Potatoes are consumed throughout the year in the entire country. During the last 70 years, farmers and consumers have incurred losses. For the first time, a new initiative titled "Operation Green" has been taken so that farmers can get right price and products are also available to the consumers at suitable prices. For this purpose, a provision of Rs. 500 crore has been made.

Implementation of 'Prime Minister's Research Fellows (PMRF)' scheme at a total cost of Rs.1650 crore for a period of seven years beginning 2018-19. The Prime Minister has emphasized the importance of innovation and technology for the progress and development of the nation. This fellowship scheme is key to realizing his vision of development through innovation.

I would also like to mention that the NDA Government has taken steps to increase in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of "Ball Copra" to Rs.7750/- per quintal for 2018 season from Rs. 6785/- per quintal in 2017. This increase in MSP of Copra will

ensure appropriate minimum prices to the farmers and step up investment in Coconut cultivation and thereby production and productivity in the country.

The long-pending demand for a third coaching terminal at Baiyappanahalli Station was given Rs.45 crore this financial year. Further Rs. 525 crore has been sanctioned for developing stations across South Western Railways. Rs.545 crore for new lines between Baiyappanahalli and Hosur, and Yeswantpur to Channasandra.

As far as electricity is concerned India is a surplus country now. We are the net exporter of electricity. Under the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Ghar Yojana, free connection is provided to four crore people. It is because of the efforts of our NDA Government. However, in spite of country having surplus electricity, the Congress Government in Karnataka is giving only three to four hours electricity, for irrigation purposes. Even that three to four hours, frequent power cuts are there.

*SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN (VADAKARA): This is the last Budget presented by this Government. For this reason it was widely expected to be distinct budget aimed at fiscal consolidation and growth. However, in effect it has turned out to be another rhetoric with hollow promises.

As many economists have pointed out, the Hon. Finance Minister has failed to make any fiscal consolidation through this Budget.

The Finance Minister presumably presented the budget with a mission to strengthen agriculture, rural development, health, education, employment, MSME and infrastructure sectors. But in effect not a single sector is going to benefit by this budget.

Promised to provide employment to the tune of 2 crores per year was one of the main slogans raised by the present Prime Minister at the time of the 2014 election. The aspiring youth of this country by and large were enamoured by the rhetoric of the Prime Minister.

But in the budget there are no concrete steps to generate employment opportunities. Normally jobs are created by the industrial sector i.e., Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. However Industrial Gross Value Added Growth has declined from

*Speech was laid on the Table.

8% in 2015-16 to 6.8% in 2016-17 to 2.7% in 2017-18. Manufacturing Gross Value Added Growth has also declined from 12.7% to 7.9% to 3.1%. In reality we seen that no jobs have been created. The younger generation of this youngest nation is deeply disappointed by the failure of this Government on all fronts especially on providing employment opportunities.

India is basically an agrarian economy and 85% of the population directly or indirectly depends upon agriculture for their livelihood.

During the last four years of this Government the level of agriculture GDP and real agriculture revenue has remained constantly low. Deep distress prevailing in the agriculture sector leads to large number of farmer suicides and farmers are suffering for want of remunerative prices for their agriculture produce.

The M. S. Swaminathan Committee Report had recommended a Minimum Support Price of 50% profits above the cost of production classified as "C2" by the Commission for agriculture cost and prices. Dr.Swaminathan himself had expressed an apprehension as to whether the proposed hike of 1.5 times the production cost mentioned in this budget is in tune with the recommendation made by National Commission on Farmers headed by him in 2006. The promise to increase the Minimum

Support Price by 1.5 times contains no details. There is no indication whatever that the real income of the farmers will increase.

In reply to my starred question 50 in the Lok Sabha on 6th February, 2018 I have been informed that the last study on farmers income was conducted by NSSO for the period July 2012 - June 2013. Not even an attempt has been made to assess the farmers' income from 2013 to 2018. This reflects the emptiness of the promise made by the Finance Minister in his budget that the farmer's income would double by the year 2022. While making this promise the Finance Minister has failed to give any details on how this will work out and how they intend to attain this. The Government is simply groping in the dark.

Farm sector unrest and farmers distress will continue and deepen and majority of farmers will be in peril.

The proclamation of the Finance Minister in the budget about health insurance cover is another attempt to mislead and defraud the poor. The promise of Rs.5 lakh per family for 10 crore families is only a gimmick. This is only a lip service by the Finance Minister keeping in view the forthcoming Lok Sabha Election of 2019. The huge financial implications involved in the Public Health Insurance Scheme has not been spelt out by the Government.

Nor is there any attempt to identify resources required for the scheme. All studies go to show that major insurance companies alone are going to take the benefit of the scheme. In ultimate analysis; the common man will be at the receiving end.

The promise of Finance Minister is similar to assurance of the Prime Minister that black money stashed abroad would be recovered and Rs.15 Lakh deposited in every account.

There is absolutely no tax relief to the average tax payer. Only cooperates with huge income benefit by the present tax reliefs. Also in stark contradiction to the contents of the Prime Ministers Davos speech no measures whatever are taken by this Government to boost exports.

It is distressing to know that allocation for major employment generation programme like MGNREGA and social welfare programmes like Prime Ministers' Awas Yojana, Safe Drinking Water, Swatch Bharat etc. have been drastically cut. This shows the anti-poor attitude of the Government.

The decision of the Government to privatise Air India is a retrograde step as the Government has no concern for public concern for public sector undertakings which were built and developed by the Congress Governments.

Air India is the pride of this country and the Government should desist from selling out this prestigious airline which has got high reputation across the globe.

Railways is the single largest public utility service in the country and it is the lifeline connecting the whole country. Development of Railways plays a prominent role in the overall development of a large country like India. It is extremely sad to note that Railway has given a raw deal to Kerala in the Budget. State of Kerala as well as MPs from Kerala placed important and vital proposals before the Government. Not even a single proposal has been considered in the budget. It has been the long cherished dream of the people since the British time to have a railway line between Thalassery and Mysore connecting Kerala and Karnataka which will go a long way in shortening the distance from Kerala to Northern States by hundreds of kilometres as also for overall development of the region.

The Chairman and senior officials of the Railway Board have visited Thiruvananthapuram and had a comprehensive discussion on the proposed line between Thalassery and Mysore. Kerala and Karnataka also came forward with a cost sharing proposal. The impression given by the authorities was that proposal would fructify soon. Unfortunately no mention is made in the budget. I earnestly

request the Government to take urgent necessary steps to include the proposal in the scheme of things.

The budget proposals are a big let-down. If the intentions were genuine and pro people then the proposals should have been bold and clear and backed by adequate provision of funds. The budget is therefore thoroughly disappointing.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Vinod Kumar Sonkar. You may please finish in only five minutes because the Minister is going to reply soon. So, you speak in brief.

[Translation]

SHRI VINOD KUMAR SONKAR (KAUSHAMBI): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on the General Budget. I would also like to thank the members of my party for giving me the opportunity to participate in the discussion on the General Budget.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, on 26 November 1949, while presenting the draft of the Constitution to Dr Rajendra Prasad, Babasaheb had stated that when the Constitution would come into force in this country on 26 January 1950, political equality would be achieved, but social and economic equality would still remain to be attained. He had also stated that political democracy cannot be sustained without social and economic democracy.

I can say with full responsibility and conviction that on 26 May 2014, under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi, this Government began its very first task of bringing social and economic equality in this country. Hon. Mallikarjun ji is seated here, and I would like to draw his attention to this point. When members of the ruling side raise the question that the Congress did nothing over the last 70 years, it causes him discomfort. Such discomfort is natural. However, I would like to draw his attention to the fact that whatever work has been done by you certainly deserves appreciation. But

how much harm has been caused to the Scheduled communities by the Congress, I would like to explain that through a small illustration.

Aligarh Muslim University was established in the year 1875 by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. Subsequently, in 1920, it was accorded the status of a Central University through an Act of this very House. As long as the British ruled this country, whatever system prevailed continued to do so. However, from 26 January 1950, when the Constitution came into force in this country, reservation was provided to the Scheduled communities, the oppressed and the labouring classes through the efforts and struggles of Babasaheb. But from 1950 till today, neither in the teaching nor in the non-teaching staff of Aligarh Muslim University has any reservation been provided to the Scheduled Castes. There are nearly 250 subjects being taught there, yet in none of them has reservation been granted to the Scheduled communities. If this issue is raised today by the BJP, the Congress and others immediately say that the minority community is under threat. However, I wish to know that if reservation had been provided in AMU over the last 70 years since Independence, how much benefit the Scheduled communities would have derived. Shri Rahul Gandhi has said that the Hon. Prime Minister does not speak. If Shri Rahul Gandhi is listening, he should respond to this issue. Seventy years have passed since

Independence, and Aligarh Muslim University runs on public funds of this country. It is funded by the money of the taxpayers of this nation, yet no reservation has been provided to the Scheduled communities. This has caused immense loss to them. There are also certain organisations which speak of unity between the Scheduled communities and Muslims. I would also like to ask them that when this Central University is run with the money of the people of India and the taxpayers of this country, and reservation has not been provided there, it would certainly be better if they too spoke on this issue.

Sir, the Congress has repeatedly faced the allegation that it did nothing. Shrimati Indira Gandhi nationalised the banks, and at the time of nationalisation, what was the argument advanced? The argument was that the villages, the poor, farmers, labourers and people belonging to the Scheduled communities would receive a larger share of the country's wealth. However, even after 70 years of Independence, or even 40 years after nationalisation, if they could not even open bank accounts for 30 crore people of this country, how can it now be claimed that they brought the people of this country into the mainstream of development.

The issue of demonetisation has not arisen for the first time in this country. The question of demonetisation had earlier arisen during the tenure of Shrimati Indira Gandhi and was discussed in

this House as well. However, Shrimati Indira Gandhi did not pursue demonetisation, only because her advisers told her that if she raised an issue like demonetisation, her political future would be at risk and that the Congress would not return to power in this country.

Sir, today we can say with full pride that earlier there was a leadership that was concerned about itself and its party, whereas today there is a leadership that is not concerned about the party and is not even concerned about its own personal political future. Whether my party remains or not, this country must remain. Therefore, the colleagues of the Congress must also respond to this issue.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, people also discuss GST. The biggest benefit of GST has been that earlier, before the Budget, there used to be extensive speculation about which goods traders should stock and which they should not, leading to price rises. ... *(Interruptions)* There are many issues, but since I am now being asked to conclude, I would like to place two or three demands before the Government through you. First, widow pension, old-age pension and disability pension vary from State to State across the country. Therefore, I would like to request the Hon. Finance Minister that a uniform widow pension, old-age pension and disability pension be implemented throughout the country, and that it should not be less than Rs. 3,000.

Second, ASHA workers today are the backbone of rural health care in the country. Rural health services cannot be imagined without them. I would like to urge the Hon. Finance Minister, through you, that a minimum honorarium be fixed for them. At present, they are paid for each task separately. A fixed honorarium should be prescribed so that the standard of living of ASHA workers serving in rural areas may improve and their exploitation may be prevented.

I would also like to request the Hon. Prime Minister, through you, that the Scheduled communities of the country are looking towards you with great hope. Over the last 70 years, many posts meant for the Scheduled communities at the Central and State levels have remained vacant and are lying as backlog vacancies. I would request that these backlog posts be filled so that members of the Scheduled communities of this country may also be provided employment.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Bill relating to reservation in promotion for members of the Scheduled communities has been pending in this House for a long time. ... *(Interruptions)* This is an important issue, and I have been given an opportunity to speak in this House for the first time. This Bill on reservation in promotion is one that cannot be accomplished by just anyone. The Hon. Prime Minister can accomplish this, because you have taken the historic

decision to constitute a Commission for the backward classes and you have taken the decision on demonetisation. Therefore, such an expectation can certainly be placed upon you.

A very large number of workers are registered under MGNREGA in this country. I would like to submit that if an accident insurance of merely Rs. 12 is made mandatory for all MGNREGA workers, then in the event of an accident resulting in casualty, their families would receive support. ... *(Interruptions)*

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Allahabad University is known as the Oxford of Purvanchal, and there is an urgent need for its expansion. New extensions are required. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

DR. A. SAMPATH (ATTINGAL): Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am raising a point of order. There is neither quorum nor order in the House ...*(Interruptions)* it is not proper to run the House like this. I raise my objection. You can count whether there is quorum...*(Interruptions)* Even if there is quorum, there is no order. Some Members are already there...*(Interruptions)*

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Quorum is there. Please sit down.

[Translation]

***SHRIMATI JYOTI DHURVE (BETUL):** In the development-oriented Budget for the year 2018-19 presented by the Hon. Finance Minister, which strengthens the New India vision, the following main points have been highlighted:-

The Budget is favourable to farmers and business, and is a Budget for the common man, farmers and the nation. There was concern across the country regarding agriculture, and doubling farmers' income is an urgent necessity. Companies in the share market have earned substantial profits, and the ease of doing business has improved, with company registration now possible within one day. Our entire focus is on the poor and on villages. Reducing corporate tax to 25 per cent was necessary. This year's Budget is higher by Rs. 1 lakh crore as compared to the previous year. The Hon. Finance Minister deserves congratulations for providing relief to salaried persons. Due attention has been given to senior citizens in the Budget, with several benefits, including income tax exemption on health insurance premium up to Rs. 50,000. The Budget will prove very helpful for working women. Relief of up to Rs. 50,000 on mediclaim will be beneficial. The Budget has provided greater opportunities for savings to the middle

* Speech was laid on the Table

class. New medical colleges will generate employment for youth. The Ayushman Scheme will work towards keeping the country healthy. This insurance scheme is the world's largest health care programme, through which 125 crore citizens will benefit. The target under the Ujjwala Scheme has been increased from five crore to eight crore. New energy centres will be set up to enhance farmers' income. Vegetable and fruit sellers will receive significant benefits. The Gobardhan Scheme will help keep villages clean. The Budget will bring positive changes in the lives of the middle class. A target has been set to provide electricity connections to nearly two crore households. The Budget will help increase farmers' income, and several schemes have been announced to support small traders. The e-assessment scheme will be implemented across the country. A tax at the rate of 10 per cent will be levied on shares purchased after 21 January 2018. Seven hundred new railway engines will be manufactured this year. A new defence policy for 2018 has been announced. Several public sector undertakings will be listed on the stock market, opening the path for disinvestment in the defence sector. Every business will be provided a UID. Unutilised railway land will be put to use. Emphasis has been laid on Wi-Fi and CCTV facilities at stations. A plan has been announced to build 600 new airports. Currencies such as Bitcoin will not be permitted in the country. One lakh Gram Panchayats will

be strengthened, and broadband connectivity will be expanded to 2.5 lakh villages. A total of 3,600 kilometres of new railway lines will be laid, more than 4,000 unmanned level crossings will be closed, and all railway lines will be converted to broad gauge. Railways will operate only on broad gauge lines. An expenditure of Rs. 1.48 lakh crore has been earmarked for the Railways, with emphasis on electrification. Ten cities will be developed on the lines of iconic tourism locations. Construction of 9,000 kilometres of National Highways has been completed. Skill centres will be opened in every district. An allocation of Rs. 3 lakh crore has been made for the Mudra Scheme. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, more than one crore houses have already been constructed. Assistance of Rs. 500 per month will be provided to TB patients. The B.Ed programme for teachers will be revamped. The Government will launch the Prime Minister's Research Fellows Scheme. The Government remains fully committed to cleaning the Ganga. Under the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Bima Yojana, 5.22 crore families have received assistance. Preparations are underway to implement the world's largest health scheme. A plan has been made to open one medical college for every five parliamentary constituencies. An allocation of Rs. 1,200 crore has been made for Health and Wellness Centres. The Government has laid special emphasis on education of tribal children, including the launch of

the Eklavya School Scheme. The Government will create a micro-irrigation fund. A target has been set to enrol 20 lakh children in schools. Thirty-seven lakh new houses will be constructed in urban areas. Two crore toilets will be constructed in the next financial year, while six crore toilets have already been built. Livestock and fisheries farmers will also be provided Kisan Credit Cards. An allocation of Rs. 500 crore has been made for potatoes, onions and tomatoes. The Agriculture Infrastructure Scheme will be launched with an outlay of Rs. 1,400 crore. Production of potatoes and onions will be encouraged. The decision to fix the Minimum Support Price at one and a half times the cost of production has been taken. The Government is moving ahead on its commitment to double farmers' income. Agricultural production in the country is at a record level, and development of villages remains the Government's top priority.

From the Budget for the year 2018-19 presented by the Hon. Finance Minister, I have not merely hope but full confidence that this balanced Budget will promote the development of tribals, farmers, the poor and the middle class, while also taking new steps in the direction of modernisation of the Railways. This Budget will fulfil the dream of a New India.

*DR. RAGHU SHARMA (AJMER): I describe the Budget for the year 2018-19 presented by the Hon. Finance Minister as a disappointing Budget for the people of the country. Through this Budget, the true face of the BJP Government has been exposed. The assurances and promises made by the BJP to the people of the country prior to the 2014 Lok Sabha elections have not even been attempted to be fulfilled in this Budget, and by doing so, the BJP Government has once again betrayed the people of the country.

The BJP came to power by promising to provide employment every year to two crore unemployed youth of the country. However, even in this Budget, by not adopting any serious measures to address unemployment, the Government has disappointed the unemployed youth of the country and has betrayed them. Whatever has been stated in the Budget is merely an illusion. The BJP came to power by promising to reduce inflation, but in this Budget, it has made items of daily consumption even more expensive. The items which have been projected as being made cheaper in this Budget do not provide any relief to the common man in any manner. On the issue of inflation, the BJP Government has broken the backbone of the entire country. Inflation has reached alarming levels, and the

*Speech was laid on the Table

BJP has made no effort to control it. This is a grave betrayal of the people of the country, which the nation will never forget.

The increase in customs duty on various items in this Budget has adversely affected the common consumer. The Government has also imposed an additional burden on the common man by increasing the cess by one per cent on essential health-related services. Under the BJP Government, the prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas have been continuously rising. No measure has been taken in this Budget to arrest this increasing burden. Due to the one per cent cess on taxes, a road cess of Rs. 8 per litre has been imposed on consumers. At present, petrol is being sold at Rs. 72.92 per litre and diesel at Rs. 64 per litre, which are the highest prices since the BJP Government came to power.

The BJP had promised, prior to the 2014 elections, to provide the country's farmers with an MSP that was 50 per cent higher than the cost of production. However, no concrete decision has been taken by the BJP Government in this direction in the present Budget, which reflects its anti-farmer mindset.

No serious effort has been made in the Budget to provide better facilities to the people of the country in the railway sector either. The Government has decided to provide budgetary support of only Rs. 55,000 crore for the Railways. The country's sporting talent has

also been disappointed by this Budget, as the allocation for the Sports Authority of India has been reduced.

While the Government repeatedly highlights the Ujjwala Scheme, it has not made any serious effort to reduce the prices of gas cylinders.

The Government has made only a very marginal increase in the education budget, which has led to disappointment among the youth of the country.

The share of social security in the Budget has been reduced. The Government has also not increased the budgetary allocation for the Janani Suraksha Yojana.

The schemes shown in the Budget for farmers are populist in nature, but there is no focus on how the Government will actually implement them. This Budget is one of lofty words and is anti-poor in character. I would describe it as a super-flop Budget. It can be termed a pro-rich Budget. This Budget is far removed from ground realities. For four years, the Government has done nothing, and I would describe this final Budget of the Government before the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections as nothing more than a paper exercise. This is a Budget that reflects complete surrender. The Government itself has admitted in this Budget that it has failed to resolve key issues facing the economy. Therefore, I would call this

Budget a disappointing one for the people of the country. This Budget provides no relief to the middle class, the farming community, the youth or the poor of the country. This Budget of the BJP Government is a roadmap for economic ruin.

In this Budget, the Government should have made efforts to expedite the work of laying the Ajmer–Kota and Ajmer–Sawai Madhopur railway lines, which were announced by the previous Congress Government, for my constituency of Ajmer. However, the Government does not appear to be serious in this regard. In my constituency, the Kishangarh Airport has already been constructed, but the Government does not seem serious about when it will be opened for public use.

I oppose this Budget and describe it as yet another attempt to sell false dreams. It is a Budget whose implementation on the ground appears highly unlikely.

[English]

***ADV. JOICE GEORGE (IDUKKI):** There are big announcement for rural development, Universal Health Care, Minimum Support Price for Agricultural produces on a detail analysis of the budget document I feel disappointed. It is the promise of the ruling dispensation to ensure 50% profit above the cost of production of all agricultural crops through Minimum Support Price (MSP). This assurance was there in previous year's budget but nothing happened on the ground to alleviate the miseries and hardship of the poor farmers of the Nation. The farmers have always been at the receiving end and some of the unfortunate were resorted to end their lives. The farmers who committed suicide can't be blamed as they could not make both ends meet due to the fall of prices, low productivity attributed to many reasons including climate change and the Government and other agencies responsible for ensure the welfare of the farmers kept a blind eye. In present year's announcement of MSP, the Hon. Finance Minister has not divulged the formula and other details for fixing the MSP. There is no mention as regards the mechanism for procurement of agricultural produces at MSP or to provide the MSP through an automate mechanism. The FM did not mention anything about the

*Speech was laid on the Table

fixation of MSP for the cash crops and other agricultural produces governed by the commodity boards Acts like Rubber Board Act, Spices Board Act and Tea Board Act. It is the long pending demand of the Natural Rubber produces and growers of other cash crops to ensure MSP of 50% profit above the cost of production, but the Hon. FM did not even mention about Rubber, Tea, Coffee, and Cardamom in his speech. I urge upon the Government to fix the MSP of 50% profit above the cost of production of all cash crops like Rubber, Cardamom, Coffee and Tea. It is desperate to see that that allocation to the Commodity Boards especially the Rubber Board and Spices Board is being reduced year by year during the last 3 years. The allocation to the Spices Board is Rs.80 Crore against the Revised Estimate of Rs. 97.10 Crore of the current fiscal year. The Rubber Board has allotted only Rs.146.62 Crore against the R.E. of Rs.183 Crore of the current year. This is the case of all other commodity Boards. The Government has been neglecting the Commodity Boards without even reconstituting the same and appointing full time Chairmen.

Though the Finance Minister was vociferous in ensuring rural development but there was no sufficient allocation for implementing the core of the core schemes like MGNREG umbrella schemes for the development of SC/ST and Minorities and other vulnerable groups. The core schemes have also been hit by the

lesser allocation compared to the revised estimate of 2017-18. For Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), there is an allocation of 27505 crore against the Revised estimate of Rs. 29043 crore of the current fiscal year. For the Prathan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), the Government could not utilized the funds ear marked for the year 2017-18 and decrease in the expenditure would suggest that the declaration an claims of the Government has not been translated into action on ground. The allocation to the Swatch Bharat Mission to the tune of Rs.17843 crore against the revised estimate of 19248 crore of the current year is exposing the faulty claim of the Government in implementing there flag ship programmes. If the Government is really committed to ensure the development of the rural population, there should be sufficient allocations and a mechanism to implement the project in a time bound manner, but unfortunately these 2 aspects has not been taken care of. Apart from this there is regional and State wise disparity in utilizing the funds provided for establishing the rural infrastructure. For example in the case of PMGSY, the State of Kerala has been allotted 540 kilometres of rural roads for the last 4 years where as the other States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and other poll bond were given more allocation. The State of Kerala has been allotted less 350 km of roads under the PMGSY scheme since its introduction.

Hence I urge upon the Government to allocate more roads under the PMGSY schemes to the State of Kerala.

The Finance Minister had spent only 3 minutes to read the Railway budget, I am aggrieved of the lesser allocations for the development of Railways in Kerala. I am representing a constituency where no railway facility is available. Though the Angamaly Sabari Railway Rail Project has been sanctioned and commenced the work 19 years before, the railway could complete only 7 kilometres of railway line out of 116 kilometres length. After settling the dispute on cost sharing the Government of Kerala and Railway has entered into an agreement and a joint venture company has been incorporated. In the current year's budget, 219.9 crore is allotted for the project. Hon. Prime Minister included the project in PRAGATI. During the 16th PRAGATI interaction on 16th October 2016, the Hon. Prime Minister agreed to complete the project with full Union Government fund. The Hon. Railway Minister also agreed for the same during the discussion with the Chief Minister of Kerala. The railway has not approved the revised estimate and is not taking steps to precede the work due to the ambiguity in cost sharing. Hence the intervention of the Government is requested.

Most of the flagship programmes of the Government meant for women and children are been implemented through the Asha Workers and Anganwadi teachers. Though the Government is

retreating their commitments to ensure the welfare of the women folk in India, these poor Asha Workers and Anganwadi teachers have been paid meagre amount as remuneration for their valuable work which rendering them to abject poverty. If you are aiming to improve the living standards of the women in rural areas through the programmes and schemes announced in this budget, it is imperative to give adequate remuneration to the Asha Workers and Anganwadi teachers. Hence I urge upon the Government to increase the remuneration to them.

Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) has a greater attention in recent days in Kerala due to the straying of wild animals in the crop fields and human casualties due to carnivores. Crop damage by wild animals is one of the major problem faced by the marginal farmers in Kerala. Wild pig, Asian Elephant, Indian Porcupine and Sambar were the major crop raiders recorded in the homesteads and plantations. Places like Chinnakkanal, Bisonvalley, Marayoor, Kuttampuzha, Mankulam etc in my constituency are gripped by elephant attacks with human causalities too. Hence I urge upon the Government to conduct carrying capacity studies and contain wildlife below carrying capacity and excess must be culled out. The legal protection of wildlife shall be strictly restricted to the forest only. The crop as well as human life should be ensured and adequate

compensation should be given to the victims on time. Fatal accident scheme should be given to the victims.

I also urge upon the Government to sanction a New Kendriya Vidyalaya at Thodupuzha in Idukki district. The Government may establish a New Medical College at Muvattupuzha in furtherance of the budget declaration, a Government Medical College at least in 3 Parliamentary Constituencies.

[Translation]

***SHRI JANARDAN MISHRA (REWA):** Prior to the year 2014, during the tenure of the UPA Government, corruption was at its peak. Scams involving lakhs of crores of rupees constantly occupied the minds of every citizen across the country. There was an atmosphere of despair in the nation. While the youth of the country had a resolve to lead an honest life, this resolve was being obscured by the ever-emerging dark stories of corruption under the UPA regime.

The Government led by Shri Narendra Modi has become the support that transformed despair into hope and enabled the nation to live by ideals. In the Budget speech, honesty has become our highest priority. This single assertion has brought about a 180-degree change in the way the world views India.

Owing to structural reforms in the system, encouraging changes are being witnessed in the country's GDP growth rate. By the middle of this year, there is a strong possibility that it will increase from 7.2 to 7.5 per cent. This is an indication that the country is moving forward and will continue to progress.

For decades, every farmer in this country has been demanding that the price of his crop should be at least 50 per cent higher than

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*Speech was laid on the Table

the cost of production. This demand has now received a principled recognition in the Budget. With the decision to procure all agricultural produce at MSP, it has been ensured that farmers' income will be doubled by the year 2022. As a result, the entire mechanism of negative propaganda being spread by the Opposition has been completely dismantled.

The Budget speech has mentioned all measures to prevent losses of agricultural produce after harvest, which reflects the Government's strong resolve. The decision to develop the existing 22,000 rural haats as agricultural markets will eliminate the constraints faced by small and marginal farmers. For this purpose, a permanent Agricultural Market Infrastructure Fund of Rs. 2,000 crore is being established. This is not merely a fund; for small farmers, this arrangement is akin to a nectar-filled vessel.

When the Opposition mocks the Government for setting 2022 as the target year to resolve the problems of every distressed section of society, claiming that the Government will last only till 2019, they forget that the year 2022 marks the completion of 75 years of the country's Independence. Alleviating the sufferings of every poor person and resolving their hardships is a resolve of the Prime Minister to realise the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi and to lay them at his feet.

The soul of Mahatma Gandhi, watching this resolve from above, is blessing the Government led by Shri Narendra Modi to continue working relentlessly till 2024.

Looking at the actions of the Congress over 60 years, no poor person would ever have dreamt of sleeping under a permanent roof. Even if the poor did not dare to dream, this Government has astonished them by providing pucca houses to 51 lakh poor people living in deplorable conditions in rural areas. This year as well, the resolve to provide houses to another 51 lakh poor people will be fulfilled with the blessings and prayers of the poor. The urban poor too are pleasantly surprised on receiving 37 lakh houses.

No one would ever have imagined that any Government would spend Rs. 14.34 lakh crore to transform the face of villages for the reconstruction of rural India. Yet, the Government led by Shri Narendra Modi is determined to fulfil every dream of the poor. When the price of stents, which were earlier sold for lakhs of rupees, was fixed at around Rs. 40,000, people could hardly believe it. When medicines costing hundreds of rupees became available for Rs. 5 or Rs. 10 at Jan Aushadhi Kendras, the country realised that the Congress Government had been subservient to pharmaceutical companies. The direct reason for accepting such subservience was to decorate their coffers with bundles of currency notes.

A patient suffering from a serious illness, who earlier did not even dare to look towards hospitals capable of curing his disease because of the estimated expenditure involved, has now found the courage to revive his life on the strength of the Rs. 5 lakh assistance provided under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme. Those who raise doubts and objections about this scheme, which gives a new lease of life to the poor, do not understand the sense of hope and excitement it generates among them. They fail to understand it because, for them, Rs. 5 lakh is like dust on the hand. Such dust is amassed through dark deeds, which the Congress Government never considered objectionable.

Under previous Governments, cleanliness was never a priority, because their tainted hands could be easily washed with Dettol. However, Narendra Modi, as a new embodiment of clean politics, has taken a resolve to run this campaign. By providing toilets to every poor household, this Government seeks to free the poor, especially women, from humiliation and indignity, and to prevent diseases at their very threshold.

Through the Gobardhan Scheme, a resolve has been taken to convert animal dung and solid waste into fertiliser, and through organic farming, to protect every citizen of the country from the harmful toxins present in agricultural produce, vegetables and fruits. The Mudra Scheme has opened new avenues of employment

for unemployed youth. Carrying this initiative forward, an allocation of Rs. 3 lakh crore has been made in this year's Budget to generate employment for women, the deprived and the poor, which will lead to the creation of 70 lakh informal jobs.

The announcement of Operation Greens in the Budget will act as a lifeline for vegetable-growing farmers. Tomatoes, onions and potatoes are perishable vegetables. Through this scheme, these vegetables can be prevented from being wasted. In our constituency, farmers produce onions in large quantities. Rewa district is emerging as a prominent onion-producing district in the country.

I have full confidence that in the coming years, industries relating to food processing for the preservation and commercial utilisation of vegetables will expand. This will generate employment in large numbers for farmers and unemployed youth, and farmers will receive the desired returns for their produce. Industries relating to milk and milk products will also be promoted through increased milk production. Through the Saubhagya Scheme, no household in the country will now remain without an electricity connection.

Rewa will also be connected under the UDAN Scheme. Owing to this extremely affordable scheme, the dream of air travel will be

fulfilled for the youth of the country as well as for young entrepreneurs and middle-class citizens of Rewa.

The AMRUT Scheme is aimed at providing relief to small towns from filth and inadequate civic facilities. Through this scheme, the people of Rewa city will also get relief from problems relating to supply of clean drinking water and sewerage.

Construction of the world's largest solar power plant of 750 megawatts has commenced in Rewa, for which I express my gratitude to the Union Government and the Government of Madhya Pradesh.

Four-lane roads connecting Rewa in all directions are under construction. The construction of the Rewa Super Speciality Hospital will also be completed soon. This hospital will provide treatment to patients suffering from serious illnesses from Rewa and the surrounding districts. On behalf of the 25 lakh people of Rewa, I express my gratitude to the Union Government and the State Government for this.

The demand of the people of Rewa for a direct train service from Rewa to Mumbai, and for a halt of the Kshipra Express at Dabhaura, is a long-standing one. The survey for a new railway line from Rewa to Mirzapur via Hanumana has already been completed, and only financial approval remains. Until about 20 years ago,

Rewa was a major centre of education, but the pain of having lagged behind in modern education is deeply felt by the people of Rewa. There is a pressing need for a modern educational institution here. I have full confidence that the Union Government will fulfil the above demands of the people of Rewa.

On behalf of the poor, the middle-class citizens, the business community and the youth of Rewa, I support this Budget.

***SHRI KRISHNA PRATAP (JAUNPUR):** This is a Budget in the interest of the common people. Through this Budget, the direction of the Government's economic policies for the coming year has been clearly outlined. This has been made possible in view of the existing serious challenges before the Government, under the able leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, and through the untiring efforts of the Hon. Finance Minister. I extend my heartfelt congratulations and thanks to the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister for presenting a progressive Budget. In this Budget, several schemes have been announced for the holistic development of the poor, farmers and people belonging to all sections of society, which is a commendable step. This Budget seeks to fulfil the aspirations relating to the health and wealth of all sections of the country.

The Government has emphasised addressing economic challenges and undertaking result-oriented and reformative measures while presenting details of the estimated income and expenditure for the coming year. It has underlined the need for transparency and integrity in the allocation of natural resources. For the Government, honesty across all departments of the country is paramount. Earlier, one would hear only reports of corruption, but

*Speech was laid on the Table

today this Government is working for the all-round development of all sections of society. It has taken notable steps towards adopting structural reforms in the economy. Through these structural changes and a higher rate of economic growth, benefits have been extended to farmers, the poor and other vulnerable sections of society. Our Hon. Prime Minister has consistently emphasised good governance and the concept of minimum government and maximum governance. Under this approach, several important reforms have been undertaken in rules, policies and procedures across Government agencies. Many effective schemes have been implemented for the general public, particularly for the poor. Electricity and gas connections have been provided to crores of households. More than 300,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras have been established, and over 800 medicines are being sold at affordable prices. Interest rates under housing schemes have been significantly reduced. Several schemes have been implemented with strictness to ensure that farmers receive a fair price for their produce. A plan has been proposed to launch Operation Greens on the lines of Operation Flood, which will encourage farmers to adopt comprehensive management practices and avail themselves of all necessary facilities. Farmers have made an important contribution to the country’s development by achieving record production of foodgrains, fruits and vegetables. In this Budget, the Government

has made substantial financial provisions for the welfare of farmers. Under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, all subsidies due to farmers are being transferred directly into their bank accounts. Several beneficial decisions have been taken in the interest of farmers. The welfare of the nation is possible only when farmers prosper. Keeping this in view, the Budget has made higher allocations than last year for agriculture and allied activities and for the creation of rural infrastructure to support livelihoods. To improve the quality of education, a district-wise strategy has been adopted, teachers are being trained, and amendments have been made to the Right to Education Act. The work of connecting all eligible habitations with all-weather road infrastructure has been largely completed. A comprehensive plan has been prepared to connect rural habitations with agricultural and rural markets, higher secondary schools and hospitals. To rid the country of corruption, the role of middlemen has been eliminated. For providing employment to the unemployed, the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana has been implemented. For the welfare and dignity of women, particularly Muslim women, whose issues were for decades bound by political calculations, decisive steps have been taken. A Bill relating to divorce has already been passed by the Lok Sabha. Once it becomes law, Muslim sisters and daughters will be able to live a life of dignity and without fear. To end discrimination

against daughters, the *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* scheme was launched and has been expanded from 161 districts to 640 districts across the country. The Government has also taken a major step by amending the maternity law, providing for 26 weeks of paid leave instead of 12 weeks. Political democracy cannot be sustained without social and economic democracy. A Government dedicated to the weaker sections, in keeping with this core spirit enshrined in the Constitution, is working to strengthen social justice and economic democracy and to make the lives of ordinary citizens easier. Toilets are being constructed to uphold women's dignity and social justice. Poor women have been given an opportunity to stand on par with more affluent women through the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. All of us are partners in the Swachh Bharat Mission. Today, our country is conveying a message of success to the world. Through Ayushman Bharat, we will build a New India, ensuring that all sections of society, especially the poor, become fully prosperous. To improve ease of doing business, 372 specific business reforms have been identified and implemented.

For the all-round development of my parliamentary constituency of Jaunpur, several proposals in public interest, pending with various departments of my Government, are still under consideration. I have brought these matters to the notice of the concerned authorities on several occasions through written

communications as well as in meetings with Hon. Ministers. There is a need to open a Kendriya Vidyalaya in Jaunpur to improve the quality of education, to connect all villages through link roads, and to resolve all problems faced by farmers. It is also essential to ensure transparency so that all Central and State welfare schemes meant for all sections of society, particularly the poor and farmers, reach the last person. In the field of health, an AIIMS-type hospital should be established in Jaunpur. Further, provisions should be made in the Budget 2018-2019 for a road overbridge at the railway station and for all pending railway-related proposals.

Once again, I express my gratitude to the Hon. Finance Minister and support the Budget for the year 2018-2019. Thank you.

SHRI PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA (ANANDPUR SAHIB): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to participate in the discussion on the General Budget. I believe that the Hon. Finance Minister has taken the challenges facing the country very seriously. One of the most startling challenges before the nation is that 73 per cent of the country's wealth has come to be concentrated in the hands of one per cent of the people. The rich have become richer, while the poor have become poorer. Yesterday, the facts placed before the House by the Hon. Prime Minister were also very striking, particularly that non-performing assets have amounted to Rs. 52 lakh crore. The third most striking aspect is that the fiscal deficit has been reduced from 6.6 per cent to 3.3 per cent, with the objective of bringing it down to zero. We also need to take note of the foreign forces that are attempting to destabilise the country. Challenges such as providing employment to all, housing for all and education for all have been kept in view. I would like to congratulate the Hon. Finance Minister for according priority to sectors that had been neglected for the last 65 years. The Budget speaks about farmers, villages and the poor.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is said, and rightly so, that the backbone of the country's economy is the farmer. It is also true that at the time of Independence, agriculture contributed about 52 per cent to the country's GDP, which has today come down to around

12 per cent, even though nearly 70 per cent of the population depends on agriculture. The Government has taken this matter seriously, and the steps taken by the Hon. Finance Minister in this direction are highly commendable. For a long time, the Akali Dal has been demanding that while fixing the MSP, farmers should be paid at least one and a half times the cost of production. I would like to congratulate the Hon. Finance Minister for assuring this in his Budget speech. However, I would like to state that there are certain apprehensions in this regard. Instead of the A2+FL formula, the C2 formula should be adopted. As suggested by Dr Ramesh Chand in respect of land rent, I would like to submit to the Hon. Finance Minister that at present only about 1.3 per cent land rent is being counted, whereas 100 per cent land rent should be included. Only then will the purpose of providing one and a half times the cost of production to farmers truly be fulfilled. While 22 crops are being covered under MSP, crops such as basmati, potatoes and onions should also be included. It is a very positive step that if traders or the Government procure grains or vegetables below the MSP, the difference will be compensated by the Union Government and the State Governments. These are indeed some revolutionary steps that have been taken.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I believe that a few more steps are required. Today, the country’s farmers are in distress. Farmers have

taken to the streets. In order to provide greater relief to farmers, a special session of Parliament should be convened for one month, and agricultural experts and Members of Parliament should rise above party considerations and place their respective suggestions. It is a hard truth that the leaders of the country and national parties have not treated the agrarian crisis as a crisis at all. By convening a special session, a broad and comprehensive agricultural policy should be formulated. The Government has introduced the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, which is a very good initiative. Such a scheme existed earlier as well, but it had several shortcomings. Earlier, the block was treated as the unit. In the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana introduced this time, the village has been made the unit. However, the Government of Punjab has not accepted it for two reasons. In cases where sowing does not take place, compensation is provided. In some cases, sowing takes place but the crop fails, and compensation is given. In States like Punjab, crops are sown by extracting groundwater and production also takes place, but compensation is not provided. We want the farmer, rather than the village, to be treated as the unit. Only then will the objective of the crop insurance scheme be fulfilled. A survey was conducted in Haryana, where the crop insurance scheme was handed over to a private company. Private companies earned a profit of Rs. 200 crore, while farmers received only Rs. 20 crore.

My suggestion is that the crop insurance scheme should be handled by a public sector company. Either the Union Government or the State Governments should establish corporations for this purpose. The amount saved, such as Rs. 200 crore, can be utilised for price stabilisation. The Hon. Finance Minister has very rightly stated that costs will be reduced. It is true that neem-coated urea has been introduced and urea manufacturing plants have been started under the Make in India initiative. The National Fertilizers Limited factory is located at Nangal.

The infrastructure already exists there and it should be expanded. To enhance productivity, costs must be reduced. Under the PMGSY, roads of 32 feet width are not provided. This needs to be improved and the width should be made 22 feet. GST on agricultural machinery should be exempted. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, houses have been provided to the poor, but in States like Punjab, where there are virtually no kutcha houses, people do not receive any benefit. I believe this provision should be amended. Gas connections have been provided to six crore people and electricity connections to four crore people. Under the Jan Dhan Yojana, 31 crore people have benefited. These are all commendable initiatives. Under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, the target has been increased from four crore to eight crore. However, I believe that at least Members of Parliament should be taken into confidence

while framing guidelines for banks, because the benefits have not been commensurate so far. LED lights have resulted in savings of Rs. 40,000 crore. Similarly, there should be an enquiry into CSR funds to ascertain how much and where CSR funds have been utilised across the country. I will conclude shortly. Punjab is a border State. Funds have been provided this time, but there is a need to provide more. Incentives are given to hill stations. In my area, both hilly and plain regions face similar problems. At least such areas should be given special facilities and incentives. The Ministry of External Affairs has rescued 90,000 NRIs, but there is a need to establish centres for them in several countries. Exports from Punjab take place more through sea routes and less through road routes. I demand that an Integrated Check Post should be established at Hussainiwala. A cargo centre should be set up at Mohali so that fruits and vegetables can be exported. One very important issue is that free langar is provided in our Gurudwaras. GST is levied on the items used for langar. The Hon. Finance Minister has stated that GST cannot be waived, but reimbursement is possible. I would request that this issue may be addressed accordingly.

[English]

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Whatever you are saying will not go on record.

...(Interruptions) *

* Not recorded.

[Translation]

***DR. SHRIKANT EKNATH SHINDE (KALYAN):** The Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, presented his fifth Budget and the last Budget of this Government in this House on 1 February. I would like to congratulate him.

This Budget is being described as one that provides relief to farmers, rural areas and the poor. However, how much of this is substantive and how much is mere sloganising will become clear only after closely examining the figures.

The Hon. Finance Minister has spoken about credit to farmers in the Budget. Last year, a provision of Rs. 10 lakh crore was made for this purpose. In the present Budget, this has been increased by 10 per cent, with a provision of Rs. 11 lakh crore. On paper, this increase appears commendable. However, if we look at last year's Outcome Budget, only 67 per cent of the loan disbursement target was achieved. In view of this, there is a doubt in the mind as to whether the provision made in this year's Budget will actually be able to meet the stated target.

Even today, nearly 25 per cent of agricultural credit is sourced through private moneylenders. Farmers are committing suicide due to indebtedness, primarily because it becomes almost impossible

* Speech was laid on the Table.

for them to escape the clutches of private moneylenders. In such a situation, it is essential to increase institutional credit, and for this, the targets set by the Government in the Budget must be achieved. However, this does not appear to be happening. The Government has repeatedly been speaking about doubling farmers' income by the year 2022. In this context, the Hon. Finance Minister has announced that from the next Kharif season, the Minimum Support Price will be fixed at 50 per cent above the cost of production. It has also been declared that this Government has already fulfilled its promise of providing MSP at more than 50 per cent above the cost of production for Rabi crops. I find it extremely surprising that if farmers are indeed receiving MSP at more than 50 per cent above the cost of production, why are they still being driven to commit suicide. More than 12,000 farmers end their lives every year, and this is not my figure. The Government itself has acknowledged this fact before the Supreme Court. The Swaminathan Commission had recommended that farmers should be given an MSP at least 50 per cent above the cost of production. The BJP had made this an election issue and had also promised this to farmers in its election manifesto. However, in February 2015, the Union Government denied this position before the Supreme Court. What has changed now in the Government's thinking is known only to the Hon. Finance Minister. Now that the Hon. Finance Minister has made

this statement through the Budget, the question that arises is how the cost of production will be determined. The Swaminathan Commission had recommended a weighted average and had suggested the C2 plus 50 per cent formula. This is also the demand of farmers across the country. However, the Hon. Finance Minister has not even mentioned the Swaminathan Commission in his Budget speech. If the Government is truly serious about providing MSP at 50 per cent above the cost of production, will it accept the formula recommended by the Swaminathan Commission? This is not clear from the Budget. The Hon. Finance Minister has made no mention of this in the Budget documents. No specific provision has been made in this regard. The claim made by the Hon. Finance Minister of providing MSP at cost plus 50 per cent for Rabi crops is based on the A2 plus FL plus 50 per cent formula. This formula was also used by the UPA Government while fixing MSP. There is nothing new in this. There is no reason for this Government to pat itself on the back on this account.

The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, which began in 2016-17 with a coverage of 30 per cent, had an allocation of Rs. 13,240 crore at that time. In 2018-19, the objective is to increase the coverage to 50 per cent, but the provision made for this purpose is only Rs. 13,000 crore. In view of this, the question arises in everyone’s mind as to whether the Government is truly serious

about bringing about a change on the ground, or whether it is interested only in making grand announcements.

Our declining investment in the health sector is a matter of serious concern. I have consistently been demanding an increase in public investment in the health sector. India's investment in health, as a percentage of GDP, is very low. Even if we take public and private investment together, less than 4 per cent of GDP is being spent on the health sector, while the share of the public sector is less than 1.5 per cent. Under the National Health Policy, 2017, a target has been set to increase this share to 2.5 per cent by the year 2025. However, there is no reflection of this commitment in the present Budget. Increasing investment in the health sector implies creating health infrastructure and manpower on a large scale. What provisions have been made in the Budget in this regard? The Hon. Finance Minister has spoken about setting up 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres across the country, but this announcement is not new. In the current financial year, the Government's target is to upgrade 4,000 sub-centres and primary health centres into Health and Wellness Centres. Under this initiative, proposals for 3,871 Health and Wellness Centres have already been approved.

This year, merely increasing figures has been attempted, but there is no mention of how much money will be required for this purpose, how many Wellness Centres will be started in the current

financial year, what provision has been made for them, or what the timeline is for setting up one and a half lakh centres. There is no reference to this either in the Finance Minister's speech or in the Budget documents. The same applies to the National Health Insurance Scheme. The Hon. Finance Minister has announced a modified version of the scheme, providing insurance cover for treatment up to Rs. 5 lakh. This announcement is also not new. In the Budget of 2016, the Hon. Finance Minister had announced insurance cover up to Rs. 1 lakh, but that scheme was never implemented. In last year's Budget, there was not even a mention of it. Now, under the new scheme, 10 crore families are to be covered. When the Government could not provide a mediclaim cover of Rs. 1 lakh, how will it provide a cover of Rs. 5 lakh? From where will the funds come? By when will this scheme be implemented? There is no mention of any of this in the Budget. For the Rs. 1 lakh mediclaim scheme, a provision of Rs. 15,000 crore had been made in the Budget, whereas for the new scheme, only Rs. 2,000 crore has been provided. No timeline has been fixed for this scheme either. After the Budget, the Government will begin consultations with the States, after which the framework will be finalised and further procedures will follow. All this will take considerable time. In my assessment, the Government will launch this scheme just before the next elections, and the responsibility of

its implementation may well fall upon the next Government. This raises serious doubts about the Government's intent.

The NITI Aayog states that this scheme would require an allocation of about Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 12,000 crore. However, according to the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, a think tank under the Ministry of Finance, this scheme would require nearly Rs. 1 lakh crore annually. Yet, the Hon. Finance Minister has provided only Rs. 2,000 crore in the Budget. The question, therefore, is whose estimate should be considered correct. This think tank includes members from the Ministry of Finance and the Reserve Bank of India, and eminent economists such as Shri Vijay Kelkar serve as its Chairperson. The report of the think tank also states that the autonomy given to States in matters of health insurance would be taken away under this scheme. This is a serious concern. Another important issue is who will ultimately benefit from this scheme. The Government will spend public money on insurance premiums, which will come from the pockets of the people. This money will go not only to public sector insurance companies but also to private companies, and eventually to private hospitals. In effect, money collected from the public will be transferred into the pockets of private hospitals. Does this mean that the Government, under the garb of this scheme, is promoting privatisation of the health-care system? The NITI Aayog has

already initiated steps towards privatisation of health care, including proposals to lease out parts of district hospitals to private hospitals for 30 years and to provide Government land for setting up hospitals with 50 to 100 beds in cities. Some people are comparing this so-called ModiCare with Obamacare in the United States. However, public health care in the United States is almost non-existent, whereas India does not face such a situation. Instead of strengthening the public health-care system, diverting public funds to the private sector through this scheme would be inappropriate. In my view, it is imperative for the Government to invest in the public sector under the National Health Policy. In the previous Budget, the Hon. Finance Minister had spoken about increasing postgraduate medical seats by 5,000 every year. The Outcome Budget for 2017-18 states that 5,800 seats were created. However, in the Budget for 2018-19, only Rs. 452 crore has been provided for this purpose, and the Outcome Budget for 2018-19 mentions a target of only 1,058 seats. Why has such a low target been set for 2018-19? At present, the doctor-patient ratio in India is 1:2000, whereas the World Health Organization norm is 1:1000. This means that we need to double the number of doctors in the country. For this, a time-bound programme is required, but this has been completely ignored in the present Budget. Since last year’s Budget, the Government has been stating that district hospitals will

be upgraded and medical colleges will be started there. Last year, an allocation of Rs. 3,300 crore was made for this purpose, but this year it has been reduced to Rs. 2,887 crore. The Hon. Finance Minister has spoken about upgrading 24 district hospitals to start medical colleges. However, it is surprising that there is no mention in the Outcome Budget for 2017-18 of how many medical colleges were actually started, nor has any target been set in the Outcome Budget for 2018-19. Therefore, it is natural to fear that, like many other announcements, this too will remain only on paper. The allocation under the National Health Mission has also been reduced this year. Regretfully, it appears that we are moving in the opposite direction in matters relating to health. We have been hearing since childhood that health is wealth, but perhaps this Government does not believe in that principle. Even in the case of the Railways, nearly 80 lakh passengers who travel daily by Mumbai suburban local trains have been subjected to injustice. Travelling by Mumbai local trains has become akin to fighting on the border. When a person leaves home for work in the morning, family members are uncertain whether he will return alive in the evening. On an average, about 15 people lose their lives every day due to falling from moving trains, being hit by trains, getting trapped between trains and platforms while boarding, stampedes on overcrowded footbridges, and several other such reasons.

Recently, a stampede occurred on the foot overbridge at Elphinstone Road station in Mumbai, resulting in the death of 24 people. Following the incident, the Hon. Minister of Railways himself visited the site. Such incidents have generated considerable anger among the public. After this tragedy, the Railways conducted a survey of suburban stations and announced the construction of several foot overbridges. In the Budget, the estimated cost for new foot overbridges is Rs. 450 crore, but the actual provision made is only Rs. 82 crore. This has been the experience of Mumbai suburban commuters for years. Under MUTP-I and MUTP-II, several projects have been under implementation for many years. However, due to the lack of full budgetary support at any point of time, these works have continued for the last 10 to 15 years. This year, an allocation of Rs. 700 crore has been made by combining both these phases, for which I am grateful to the Hon. Finance Minister. However, considering the requirements of the Mumbai suburban railway system, this allocation is far from adequate. At this pace, it will take several more years to complete the works. Under MUTP-III(A), the Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation has submitted proposals amounting to about Rs. 55,000 crore for Budgetary consideration. Among these, the most important proposal relates to the introduction of the Communication-Based Train Control system.

This system will double the frequency of local trains. Where 15 trains currently run in an hour, 30 trains will be able to operate. This project needs to be taken up on a war footing. However, how much provision has been made in the Budget for the entire MUTP-III(A)? Merely Rs. 1 crore. Hon. Finance Minister, if you are unable to provide reassurance to Mumbai suburban commuters, then at least do not rub salt into their wounds. Women's safety on the suburban railway has become a very serious issue. There is frequent discussion about installing CCTV cameras in local trains. It was somewhat reassuring to see that this proposal has found mention in the Budget. However, for installing CCTV cameras in 10,349 coaches, the provision made by the Hon. Finance Minister is only Rs. 1,000. This clearly indicates that while the work is intended to be done, it has not been accorded any real priority. I could list many such issues. Serious questions are also being raised regarding the safety of coaches. Recently, within a span of just 15 days, fires broke out in two local trains. By the grace of God, no lives were lost.

However, on the suburban railway, several coaches have already exceeded their expiry period. On the other hand, the CAG, in its 2016 report, clearly stated that out of 373 new coaches procured for zonal railways, 150 coaches were not put into service at all. As many as 168 coaches were inducted into service after

considerable delay, and 35 coaches were brought into service without the permission of the Chief Commissioner of Railway Safety. This resulted in a loss of Rs. 736 crore to the Railways, apart from a loss of revenue amounting to Rs. 80 crore, and amounted to a serious compromise with passenger safety.

Provision of Rs. 900 crore has been shown on paper by the Hon. Finance Minister for passenger amenities. However, out of this, Rs. 700 crore pertains to the Railways' share for station redevelopment, which will come from extra-budgetary resources. This means that, in reality, only Rs. 200 crore has been provided for passenger amenities. This maze of figures can be described as the biggest feature of this year's Budget.

With regard to personal income tax, the Hon. Finance Minister has stated that a five per cent tax rate does not exist anywhere else in the world. I agree with this. However, there was a demand to increase the exemption slab, which currently stands at Rs. 2.5 lakh. The Hon. Finance Minister would recall that when he himself was in the Opposition, he had demanded that this slab be raised to Rs. 5 lakh. He has now had four years in office, yet the slab has not been increased. As a result, whether it is farmers, the middle class, railway passengers or the health sector, there is no area where any structural change can be seen through this Budget. My humble request to the Hon. Finance Minister is that concrete steps should

be taken to increase Government investment in the health sector. Private health care is not affordable for our citizens. Strengthening the public health-care system is the only viable solution. I also request that much greater provision be made to address the problems of the Mumbai suburban railway.

Thank you.

[English]

***SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA):** Many of our Hon. Members have made great speeches on the annual Budget 2018-19. While the treasury benches are hailing it as the greatest budget in the history of independent India, there are so many criticisms on the budget within and outside this August House. A quick glance on the highlights of the budget will reveal that it is not a pro- poor budget, rather the one which is beneficial to the corporate houses.

Anyway I am not going to focus on all these issues as it has been discussed a lot. So far there is no serious discussion on the annual budget 2018-19 in respect of the SC/ST population in India. Hence I would like to highlight few points regarding the Scheduled Caste Component and Scheduled Tribe Component in the budget.

According to the Census 2011, there are 16. 6% belongs to SC and 8. 6% belongs to ST in India. Allocation under Scheduled Caste Component and Scheduled Tribe Component should be in proportion to the population.

Dalits and Adivasis are communities who are subjected to historical marginalisation resulting in denial of their due share in economic resources, developmental benefits and basic entitlements

* Speech was laid on the Table.

necessary for a decent living. Caste based discrimination, ethnicity, social exclusion perpetuated by the upper class as a result of which they fare the poorest on all socio- economic indicators vis-a-vis structural impediments. They find it difficult in accessing developmental benefits.

Our Hon. Prime Minister and the present bunch of Hon. Members from ruling party always find fascination in criticising our first Prime Minister and the person who laid a strong base for modern India, Jawaharlal Nehru and the Iron Lady who has started revolutionary schemes for the development of SC/ST. But please note that it is they who have drawn up the schemes for the development of the SC/ST to bring them to the mainstream considering the inadequacies of that time. The ideas and aspirations of Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar for the development of Dalits and Adivasis were taken by them and put it into practice in the form of schemes.

As a step towards addressing the increasing inequalities between SC/ST and other dominant class, Shrimati Indira Gandhi during the fifth Five Year Plan (1974-75) introduced the policy of Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) and Special Component Plan (SCP) in the Sixth Five Year Plan (1979-80). SCSP/ TSP has been formulated as a mechanism for allocating development plan fund for SCs and STs across Central Ministries and all departments in the State in

proportion to the SC/ST population. Allocations under these plans were mandated to be in proportion to the population.

As the present NDA Government finds it as a fashion to change the name of the schemes or changing the style and not the content. In the FY 2017-18, the Government merged the Plan and Non-Plan components of the Budget. Further the SCSP- TSP was renamed as Schemes for the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Schemes for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes respectively.

How much allotment for the SCC and STC was made in 2018-19 budget? Annual Budget 2018-19 allocated 6.55% towards welfare of SCs from the total eligible Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Central Sector Scheme. This is 10.50% short of approximately 16.6% of SC population in the country, to maintain proportionate allocation.

Union Budget 2018-19 allocated 4.53% towards Welfare of STs from the total eligible Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Central Sector Schemes. This is 4.07% short of approximately 8.6% in terms of ST population, to maintain proportionate allocation. The Government is yet to issue guidelines towards allocation of proportionate resources towards the development of SCs and STs in the changed scenario.

Only 31 out of 279 schemes meant for SCs and 52 out of 305 schemes of ST are appropriate, accessible and available directly to Dalits and Adivasis. Due to paucity of time, I am not venturing into its details.

None of the schemes meant for SCs and STs have inbuilt accountability mechanisms making accessibility difficult. Only 23 new appropriate schemes introduced for SCs and STs. 8 of the important schemes for SC/ STs are severely underfunded. A total of Rs.2700 crore is being allocated under STC for Ministry of Road Transport and Highways which is totally inappropriate. Is it going to benefit only SC/ ST? How many of them have vehicles to run in these NH. This is a farce in the name of Dalits and Adivasis.

There are 14 schemes with allocation amounting to Rs.8002. 65 Crore are obsolete and notional schemes. The notional schemes are only in paper. It never reaches the targeted population. It is not directly benefiting to the Dalits and Adivasis. Many of the schemes are not directing towards SCs to take them out of poverty line or reduce the gap between and other communities. It is also seen that schemes developed by many ministries and departments are more in the nature of welfare and not oriented towards economic mobility, skill development, land purchase, employment or enterprise development which would directly enhance the living standards of the SCs.

The total Budget Estimate for 2018-19 is Rs.24,42,213. 30 cr, out of that the total outlay for eligible Centrally Sponsored and Central Sector Schemes amounts to Rs.8,63,944 cr. For SC and ST, the due allocation amount to Rs.1,43,414.74 Cr and Rs. 74,299.20 Cr respectively. The allocation, however, for SCC and STC is Rs. 56,619 Cr and Rs. 39,135 Cr respectively. Examining this further, the targeted schemes under SCC amounts to only Rs. 28,697.74 Cr and under STC amounts to Rs. 19,623 cr. The total gap in schemes for SC is Rs.1,14,717 Cr and for ST is Rs.54676 cr. This amounts to a sizeable proportion, for which schemes have to be innovated that is relevant for bridging the gap between SC/ST and others.

The outcome and output framework is an important way of analysing the budget from the SC and ST perspective. Budget outcome means a set of impacts that a budgetary allocation has on the wider society or economy. Budget outputs, on the other hand, are the number of people who have been able to access public entitlements through a particular scheme or programme.

Most of the time, the Budget analysts pay more attention to Budget inputs and nature of allocations and output and outcome analysis doesn't receive the attention it deserves. One of the main reasons behind ignoring output and outcome results in the Budget

analysis is that there has been very less transparency in the way in which schemes are designed and planned at the policy level.

As a result, there is less importance given at the final outcome and output of any particular given scheme. At the same time, there is also less understanding about the difference between "outcome" and "output" within the budget technicality. Keeping this in mind, NCDHR have analysed the outcomes and outputs of 233 schemes implemented by 26 different Ministries and Departments under the SCC and 273 schemes under the 32 Ministries and Departments under the STC for FY 2017-18. It is striking that except for 33 schemes implemented under the SCC rest of the 206 schemes don't take into account any of the priorities or needs of SC community at the planning and the outcome level. Similarly, 227 schemes out of 273 schemes implemented under the STC don't even mention ST communities in their outcome document.

Secondly, there is more focus on the output part as compared to overall outcome which means schemes are mostly designed to achieve quantitative targets and overlook the development gaps arising from social inequalities based on caste discrimination and geographical isolation of SC and ST communities respectively.

Under Education Schemes the budget 2018-19, has allocated Rs.3000 Cr under SCC and Rs.1586 Cr under STC towards Post

Metric Scholarship scheme for SCs and STs. This is a key scheme to ensure access to education by the students from the community.

In response to questions raised by MPs in the recent session of the Parliament more than Rs.8000 Cr were outstanding in all states due to inadequacy of funds. 51,03243 SC and 20,33,741 ST student across the country are facing many difficulties and challenges due to pending/ outstanding fund of more than Rs.8000 cr and Rs.3156 cr to SC and ST students by the Union Government to the State Governments over last three consecutive years. Resulting in discontent among students, increasing drop outs and many are even debarred from private institutions. Hence, I strongly urge the Government to enhance the funds to clear all the outstanding bills and to cater to the needs of this fiscal year.

Similarly, in LAND RELATED SCHEMES, the official data shows that SCs are landless or marginal landholders and the trend continues even today. According to NSSO data for 2009-10, 92.1% of SCs in rural areas are landless or own landholding of one hectare or less followed by 76.5% ST households. This has forced SCs into casual and agricultural or non- agricultural labours, constituting according to NSSO (2012) data, 59% amongst SCs and 46.5% amongst STs.

According to the Economic Survey 2018-19, there was a substantial increase in the number of women performing various roles in the agricultural sector alluding to a 'feminisation of agriculture'. Keeping these recommendations in mind, the budget should have made adequately to ensure enhanced access to resources. Unfortunately, the budget fails to mention and acknowledge the realities of SC-ST women agriculture labourers and landowners.

Allocation in the year 2018-19, towards land related schemes amount to Rs.415.17 Cr under SCC and Rs.250.10 Cr under STC. All these schemes are silent on ownership patterns and needs of SC-ST agricultural labour and are non- direct in nature.

The centuries old manual scavenging is another grave area which was forgetted in the Budget to address sufficiently. Those engaged in manual scavenging are given one time compensation, with little to no efforts being made towards ensuring access to decent livelihoods by those engaged in manual scavenging. Rs. 20 Cr were allocated in the Union Budget 2018-19 towards the rehabilitation of manual scavengers. The allocation under the National Safai Karamchari Finance Development Corporation has been reduced from Rs.45 Crs to 30 Crs. This is hardly sufficient to achieve the objective of abolition of manual scavenging in this country. Is this empowering Dalits? How far they have to wait for

the mercy of Government? Or shall they continue to carry the SHIT on their shoulders? This is atrocities.

Atrocities/ Crime against SCs have increased by 5. 5% in 2016 (40,801) over 2015 (38,670). Atrocities/ Crime against STs have increased by 4. 7% in 2016 (6,568) over 2015 (6,276). Robustly, enforce and implement the amended SCs and STs (PoA) Act 1989 and Rules 1995 with sufficient budget/ funds for establishing mandatory Exclusive Special Courts with proper infrastructure, sufficient human resource and Special Public Prosecutors in 445 districts, where exclusive special courts are not established. Out of 640 districts, 2011 census, only 195 exclusive special courts have been established in 14 States. For the establishment of special courts allotment are required.

The NCDHR's Union Budget analysis reveals that 'gender sensitive' nature of Economic Survey did not translate into budgetary allocations for Women with miniscule amounts for SC and ST women. Allocations under GBS constitutes 4. 99% of the total Budget Expenditure, while those for SC and ST women forms only 1. 03% of the total Gender Budget Statement (henceforth GBS) 14 which amounts to Rs. 121961. 32 cr. Specific allocations for SC and ST women, under MSJE 15 and MoTA respectively, amounts to 0. 53% and 0. 49% of the GBS respectively. While

allocation towards welfare of ST women saw an increase of 0. 04%, those towards SC remained the same.

The Budget analysis show that there is an increased gap in allocation for SCC and STC of Rs. 1,06,831 Cr. from 2017-18 to Rs. 1,69,393 Cr. in 2018-19.

Out of the allocated amount for SCC and STC only Rs. 48,321 Cr are targeted schemes, the rest Rs. 47,432 Cr have no relevance nor are accessible by the community for its development.

The special components for SCs and STs have been visionary but the purpose remains defeated due to gross under allocations, notional and general allocations along with unspent amount.

Post-merger of Plan and Non- Plan and restructuring of schemes the planning and allocations for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes development has totally been neglected. In the absence of clear guidelines, accountable mechanisms and participation of SC and ST communities in the scheme design, planning the objectives of SCC and STC are in a situation to be defeated.

Some urgent actions are required to resolve the problem arise out of merger of Plan and non-plan component. The policy of allocation of funds is hanging loose post- merger of Plan- Non

Plan. This must be legislated and machinery should be established not only to bridging the gap but for ensuring financial inclusion.

The newly MIS systems for SCC and STC shows that there is a huge unspent balances of Rs. 20478. 62 Cr under SCC and Rs. 7131. 28 Cr under STC. In order to tide over this situation I request Government to set up a non- lapsable pool of SCC and STC funds must be created. This unspent money must be deposited and plan must be designed to implement new schemes, which will be directly beneficial for SC and ST population.

Immediate steps need to be taken by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Ministry of Tribal Affairs, which are the nodal Ministries for implementation of SCC and STC respectively to ensure that all the required Ministries, allocate and implement stipulated percentage of funds in the component schemes. Strict measures must be taken against the defaulting Ministries and Departments.

Many Departments and Ministries have made notional allocations without exclusive schemes benefitting the SCs and STs. The general schemes should revise their guidelines for creating special provisions and tailor made projects for the development of SCs and STs.

An independent authority/ commission chaired by the Cabinet Secretary/ Chief Secretary should be created for the progression of SC and STs with necessary administrative, executive and accountability mechanisms to monitor SCC and STC up to the district level. Otherwise, the funds will not reach the beneficiary.

As our great visionary leader Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar ji has pointed out, education is the key to the progress of the Dalits and Adivasis. It is possible only through budget support from Union Government. There is a huge deficit of funds for Post Metric Scholarship amounting to more than Rs. 8000 Cr for SC's and Rs. 3000 Cr for ST's, even though was due, due to under- allocation of funds, should be immediately allocated and deficit be cleared for lakhs of SC and ST students.

Further, I urge upon Government to take action to set up Special Courts for speedy trial of castes related to Dalit and Adivasi community. Increased compensation amount to be given to victims of case and ethnicity based atrocities.

***DR. HEENA VIJAYKUMAR GAVIT (NANDURBAR):** India is one of the few countries where the Government's annual Budget is the equivalent of a national event, and this is not without reason! It is a large democracy with an absolutely free- political system, unlike many developing country peers; this makes its Budget one of the easiest policy tools to get passed through. With India now featuring amongst the eight economies worldwide that have a $2 trillion plus nominal GDP, its budget has implications for the global economy as well.

This Budget's tone was reasonably populist and for good reason too! India's Finance Minister recommended better minimum support prices (MSP) for certain agri- produce, apart from strengthening crop insurance. Non- agriculture rural occupations like fisheries and animal husbandry also received incentives. A mass-scale health insurance scheme was announced for the poor, covering up to Rs. 0.5 million. Gas connections were to be given to poor women. Socially- backward communities were allocated outlays in education, etc. Roads and highways would see a continued push, as would irrigation. It also hiked the custom- duty on gold and silver and certain manufactured products, lowered the corporate tax- rate on smaller companies, amongst other steps.

*Speech was laid on the Table.

Most of these initiatives have impact on the poor as well as the rural. This move sorely needed, both economically and politically.

These two segments have been largely left out of India's two-decade- old economic story, which has been relatively skewed towards certain educated demographics in urban clusters. In a country where income inequality has grown with GDP since the 1990s economic reforms, swathes of population have been left behind. A Credit Suisse report said the Top-1% in India control nearly 60% of its wealth, up from 36% in 2000. Demonetisation highlighted further how income inequality and the imperative to make the growth story more inclusive have become political economy challenges. Indians have votes, but not all have incomes, jobs and opportunities; and the two cannot be long left apart! As impatience increasingly overpowers aspiration amongst these segments of the populace, there was a need to incentivize them.

Better MSPs and crop insurance would help protect rural incomes, while incentivizing non- agriculture occupations would help diversify rural incomes. Better rural incomes would benefit all those businesses who sell to rural consumers. Moreover, a shift in India's agriculture output mix from food- grains to horticulture can hit the demand- supply equation for key grains, which is typically consumed more in rural lifestyles. All in all, while an improvement in rural incomes was needed, there was a need to ensure it does not

entirely flow for consumption, but some of it also flows into saving and investment. That would protect their future purchasing power as well, and not just current consumption. India needs more incentives to expand retail financial services and microfinance networks across all rural districts that can mobilize this investment. While financial inclusion has been a policy of the Government, it should have received more emphasis in the Budget to complement its push towards rural incomes.

Health insurance and gas connections should help improve the overall health and well- being of people, and help improve productivity. Access to education to socially deprived sections should help add to the workforce. The Budget's continued focus to invest in infrastructure like roads and highways, as well as irrigation, should help in job- creation to some extent.

The Budget gave a corporate tax incentive for smaller companies, which expands their retained earnings and their ability to invest more into future hiring.

- 22,000 rural haats to be developed and upgraded into Gramin Agricultural Markets to protect the interests of 86% small and marginal farmers.

- Two New Funds of Rs. 10,000 crore announced for Fisheries and Animal Husbandry sectors; Re- structured National Bamboo Mission gets Rs.1290 crore.
- Higher targets for Ujjwala, Saubhagya and Swachh Mission to cater to lower and middle class in providing free LPG connections, electricity and toilets.
- 100 per cent deduction proposed to companies registered as Farmer producer Companies with an annual turnover upto Rs. 100 crore on profit derived from such activities, for five years from 2018-19.
- Loans to Women Self Help Groups will increase to Rs. 75,000 crore in 2019 and 42,500 crore last year.
- TDS not required to be deducted under Section 194 A. Benefit also available for interest from all fixed deposit schemes and recurring deposit schemes.
- Exemption of interest income on deposits with banks and post offices to be increased from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000.
- Standard Deduction of Rs. 40,000 in place of present exemption for transport allowance and reimbursement of miscellaneous medical expenses 2.5 crore salaried employees and pensioners to benefit.

[Translation]

SHRI ABHISHEK SINGH (RAJNANDGAON): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is my privilege to have been given the opportunity to participate in the discussion on this Eighteenth Budget of the twenty-first century. I wholeheartedly extend my felicitations to you and thank you.

Sir, this Budget will realise the golden future of the 125 crore people of this country. This Budget provides social and economic security to the poor of the nation. It addresses the concerns of the distressed and the deprived. It is a Budget that accords dignity and strength to women, provides direction towards employment and self-employment for the youth, gives due recognition to the hard work of farmers, frees 50 crore poor and middle-class people from anxiety relating to health care, and places Mother India at the pinnacle of prosperity. I warmly welcome and congratulate the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister.

Sir, today the 125 crore citizens of this country are not only dreaming of a golden future with open eyes, but are also working shoulder to shoulder with this Government to take the nation forward. Ever since the presentation of the Budget for the year 2018, there has been widespread discussion. I observe that a sense of panic appears to have gripped friends from the Opposition. On

the one hand, people across the country are applauding this Budget, while on the other, there is visible consternation within the Opposition. They are anxious about how this Government will provide medical treatment of up to Rs. 5 lakh for 10 crore families, covering 50 crore people.

They are unable to comprehend this. However, the people of the country had understood this very well during the elections of 2014, and that is precisely why the people, through their mandate in the 2014 elections, decided to seat them there.

Sir**,** they are unable to believe how the Government of this country will pay farmers one and a half times the cost of production for their crops. They had no faith even when the Hon. Prime Minister took extraordinary and revolutionary decisions such as demonetisation and thereafter GST. However, the people of this country have stood by this Government and by the decisions taken by the Hon. Prime Minister in the national interest. This is clearly reflected in successive electoral outcomes in the States, the successful acceptance of GST, and the rapid advancement of the country's economy after demonetisation. We understand if our policies do not appeal to you. We also understand if you neither comprehend nor trust our policies. You are entitled to criticise our policies; democracy has given you that right. If you have suggestions to improve our policies, we respect those suggestions.

However, the lakhs and crores of poor families of this country who earn their livelihood by selling tea at roadside stalls, selling pakoras, or selling poha to sustain their families, will not accept it if you mock their hard work. You may recall that in the 2014 elections, when a tea seller was ridiculed, the people of this country reduced you to 44 seats. Today, you have mocked the hard work of a pakora seller. In the times to come, this country will respond to that as well, and I am confident that if your mockery of a pakora seller confines you to five seats, the nation will not be surprised.

Sir, in almost every State of this country, and I believe in the constituency of every Member of Parliament, there are examples of individuals who began supporting their families under extremely poor circumstances by running a small handcart or a modest paan kiosk, and who, through hard work, dedication and talent, not only made their families economically secure but gradually expanded their small activity into a full-fledged business. Today, such individuals provide employment to 10, 50 or even 100 people. I would like to thank the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister for formulating policies that recognise and respect the hard work of such youth and people from poor families. Through initiatives such as Mudra loans, Stand Up India, Skill India and other schemes, conditions have been created whereby even a poor person living in this country can dream that, if he works hard and

moves ahead, his economic condition can improve in the future. He can aspire not merely to stand in a queue for a job, but to become a job provider. I hold the vision of the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister in high regard.

I would like to cite an example from the region I represent. In Rajnandgaon district, there is a village called Ghatula, where several years ago a person named Tikam Sahu began by selling paan and tea from a small cart. Later, he started selling poha. Today, through his establishment, he provides employment to 10, 15 or even 20 people, and people travel from far and wide to enjoy his poha. He takes pride in his work.

Sir, in Raipur, Shri Sahu, having come from a distant place, started the Sahu Poha-Jalebi Centre. While discharging responsibilities towards eight members of his family, through his dedication he has today expanded it into a family business.

There are numerous such examples where a person standing at the last rung of society has moved forward with the dream that, through hard work and talent, he can make a meaningful contribution to society and to the nation.

Sir, no work is small or big. It is the spirit with which the work is undertaken, the outlook of the person performing it, and his hard work and talent that determine how far he can progress in the times

to come. To view work as small is your perspective; it reflects your outlook and mindset, as evidenced by the mockery of a pakora seller. As far as mindset is concerned, I am reminded that scholars of political science and sociology in this country acknowledge that one of the most difficult challenges for any government is to endeavour to transform the national mindset. I am pleased that our Government, under the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister, has formulated policies that are transforming this mindset and leading the nation towards the vision of a better India.

Sir, when Government schemes are taken to the people not merely as official programmes but as a mass movement, the outcomes are truly heartening. I would like to place this before the Members of this august House. The Swachh Bharat Mission, which was launched by the Hon. Prime Minister with women's dignity as a central concern, and the Ujjwala Yojana, which has benefited women living in rural areas, are notable examples. The Ujjwala Yojana is not merely a scheme for providing subsidised gas cylinders. I would like to cite examples from my Lok Sabha constituency, Rajnandgaon, and from Kabirdham. Women who earlier spent at least six hours a day collecting firewood, cooking twice a day, and lighting traditional stoves, now find that their labour has been significantly reduced. With gas cylinders, they are able to prepare meals for their families in much less time. Members

will be pleased to know how these women are utilising the time thus saved. They have formed self-help groups. Through these groups, they have begun small savings within their villages. They have started small and cottage industries, whether it is making mango pickles or papads, and have begun selling these products in the market. Today, these women are playing a leading role in the economic advancement of the country. Not only that, alongside economic progress, they are also at the forefront of social advancement. An example of this is seen under the Swachh Bharat Mission. When the Hon. Prime Minister appealed to the nation that, in the interest of women's dignity, every household should have a toilet, in Rajnandgaon, Phool Basan Yadav leads the Maa Bamleshwari Women's Group, which has lakhs of women associated with it. They resolved, on their own initiative, to construct toilets in their homes without seeking Government assistance, and to utilise the Government support received for the overall development of their villages.

Sir, there are many such examples. When the Hon. Prime Minister visited Chhattisgarh, a 104-year-old woman, Kunwarbai, who had decided to sell her livestock in order to construct a toilet in her home, was personally honoured by the Hon. Prime Minister, who touched her feet as a mark of respect. Through this House today, I would like to place on record my salutations to her.

Sir, today there is a shared vision among the people of the country regarding what our villages should look like in the times to come. Farmers should receive one and a half times the cost of production for their crops. If they wish to sell their produce in the market, they should be able to do so at the agricultural rural markets being developed near their villages. This is the vision of a New India, which is moving forward not only on the basis of the policies of this Government, but also in keeping with the expectations and aspirations of the 125 crore people of this country. In the making of such an India, the poor, the youth and the women of this nation should play a leading role. With these good wishes and heartfelt felicitations, I conclude my remarks. Thank you.

SHRI TEJ PRATAP SINGH YADAV (MAINPURI): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to participate in the discussion on the General Budget for the year 2018-19.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, first the Address by the Hon. President was delivered, followed by the presentation of the Budget Speech by the Government. Neither of these speeches appears to have generated any concrete hope in the minds of the common people of this country, and they seem to amount to nothing more than hollow assurances. At first glance, this Budget appears less like a Budget and more like a manifesto for the forthcoming elections.

Sir, if we look at the state of the economy, the GDP growth rate stood at 8 per cent in the year 2015-16, declined to 7.1 per cent in 2016-17, and further fell to 6.5 per cent in 2017-18. During the tenure of this Government, GDP growth has continuously declined. Yesterday, an Hon. Member from the Bharatiya Janata Party was making tall claims that our country had surpassed the United States and China. However, these figures clearly belie such claims.

Over the past three years, the Government has made grand assertions about development, but these have also proved to be hollow, and it appears that development itself has gone missing.

This Government has also failed to achieve its fiscal deficit targets during the last three years.

Sir, if we turn to the issue of income tax, the middle class had great expectations from this Government that perhaps the tax slabs would be raised and greater exemptions would be provided. However, the middle class has been left disappointed yet again. On the one hand, a standard deduction of Rs. 40,000 has been introduced, while on the other hand, the cess has been increased from three per cent to four per cent. The Government has given with one hand and taken away from the pockets of the middle class with the other.

While this Budget has brought disappointment for the middle class, the Government has extended a five per cent tax concession to corporates. This clearly reflects the Government's intent that it is only corporate-friendly, while farmers and the middle class do not figure on its agenda.

The Government has imposed a ten per cent Long Term Capital Gains Tax. The immediate impact of this decision was that the Sensex fell by nearly 1,700 points over the last four days, resulting in heavy losses to investors. Such a sharp fall in the Sensex also indicates that the market itself has outrightly rejected this Budget.

The Hon. Prime Minister, in his recent address at Davos, claimed that certain countries were adopting protectionist policies to prevent others from engaging in trade. However, in its own Budget, this Government has increased import duty on 45 items, thereby effectively converting the Make in India programme into a Protect in India programme.

During the tenure of the UPA Government, whenever petrol prices were increased, leaders of the BJP launched massive agitations and protests. Today, when they are in power, petrol and diesel prices are rising almost every day, and people are often unaware of the day on which prices are increased. At present, petrol prices are at their highest level in the last four years.

Recently, an international survey revealed that in India, one per cent of the population holds 73 per cent of the country's wealth. Over the past four years, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened further.

Sir, ours is an agrarian country. Over the past four years, ever since I became a Member of this House, there has hardly been a Session in which the problems of farmers, their distress and hardships have not been raised. Whether it has been hailstorms, floods or drought, farmers' issues have been discussed in this House on one ground or another. Yet, even after four years, the condition

of farmers has continued to deteriorate and has gone from bad to worse. No meaningful reforms have been carried out for farmers under this Government. Since this is an election year, the Government has suddenly remembered the farmers and is now speaking about Minimum Support Price. The Government is well aware that if the farmers of this country make up their minds, they possess the strength to overturn any Government.

In the year 2016-17, the cost of production of wheat was Rs. 2,345 per quintal, but the Government fixed the MSP at only Rs. 1,525 per quintal. The Government claims that there has been record crop production in the country and that farmers are its priority.

Sir, despite record production, the continued incidents of farmers committing suicide and being forced to dump their produce on the roads clearly show that the Government has been offering nothing but hollow assurances to farmers.

Sir, I come from a parliamentary constituency where farmers cultivate potatoes in large quantities. Whether it is Firozabad, Agra, Aligarh, Farrukhabad, Kannauj or Mainpuri, farmers in these areas are engaged in potato cultivation on a large scale. Even the so-called ‘king of vegetables’, the potato, is in a deplorable condition under this Government. The cost of one sack of potatoes to a farmer comes

to approximately Rs. 250 to Rs. 300. For the last two years, farmers have not even been able to realise their cost of production from the market. I demand that the Government should assure an MSP for potatoes that provides some relief to farmers.

Sir, when farmers in Uttar Pradesh protested against not receiving a fair price for their potato crop by throwing potatoes in front of the Legislative Assembly and the Chief Minister's residence, the State Government treated them not like farmers, but like terrorists. The Government lodged cases against them under stringent sections and sent them to jail.

Sir, this Budget makes no special provision for irrigation. The distressing condition arising from the lack of irrigation water in regions such as Vidarbha, Bundelkhand and Marathwada in Maharashtra is before all of us. The Hon. Prime Minister has spoken of doubling farmers' income by the year 2022. However, judging by the manner in which the Government is presently functioning and the nature of its schemes for farmers, I do not believe that the Government will be able to achieve this objective by 2022.

Sir, only 0.3 per cent of GDP has been allocated for health. The Hon. Prime Minister has announced a major scheme under which 10 crore people, with five members per family, are promised health cover of up to Rs. 5 lakh for medical treatment. However,

contrary to this announcement, only Rs. 2,000 crore has been allocated for this scheme in the present Budget, which is grossly inadequate. This scheme would require substantial financial resources. The Government has not yet clarified how the beneficiary families will be identified, nor who will bear the insurance premium. It appears that this scheme has been designed to benefit private insurance companies more than the common people.

Sir, very limited provision has been made for education in this Budget. The share of education expenditure, which ought to have been higher, has been continuously declining over the past few years. The Hon. Finance Minister had stated that a scheme would be introduced in civil aviation so that even those wearing slippers would be able to travel by air. However, this claim also appears to be hollow. An allocation of Rs. 6,602 crore has been made in this Budget, out of which Rs. 4,469 crore is proposed to be spent merely on the purchase of two VIP aircraft, as stated by the Government itself in the Budget documents.

Sir, the increasing incidents of atrocities against minorities and Dalits in the country over the past few years are before all of us. According to the data provided by the Government itself, the highest number of communal incidents in the year 2017 occurred in Uttar Pradesh, where the BJP is in power. Owing to these incidents,

minorities and Dalit communities in the country are unable to feel secure. The Government has also decided to withdraw the Haj subsidy. However, when I raised a question regarding the utilisation of the funds saved by withdrawing the Haj subsidy, the Government did not give any clear reply.

Sir, the expenditure on national security has also been reduced in this Budget. For the first time since 1962, the allocation for defence is at its lowest level. When the NDA Government came to power, the country was assured that enemy nations would be given a fitting reply. However, in recent times, there has been a sharp increase in ceasefire violations, and our soldiers are being martyred almost every day. Today, the country is facing a two-front challenge, with Pakistan on one side and China on the other, both making repeated attempts to intrude along our borders. At such a critical juncture, the cuts made in the defence budget will adversely affect the morale and preparedness of our armed forces.

Sir, today the Hon. Prime Minister speaks about employment, but the country is grappling with jobless economic growth, and all of us are well aware of this reality. Sixty-five per cent of the country's population comprises youth below the age of 35, who are striving for employment. After demonetisation, those who were self-employed through small trades and who also provided

employment to five or ten others saw their livelihoods collapse, and they themselves were pushed into the ranks of the unemployed.

Sir, the situation of unemployment is such that today, for jobs where the minimum qualification is Class XII or a Bachelor's degree, thousands of PhD holders are applying. The Government speaks of skill development, yet it has failed to even utilise the entire budget allocated for this purpose. On the one hand, the Government talks about addressing unemployment through what has come to be known as the 'pakoda' employment narrative; on the other hand, just two days ago in Noida, officials of the Uttar Pradesh Government removed vendors selling pakodas. This action is completely contrary to the Government's stated intent.

Sir**,** this Government has also diminished the stature and significance of the Railway Budget. The common man of this country used to wait throughout the year for the Railway Budget, with many expectations attached to it. Along with announcements of new trains, the people also looked forward to reductions in fares. By abolishing the separate Railway Budget and confining it to merely a paragraph, the Government has done away with that long-standing tradition. The Government speaks about railway safety, but the reality is that even today there are around 2.20 lakh vacancies in the Railways, out of which nearly 1.40 lakh vacancies are in the Railway Protection Force alone.

The Hon. Minister has once again spoken about the bullet train in the Budget. It is welcome that there is discussion about introducing a bullet train, but before that, our priority should be to improve the present condition of the Railways. Trains that run at speeds of 70 to 80 kilometres per hour are getting derailed frequently, and we have witnessed several accidents over the past few years. One of the biggest challenges facing the Railways today is project delay. Many projects are not being completed on time, and due to these delays, project costs are continuously escalating.

Sir, the people of the country gave a decisive mandate to the NDA. The NDA had sufficient time to make sincere efforts to take the country on the path of development, but so far, this Government has failed to live up to the expectations of the people. This Budget is anti-farmer, anti-youth, anti-village and anti-rural India, and anti-middle class. Even the constituent parties of the NDA, which have been waiting for the last four years for a special package, have been disappointed. Our colleagues from the Telugu Desam Party, from Andhra Pradesh, have been standing in the Well of the House and protesting continuously for the last four days, demanding their due from the Government, but their demands have not yet been met. I firmly believe that this Budget is entirely anti-farmer and anti-youth.

[English]

***SHRI P.C. GADDIGOUDAR (BAGALKOT):** I congratulate the Hon. Prime Minister and Finance Minister Shri Arjun Jaitley for presenting a very good Budget to the over- all development of the nation with focus on fulfilling the dreams of every section including the poor, the farmers, rural workers, women, dalits, small business and under privileged. This Budget will add to ease of living and strengthen the vision of New India as rightly said by Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji.

Hon. Finance Minister has focused on income security of farmers. That the farmers should get at least 50 per cent more than the cost of their produce. In other words, one and half times of the cost of their production. The Finance Minister has announced the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their produce. It is more important that farmers should get full benefit of the announced MSP. For this it is essential that if price of agriculture produce market is less than MSP, then in that case Government should purchase either at MSP or work in a manner to provide MSP for the farmers through some other mechanism. This will benefit the farmers to great extent.

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*Speech was laid on the Table.

The Finance Minister has announced to launch a flagship National Health Protection Scheme to cover over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families providing coverage up to 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. This will be the world's largest Government funded health care programme. This is a bold and ambitious move.

The Finance Minister has announced to increase the loans for Self Help Groups of women to about Rs. 42,500 crore, growing 37% over previous year which is very good decision. The Government is confident that loans to Self Help Groups will increase to Rs.75000 crore by March, 2019. The allocation to National Rural Livelihood Mission has also been substantially increased to Rs.5750 crore.

Prominent tourist sites are located in my Constituency namely Badami, Pattadakal and Aihole which are historical places. A large number of people are visiting these places every day. Therefore, tourist amenities are to be enhanced for their visits. Badami city has been identified in National Heritage Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY). For this scheme more financial assistance is required for implementation. Therefore, I request the Government to provide more funds for completing the works of HRIDAY and Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT).

A provision of Rs. 1.48 crore has been made for capital expenditure for Railways with view to improve and modernize the basic infrastructure. Declaration of 100% conversion of broad-gauge, targeting complete track renewal over 36000 Kms. and elimination of 4267 unmanned level crossings. This will go a long way to enhance Railway Safety and reduce train accident. This is a very good initiative. I welcome the decision to expand the suburban network, particularly Bengaluru.

I would like to bring to the notice of the August House through you that in my Constituency new railway line of Almatti- Koppal survey work has been completed long back and the Survey Report has been submitted to Railway Board for approval. The demand of the railway line is long pending. This line will connect historical places like Aihole, Pattadakal and Badami. It will also enhance the prosperity of granite, sugar and cement industries of the zone. Therefore, I urge the Railway Minister for the new line of Almatti-Koppal. A new railway line of Bagalkot- Kudachi was sanctioned long back, but only 30 Kms work from Bagalkot to Khajjidoni has been completed. The remaining work has been stopped due to settlement of compensation to the land owners. Therefore, I request the Hon. Railway Minister to expedite the remaining work.

I once again congratulate the Finance Minister for presenting a very good Budget.

[Translation]

SHRI SHARAD TRIPATHI (SANTKABIRNAGAR): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity. About 2,332 years ago, one of India's greatest political thinkers, Acharya Chanakya, had said that being born in a poor and uneducated household is not a great crime, but to die poor and uneducated is the greatest crime in the world. Drawing inspiration from this thought, the Hon. Prime Minister has given the slogan of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*. This slogan clearly reflects that we are not only striving for the welfare and development of all, but are also firmly committed to it. Taking this resolve forward, the Hon. Prime Minister has initiated welfare schemes for the people of this country, irrespective of religion, caste or faith, in a unique and inclusive manner.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, as the discussion on the Budget is underway, many of the Members who spoke before me have placed their views before the House. For the first time since India's Independence, such a Budget has been presented under the leadership of our Government, headed by the respected Narendra Modi, and presented by the respected Arun Jaitley. Through this Budget, the Hon. Prime Minister has worked tirelessly and with great enthusiasm to realise the missions of a poverty-free India, an

illiteracy-free India, a cleanliness-driven India, and an unemployment-free India.

14.00 hrs

Under the *Khelo India* programme, a provision of approximately Rs. 200 crore has been made for rural areas, almost for each district. Three to four stadiums will be constructed in a district, with facilities including swimming pools and courts, as well as grounds for football and volleyball, which are essentially rural-based sports. Until now, previous Governments had largely turned a blind eye to such sports. Through this initiative, the Government has sought to provide fresh inspiration to the youth. Under this scheme, a strong and aspiring young person from a village, who earlier wished to learn swimming but had to fulfil that desire in rivers because he had never seen a swimming pool, will now have access to proper facilities. By allocating a substantial budget under *Khelo India*, the Government has worked to enhance the pride and confidence of the youth of the country.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue of Railways has also been raised today. I am pleased to state that I come from Uttar Pradesh. Particularly in eastern Uttar Pradesh, there is not even a single metre of railway line left where work has not been completed by our Government in a short span of time through gauge conversion. If

one looks at the railway projects undertaken in Uttar Pradesh from the year 1947 till 2014, and compares them with the work done over a period of three and a half years thereafter, this is the first Government which, under the leadership of Narendra Modi, has accomplished such unprecedented railway development within such a limited time-frame.

The health sector is also closely linked with employment. Today, the Government has taken a major and revolutionary decision. Around 800 medicines are being sold through *Jan Aushadhi Kendras,* and more than 3,000 such centres have already been established. A medicine that costs Rs. 100 in the market is now available at a minimum price of around Rs. 24 through these centres. This Government has initiated a revolutionary step for safeguarding the health of the poor. In the present Budget, provision has been made under the insurance cover scheme for treatment ranging from Rs. 5 lakh up to Rs. 10 lakh. Today, people no longer have to worry whether they will receive treatment if they go to a hospital, or whether they will be asked to bring money in advance. Earlier, rural women often had to pledge or sell their jewellery, or borrow money, in order to obtain medical treatment.

By addressing these hardships, the Government has made provision in the Budget for setting up 24 new medical colleges. Through this, approximately 248 meritorious students, from MBBS

to postgraduate levels, will be trained, thereby helping to bridge the gap between doctors and patients. Around 350 paramedical training centres are also being established, through which this Budget seeks to create employment opportunities for unemployed young men and women.

Wherever paramedical training centres are established, they will generate healthy competition even in rural areas, leading to the opening of new hospitals there as well. When doctors undergo paramedical training, whether at the postgraduate, MBBS or DCS level, and when new medical colleges begin functioning and hospitals are established, each hospital will require thousands of personnel. These will include paramedical specialists, attendants, nurses, supervisory staff and others. In this manner, employment will be generated through the health sector in every rural area. This Budget has been brought forward for a prosperous and healthy India, and for this I congratulate the head of our Government.

This Government has doubled the Budget allocation in one stroke for farmers, villages, the poor and food processing. Rural cottage industries are being promoted. Many such industries, which earlier had no support systems and lacked the resources to function, are now being supported under the Livelihood Mission through group-based food processing initiatives. The Government has also provided Budgetary support to small and micro units through the

MSME Ministry. Some Members have asked where this money will come from. Earlier, there was a tax concession up to a turnover of Rs. 50 crore; this Government has now extended the benefit of a reduced tax rate of 25 per cent up to a turnover of Rs. 250 crore.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, you also come from a rural background and have seen poverty firsthand, and you often speak about it in this House. For the first time, a Government has introduced a provision under which any unit related to farmers that sets up its plant in a rural area, and whose industrial activity is entirely farmer-based, will be granted a 100 per cent tax exemption. This is a historic step taken by the Government.

Our position in the sphere of foreign affairs has also been strengthened. Just today, while reading a newspaper, I was pleased to note that Dubai has granted permission to Air India for an air route that was earlier not possible, namely, the use of Dubai airspace for travel to Israel. I also read in the newspaper that the Dubai Government has provided assistance amounting to 7.5 million euros. This reflects how firmly our foreign policy is being established today, and the Government is clearly focused on strengthening India’s standing on the global stage.

There is immense potential for tourism in my parliamentary constituency. I would like to request that Kopiya and Gobind Sahab

be developed and placed prominently on the tourism map of India, so that tourists from across the world may visit these places and avenues for employment may be created for the local population. Thank you.

[English]

***SHRIMATI K. MARAGATHAM (KANCHEEPURAM):** I express my hearty gratitude and indebtedness to our beloved immortal Leader Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA, before I place my views on the General Budget 2017-18.

The extremely heavy rains during the North East Monsoon in December 2015 have caused enormous devastation to standing crops, property and public infrastructure besides loss of livelihood, loss of life and cattle. The State Government's requirement was Rs. 25912 crores. But even a year after the central team has inspected and given its report, the Government had not provided adequate funds to Tamil Nadu.

Similarly in Dec 2016 Cyclone Vardah had caused severe damages to the coastal regions of Northern Tamil Nadu. The Government of Tamil Nadu had sought Rs. 22,573 crores from the Union Government to undertake reconstruction works in areas affected by cyclone Vardah. But no relief fund was provided. Recently the Ockhi Cyclone has devastated the Southern parts of Tamil Nadu in Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli Districts. But not enough relief funds were provided from Centre in Tamil Nadu.

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*Speech was laid on the Table.

Earlier this year the Tamil Nadu Government had declared all 32 districts as drought affected and urged the Centre to sanction Rs. 39,565 crore to provide relief to farmers for damages caused due to the drought situation.

A special package for drought affected farmers of Tamil Nadu and cyclone ravaged fishermen and farmers would have been a very welcome. Tamil Nadu was severely affected by drought and scarcity of water for irrigation. I urge the Union Government to release a special package and funds to address the plight of farmers in Tamil Nadu at the earliest.

Tamil Nadu having coastal length of 1076 Km is one of the leading States in the country boosting Fishing industry. I request the Hon. Finance Minister to release Rs.3000 crores for the development of fisheries in Tamil Nadu. The Union Government has promised to form a separate Ministry to develop and conserve the fisheries resources and to enhance the socio economic status of the fishermen community and to provide protection, ensure safety and security of the fishermen. I would like the Government of the day create a separate Ministry for Fisheries and Development of Fishermen Community.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has urged the Union Government to release Rs.17000 crores to enhance power

infrastructure in the cyclone prone Tamil Nadu either as grant or as soft loan. Conversion of 230 KV transmission overhead lines into 230 KV underground cables need to be expedited to facilitate urban growth in Greater Chennai. I urge the Union Government to release Rs.17000 crores to enhance power infrastructure, to expedite the Cheyyur Ultra Mega Power Project, and to speed up the process of establishing the inter- state green energy corridor.

In Chennai Metropolitan city, the Central and Egmore railway stations are strategically important in the sub- urban railway EMU line connecting Chennai with several stations in Kanchipuram, Tiruvallur and Vellore Districts. There is an urgent need to have a skywalk connecting Central and Egmore Stations. Many important bridges and railway crossings near Central and Egmore Stations and in Chennai particularly the Elephant Gate Bridge needs to be renovated and strengthened. Therefore I urge the Government to take up the redevelopment and modernization of railway stations at Chennai Central and Egmore in one go and also to provide much needed fillip to all the railway stations.

As far as my Kanchipuram Parliamentary Constituency is concerned, I would urged upon the Government to provide adequate funds for the establishment of necessary infrastructure facilities as the Power projects at Kalpakkam and Cheyyur and also several industries are situated in Kanchipuram District of Tamil Nadu.

There are several pending demands in Railways need to be executed immediately for the benefit of millions of people in and around Kanchipuram.

Kanchipuram town being the most ancient and historically important heritage site in the world comprising the great Temples of Pallavas, Cholas and Vijaynagara Temples require funding for renovation and restoration of these ancient Temples and also to develop Kanchipuram as Tourist Hub in Tamil Nadu as large number of domestic and international passengers visit Kanchipuram Temples throughout the year. Melmaruvathur is another very important pilgrim site which requires a new train service Melmaruvathur to Yeshwanthpur via Kanchipuram, Chengalpattu and Melmaruvathur.

*__SHRI DHANANJAY MAHADIK (KOLHAPUR):__ Budget 2018 by Hon. Finance Minister has been the talk of the town. I have come around an interesting joke that claims to summarize the recent budget.

Lower class gets Subsidy ! Upper class gets Rebate !! Middle class gets only TV Debate!!

A term Modicare has been generated in the media for its policies such as expanding the ambit of Ujjwala Scheme (80 million poor families will be given free cooking gas connections), announcing the Ayushman Bharat Programme (Health Insurance Coverage of upto Rs.5 lakh for a formally employed women coming down to 8%. Senior Citizens have also gained from this budget. The rest of the salaried class, undoubtedly, have been imposed with more tax. Budget also promises lesser income tax and better credit flow for smaller businessman. Highly criticized is the LTC G tax (long term capital gains exceeding Rs.1 lakh will be taxed at 10% without indexing) which has caused turmoil in stock markets and robbed off pockets of middle class section of the society.

Fiscal deficit of 3.3% of GDP for next year is much higher than the ideal 2.5% for the Union Government as per the

*Speech was laid on the Table.

recommendations by N. K. Singh Committee. If the Government is not able to maintain, it will lose its credibility. Although, our economy has not been able to maintain 3% growth even in good years leading to serious questions on the ruling dispensation. Expected gross tax revenue seems to increase by 16.7%, which is indeed a high figure but we don't know how GST revenues will behave.

There is nothing in the budget that can directly stimulate investment except for benefits to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). With no new investments ventured in through budget there is lesser possibility of required job creation. India is unique in the sense that it's a broadly agrarian economy which has people coming from both the highest and lowest class of income distribution. Catering to both sections of society which are starkly different from each other is a challenge in itself. Higher expenditure on health and education was required. The budget for 2018-19 was presented against the background of “slowdown in growth, inadequate private investment and distress in agriculture. Few of the issues were addressed but not fully.

What about the Aam Janta or the middle class? There are simply no benefits for them.

The Government did follow a ‘growth and consumption-oriented’ approach. However, there should have been greater incentives and measures on the education front.

Exports also did not get as good a boost in the budget. The sector is poised for growth, if given a better boost.

Indians pay about 62 per cent of the health expenditure out of their pocket, World Bank data shows. That's much higher than peers in countries like China (32 per cent) and Brazil (25. 5 per cent). That too in a nation where about one-fifth of the 120 crore population lives below the international poverty line of $ 1.9 a day, according to a World Bank report. A health cover will protect vulnerable families from falling back below the poverty line in case of hospitalisation.

The Rs. 12,000 crore estimate for the national scheme will be logical only if the Government is able to get all the empanelled hospitals to agree to a fixed rate for procedures.

The private sector has been on the losing end, with “not much left in its hands, and capital taken from the sector instead by the levy of surcharge and cess,”

[Translation]

***SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL (DAMOH):** The General Budget has given special attention to social concerns, social security and social transformation. It is a Budget that reflects strong political will.

When the Budget was introduced in Parliament with the address titled “Premium of Honesty”, it was evident that this Budget was different from the conventional approach. Provisions have been made in the Budget that will address the problems of the weaker sections and the middle-class rural population, problems that have abruptly undermined their financial and social stability. Earlier systems weakened their capacity for self-reliance and, in many cases, compelled them to become indebted or landless. Among these issues, health is the most significant.

Health encompasses both illness and helplessness, and it has a direct relationship with financial capacity. Illness weakens a person physically, mentally and financially. Through this Budget, an option has been introduced to rescue the majority of the country’s population from this hardship.

By implementing a health assurance scheme providing coverage of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year for medical treatment,

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

the Government has directly benefited 10 crore families in the unorganised sector, covering nearly half of the country's population. This step provides confidence even more than financial assistance. It is essential that the poor feel assured that treatment will be available even in the absence of money. Among the majority of society, there has long been a perception that only the affluent can receive treatment in private or large Government hospitals. This measure will help dispel that perception. Through this initiative, the Government has instilled a new sense of confidence among the people. It will pave the way for the construction of new hospitals and the enhancement of public facilities in existing hospitals. At the same time, affordable healthcare will also reduce the burden and overcrowding in Government hospitals. The introduction of dialysis facilities has already yielded several positive outcomes.

I would like to cite the example of my parliamentary constituency, Damoh. Dialysis services were started there on 1 April 2017, and since then, 44 patients in the district have received dialysis treatment on 1,845 occasions. One can well imagine how much money these families would otherwise have had to spend and the extent of hardship they would have endured. This itself reflects the seriousness of the Government's commitment towards public health. The Government's intent to provide affordable healthcare is further evident from the decision to open medicine centres in every

district to supply low-cost generic medicines, and from the proposal to establish one medical college for every three Lok Sabha constituencies. This represents an honest effort by the Government towards balanced development and improved public amenities. Has there ever been an attempt to understand the suffering of rural women whose entire lives were spent amid smoke? To make their lives smoke-free and brighter, the Government launched the Ujjwala Yojana to provide free LPG connections to women in remote rural areas. Initially, a target of five crore connections was set, which has now been increased to eight crore. Most importantly, the Hon. Prime Minister ensured that the burden of providing free LPG connections did not fall solely on the Government. Instead, a path of social participation was adopted. Responding to a single appeal by the Hon. Prime Minister, more than three and a half crore people voluntarily gave up their LPG subsidy, and the savings generated were utilised to bring about a transformative change in the lives of rural women. Through this Union Government scheme, women who earlier cooked on traditional stoves and inhaled smoke equivalent to nearly 250 cigarettes every day are now being protected. This has immense value not only in terms of safeguarding health but also in reducing environmental damage. Sir, access to safe drinking water plays a crucial role in maintaining good health. Without it, the very idea of a healthy life is

inconceivable. Under the AMRUT scheme, the plan to provide drinking water to 550 urban centres and to hundreds of villages in rural areas through cluster-based arrangements is truly a revolutionary step.

The benefits derived from the tap water schemes in Badamalhara and Pathariya, comprising nearly 200 villages in my parliamentary constituency, are a case in point. Through the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, this Government is creating history by achieving its targets on time, and in several States, even ahead of schedule. Under the ambitious objective of ensuring that every citizen of the country has a house by the year 2022, 51 lakh houses were constructed last year, and a target has been set to construct another 51 lakh houses during the current year. In the changing times, electricity has become essential for both the poor and the affluent alike. Technological necessities such as mobile phones, computers and online transactions have further increased the importance of electricity. To meet this requirement, work is underway to connect all villages, hamlets and habitations across the country under the Deendayal Gram Jyoti Yojana. In addition, the decision to allocate Rs. 16,000 crore under the Saubhagya Scheme to provide electricity connections to every household is a commendable step taken by the Government in the interest of public convenience. Whether it is the issue of connecting villages with

roads or the development of commercial corridors, the fourth phase of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is setting new benchmarks. Under this phase, a plan has been formulated to connect the country's mandis with the main roads. Improved connectivity will directly benefit farmers and rural communities. Significant progress has also been achieved in the expansion of National Highways. Prior to 2014, the pace of National Highway construction in the country was merely 3 km per day. Today, road construction is being carried out at the rate of 27 km per day. Before 2014, the total length of National Highways was 97,000 km, which has now increased to 1,76,000 km. Special emphasis is now being placed on the construction of expressways. This will lead to savings in both time and fuel, thereby strengthening the country's economy. Projects such as Bharatmala, Sagarmala and Setu Bharatam are initiatives that will not only interconnect all parts of the country according to requirements but will also make transportation more dynamic. In the Budget, an allocation of Rs. 1,50,000 crore has been made for railway expansion and modernisation. Through this allocation, all railway lines will be converted to broad gauge, new railway lines will be constructed, existing lines will be doubled and tripled, and electrification of railway routes will be undertaken.

In the year 2018, work has commenced in Indian coach factories to manufacture railway coaches using indigenous technology, which will help realise the dream of New India. The Government is working with a very positive outlook. Therefore, efforts are being made to develop all modes of transport simultaneously. The plan to strengthen road transport, inland water transport and rail transport, along with the expansion of air connectivity, is a clear reflection of this integrated and forward-looking approach.

Our country is regarded as an agrarian nation. The Hon. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has set a target of doubling agricultural production by the year 2022. A majority of the country is dependent on agriculture, and a large section of the population is directly or indirectly engaged in farming. The agricultural sector is a major source of employment and plays a vital role in protecting and strengthening the rural middle class. In recent years, a perception had begun to take hold among the people that agriculture had become an expensive and unviable activity, which in turn adversely affected the sector. The Government has understood this mindset seriously and has introduced positive measures in the Budget to address it. For irrigation, the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana has been implemented, and along with the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, the biggest remaining challenge was that of

Minimum Support Price. By adopting a policy of providing MSP at one and a half times the cost of production, the Government has strengthened the self-reliance of farmers. Earlier, only Rabi crops were covered under this policy, but by now including Kharif crops as well, the Government has taken a significant step towards empowering the agricultural sector. The Government has not confined itself merely to increasing foodgrain production. In order to ensure that farmers receive a fair price for their produce in a transparent manner, shortcomings in the e-mandi system have been addressed. To enable farmers to obtain the right price for their produce, a major step has been taken to convert 22,000 rural haats into agricultural markets. In addition, to control the frequent fluctuations in vegetable prices across the country, Operation Green has been launched. Under this initiative, a fund of Rs. 500 crore has been provided to manage losses related to the storage and marketing of commodities such as potatoes and onions. This fund will operate independently of State policies.

Along with increasing the production of fruits and vegetables, important decisions have also been taken to promote food processing and the establishment of mega food parks, so that agricultural produce is put to proper use. This will create better opportunities for educated children from farming families. Another significant decision to promote agriculture is to grant 100 per cent

tax exemption to agricultural companies with an annual turnover of up to Rs. 100 crore. This will lead to rapid growth in the agricultural industry and encourage the youth of the country to associate themselves with this sector without hesitation. Among these reforms, an important change relates to workers in the unorganised sector whose provident fund is deducted but who are often unable to secure its full benefits. Owing to contractual and outsourcing practices, even skilled workers are not properly registered, and their future social security remains uncertain. The Government has assured future security for new workers by contributing 12 per cent towards their provident fund. In the case of women workers, this contribution has been reduced from 12 per cent to 8 per cent in order to promote greater participation in employment and to increase the number of registered workers. Earlier, the Modi Government had already ensured that workers receive the proceeds of their hard work directly into their own accounts by providing a unique Universal Account Number for provident fund purposes. This Budget has taken care of every section of society. An allocation of Rs. 56,000 crore has been made for Scheduled Castes and Rs. 39,000 crore for Tribal development. Through initiatives such as Eklavya Residential Schools, the Jeevan Jyoti Insurance Scheme and the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, social security has been strengthened by providing accident insurance cover of Rs. 2

lakh to 13 crore families. The Union Government is working in accordance with the vision and commitments it made to the people. By adopting the principle of *Antyodaya* propounded by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya in matters of social concern, the Modi Government is moving forward with the guiding motto of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas.

The Hon. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, is aware of every small and big problem of the country. He himself serves as a role model in resolving issues. Therefore, by adopting a social perspective, he is addressing every problem in such a manner that the people of the country are freed from these challenges in the future and guided towards a path of noble progress and development.

The Hon. Prime Minister is working for the nation with this thought in mind:

“Vijetri cha nah samhata karyashaktir vidhayasya dharmasya sanrakshanam evam vaibhavam netumetat swarashtram samartha bhavatvaashish te bhrisham.”

(“May our collective strength be victorious; may it safeguard and uphold righteousness, and may it lead our nation towards

prosperity and glory. May our country be fully capable of this, and may abundant blessings be upon it.”)

Thank you.

SHRI BADRUDDIN AJMAL (DHUBRI): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am deeply grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this subject. Sir, my colleague has just mentioned that the Hon. Prime Minister was accorded a warm welcome in Dubai, and that discussions on investment also took place there. Earlier, when the Hon. Prime Minister visited Abu Dhabi, the Government there allotted land for a temple, and a temple was constructed. Now, the Hon. Prime Minister is to inaugurate it. This is indeed a welcome development. However, Sir, we must also reflect on another aspect. When messages go abroad suggesting that Muslim girls in our country are being subjected to violence, that they are being attacked, burnt and dishonoured, one can only imagine what impact such reports have on the hearts and minds of people overseas. We need not just one hand, but both hands, to address these issues. The message we wish to convey is this: you are speaking about development, you are presenting ambitious plans, and these plans were also announced four years ago. Every year they are presented in a somewhat changed form. But the question that must now be asked is: how much has actually been achieved? It is time that the Government renders an account of these promises. Sir, we are hearing that elections may take place within a year. This is not merely a matter of numbers within this House, that votes here alone will secure power. It is the same Government, the same people, the

same poor, the same farmers and the same workers who place you in power. And it is they who can also remove you from power. The Government must keep this reality firmly in mind and must be accountable for its actions.

I come from Assam. Today, what is the condition of education there? Much has been said about *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*. There is talk about gas cylinders and about providing facilities to the people. But where has the issue of education reached today? In poor areas, the message of education is not reaching the people. Funds are not reaching those who need them. The dream of road connectivity envisioned by Hon. Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji has still not been fulfilled. Where is the money going? For whose benefit is it being utilised? Hon. Minister for Agriculture is like an elder brother to me, and I share a very cordial relationship with him. I would like to say to him that today, in Assam, agricultural science and farmers are in a very poor condition. You may be sending funds, but you should visit the State, examine the situation on the ground, seek accounts and demand accountability. Only then will the real picture emerge. Merely sending money will not ensure the cultivation of paddy, wheat or rice.

We had hoped that when the Hon. Modi Government came to power, and given the manner in which the Hon. Prime Minister spoke and delivered his speeches, his words would translate into

results. We placed our trust in those assurances. However, after four years, what we see is that in some matters only 10 per cent has been achieved, in others 20 per cent, and in some cases 25 per cent. The public is keeping an account of this. It is the people who are watching, and they are fully aware. The reckoning is reaching them. If indeed something substantive is done in the next eight or nine months, it is possible that the people may consider extending their support again. The Shiv Sena has already announced its separation. Members of the Telugu Desam Party are standing here in protest. All members of Shri Chandrababu Naidu's party are aggrieved. Apart from this, parties in South India are also dissatisfied. These are realities that must be taken into account. ... *(Interruptions)* Sir, you must take everyone along. Merely sitting here will not achieve Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas. ...*(Interruptions)* That is precisely the point. Sir, I do not wish to enter into controversial matters, but I would like to say this. Much concern has been shown regarding Muslim women in the context of the issue of triple talaq. However, Muslim women are also being murdered, cut down and burnt, much like the Nirbhaya case. In Rajasthan, Muslims are being burnt and killed. This message is not being received well across the world. At the very least, these issues must be addressed together. I hope that the Hon. Prime Minister is watching my speech. I request him to also explain to our Hindu brothers that if we wish to work for the

long term, Lord Ram did not teach us to kill people, nor did Lord Krishna teach us to kill people. ... *(Interruptions)* Sir, you may respond to me here. ... *(Interruptions)* You may respond here, but the crores of people of India will not accept violence. Therefore, I urge that sincere efforts be made to move forward on these issues.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have been elected from Assam, and therefore I wish to place before the House the issues concerning Assam. You are aware that Assam faces floods and erosion every year, causing immense devastation and destruction. The loss of life and property is well known. Our first demand is that this be declared a National Calamity. I believe all Members will support this, as it is a matter of humanity. Everything there is being destroyed, and Assam is unable to move forward. The Dhubri-Phulbari Bridge falls within my constituency and is an urgent necessity. I have been a Member of this House for eight or nine years, and from the very first day I have been raising this demand. The DPR has already been prepared. I hope the Government will take note of this and commence the work at the earliest. The Rupsi Airport should be reopened. This airport was operational during the Second World War, but its absence today causes great hardship to the people of the region.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I hope the Government will take note of these matters and act expeditiously. Similarly, the Assam-

Bangladesh border has become our biggest challenge. It is an issue of safety and security. While some suggest fencing, our party demands complete sealing of the border so that the problem of illegal infiltration from Bangladesh is resolved permanently. Rail connectivity across Assam, including areas such as Dhubri, Padpeta, Karimganj and the Bengali villages, should have been far better than it is today. Branches of Aligarh Muslim University have been established in places like Kerala, Kolkata and Kishanganj. I sincerely hope that before the completion of its term, this Government will establish an AMU branch in Dhubri, in my constituency. I request that this be duly noted, as it is a matter of minority education. In the same manner, there is an acute need for a Unani Medical College or an AYUSH Medical College in Dhubri. There is not a single such institution in the entire State of Assam. I request that at least one such institution be established in my constituency, for which I would be most grateful.

In the same manner, there is an acute need for medical colleges and engineering colleges in places such as Karimganj, Nagaon and Dhubri. In Assam, nearly 35 per cent of the population is Muslim, and this community is severely backward in the field of education. If 34 to 35 per cent of the population remains uneducated, neither the State nor the country can progress in any meaningful way. I trust that the Government will give due attention to this matter.

Similarly, across the entire State of Assam, there are only two paper mill industries, one at Nagaon and the other at Karimganj–Badarpur. Both have been closed for the past one year, rendering thousands of people unemployed. I earnestly request the Hon. Minister for Industry and the Hon. Prime Minister to ensure that these units are reopened at the earliest. The fact that Assam has only two such industries and that both have been shut down is a matter of deep concern. I believe that, through you, this message will reach the Government and that these industries will be revived. Likewise, the North East Industrial Policy should be reviewed. Every day, a new industry is being established somewhere in the country, but it is unfortunate that in Assam, an industry seems to be shutting down every day. Assam is also an integral part of this nation.

SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA (AMBALA): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to speak in support of the Budget for the year 2018-19 presented by the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley Ji. The country has been given a visionary Budget of this nature, which embodies a resolve that, in the times to come, India's economy will be among the fastest growing economies in the world and that we shall achieve a GDP growth rate of more than eight per cent. This entire vision has been placed before the nation by the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi Ji, ever since he assumed office. It is for this very reason that India is now poised to become a world leader in the twenty-first century. Wherever the Hon. Prime Minister has travelled across the world, he has presented this economic vision of India before the global community. As a result of this, higher levels of foreign direct investment are today flowing into our country.

SHRI BHAGWANT MANN (SANGRUR): Sir, such serious issues are under discussion, but the House does not have the required quorum. *...(Interruptions)* Sir, the debate from the Treasury Benches is not being conducted seriously. *...(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Quorum is there. Please sit down. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA: Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the United Nations had set the Millennium Development Goals in the year 2000, which were to be achieved by the year 2015. … *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BHAGWANT MANN: Sir, such serious issues are under discussion, but the House does not have the required quorum. … *(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: My ruling is there. Please sit down.

...(Interruptions)

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Quorum is there. Please sit down. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA: Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, eliminating inequality within the country, eradicating poverty, and placing emphasis on education were among these twelve goals. … *(Interruptions)* India has made progress in achieving them. … *(Interruptions)*

SHRI BHAGWANT MANN: Sir, there is no quorum. *…(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have given you the ruling. The Quorum is there. Please sit down.

…(Interruptions)

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am telling you that the Quorum is there. Please sit down.

…(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI BHAGWANT MANN: Sir, a very serious issue is under discussion. *…(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: You asked about Quorum, I am telling you that the Quorum is there. Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA: Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by India in 2015 are reflected in this Budget, which demonstrates our commitment to achieving all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. It sets out how we propose to build infrastructure and advance development across the agriculture sector, health sector, education sector, employment sector and the MSME sector. … *(Interruptions)*

Today, a revolutionary decision has been taken in the health sector, namely, the provision of health assurance of up to Rs. 5 lakh for ten crore families under this Budget. Experts in the relevant fields are of the view that India can truly emerge as a great nation only when its education system and health system are strengthened. It is for this reason that the Hon. Finance Minister has accorded priority to both the health and education sectors.

Secondly, India is a nation of villages. Unless development reaches our villages, progress cannot be truly inclusive. In this context, the commitment made in the Budget to double farmers' income, along with the provision of agricultural credit amounting to Rs. 11 lakh crore, will prove to be a game changer. Likewise, the allocation of Rs. 75,000 crore for Self Help Groups will make a

significant contribution to the empowerment of women across the country. The decision to develop 22,000 rural haats is a revolutionary step towards strengthening the agricultural infrastructure in rural areas. Similarly, an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore for animal husbandry will further reinforce the rural economy. … *(Interruptions)* Sir, I have only just begun to speak. Road connectivity, maritime connectivity, air connectivity and rail connectivity are four critical pillars for steering any nation towards progress and greatness. I support the provisions made in the Budget for all these four sectors, as they will generate employment for crores of people across India in the years to come. Under the Modi vision, the scope for employment in our country is steadily expanding. The Hon. Prime Minister's address at Davos, particularly his emphasis on climate change and his strong stand against protectionism, has earned widespread appreciation. The policies adopted by India have inspired global confidence and are attracting investment from across the world into our country.

Sir, I support this Budget, and I am fully confident that in the times to come, as India advances towards becoming a *Vishwaguru* in the 21st century, the resolve taken by the Hon. Prime Minister will be fulfilled. Today, the entire world is acknowledging the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister and is standing with India.

[English]

***SHRI M. MURLI MOHAN (RAJAHMUNDRY):** At the very outset, on behalf of my Chief Minister, Shri Nara Chandra Babu Naidu garu, and TDP MPs from Andhra Pradesh, I express my sincere thanks to all political parties cutting across the party lines who stood by us for supporting our cause with regard to implementation of AP Reorganistaton Act, 2014.

The people of Andhra Pradesh had a hope on this NDA Government. The unscientific bifurcation of this State, we have lost all revenue resources including all premier institutions. It was widely felt that the NDA Government- led by Shri Narendra Modi ji, Hon. PM would render justice to the State of AP at least in this Budget and extend his cooperation with regard to implementation of AP Reorganisation Act, 2014 including financial support for construction of new capital city, incentives for setting up new industries, funds for Externally Aided projects etc. as our TDP MPs including me raised in this August House and other colleagues in Rajya Sabha in various times to fulfil all promises/ assurances made in the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014 as A.P. is reeling under financial deficit. However, despite the fact that nearly four years are going to elapse by now, not a single assurance made in the AP

*Speech was laid on the Table.

re-organization Act 2014 has been implemented. We have no wherewithal for construction of new capital city at Amaravathi and funds for the welfare schemes of our State. I would expect the Government at least to stop dilly-dally attitude and come out with their stand on implementation of AP Reorganization Act, 2014.

In this background, I would like to ask some specific questions and demand from the Hon. Finance Minister on the following issues:

a) Whether the Union Government is fully committed to implement the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 regarding major issues like establishment of Separate Railway Zone with headquarters at Visakhapatnam, setting up of new Steel Plant at Kadapa District, construction of new major Post Trust at Duggirajupatnam, Nellore and funds to Polavaram National Irrigation Project and construction of New Capital City at Amaravathi etc, and also Special Financial Package in place of Special Category Status, funds for metro rail at Visakhatpatnam, Vijaywada etc?

b) Whether the Government has fixed any timeline to fulfil the assurances made in the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014?

c) The reasons for delay in implementing the aforementioned issues?

Thank you.

[Translation]

[*]**SHRIMATI VEENA DEVI (MUNGER):** I express my gratitude for, and extend my support to, the historic General Budget 2018-19 presented by the Hon. Finance Minister, which is focused on farmers and rural areas. Advancing with the vision of a New India, the Modi Government has infused renewed strength into its agenda through the General Budget 2018–19. The Government is moving forward with progressive ideas. India's economy stands at Rs. 160 lakh crore, making it the world's seventh-largest economy, and it will soon become the fifth-largest economy. By placing special emphasis on the rural economy, which is considered the backbone of the country's economy, the Hon. Finance Minister has further sharpened the economic policy. In the General Budget 2018–19, the welfare of villages, the poor and farmers, along with the empowerment of women, has been taken up as a mission.

My Lok Sabha constituency of Munger comprises Patna Rural, Lakhisarai and Munger districts. My parliamentary constituency of Munger is the most backward region in the State of Bihar. Therefore, special attention needs to be given to this region in the General Budget 2018–19. While drawing the attention of the Hon.

[*]Speech was laid on the Table.

Finance Minister to the following points, I hope for additional budgetary support for the Lok Sabha constituency of Munger.

For the Mokama Tal region, which is the only major pulse-producing area in the State of Bihar, spread over 1,062 square kilometres with 1.06 lakh hectares of land, measures are required for drainage of waterlogging and protection from drought. By opening channels to connect the Tal region with the River Ganga through cuts, farmers will benefit and their incomes will also increase. In this Tal region, 95 per cent of the cultivation is of lentils, while 5 per cent comprises chickpea, peas and other crops. The Mokama Tal region can supply pulses for six months of the year for the entire country. The soil of the Tal region is extremely fertile, and there is potential for cultivating three crops annually in this area. The Tal region, spread across nine districts of the State of Bihar, is known as the Mokama Tal area. There is a need to announce the construction of a dam in this Tal region. Once the dam is constructed, the water requirements of farmers can be adequately met and, instead of a single crop, as many as three crops can be cultivated annually. The development of the Mokama Tal region will greatly benefit the farmers of my parliamentary constituency. With the development of this region, farmers will be able to bridge the shortage of pulses and oilseeds in the country. This will reduce the need to import pulses and oilseeds from other countries and will

also ensure the prosperity of farmers. For this purpose, additional budgetary provision is required in the General Budget 2018–19.

In the General Budget 2018–19, the National Health Protection Scheme has been launched. My Lok Sabha constituency of Munger is affected by Left Wing Extremism and is also prone to floods, besides having hilly terrain. This region is the most backward area of the State of Bihar and, as a result, has the highest concentration of poor people. For medical treatment during illness, people from this area are compelled to travel to Bhagalpur, Kolkata, Begusarai or Patna, which leads to substantial expenditure on treatment. Therefore, the district hospitals located in the districts falling under the parliamentary constituency of Munger should be upgraded into medical colleges and hospitals. There is also a pressing need for an All India Institute of Medical Sciences in this region. Hence, I request that additional budgetary allocation be made under the National Health Protection Scheme for my parliamentary constituency of Munger.

A large part of my parliamentary constituency of Munger is hilly and affected by Left Wing Extremism. There is a serious lack of primary education facilities in this region, as a result of which young children are compelled to go outside the area for schooling. For higher education, children from my constituency are forced to leave not only the district but even the State of Bihar. There is an

acute shortage of institutions for engineering, medical and other higher education in Bihar. Consequently, only children from well-off families are able to pursue education outside the State. Since Independence, Bihar has remained backward, and successive governments have failed to make any concrete efforts for its development. Once left behind, the State has repeatedly been pushed further back. In comparison with other States, Bihar has a large number of meritorious students who, whenever given an opportunity, continue to demonstrate their capabilities and bring credit to the country, a fact acknowledged nationally and internationally. Therefore, it is imperative that serious efforts be made to establish engineering and medical colleges, IITs, universities and other institutions of higher learning in Bihar, so that the State's youth may receive quality education within the State itself.

My parliamentary constituency of Munger lacks basic infrastructure such as roads, rail connectivity and airport facilities, despite the fact that one of the country's oldest and most important railway workshops is located at Jamalpur in Munger district. This workshop has contributed significantly to the Indian Railways over the years. However, it has not been modernised and continues to function with outdated systems and methods, as a result of which this renowned railway workshop is no longer able to achieve its full

potential. Munger is also home to Raja Karna's fort, several tourist and religious sites, and India's first Yoga University. Tourists from across the country and from abroad visit Munger. However, due to the absence of adequate rail and air connectivity, the number of tourists has declined sharply. If proper railway services and air connectivity are provided in Munger, tourism will receive a significant boost. There is a very old airport in Munger, but its present condition is dilapidated. Therefore, in the current financial year, there is an urgent need to allocate additional funds to make the Munger airport operational and to improve railway infrastructure in the region.

My parliamentary constituency of Munger was once part of the ancient Anga Kingdom ruled by Raja Karna. Even today, Raja Karna's fort stands in Munger district, along with several famous temples and heritage sites constructed by him. Unfortunately, due to the lack of adequate attention by both the Union Government and the Government of Bihar, and because these sites have not been properly notified or developed as tourist destinations, Raja Karna's fort and many renowned temples and heritage sites are in a state of neglect and gradual decay. I, therefore, urge that in the General Budget 2018-19, adequate funds be provided for the conservation and protection of the heritage sites in Munger, and that Raja Karna's fort and the temples built by him be developed and maintained as

centrally recognised tourist destinations through enhanced financial allocation.

Therefore, with the above points, I extend my strong support to the General Budget 2018-19 and respectfully urge the Hon. Finance Minister to give due consideration to these matters.

Regards,

***SHRI VISHNU DAYAL RAM (PALAMU):** I am grateful for the opportunity to place my views on the Budget 2018-19, which is dedicated to the theme *"Prosperous Farmers, Healthy India."* Through the General Budget 2018-19, after a long time, there is renewed hope that the winds of development will not always flow only from cities to villages, but that in a country of villages like India, rural areas too will develop with confidence and dignity.

If the vision and efforts of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji and Hon. Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley ji move from policy to effective implementation on the ground, *New India* will not be far away. That *New India* where villages stand shoulder to shoulder with cities, migration becomes a thing of the past, and the nation may be freed from the unfortunate curse of farmer suicides.

The Budget provides that, in order to ensure fair prices for the produce of small and marginal farmers, small rural haats and markets will be developed into mandis. For this purpose, 22,000 such rural markets have been identified across the States. Their infrastructure development will be supported through MGNREGA and other schemes. These markets have also been exempted from the mandi laws (APMC Act). In these mandis, farmers will be able to sell their produce directly to consumers and wholesale buyers.

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*Speech was laid on the Table.

Earlier, due to distortions in the mandi laws, farmers were unable to avail themselves of this facility. These mandis have also been kept outside the purview of e-NAM (National Agriculture Market). The announcement of providing water to every field and increasing the Minimum Support Price for Kharif crops to one and a half times the cost of production, with a view to improving the financial condition of farmers, will prove to be far-reaching steps. These measures will enhance farmers' incomes and significantly improve the overall picture of rural India.

At a time when the entire world is looking towards India, the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister have taken concrete steps to translate the dream of farmers' prosperity and a healthy India into reality. Advancing further on the path of building *New India*, the launch of the world's largest "**National Health Protection Scheme"** is a welcome step. This ambitious scheme will benefit ten crore families, that is, nearly fifty crore people. It will not only contribute to an increase in the life expectancy of the common Indian citizen but will also curb the arbitrariness of the private health sector. In addition, the provision of Rs. 1.38 lakh crore in the Budget by the Hon. Finance Minister for various schemes related to the development of the education and social sectors is a commendable initiative. As a result, the country will move steadily towards an improved *ease of living*.

The effective harnessing of the young population is possible only through employment-oriented and quality higher education. In this direction, the proposed investment of Rs. 1 lakh crore over the next four years to strengthen the higher education framework is a significant initiative. This amount will be utilised to promote research and infrastructure. The "**RISE" (Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education)** initiative is an important step taken by the Government to strengthen the higher education sector. The financing of this initiative will be undertaken through "HEFA", the Higher Education Financing Agency, and these measures will enable our higher educational institutions to attain global standards. The **Prime Minister's Research Fellowship (PMRF) initiative** announced in the Budget is also a welcome step.

The Government has taken several important steps towards women's empowerment. In this direction, under the **"Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao"** initiative and the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, the original target of providing free LPG connections to 5 crore women has, in view of the scheme's popularity, been enhanced in this Budget to 8 crore poor women. Similarly, keeping in view the objectives of "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao", the Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme, launched in January 2015, has proved to be highly successful. Under this scheme, 1.26 crore accounts have been opened in the names of girl children across the country, with total deposits amounting to Rs. 19,183 crore.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are among the principal drivers of national growth and employment generation. In this context, the allocation of Rs. 3,794 crore for the MSME sector towards credit support, capital and interest subsidy, and innovation is a commendable initiative. Following demonetisation and the implementation of GST, the effective scale of operations of small and medium enterprises has been expanding. This process is creating a robust financial information database for MSMEs, which will facilitate improved financing of their capital requirements, including working capital needs. In addition, the fixation of a target of Rs. 3 lakh crore under the Mudra Scheme for the financial year 2018–19 will further accelerate momentum in this

sector. Besides these measures, the Budget provides for employment generation through tax incentives to companies creating new jobs in the organised sector, as well as through the development of basic infrastructure in rural areas. Furthermore, the proposal to establish Skill Development Centres in every district to enhance the employability of youth is also a laudable step.

The Budget for 2018-19 has taken due care to ensure that the slogan of building a **"New India"** does not remain confined only to cities or to a particular section of society. In this regard, the Hon. Finance Minister has accorded special importance to the ambitious Smart Cities Mission. Keeping this objective in view, an allocation of Rs. 41,765 crore has been made for the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for the next financial year. As compared to Rs. 40,618 crore in the current financial year, this represents an increase of 2.82 per cent. Government is also committed to provide free electricity for lighting along with housing to the poor. For this, a target has been set to provide electricity to every household through the Prime Minister Sahaj Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya).

The Government is also committed to providing housing for the poor along with access to electricity. Under the **Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya)**, a target has been set to ensure electricity connectivity to every household in the country.

Overall, I am of the considered view that this Budget has given balanced attention to all sectors, ranging from agriculture to infrastructure. It is farmer-friendly, supportive of the common citizen, and conducive to improving the business environment in the country. Taken together, this Budget will accelerate the pace of development and give fresh momentum to the vision of a New India.

[English]

*__SHRI NISHIKANT DUBEY (GODDA):__ Economic Performance Global economy the world economic output rebounded in 2017 with a growth rate of 3.7% as compared to an eight year low growth of 3.2% in 2016. As per the IMF, the year 2017 witnessed “the broadest synchronised global growth upsurge since 2010.” The pickup in growth has been broad based, with notable surprises in Europe and Asia. While the advanced economies are estimated to grow by 2.3%, the EMDEs are estimated to grow by 4.7% in 2017. China remains the fastest growing major economy in the world growing at 6.8% followed by India at 6.7%. The forecast for the coming years also appears positive, reflecting the increasing global momentum. Global economic output is slated to grow by 3.9% in 2018 and 2019. The recently approved USA tax policy changes are seen as a key contributor to this increased growth rate. In particular, corporate income tax cuts in the USA are expected to stimulate economic activity. Growth rates for many of the Eurozone economies have also been revised upwards, especially for Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, reflecting the stronger momentum in domestic demand and higher external demand. Growth is expected to pick up

*Speech was laid on the Table.

in India, moderate gradually in China and remain broadly stable in the Asian economies with India possibly again occupying the fastest growing economy position in FY 2018-19. However, risks may threaten the global economy, and consequently, the Indian economy. The build-up of financial vulnerabilities remains a key concern. As noted in the October 2017 Global Financial Stability Report, the share of companies with low investment grade rating in advanced economy bond indices has increased significantly in recent years.

Non-financial corporate debt has also grown rapidly in some emerging markets, calling for a policy response. Furthermore, an increase in trade barriers and regulatory realignments would weigh on global investment and may pose as an obstacle for increased global output. Along with this, a rise in commodity prices may also adversely impact the non-OPEC countries.

Indian economy, the figures for FY18 show that the Indian economy faced a temporary slowdown on the back of reform measures such as GST and demonetisation. While the economy continues to be the seventh largest in the world (third largest in PPP terms), the growth rates are at a four year low. Both IMF and World Bank estimate that India's economy will grow by 6.7% in FY 2017-18. Advance estimates by CSO suggest that the economy will grow by 6.5% in this fiscal year. Subdued domestic demand, especially

in the first half of the year, remained the major concern for the economy. The GDP at market prices in Q1 FY 2017-18 was recorded at 5.72%, which was the lowest in 12 quarters. Partially, this was due to sluggish performance by the industry segment. Apart from this, growth in Government expenditure which was the key driver in the previous year, also fell in this year. In the first half of 2017-18, the Government Final Consumption Expenditure grew by 10.7% as opposed to 16.5% in the same period of the previous year. However, notably, India is still one of the best performing economies in the world, despite this temporary blip. GDP growth has averaged 7.3% for the period from 2014-15 to 2017-18, which is the highest among the major economies of the world. The growth is around 4% higher than world average of last 3 years and nearly 3% more than the average growth achieved by EMDEs. The economy has shown signs of recovery in the second half of the year. Industrial production for instance, has picked up after bottoming out in June 2017. In November, IIP growth surged to a 25 month high on the back of a manufacturing boost. Similarly, other metrics such as vehicle sales, cement production and bank credit present an optimistic scenario for the economy.

The broad macro-economic indicators for the economy are as follows: GDP growth: The GDP is expected to grow at 6.5% this fiscal (2017-18), according to the first advance estimates of the

CSO as against 7.1% in the previous year. This is primarily due to a lower growth in agriculture (2.1% v 4.9% in 2016-17) and industry (4.4% v 5.6% in 2016-17). Services, on the other hand, are expected to grow faster in this fiscal year (8.3% from 7.8% in 2016-17). Inflation: Retail inflation fell sharply in the first half of the year, declining to a five year low of 1.6% in June 2017. This was partly due to a fall in global crude prices, food prices and because of lower domestic demand. Post June2017, there was a continuous rise in inflation, rising up to 5.21%. However, the average for the year to date (April to December) stood at 3.23%, which was lower than 5.47% during the same period in previous year. Fiscal deficit: Fiscal deficit as percentage of GDP for FY 2017-18 is revised to 3.5% from 3.2% budgeted. Further, the Government aims to bring down fiscal deficit to 3.3% of GDP in FY 2018-19. This is on account of rising revenue deficit to 2.6%. Trade deficit: India's trade deficit increased by 33% during April to November 2017, when it stood at $102.1 billion, as opposed to USD 67.8 billion in the corresponding period of the previous year. This was primarily due to a 22% increase in imports as against only 11% increase in exports. Both oil and non-oil imports grew in roughly the same proportion. Currency: the rupee appreciated by 4.14%, as it stood at an average of 64.4 per USD during April 2017 to January 2018 against an average of 67.19 per USD during the same period

in the previous year. Fiscal consolidation continuing on fiscal consolidation path, the Government had set the fiscal deficit target of 3.2% for FY 2017-18 down from 3.5% in FY 2016-17. This was aimed to be achieved despite uncertainties arising out of implementation of GST, demonetisation and rising crude oil prices. There was a slippage in fiscal deficit target by 0.3% in FY 2017-18 as the fiscal deficit was revised to 3.5% of GDP for FY 2017-18. Similarly, revenue deficit is revised upward to 2.6% in FY 2017-18 from budget target of 1.9% of GDP. One of the reasons is the shortfall in non-tax revenue collection and rise in expenditure in this financial year. The non-tax revenue collection during April - November 2017 declined by 39% to INR 1.05 trillion over non-tax revenue collection of INR 1.75 trillion in the corresponding period of the previous year. Total expenditure in the year 2017-18 has increased by 3% over budget estimate. Further, fiscal deficit is pegged at 3.3% for FY 2018-19. This looks achievable, given the upward trajectory in growth, buoyant direct taxes and stabilisation in the GST. The Government has proposed to accept the recommendations of the Fiscal Reform and Budget Management Committee relating to adopting debt rule and to bring down the centre's debt-to-GDP ratio to 40%. Currently, the debt-to-GDP ratio for the centre alone is approximately 48%. An announcement with regard to timelines of achieving this target may be done in future.

Further, the Government has also accepted the recommendation to use the fiscal deficit target as the key operational parameter. Impact of demonetisation: The Government withdrew the status of legal tender of INR 500 and 1000 currency notes on 8 November, 2016, thereby, withdrawing 86% of the currency in circulation. There are various opinions on the probable impacts of demonetisation on the economy, both on its short-term and long term impacts. Economic survey suggests that the negative impact of demonetisation has receded as the cash-to-GDP ratio has stabilised and has forecast growth to be between 7% and 7.5% in FY 2018-19. Some of the impacts can be noted as follows:

- The withdrawal of high value currency notes led to a liquidity stock, thereby, affected demand and production, especially in informal cash driven sectors. This might have contributed to the slow growth rate realised in first half of FY 2018.
- Economic Survey 2017-18 finds demonetisation-cum-GST has increased tax base by 1.8 million additional taxpayers, though these new filers did not contribute any taxes as they were close to thresholds of 0.25 million. However, in the long run, with income growth, this may increase revenue of the Government.

- Demonetisation, along with various measures taken by Government to promote digital payment, boosted transactions through systems such as NEFT, debit and credit cards, cheques, prepaid wallets, UPI and mobile banking etc. as per the RBI's Annual Report, in the month of December 2016, transactions of 957 million were made, as compared to 671 million in the preceding month, but the volume has since come down to 862 million transactions in July 2017, indicating moderation of the initial rapid growth.

Key reforms in 2017-18 in the current fiscal year, the Government continued with its reform agenda. Some of the most notable reform measures are as follows: Goods and Services Tax on 1 July, 2017 the Government launched the GST, which has replaced the complex multiple indirect tax structure. The act transformed India into one market with one tax rate. PSU bank recapitalisation in October 2017, the Finance Ministry announced INR 2.11 trillion recapitalisation plan for PSU banks over the next two years. Of the total amount, INR 1.35 trillion would come from recapitalisation bonds, INR 181.39 billion from the Centre's budgetary funds and the remaining INR 580 billion would be mopped up from capital market by diluting the Government's equity. Capital infusion was a long standing demand of state-owned banks, as the asset qualities of these banks have grossly worsened due to increasing non-

performing assets. The Government's announcement also led to improvements in the country's sovereign rating. Disinvestment with objectives to efficiently manage its investment in CPSEs and exit from the non-strategic business, Government launched DIPAM scheme in 2016. The proceeds from disinvestment in FY 2017-18 stood INR 1 trillion as against budgeted INR 725 billion for 2017-18. The Government took various measures with regard to disinvestment, which require mention here. In February 2017, the Government launched procedure for time bound listing of CPSEs on stock exchanges. The Government also approved listing of 14 CPSEs (including two insurance companies) on the stock exchanges. During the current financial year, four IPO issues of HUDCO, Cochin Shipyard Ltd. (CSL), General Insurance Corporation and New India Assurance Company, Ltd. have been successfully listed on the stock exchange. Further, the Government sold its entire stake in HPCL to ONGC which would fetch INR 369.15 billion for the Government. In November, 2017, the Government launched Bharat 22 ETF compromising shares of 22 CPSEs to raise money from the market, which received an overwhelming response across all classes of investors. In June 2017, the Government formally approved the privatisation of national airline Air India Ltd. And five of its subsidiaries and allowed foreign airlines to own upto 49% stake in national carrier.

Dynamic fuel pricing in June 2017, India joined the league of select countries such as the USA and Australia where fuel prices are revised on a daily basis. The three state-owned oil marketing companies- Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation-- are since rolling out the daily dynamic pricing mechanism for petrol and diesel. Under the dynamic pricing scheme, petrol and diesel prices are revised on a daily basis in sync with global crude oil prices. Banking Regulation (Amendment Bill), 2017, in August 2017, the Government passed the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2017, which empowers the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to give directions to banks to act against loan defaulters. The bill came after an ordinance was promulgated in May, as immediate action was required to combat the unacceptably high levels of stressed assets in banking system. Liberalisation of FDI policy: The Government of India, in continuity with its motto of attracting foreign investment and ease of doing business in India, has made changes to the FDI policy across sectors in single brand retail trading, 100% FDI is permitted under the automatic route. For real estate broking services, it is clarified that such services do not amount to real estate business and 100% FDI is permitted under the automatic route.

For the current fiscal year (2017-18), the CSO estimates the GDP to grow by 6.5%. the estimates by the Economic Survey on

the other hand as well as by multilateral agencies such as the IMF and World Bank suggest that growth may be somewhere in the range of 6.7-6.75%.

- The growth is expected to further increase in the next fiscal year, with the Economic Survey forecasting a growth rate in the range of 7-7. 5%. This is in line with the predictions by IMF (7. 4%) and World Bank (7. 3%). These figures would mean that India would overtake China as the fastest growing major economy in the world.
- The growth projections seem achievable given the recent signs of revival in investment activity as well as a spike in bank credit. More importantly, the Government's intention to go ahead with gritty reforms may boost growth rates. Bank recapitalisation and implementation of the IBC 2016 is likely to boost credit growth and investments. The smoothening of the GST processes along with further liberalisation of FDI will also help in spurring growth.
- A spike in oil prices in the next fiscal year could pose as a downside risk for the economy. Oil prices have risen by around 14% in the current fiscal year and are projected to further rise by roughly 12% in 2018-19 (IMF). As per the CEA, GDP may be impacted by 0.2% and 0.3%, inflation will

be higher by 0.2-0.3% and current account deficit will widen if oil prices were to rise by USD 10 per barrel.

- From a macro perspective, India will need to deal with two vulnerabilities: fiscal and current accounts. Both of these trend to deteriorate when oil prices pick up rapidly. On the fiscal front, the increased tax base post demonetisation and GST should result in a more comfortable position in the medium term. As far as the current account is concerned, raising the growth trajectory of exports will be crucial in order to avoid further deterioration. The economic survey highlights that reviving manufacturing and making the sector internationally competitive have been the twin goals of the Make in India program. Hence, this shift in policy is expected to boost exports and reduce the deficit in the current account.
- Favourable global conditions are further expected to help the Indian economy meet its growth ambitions. As per the IMF, world output is expected to grow by 3.9% in 2019-2020. This forecast reflects the expectation that favourable global financial conditions and strong sentiments will help maintain the recent acceleration in export demand.

[Translation]

SHRI KAUSHALENDRA KUMAR (NALANDA): I am grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to participate in the discussion on the Union Budget for 2018-19.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Budget presented by the Hon. Finance Minister this year is one that will impart momentum to the country's economy, ensure inclusive development, make the lives of citizens easier, provide insurance coverage to ten crore families, double farmers' income, and fulfil the dream of a New India. For this, I congratulate the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister. Under the able leadership of the Hon. Finance Minister, an inclusive Budget has been presented with due regard for the interests of the common people. Provision has been made for the development of 124 airports, an allocation of Rs. 1,48,000 crore for the Railways, and Rs. 2,04,000 crore for Smart Cities. This Budget appears distinct from earlier Budgets. Under the budgetary provisions, the allocation for the Regional Air Connectivity Scheme has been increased fivefold to Rs. 10.14 lakh crore. An amount of Rs. 5.97 lakh crore will be spent on infrastructure during 2018–19. For roads, Rs. 916.63 crore has been allocated to the National Highways Authority of India, and nearly 9,000 kilometres of National Highways have already been constructed. Under the Bharatmala Project, an expenditure of Rs. 5,35,000 crore has been

proposed for the construction of 35,000 kilometres of roads. A historic health insurance scheme for the poor, with an outlay of Rs. 12,000 crore, is being introduced, under which financial assistance of up to Rs. 5 lakh will be provided for the treatment of ten crore families. Under the Ujjwala Scheme, about 3.31 crore beneficiaries have already received benefits, and free LPG connections will be provided to nearly eight crore families. The proposal to connect all villages in more than 700 districts with the Internet is highly commendable. An allocation of Rs. 56,219 crore has been made for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes, and Rs. 39,135 crore for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes.

By 2022, the Hon. Prime Minister has spoken of providing a house to every poor person and ensuring electricity for every household. Several programmes have been implemented to expand employment opportunities. Concrete steps have been announced to address credit-related issues of the MSME sector, which generates large-scale employment. Entities with a turnover of up to Rs. 250 crore have been granted a five per cent reduction in corporate tax. Earlier, they paid tax at the rate of 30 per cent; now they will pay 25 per cent. Measures have been taken to contain inflation. Economic relief has been provided to the middle and lower income groups, and salaried employees have been granted an additional standard deduction of Rs. 40,000 in income tax. Special relief has

been announced for soldiers. An additional Rs. 1,00,000 crore has been allocated for higher education. Rs. 11,00,000 crore has been earmarked for Kisan Credit Card holders. To ensure that farmers receive fair prices, Rs. 500 crore has been provided; Rs. 200 crore has been allocated for reforms in agricultural markets; and Rs. 10,000 crore has been provided for dairy development. These are historic decisions. The action being taken by the Government against black money is highly commendable. It has curbed corruption and will continue to do so in the future.

I would like to make a request to the Hon. Prime Minister and also place certain demands concerning Bihar. The Bihar Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council have sent a proposal to the Union Government seeking Special Category Status for Bihar. I request that this demand for granting Special Category Status to Bihar be fulfilled. I also demand that, under the Ujjwala Scheme, all families in Nalanda district be provided with gas connections and that Nalanda be declared a 100 per cent gas-connection nodal district. I further request that the Ultra Power Project approved at Banka in Bihar be started at the earliest. Out of the proposed 24 new Medical Colleges, I propose that at least four Medical Colleges be established in Bihar. Given that Bihar has a population of 11 crore, it deserves at least four Medical Colleges. Bihar was allotted an AIIMS hospital last year, but there has been no significant progress

in its work. Through you, I request that the work on this AIIMS be expedited.

The AIIMS that already exists there has indeed commenced operations, but it is not yet fully functional. Several specialist doctors have not joined so far. My demand is that the AIIMS be made fully operational at the earliest. Patna University should be converted into a Central University. The Rs. 7,200 crore Flood Relief Fund for Bihar has not yet been released; I request the Hon. Minister to release this amount. The Hon. Prime Minister had announced an economic package of Rs. 1,65,000 crore for Bihar; this amount should also be allocated. A Central University should also be established at Bihar Sharif, which has been included under the Smart Cities Mission.

I congratulate the Government on the implementation of GST. This will lead to higher revenues for the States. I urge that the system be upgraded at the earliest so that traders do not face difficulties. The penalties being imposed do not appear reasonable. An estimated GDP growth rate of 7.5 per cent will further strengthen the country’s economy. The projected agricultural growth of 2.1 per cent has brought cheer to farmers. Every year, crores of families in Bihar are affected by floods, primarily due to the excessive inflow of water from Nepal during the monsoon. I therefore urge the Government to engage with the Government of

Nepal to arrive at a permanent solution. The problem of silt in the Ganga should be addressed urgently. Due to the Farakka Barrage, silt has accumulated in the Ganga across large parts of Bihar.

Sir, I would like to place before the House a few demands relating to my parliamentary constituency and the State of Bihar. I would like to urge that a dedicated relief fund be created to deal with drought, and that assistance from this fund be extended to all States as required. I would also request that regional airports be developed at Nalanda, Purnia, Darbhanga, Muzaffarpur and Bhagalpur at the earliest. I further submit that petrol and diesel prices be rationalised so as to provide relief to consumers. I would also like to propose the establishment of a five-star hotel and an international library at Rajgir in Nalanda, in view of its historical and tourism significance. I also propose that at least five more cities in Bihar be declared as Smart Cities. With regard to urban transport, the Patna Metro Rail project is proposed to be established. I request that this metro network be extended to Nalanda, Hajipur and Bodh Gaya, so that a larger population of the State may benefit from improved connectivity. I submit these demands for the kind consideration of the Government.

[*]**DR. KARAN SINGH YADAV (ALWAR):** The presentation of the Budget for the year 2018-19 is merely a matter of formality. Through this Budget, the Hon. Finance Minister has once again resorted to the same old, time-worn claims and assurances.

In this last Budget of the Modi Government, there is little substance beyond hollow announcements. Even in the BJP's election manifesto, there was talk of increasing farmers' income by one-and-a-half times, but over the past four years these announcements have remained confined to paper alone. This time again, the Budget speech has promised the implementation of the Swaminathan Commission's recommendations.

Widespread farmers' movements and the continuing incidents of suicides clearly indicate that the condition of farmers has gone from bad to worse over the last four years.

Indian farmers have been agitating primarily around two demands, namely, "remunerative agricultural prices" and "freedom from debt". There was an expectation that the Budget would announce some form of loan waiver, but the Hon. Finance Minister has disappointed them. Recently, this Government has written off massive loans of corporate houses through bank recapitalisation. This clearly shows that the Government is a supporter of the

[*] Speech was laid on the Table

corporate world, and not of the poor and ordinary farmer. For political expediency, loans of some farmers were waived in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, but the voice of the poor farmers of Rajasthan is heard neither by the Union Government nor by the State Government.

An announcement regarding minimum support price has indeed been made, but in the absence of procurement centres run by the Government and its agencies in the market, farmers are being compelled to sell their produce at very low prices. I place these views before the House.

In my own Lok Sabha constituency of Alwar, there is substantial production of mustard and bajra. Against the minimum support price of Rs. 3,700 per quintal declared by the Government for mustard, farmers are being compelled to sell their produce at prices ranging between Rs. 3,300 and Rs. 3,400 per quintal. Unless the Government itself procures agricultural produce at the minimum support price, or introduces a mechanism to compensate farmers for the difference between the market price and the support price, the condition of farmers will not improve.

During the tenure of the previous UPA Government, farmers were provided crop loans at zero interest and a bonus of Rs. 150 per quintal on wheat, which has since been discontinued. It is also the

responsibility of the Government to keep under control the rising prices of electricity and the continuously increasing cost of diesel.

The salaried employees and pensioners, who await the Union Budget with the greatest anticipation, have been left disappointed by this Budget. The public had hoped for changes and relief in the income tax slabs. As far as the standard deduction of Rs. 40,000 in income tax is concerned, this too appears to be merely a populist measure. In return, by withdrawing the transport and medical allowances, the Government has effectively taken back Rs. 34,200. Such an act of deception against the ordinary middle-class taxpayer will prove to be detrimental for the Modi Government.

The Government claims that it is launching the world's largest health insurance scheme. It has asserted that health insurance cover of up to Rs. 5 lakh will be provided to 50 crore people belonging to 10 crore families. However, the Budget announcement does not clearly specify the source from which the funds required to implement this scheme will be mobilised. According to a rough estimate, an expenditure of nearly Rs. 50 lakh crore would be required to provide such health insurance cover. It appears that, rather than patients, insurance companies and private hospitals are likely to be the principal beneficiaries of this scheme. It is noteworthy that following the Budget announcement, while the stock market witnessed a downturn, the shares that recorded an

increase in value were those of private hospital companies. In Rajasthan, a similar scheme, the ‘Bhamashah Scheme’, has largely benefited private hospitals, and owing to its technical and complex procedures, poor people are often deprived of treatment.

In contrast, the scheme of free diagnostic tests and free treatment in Government hospitals, initiated by the previous Ashok Gehlot Government in Rajasthan, proved to be far more effective and beneficial. The Union Government should study the Rajasthan Government’s Gehlot model and invest more substantially in the public healthcare sector.

The Budget has also presented the vision of establishing, on average, one medical college for every three parliamentary constituencies to strengthen health infrastructure. However, the actions of the Union Government over the past four years have been contrary to this stated objective.

By way of illustration, I would like to draw attention to a case from my own constituency, Alwar. An ESIC hospital and medical college, constructed at a cost of Rs. 800 crore during the tenure of the UPA-I and UPA-II Governments, were completed in 2016, yet have remained non-operational ever since. After completion of the construction, the Uttar Pradesh Rajkiya Nirman Limited has, since October 2016, repeatedly written to the ESIC Corporation

requesting it to take over the building. However, the Government has shown complete apathy in taking possession of the facility. As a result, the building is today being guarded merely by 20 to 30 watchmen, and bats have made it their habitat.

When the Ministry of Labour has been unable to provide any medical services for the past three years in a building constructed at a cost of Rs. 800 crore, what confidence can the public repose in such a Government?

I would urge the Hon. Minister for Labour to immediately take over the ESIC Medical College and Hospital building at Alwar, ensure the prompt appointment of doctors and nurses, equip the hospital with necessary medical infrastructure, and make quality healthcare facilities available to the people of Alwar and the working class at the earliest.

While promises have been made in the Budget for the development of the Railways, the actual financial provision is grossly inadequate. Priority must be accorded to projects that were approved earlier but remain pending. Keeping in view the convenience of people commuting daily for employment from the areas surrounding the National Capital Delhi, and with a view to reducing population pressure on Delhi, the National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) under the Ministry of Urban

Development had approved the operation of a railway line from Delhi to Alwar, covering a distance of 180 kilometres, under the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS). This project was envisaged to benefit major towns such as Gurugram, Rewari and Khairthal. The identification of stations, survey work and even the Detailed Project Report (DPR) had already been completed, and a decision had been taken to complete the first phase by the year 2016. However, the present Government has consigned this important project to cold storage. I would urge the Hon. Minister for Urban Development and the Hon. Minister for Railways to take up this project without further delay.

My Lok Sabha constituency has been grappling with an acute shortage of drinking water for several years. During the tenure of the previous Government, a scheme had been formulated by the Union and State Ministries of Water Resources to bring Chambal river water to Alwar, but this project has since been stalled. I would earnestly request that this water supply scheme be revived and implemented on a priority basis.

Following demonetisation and the implementation of GST by the Modi Government, there has been an unprecedented rise in unemployment. Providing employment opportunities to local youth must be our foremost priority.

Hon. Shri Arun Jaitley ji and Hon. Shri Narendra Modi ji must understand the problems faced by the people. The manner in which the last four years have passed makes it evident that the forthcoming public mandate will go against them. This change is already reflected in the verdict of the three by-elections held in Rajasthan. The political winds have clearly shifted.

[*]**SHRI JANAK RAM (GOPALGANJ):** I express my gratitude for being given the opportunity to place my views on the Budget 2018–19, which is dedicated to the theme *"Prosperous Farmers, a Healthy India."* Through the General Budget 2018-19, after a long time, hope has arisen that the winds of development will not flow only from cities to villages, but that in a country of villages like India, rural areas will also develop independently and live with dignity and self-respect.

If the vision and efforts of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji and Hon. Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley ji, moving firmly in this direction, are implemented effectively on the ground, then *New India* is not far away. That New India will be one in which villages stand shoulder to shoulder with cities, migration becomes a thing of the past, and the unfortunate scourge of farmers' suicides is finally eliminated.

The Budget provides that, in order to ensure fair prices for the produce of small and marginal farmers, small rural haats and markets will be transformed into mandis. For this purpose, 22,000 such rural markets have been identified across all States. Their infrastructure development will be supported through MGNREGA and other schemes. These markets have also been exempted from

[*] Speech was laid on the Table

the mandi laws (APMC Act). In these mandis, farmers will be able to sell their produce directly to consumers and wholesale buyers. Earlier, due to distortions in the mandi laws, farmers were denied this facility. These markets have also been kept outside the ambit of e-NAM (the National Agriculture Market). The announcement to provide water to every field and to improve the financial condition of farmers by increasing the Minimum Support Price for kharif crops to one-and-a-half times the cost of production will prove to be a far-reaching step. This will enhance farmers' incomes and significantly improve the overall picture of rural India.

At a time when the entire world is looking towards India, the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister have taken decisive steps to translate the vision of farmers' prosperity and a healthy India into reality. Moving further in the direction of building a New India, the launch of the world's largest **National Health Protection Scheme** is a welcome step. This ambitious scheme will benefit ten crore families, that is, nearly fifty crore people across the country. It will not only contribute to an increase in the life expectancy of the average Indian but will also curb the arbitrariness of the private healthcare sector. In addition, the provision of Rs. 1.38 lakh crore in the Budget for various schemes related to the development of education and the social sector is a

commendable measure, the outcome of which will move the country further in the direction of *ease of living*.

The effective harnessing of our youthful population is possible only through employment-oriented and quality higher education. In this regard, the proposed investment of Rs. 1 lakh crore over the next four years to strengthen the higher education framework is a noteworthy initiative. This amount will be spent on promoting research and infrastructure. The "**RISE" initiative (Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education)** is an important step taken by the Government to strengthen the higher education sector. This initiative will be financed through "HEFA", the Higher Education Financing Agency, and these measures will enable our higher educational institutions to attain global standards. The announcement of the **Prime Minister's Research Fellowship (PMRF) Scheme** in the Budget is also a welcome step.

The Government has taken several significant steps in the direction of women's empowerment. In this context, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao and the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana have proved to be milestone initiatives. Under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, the original target of providing free LPG connections to five crore women has, in view of the scheme's popularity, been enhanced in this Budget to eight crore poor women. Similarly, keeping in view the objectives of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, the

Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme, launched in January 2015, has been highly successful. Under this scheme, 1.26 crore accounts have been opened across the country in the names of girl children, with total deposits amounting to Rs. 19,183 crore.

Medium, small and micro enterprises are the principal drivers of the country's progress and employment generation. In this regard, the provision of Rs. 3,794 crore for the MSME sector towards credit support, capital and interest subsidy, and innovation is a commendable initiative. Following demonetisation and the implementation of GST, the scale of operations of small and medium enterprises in the country is expanding in a more formal and effective manner. This process is creating a robust financial information database relating to MSME businesses and financial instruments, which will help improve the financing of their capital requirements, including working capital. Further, under the Mudra Yojana, a target of Rs. 3 lakh crore has been set for the financial year 2018-19, which will provide additional momentum to this sector. In addition, the Budget contains provisions for employment generation through tax incentives for companies creating new jobs in the organised sector, along with the development of basic infrastructure in rural areas. The proposal to establish skill development centres in every district to make the youth more skilled is also a highly appreciable step.

The Budget 2018-19 has also taken due care to ensure that the vision of building a **"New India"** is not confined only to cities or to a particular section of society. The Hon. Finance Minister has accorded special emphasis to the ambitious Smart Cities Mission. Keeping this in view, an allocation of Rs. 41,765 crore has been made for the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for the next financial year. Compared to the allocation of Rs. 40,618 crore in the current financial year, this represents an increase of 2.82 per cent.

The Government is also committed to providing housing along with free electricity to ensure lighting for the poor. To this end, the **Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya)** has set a target of supplying electricity to every household.

Overall, I am of the view that this Budget has paid balanced attention to all sectors, from agriculture to infrastructure. It is farmer-friendly, supportive of the common citizen, and conducive to improving the business environment in the country. Taken as a whole, this Budget will accelerate the pace of development and give momentum to the vision of a New India.

Under the leadership of Narendra Modi, the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has presented this Budget in the Parliament of India. This is a Budget that reflects the spirit of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*, keeping all sectors in view and, in particular, focusing on the

welfare of the people, the economy, and public finances. It is highly commendable, and I would like to extend my warm congratulations, on behalf of my colleagues and the people of my constituency.

The bold steps taken by the Hon. Prime Minister carry immense potential to strengthen social harmony and coordination among the citizens of the country. By abolishing a practice that had continued since the British period for 92 years and merging the Railway Budget with the General Budget, special attention has been paid to the optimal use of time and resources. I have not merely faith, but complete confidence, that during this term these progressive steps will achieve their intended goals, which may well exceed present imagination. Such progress can be realised only through the participation of all, thereby truly fulfilling the ideal of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*.

I now wish to place before the Government the following demands for grants:

1. Provision of street lighting and electrification in Gopalganj District Headquarters and its Sub-Divisions.
2. Establishment of a Medical College in Gopalganj District Headquarters, introduction of modern medical technology,

and renovation and upgradation of hospitals at the Sub-Divisional and Block levels.

3. Regarding Operation of the following train services from Thawe Junction in Gopalganj District: Bihar Sampark Kranti Superfast Express, Vaishali Express, Gorakhpur–Asansol Express, Lichchhavi Express and Train services to New Delhi and Howrah.

4. Gopalganj is a highly backward district and is even more backward in the field of education. There is no functional technical school in the district. Therefore, there is a need to establish technical schools in both Sub-Divisions.

5. This district is predominantly agrarian. The Hathua and Sidhwalia Sugar Mills, which have remained closed since the time of the previous Governments, should be revived so as to realise the objective of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*.

Overall, I am of the view that this Budget has paid balanced attention to all sectors, from agriculture to infrastructure. It is farmer-friendly, supportive of the common citizen, and conducive to improving the business environment in the country. Taken as a whole, this Budget will accelerate the pace of development and give momentum to the resolve of building a New India.

[English]

***SHRIMATI RAKSHATAI KHADSE (RAVER):** Thank you very much Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to speak in Marathi. First of all, I would like to congratulate Hon. Prime Minister Shri Modi ji and Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitly ji for giving importance to the welfare of the farmers, poor people, women, backward classes, youth and senior citizens. Special care has been taken of the farmers in this budget. India is known as an agriculture dominated country and that is why a special treatment should be given to the farmers. It was expected that some kind relief would be given to the farmers and our Government has fulfilled their expectations. In India, around 86% of the farmers are meagre land holders and these farmers always expect to fetch remunerative prices for their agriculture produces. Hence, through this budget Government has proposed to develop markets at tehsil levels. Government has also guaranteed to fix 1.5 times of the production cost as MSP for the crop.

But apart from this I would like to request the Government to promote group pattern agriculture in every tehsil and district. Every farmer expects to earn some more money every year. If a farmer sows pigeon pea and he gets bumper production then the rates

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Marathi.

automatically goes down in the market. Along with the implementation of welfare schemes, Government should also undertake some kind of agriculture survey of the cultivation pattern of crops. It would definitely help the farmers for the selection of the crop cultivation in different districts throughout country. In this way he would definitely get remunerative price for his crop.

Today, our Government is trying to develop tehsil level markets and we are also trying to provide all kinds of facilities to the farmers and that is why I am pretty sure that we will be successful in this venture.

It is the need of the hour that farmers should get an alternative to maximize their earnings through fishing and dairying. We know about Amul which is a big brand and this has been established through milk federation.

If we try to form milk federations in every state by giving subsidy and linking the farmers with this kind of federations, it would definitely help the farmers to increase their income. We have made handsome budget provision for this but it needs to percolate down.

In this budget, a budgetary provision has been made for skill development scheme. We are trying for employment generation through this scheme. In this regard I would like to suggest for the

creation of agriculture related courses which would help farmers and such centres should be set up at tehsil level.

Today we can see that the approach towards farmers has been changed. In my state, I have seen that no parents are ready to marry off their daughter to a farmer. So, it is our duty to empower farmers so that they can fulfil all their household and family needs. Skill development institutes for farmers should be set up at tehsil levels which would help them to improve their skill by using modern technology. We can construct farm side roads through MGNREGA scheme which will benefit the farmers.

Shrimati Supriya Tai is sitting here right now. I keep on listening to her speeches very carefully. She said that we have been providing subsidy only and that is not sufficient. Therefore I, would like to reply her that we have been trying to empower people and making them self-reliant and independent. I personally believe that we should not be dependent on Government and we should try to stand up on our own and our Government is striving to realize this goal.

During the regime of the previous Government we had to wait for gas connections for years together. But through this Ujjwala Yojana we get the connections immediately. Gas Agency owners are conducting surveys in villages and they are providing gas

connections hassle-free through this scheme. This Ujjwala scheme has extended gas connections to the poorest of the poor and that is why we are happy and satisfied.

PMGSY is a very important scheme and it was started during the Atal Behari Vajpayi regime. It helped to construct roads in every village. Budget allocations have been increased for this ambitious scheme in this year's budget. For the youth of this country, Government has brought new schemes. The budget allocation has been made for the scholarship schemes for the SC, ST and OBC students so that they can get quality education to make their career.

UDAN is also a very good scheme. It has been launched in all the states. But its importance is not limited to mere air travel facility but it is very important for the overall development of that district. It is necessary for the industrial development of that region because it would help to promote industrial and economic activities and employment generation in the area. Hence our Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji has launched this scheme throughout India to boost the industrial and economic development of the country.

I support this budget and conclude.

Thank you.

*SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY (BAHARAMPUR): I would propose to make a special endeavour to promote jute industry in India, given the bio- degradable fibre of jute which may fetch good earnings by exporting jute related products. In view of eco-friendly traits of jute which is recognized as a golden fibre across the world there is a great potentialities of jute products. Jute-technology mission was conceived by Rajiv Gandhi however it has not been given due attention.

Jute procurement centres which are run by Jute Corporation of India under Ministry of Textiles, they do not provide the requisite cooperation to the jute farmers by procuring jute at remunerative prices as a result of which jute farmers are undergoing severe financial stress and strain.

Due attention to jute may change the economic and employment scenario in the eastern India. Scores of jute mills in Eastern India have been closed which entailed thousands of job losses apart from the jute producers who have deprived of having remunerative prices.

2nd green revolution which was said to have been focused in the Eastern India needs to be revitalized as there is an enormous potentialities to increase the production of agriculture commodities

*Speech was laid on the Table.

including paddy as unlike Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh these areas are get to be saturated by the yield.

Allocation of fund for the Railways has not been adequate given the number of sanctioned projects in West Bengal. A sense of deprivation has been going around in West Bengal contrary to cooperative federalism.

All the flagship programmes in West Bengal are smacking of rampant corruption. Beneficiaries are being exploited by not providing their due more so they are the voiceless as the administration is playing indifferent and causal to the plight and deprivation of these poor people.

DISHA committee meeting is not held where opposition Member of Parliament is supposed to be the Chairman. So monitoring cannot be done in a proper way.

SME enterprises are suffering due to imposition of GST since they have to pay GST in advance on raising bills, without receiving the payments from clients. This is leading to lower of deposit of GST returns since funds are short for SME's.

[Translation]

***SHRI MANSUKHBHAI DHANJIBHAI VASAVA (BHARUCH):** The Budget for 2018–19 presented by the Hon. Finance Minister is dedicated to villages, the poor, and farmers. Nearly 67 per cent of the country's population depends on agriculture, and the condition of most farmers has been extremely distressing. In this context, the Government has provided special relief to farmers. Until now, farmers were deeply troubled as they did not receive even the cost of production for their crops, and agriculture had come to be viewed as a loss-making activity. Respecting the farmer-friendly vision of the Hon. Prime Minister, the Hon. Finance Minister has announced that farmers will be provided returns at least 50 per cent above the cost of production. It has also been declared in this Budget that the Minimum Support Price for all notified crops will be fixed at one-and-a-half times the cost of production. The allocation for agricultural credit through banks has been enhanced from Rs. 10 lakh crore to Rs. 11 lakh crore. This will ensure that farmers are not compelled to depend on moneylenders. The Government has also directed that at least 18 per cent of the total bank credit should be extended to the agricultural sector. I would like to request the Government to

* Speech was laid on the Table

review the implementation of these directives from time to time so that farmers continue to receive adequate and timely credit. At present, the Government is providing agricultural loans to farmers at an interest rate of four per cent.

As is well known, where there is life, there is the world; in other words, health is the foundation of everything. Recognising the importance of health, our Government has expressed deep concern for the well-being of the poor and the middle class and has introduced several schemes to enable them to lead a healthy life. The Government has indicated that free medical treatment up to Rs. 5 lakh will be provided to 50 crore people. This scheme is the largest Government-funded health scheme in the world and is unique of its kind globally. Through this initiative, nearly 40 per cent of the country's population will be covered under health insurance. To ensure that patients suffering from tuberculosis receive proper and nutritious food, the Government has assured financial assistance of Rs. 500 per month to each TB patient. For this purpose, an allocation of Rs. 600 crore has been made in the Budget. We are all aware that, even two decades ago, survival from tuberculosis was extremely difficult. I would like to request the Government to address the shortage of doctors in district civil hospitals and at the taluka level, as the absence of adequate medical personnel in these hospitals is preventing people from receiving

proper treatment. Even today, people in rural areas are being compelled to sell their land and houses to meet the cost of medical treatment. The steps taken by this Government to ensure affordable healthcare in the country are truly commendable.

My parliamentary constituency of Bharuch includes the Narmada and Bharuch districts, which are predominantly tribal areas. For the development of tribal regions, the Government has allocated Rs. 56,619 crore, and it has also announced the establishment of Eklavya Model Residential Schools in areas with a tribal population of 50 per cent or more. In this regard, I would like to request the Government to address the shortage of teachers in Eklavya schools and to regularise the services of contractual teachers who are currently teaching in these institutions. Special emphasis should be laid on tribal areas, irrigation, health and education, so that tribal communities are able to achieve their economic and social development in a proper and timely manner.

At present, during periods of drought, farmers across the country are facing severe difficulties in irrigating their fields. Due to inadequate rainfall, irrigation is not possible in many areas, as a result of which farmers are unable to obtain the expected crop yield. The Government is implementing several irrigation schemes across the country. I would like to urge the Government to take stringent steps to ensure the early completion of irrigation projects that are

running behind schedule, so that maximum irrigation coverage can be provided to agricultural land and farmers may be relieved of the recurring problem of drought. In my parliamentary constituency of Bharuch, the Sardar Sarovar Irrigation Project, which is one of the most beneficial irrigation schemes in the country, is operational. However, the release of water from Gate No. 8 of this project has been stopped, as a result of which the River Narmada flowing through my constituency is on the verge of drying up. This has deprived farmers of irrigation facilities, rendered fishermen without livelihood, and led to drying up of areas along the river banks. Moreover, due to the acute shortage of water, local residents are even facing difficulties in performing the last rites of the deceased. I urge the Government to take serious note of this situation.

At present, during periods of drought, farmers across the country are facing serious difficulties in irrigating their fields. Due to insufficient rainfall, irrigation is not possible in many areas, as a result of which farmers are unable to obtain the expected crop yield. The Government is implementing several irrigation schemes across the country. I would like to urge the Government to take firm steps to ensure the expeditious completion of irrigation projects that are running behind schedule, so that maximum irrigation facilities may be made available to farmers and they may be relieved from the recurring problem of drought. In my parliamentary constituency of

Bharuch, the Sardar Sarovar Irrigation Project, which is one of the most beneficial irrigation projects in the country, is operational. However, the release of water from Gate No. 8 of this project has been stopped. As a result, the River Narmada flowing through my constituency is on the verge of drying up. Consequently, farmers are being deprived of irrigation facilities, fishermen are being rendered without livelihood, and areas along the banks of the River Narmada have begun to dry up. Moreover, due to the acute shortage of water, local residents are facing serious difficulties even in performing the last rites of the deceased. The Government must take serious note of this matter.

The Budget has taken several transformative decisions, including the provision of employment to 70 lakh youth, the supply of free LPG connections to 8 crore poor women, the construction of 2 crore toilets across the country, the enhancement of the exemption on interest income for senior citizens from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000, and the allocation of Rs. 16,000 crore under the Saubhagya Scheme to provide electricity to 4 crore households. These measures clearly indicate that the Budget seeks to empower women and strengthen the poor and underprivileged sections of society.

The Government has allocated Rs. 1.48 lakh crore for the Railways in this Budget. I would like to draw the attention of the

Government to certain railway-related issues pertaining to my parliamentary constituency. My parliamentary constituency of Bharuch is a major hub of industrial development not only in Gujarat but in the country as a whole. Owing to its large industrial base, a significant number of workers from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, and West Bengal are employed in this region. However, several important railway services do not have a stoppage in Bharuch, causing considerable inconvenience to the travelling public. I would therefore like to request the Government to declare stoppages at Bharuch Railway Station for the following train services: Surat-Muzaffarpur Express (19053/19054), Bandra-Jaipur Express (12979/12980), Bandra-Jhansi Express (11103/11104), Indore-Pune Express (22944/22945) and Suryanagari Express (12479/12480).

Further, in the Railway Budgets of the past two years, Bharuch Railway Station and Ankleshwar Railway Station were declared to be developed as Model Stations. However, the work envisaged under this scheme has not progressed in accordance with norms, and several essential facilities expected at Model Stations have yet to be completed.

Additionally, there is no local passenger train service between Bharuch and Baroda between 10.00 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. I would therefore urge the Government to introduce a new passenger service

during this time period to alleviate the difficulties faced by daily commuters.

In my parliamentary constituency, no train has a scheduled stoppage at Karjan Railway Station between 12.00 midnight and 6.00 a.m. I therefore request that one or two train services be provided with a halt at Karjan Railway Station during this time period, in order to address the inconvenience faced by passengers.

In my parliamentary constituency, no train has a scheduled stoppage at Karjan Railway Station between 12.00 midnight and 6.00 a.m. I therefore request that one or two train services be provided with a halt at Karjan Railway Station during this time period, in order to address the inconvenience faced by passengers.

Bharuch city holds significant importance from the perspective of industrial investment and development. A large number of domestic and foreign investors regularly travel to Bharuch. In view of this, there is a pressing need to beautify and suitably develop both the main entrances of Bharuch Railway Station. Further, due to insufficient parking space and a limited circulating area, railway passengers are frequently compelled to face congestion and inconvenience. I therefore request that the parking area be relocated slightly away from the circulating area, and that additional landscaping and beautification, including

gardens and decorative features, be developed within the circulating area. I urge the Government to take necessary action in this regard.

In conclusion, I support the Budget for the year 2018–19 as presented by the Hon. Finance Minister.

[English]

SHRI E. T. MOHAMMAD BASHEER (PONNANI): Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak.

This Budget is being presented at a turning point in India's developmental scenario. This is the first Budget after the roll out of the GST and also the last Budget of the NDA Government. We all thought and the nation was also expecting it to deal with the impact of the GST and demonetisation. Naturally, we all thought that the Government will take some corrective action. We are totally disappointed. It is very clear that the Government has no vision or preparedness for addressing the adverse impact of GST and demonetisation.

Sir, this Budget is a budget of dreams, without realising the ground Indian realities. The *Economic Survey* has also admitted it. It says that at the end of four years, there is a failure in three sectors – employment, education and infrastructure. Besides this, agrarian crisis is also mounting in a big way. There is a reasonable question. What was the Government thinking or doing in the last four years to correct all these wrong-doings? Have they made any introspection before preparing this new Budget? With all politeness, I would like to say that this Government did not do this.

Coming to the agriculture sector, I would say that the Government is talking about the MSP which is 1.5 times of cost of production. They claim that it is a historical decision, but let us see what experts say about it. The CEO, CMIE while reviewing the impact of MSP said in an article which appeared in *The Times of India*, and I quote:

> "Agriculture is a risky business – far riskier than industry. Twice every year farmers initially face a production risk and then a price risk. They need risk-mitigation instruments, modernisation, better logistics to integrate with consumers and more. An assured 50 per cent return on cost does not help in any of these directions. It probably eliminates the risk of losses, but its collateral damage will be to ruin agricultural markets that discover prices. "

Do not do this injustice. I would like to appeal to you once again to ensure justice to the minorities. With these words, I conclude.

[*]SHRI MD. BADARUDDOZA KHAN (MURSHIDABAD): Thanks to Hon. Finance Minister for his Budget 2018-19.

In the Budget Speech Hon. Finance Minister has announced some attractive schemes especially in case of agriculture and health, keeping in mind the forthcoming Lok Sabha election. Throughout the country our farmers are very much distressed. Some of them are committing suicide every year and some are leaving from agriculture and joining in un-organized sector. In such a position Finance Minister has declared that 150% of production cost will be given as MSP from the next Kharif crops. But it is not clear how this MSP will be settled. It is also not clear how much production will be procured without sufficient infrastructure and procurement centre. Already Government has declared MSP for some crops. But in spite of that, at the time of harvesting nobody is purchasing their product in MSP. In the reply speech Hon. Finance Minister should clear it, how the farmers will get relief from distress sale. Apart from that Finance Minister has not mentioned anything about the agricultural loan waiver which is a burning question now.

Another great declaration is health insurance for fifty crore people of 10 crore families. He has claimed that it is the largest health insurance of the world. But sorry to say that allotment in this

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

sector is only Rs. 2000 crore. What will be the model of this scheme and also what will be the role of the state governments is not clear till now.

Our Finance Minister has declared that one lakh crore will be collected through disinvestment of PSU. It is remarkable that these PSU's are the wealth of our country. This sector has saved our country at the time of Global Finance Crisis in 2008. All these units are not profitable. But in spite of that for the interest of corporates, all these are sold every year. It must be stopped.

In last 3 years budget Finance Minister had anticipated 2 crores of employment every year. But it is not achieved. So in this budget Finance Minister has not fixed any target of employment generation. Besides that no allotment has been increased in MNREGA. On the other hand, it is true that lakhs of people have lost their job due to the effect of demonetisation.

In this budget also, there is no proposal of increase in direct tax. Corporate tax has been decreased from 30% to 25%. The proportion of direct tax has been decreased from 51.6% to 50.6%. So, it is a burden to the common people.

Our Prime Minister has told that this is a pro-middle class and pro-farmers budget. But the middle class employees i.e. the salaried

persons have got no relief from tax burden. Already they are affected due to reduction in interest rate.

In this Budget there are some gimmicks only. It is a pro-rich budget.

SHRI J.J.T. NATTERJEE (THOOTHUKUDI): Sir, unemployment is a ticking bomb and it affects the whole socio-economic fabric of the society and the country. In a vast country like India, employment generation is very important to keep peace in the society. Otherwise, economic disparity and inequality will rise among the working class and unemployed youth which lead to social injustice and unrest. Therefore, any step taken by the Government to increase the employment opportunities is welcome. The Government's infrastructure development projects and social welfare schemes can generate at least 50 lakh jobs every year, absorbing nearly half of the one crore people who annually enter the country's workforce. The pace of job creation is often considered an important barometer of the Government's performance. The unemployment and its increasing trends have continued to plague our country for the last two decades.

According to the budget document, the estimated workforce of the Union Government establishments will be 35.05 lakh as on 1st March, 2018. This is 2.53 lakh more than the head count of 32.52 lakh in March, 2016. About one lakh more workforce is estimated to be added in police departments under the Home Ministry to take the total head count to 11,25,093 by March, 2018. About 30 lakh jobs are expected to be created under a budgetary allocation of Rs. 1,600 crore for 2018-19 under Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan

Yojana. The public sector and private sector companies play a crucial role in the employment generation in the country. But, still, a lot of gap exists between employed and unemployed population in the country. There is an urgent need to address the rapidly increasing unemployment and under-employment condition in the country.

For example, in my Thoothukudi Constituency, salt producers are seeing a decline in the market and industry workers in Thoothukudi are seeing themselves making no headway in getting better life this year. Salt production, which involves a sizeable workforce, is the mainstay of the local economy. However, most of the workers relying on the industry live below the poverty line. I urge the Government to look into this serious issue and sanction a special package for the development of Salt pan workers of my Thoothukudi Parliamentary Constituency.

The River Cauvery is the lifeline of Tamil Nadu, particularly millions of farmers in the delta regions in Tamil Nadu. The people of Tamil Nadu are sad because the Union Government had failed in its responsibility to constitute the Cauvery Management Board as per the orders of the Supreme Court to form the Cauvery Management Board in ten days. With the notification of the final order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, the scheme for

modernisation of the canal system in the Cauvery Basin at a cost of Rs. 11,421 crore may be accorded approval.

The Tamil Nadu Government had submitted the proposal to the Central Water Commission for the extension, renovation and modernisation of Grand Anicut Canal at the cost of Rs. 2,610 crore. The Commission also gave the in-principle consent.

I urge upon the Union Government to consider this important proposal and allocate the requested funds for the implementation of Grand Anicut project. The Government of Tamil Nadu had sought the assistance of the Union Government for implementation of the proposal to divert the flood waters of Cauvery to drought-prone areas by linking the Rivers Cauvery-Vagai-Gundar at a cost of Rs. 5166 crore. This project proposal needs to be approved and supported by the Government.

Tamil Nadu is one of the leading States in India in fisheries development having a coastal length of 1076 km. I request the Hon. Finance Minister to release Rs. 3000 crore for the development of fisheries in Tamil Nadu. The Department of Fisheries in Tamil Nadu has pioneered many fishery development activities in India. The Union Government has promised to form a separate Ministry to develop and conserve the fisheries resources. I wish the Government will create a separate Ministry for fisheries and

development of fishermen community in the country and focus exclusively on the subject to provide a permanent and everlasting solution for problems faced by fishermen community.

Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries sectors play a very important role in the socio-economic development of the country. India continues to be the biggest milk-producing country with an impressive growth rate. Cattle rearing needs government patronage and as rightly implemented by *Puratchi Thalaivi* Amma, the distribution of priceless cows, goats and sheep to cattle-rearing people in Tamil Nadu has indeed produced remarkable success in the socio-economic development of poor and deprived people particularly in the villages and remote areas.

Sir, coming to my Thoothukudi Parliamentary Constituency, the work on the much-awaited 1320 MW supercritical thermal power project (TPP) at Udangudi in Thoothukudi District, is proposed with financial support from the Centre. The proposed 2x660 MW coal-based supercritical thermal power project will improve the power infrastructure in Tamil Nadu. The Rural Electrification Corporation has come forward to provide a loan of Rs. 1 lakh crore to Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation to augment production by setting up new projects and Rs. 10000 crore has been sanctioned for the first phase of TPP at

Udangudi. Now this needs a separate exclusive captive port for handling coal.

The Thoothukudi airport needs to be expanded. A total of 600 acres had been identified for the expansion of Vagaikulam airport from adjoining villages including Kumaragiri, Kattalangulam Mudivaithanendal and Servaikaranmadam. The District Administration has already handed over 366 acres of *patta* land acquired as per the Land Acquisition Act to the Airports Authority of India. I urge upon the Union Government to expedite the expansion of the Thoothukudi airport.

The East Coast Railway line from Karaikudi, in Sivaganga District, to Kanyakumari via Tuticorin, Tiruchendur and Kudankulam is a long pending demand of the people of Southern Tamil Nadu. The route is very essential with power plants coming up at Udankudi and Kudankulam. Moreover, several temples are located in towns along the route, attracting thousands of pilgrims every year. Also, it could be an alternative and shorter route to Kanyakumari. I urge upon the Union Government to take up the East Coast Railway line and accord top priority. There is an urgent need to start a Kendriya Vidyalaya School in my Thoothukudi constituency. I wish the Government would fulfil these demands in this year.

With no significant gains for the salaried class and with the higher income taxpayer reeling from the additional tax burden, the only section of the society that seems to be rejoicing is the senior citizens. Most of the initiatives in the Union Budget 2018 are done keeping in view the next elections which are round the corner. There is not much substantial for the productive States like Tamil Nadu or Maharashtra but there is substantial gain for North-East and Northern Indian States. Budget 2018 is short on substance and will not fulfil the hopes and expectations of middle class majority in this country.

Thank you.

[*]**SHRI B. VINOD KUMAR (KARIMNAGAR):** At the outset, we support the Union Government's budget for the coming fiscal year. However, I would like to highlight some concerns regarding budgetary allotments made towards the State of Telangana, as required by the Andhra Pradesh State Reorganisation Act, 2014 and for the purpose of effectively implementing policies in the newly formed state. For the sake of clarity, I have broken down the response into paragraphs regarding the various sectors.

Agriculture and Allied Sectors

The Hon. Finance Minister proposed that farmers will be given 1.5 times their cost of production.

- No basis indicated for calculation of cost. Multiple formulae exist such as one that includes implicit cost of rent and capital, while other includes cost of family labour.
- No budgetary allotment to indicate payment of 1.5 times of cost. Allocation of Rs. 46,700 crores is slightly more than RE (2017-18) of Rs. 46,105 crores. Who will bear the burden? The States. Telangana is already providing free power for agriculture and is paying input grants of Rs. 20,000/ hectare/ farmer/ year.

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

- The MSP payable should be borne by the Centre itself as it was declared by the Union Finance Minister in his Budget Speech.

Farmer Agricultural Companies

A new Section 80PA has been inserted under the Act in order to provide that 100% of the gross total income of Producer Company shall be exempted if following conditions are satisfied.

- Turnover in the relevant previous year is less than Rs. 100 crores
- Such Producer Company shall be engaged in marketing, processing of agricultural produce of members, purchase of agricultural implements, seeds, livestock for the use of members.
- Deduction can be taken from FY 2018-19 to FY 2024-25.
- This can be appreciated as it will help build infrastructure in agricultural sector and post-harvest industry.

Dairy Processing Infrastructure Development Fund:

The corpus of the fund is Rs. 11,000 crores which is a welcome move. This will help increase farmer income by providing an alternative source of income.

Medical and Health Sector

The Hon. Finance Minister proposed that National Health Protection Scheme to cover 10 crores poor families raising the coverage upto Rs. 5 lakh per family per year.

- Present coverage of Rs. 30,000 under the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) is also not being done properly. The budgetary allotment for RSBY has been decreasing over the years and there are plenty of complaints of inefficiency and lack of transparency.
- In the last Budget, the Government had announced the National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS) which had proposed to give Rs.1 lakh per family. The NHPS did not quite take off, with the Government telling Parliament just two months ago,“The contours of the scheme are yet to be finalised," And now the Government is adding this burden on top of the existing schemes, without any materialisation of the past schemes.
- The provision made in the Budget is only Rs. 2,000 crores, whereas the estimated cost of the scheme is likely to be many times more. The scheme is expected to be rolled out in about 8 months. The Finance Secretary has indicated that the

Centre's burden will be Rs. 4,000 crores, implying thereby that the States will have to bear 60 per cent of the cost.

- Finance Secretary has indicated that the additional 1 per cent cess (Health and Education Cess) which will yield Rs. 11,000 crores is meant for the scheme. The same can be used for the purpose of the new National Health Scheme, without burdening the States.

Upgradation of District Hospitals into Medical College

- It is proposed to set up 24 new Government Medical College and Hospitals by upgrading the district hospitals. We should press for upgradation of at least one district hospital in the State as it has been envisaged that there will be one Government Medical college for every 2/3 parliamentary constituency.

- Thus, one Government Medical College should be allocated for the State of Telangana.

Tax Proposals

The Hon. Finance Minister proposed an increase in cess from 3% to 4% on personal income tax.

- The Budget has proposed increase in the Health and Education Cess from 3% to 4% on personal income tax and corporation tax yielding on additional revenue of Rs.11,000 crores. Increase in the cess, the yield of which is outside the divisible pool of central taxes, is against the spirit of cooperative fiscal federalism and simplification of tax system.

- It is also proposed to impose a Social Welfare surcharge at the rate of 10% of the aggregated duties of customs by replacing the existing education cess. This is on TVs, mobile phones, furniture, etc. which is a welcome move as it will promote manufacturing in India and use of domestic material in the growing industries, hence providing jobs.

Reduction in corporate tax on small companies

The benefit of 25% corporate tax rate available to companies with turnover of Rs. 20 crores is proposed to be extended to companies which have reported turnover upto Rs.250 crores in the financial year 2016-17. This is a welcome measure.

Standard Deduction of Rs. 40,000

- Finance Bill, 2018 has introduced Standard Deduction amounting to INR 40,000 from Gross Salary as a benefit to the

salaried employees. Now, total three deductions are available under the head salaries:

- Deduction of Profession Tax Paid (for all employees);
- Deduction of Entertainment Allowance (only for Government Employees),
- Standard deduction of INR 40,000 (for all employees)

- It has further withdrawn the benefit of medical reimbursement which was earlier available to the extent of INR 15,000. Further, exemption upto INR 19,200 w.r.t. transportation allowance for commuting between office and residence has also been withdrawn.
- Hence, the benefit which has been given under the head salaries is nominal i.e. Rs. 5,800. Also, employees are not required to submit any bill as earlier in case of medical reimbursement, which is a good compliance relief.

Long-term Capital Gain @10% over Rs. 1 lac

- Before Amendment, Section 10(38) exempts the income of any person arising from long-term capital gains on sale of listed shares, units of equity-oriented fund etc. the same also includes LTCG of FIIS from such securities.

- Finance Bill, 2018 has made an amendment under Section 115 AD of the Act in order to provide that 10% tax will be levied in case such LTCG exceeds Rs.1 lakh.

- Reasons given by the FM were that all profits were being reinvested in the securities market, rather than in asset and job creation. For this purpose, the LTCG could have been imposed only on corporates that were re-investing their gains and not on individuals.

Measures to promote start-ups:

- Section 80-IAC of the Income Tax Act, 1961 provides 100% deduction to start-ups for 3 consecutive years out of seven years if it is incorporated between 01.04.12016 to 31.03.2018 and the turnover is upto INR 25 crores per year between 01.04.2016 to 31.03.2021.

- Finance Bill, 2018 has made an amendment in order to provide that start-ups incorporated between 01.04.2019 to 31.03.2021 can also avail the benefit of this section. Further,

turnover limit of INR 25 crores is applicable for first seven years from start date. Start-up can be of such type which can generate employment or create wealth substantially.

Employment Generation

- With regard to employment generation, there are no substantive proposals to boosting employment except tax concessions to small industries and an increase in customs duties to protect the domestic industry.
- With over half the country's population under the age of 25, India needs jobs. The Government has failed to provide an impetus for job creation and key investment in labour-intensive industries.

Transfers to States

- **Transfers** proposed to the States under tax devolution and CSS have been increased substantially with the total figure rising from Rs. 6.73 lac crores (2017-2018 RE) to an estimated Rs.7.88 lac crores in the coming fiscal year (2018-19 BE).
- Specific devolution to Telangana has risen from Rs. 16,420 crores (2017-18 RE) to Rs. 19,207 crores (2018-19 BE).

- There is an increase of 17% in Tax Devolution in Telangana. There is an increase of about Rs.200 crores per month (Tax Devolution is received in 14 instalments).

- The overall increase under CSS is only 7 per cent as compared with the RE. There is no increase in the allocation under MGNREGA, reduction in the allocation under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Swatch Bharat Mission, National Health Mission and National Rural Water Drinking Mission.

- There is only marginal increase in the allocation for development scheduled castes and tribes under Centrally Sponsored Schemes. Significant increase in allocations is noticed in respect of Amruth, Smart Cities, Rurban Mission and Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana.

Fiscal Consolidation by the Centre

The fiscal deficit in 2017-18 (RE) is 3.5 per cent of GDP compared with the BE of 3.2 per cent. The estimated fiscal deficit in 2018-19 is 3.3 per cent.

The Centre failed to contain the fiscal and revenue deficits within the Budget estimates in 2017-18. The reduction the fiscal deficit target proposed in 2018-19 is mainly because of underfunding in respect of a number of schemes. The increase in

revenue from GST proposed is over 67 per cent. This is very high even accounting for the fact the GST was introduced in July 2017.

Increase In Fiscal Space of States- A Myth

The Union Finance Minister has indicated in his post-budget meet on February 2 that the States are flush with funds following the increase in the tax devolution from 32 to 42% of the divisible pool of Central taxes and that they are in a better position to share the burden. This is far from the truth. Fiscal devolution to states takes place via two routes:

- Share of taxes-this is a percentage amount and thus variable. It is calculated as a percentage of the revenues received by the Centre. Eg. -50% of revenue
- Grants- these are fixed absolute amounts that do not change with the revenues received by the Centre. Eg. Rs 2,000 crores (flat amount)

In this context EC-XIV observed that aggregate transfers to States, as a percentage of gross revenue receipts of the Union, went up from 49.9 per cent in 2010-11 to 53.7 per cent in 2011-12 before coming down to 49 per cent in 2012-13.

In the first three years of the FC-XIV award period, aggregate transfers hovered around 48 per cent of Centre's gross revenue

receipts. In the Union Budget for 2017-18, total transfers to States budgeted at only 50 per cent. In actual terms, they may turn out to be much lower.

Telangana-Request for Budget Allocation

- I bring to the attention of this House that there are no specific provisions towards assistance to Telangana. These relate to assistance relating to development and progress of the successor states as mandated in Section 93 of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.
- Assistance to Mission Bhagiratha amounting to Rs. 19,205 crores
- Assistance to Mission Kakatiya amounting to Rs. 5,000 crores over a period of three years as recommended by NITI Aayog.
- The demand for allocation of at least an amount of Rs. 10,000 crores to Kaleswaram project and treating it as a project of national importance, on par with the Polavaram project.
- There are also no provisions for an AIIMS institution and other projects such Railway Coach Factory at Kazipet, as envisaged in the Reorganisation Act.

- There is a provision of Rs. 10 crores each in the Budget, for the establishment of Tribal Universities in the States of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. This meagre amount will not suffice for setting up of a leading Tribal University in a state which has a high population of tribals. Thus, more funds are required under this project.

- With a growing dairy sector in Telangana, the need for funds for infrastructure development is high. With the newly sanctioned dairy processing Infrastructure Development Fund with a corpus of Rs.11,000 crores in the Budget, we request high budgetary allotment towards further developing this crucial industry in the state.

- Considering Telangana is a new State with many ambitious programmes launched across all sectors, sufficient funding is key to their effective implementation.

15.00 hrs

[Translation]

SHRI RAJESH RANJAN (MADHEPURA): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to say very humbly that when the Hon. Prime Minister was delivering his speech, he spoke very seriously about farmers. I would like to know how many farmers there are in our country. In India, there are nine crore eighty-two lakh farmers, sharecroppers, daily wage labourers and bonded labourers. There was no discussion on this. The debt of landlord cultivators gets waived, but the debt of farmers has not yet been waived. As far as the condition of farmers is concerned, I can only say this very seriously that from the year 2015 to 30 December 2016, there is a complete sample of suicides showing how many farmers committed suicide in Marathwada. There has been an increase of nearly 40 per cent in farmers' suicides, with the highest number of suicides reported from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Vidarbha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

The manner in which the farmers of Tamil Nadu protested at Jantar Mantar in Delhi worsened the situation further. Farmers were forced to drink urine, they were compelled even to eat excreta, they were not given tablets, and here we speak at length about farmers.

If we speak about farmers, what causes me the greatest anguish is that 67 per cent of the youth have given up farming. They do not wish to pursue farming and have already abandoned it. Today, the situation is such that the farmer has no market. We do not talk about small-scale industries or cottage industries for farmers. We do not talk about agriculture-based industries, we do not talk about minimum prices, and we do not talk about granting the status of an industry to agriculture. When we talk about subsidy, I am surprised to note that we provide only 62 dollars as subsidy, whereas if you go to America and other countries, they provide 26,000 dollars, and in some cases 21,000 dollars, as subsidy to farmers. In our country, a farmer receives only 62 dollars as subsidy. There is a vast disparity among farmers. If you do not provide farmers with a market and a fair price, the situation will only worsen. In my area, farming is based on jute, sugarcane and maize.

In Madhepura, the Amul milk factory is closed, and 22 sugar mills have shut down. In my area, the jute mill has been closed, and there is no sugar mill there. You repeatedly say that you will give Rs. one lakh twenty-five thousand crore and that a special package will be given to Bihar. Now, your Government is in power at both places. The Hon. Prime Minister had spoken about Rs. one lakh twenty-five thousand crore or a special package. Please give it. The Hon. Chief Minister has discussed the construction of the Farakka

and Bhimnagar projects with you several times, but there is no discussion on this. There is no discussion on desilting of rivers. You do not talk about the development of the Tal and Diara areas. If you do not give farmers a remunerative price for their produce, if one crop goes at a loss and the last crop goes into surplus, when will farmers make a profit? The rate of suicides in India has increased, but you do not discuss this.

I would like to know from the Hon. Finance Minister, Sir, about food security. I have a copy of an RTI. Food security does not reach even 12 per cent in a district, and in villages it does not reach even 4 per cent of the common people.

Under the food security scheme, 96, 97 or 98 per cent of the money, or Rs. 365, or foodgrains are to be given. Where has that foodgrain gone? Into the pockets of leaders, officials, middlemen or brokers?

This time, a gap of Rs. 74,000 crore has been created in the students' budget. What will you give to education? There is not even 9.6 per cent growth in education. About 1.6 per cent of Dalits, SCs and STs do not receive education, and 3.2 per cent of girls are unable to get education. Scholarships have been discontinued. Football and volleyball have not been promoted under Khelo India.

Wrestling should be promoted district-wise on a commissionary basis in Bihar, as Bihar produces the highest number of wrestlers.

When salaries are paid to MPs and MLAs, and when public representatives at the Panchayat level such as Block Pramukhs, Mukhiya, Panchayat Samiti members and District Presidents are appointed, permission has virtually been given for loot in the Public Distribution System. In Panchayati Raj, we end up calling them thieves. My submission is that Panchayati Raj public representatives should be given a basic salary so that they are not branded as thieves. In Bihar, the Government has even spoken about curtailing the powers of the Mukhiya. We want this to be reconsidered.

There has been no discussion on Mamta, ASHA and Anganwadi workers, nor has there been any discussion on food security. I urge you, under all circumstances, to speak in the interest of young students. Abolish the Medical Council of India. You give preference to mafias, you give preference to medical mafias. There are no teachers in schools, yet you talk about building schools. There are no doctors in hospitals, yet you talk about building hospitals. In the country, there is a shortage of 60 per cent doctors and 57 per cent teachers, yet you talk about setting up Eklavya schools. Provide teachers in schools, ensure quality, and bring in common and compulsory education. This is not how a Budget

works. A Budget works through the development of the common people. It works through the progress in the lives of the poor. A Budget works on the principle of sarva dharma sambhava.

[*]**SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE (AKOLA):** I would like to first thank the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, for presenting the Budget in accordance with the far-sighted vision of the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi.

The manner in which this Budget has taken full care of all sectors along with the interests of all sections of society is commendable. This Budget appears to fulfil the promise of providing an honest, clean and transparent Government.

At a time when the global economy is passing through a critical phase, and the Indian economy is also going through a challenging phase, the stability of the Indian economy is in itself an achievement. The objective of the holistic development of every Indian is reflected in this Budget. This Budget strongly reinforces the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's concept of minimum Government and maximum governance.

In India’s financial history, the World Bank has, for the first time, placed India among the top 100 countries in the ranking of Ease of Doing Business, which is in itself a major achievement.

[*] Speech was laid on the Table

In recent years, the Hon. Prime Minister has taken several challenging decisions collectively for economic reforms, which have imparted new momentum to economic reforms in the country.

I would like to congratulate the Hon. Finance Minister for the historic achievement of deciding to fix the Minimum Support Price at one and a half times, that is, 50 per cent above the cost of production in the agriculture sector, implementing it from this very year, and resolving to extend it to other crops in the coming years. This decision will directly benefit more than 86 per cent of small and marginal farmers. It will clearly make the target of doubling farmers' income by 2022 easier to achieve. One of the reasons for this is that in the year 2016-17, foodgrains, fruits and vegetables recorded historically high levels of production. In addition, steps such as the creation of a permanent fund for the development and upgradation of agricultural marketing infrastructure in rural agricultural markets and APMCs, ensuring the permanent maintenance and strengthening of all-weather roads, and similar measures will directly benefit farmers and rural areas.

For the first time, the Government has focused on vegetables used throughout the year, such as tomatoes, onions and potatoes, and the conceptualisation of Operation Greens for this purpose will benefit both farmers and consumers alike.

The manner in which the Hon. Prime Minister is aware of the problems of the poorest and weakest sections of society, particularly poor women, and keeping this in mind, the resolve he had taken to free them from the smoke of firewood has been taken forward by bringing nearly eight crore such women under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. This is a concrete step in that direction.

Similarly, through the Pradhan Mantri Saubhagya scheme, connecting four crore poor households in the country with electricity connections without charging any fee will be regarded as a very significant step. This will benefit the backward sections of society in a substantial manner.

I would like to congratulate the Hon. Finance Minister for the achievement of constructing more than six crore toilets under the Swachh Bharat Mission. This is directly linked to the dignity of women, the education of daughters, and the health security of their families. This step is a concrete move towards making the country free from open defecation.

I would like to thank the Hon. Finance Minister for taking the resolve, for the first time in the history of the country, to provide health insurance to more than ten crore poor and vulnerable

families. This will directly benefit nearly fifty crore beneficiaries and will prove to be a milestone in the construction of a New India.

If national initiatives of importance such as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, the Ganga cleaning programme, and others are not mentioned here, it would indeed be an injustice to this Budget. The manner in which the Government is implementing these schemes in a phased manner and steadily moving towards its objectives is commendable, and it will yield far-reaching results.

I would like to thank the Hon. Finance Minister for the steps taken by the Government to provide employment in the country and for the creation of the necessary infrastructure for this purpose. The manner and speed with which the expansion of national highways has been carried out, consistently surpassing targets, is an exemplary and historic achievement.

After the Railway Budget was merged with the General Budget, the reform measures being implemented in a phased manner in the railways are commendable. I wholeheartedly welcome the far-sighted provisions made in the Budget to increase the speed of trains, enhance passenger amenities, modernise the railways through infrastructure development, connect all regions with the rail network, increase freight capacity, undertake gauge

conversion, electrify railway lines, and give concrete shape to India's high-speed rail project.

I congratulate the Hon. Finance Minister for demonstrating commitment to further strengthening the country's security by showing resolve towards the defence sector and for taking the pledge to introduce an industry-friendly defence production policy.

This Budget provides clear direction for especially strengthening the sectors of agriculture, rural development, health, education, employment, and the infrastructure of the Indian economy. I believe that this Budget will play a positive role in protecting the country from the nefarious designs of terrorists and enemies, and in strengthening India as a powerful nation on the international economic मंच.

I once again express my gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister for conceptualising such a Budget and for working in a transparent and honest manner, while keeping in view the interests of all sections of society, to place the country on a new path of progress, which is truly an exemplary effort.

[English]

***SHRI PRASANNA KUMAR PATASANI (BHUBANESWAR):** Union Budget 2018-19 is Further Attacks on People's Livelihood. This last full budget of the Modi Government before the next general elections reflects, once again, its clear commitment to serve the interests of foreign and domestic big corporates while mounting further assaults on the vast majority of the working people of our country. This assault is, however, sought to be window-dressed to appear as it's opposite.

The budget does not seek to mobilize revenues by increasing direct taxes applicable to the rich, in spite of the fact that the top one percent of the Indian population garnered 73 per cent of the additional wealth generated in 2017. On the contrary, governmental expenditures increasingly rely on indirect taxes which are a burden on the common people. In fact, the proportion of the direct taxes in gross central taxes budgeted to come down from 51.6 per cent to 50.6 per cent.

A lot of fanfare is being created by packaging the budget as pro-poor by projecting massive expenditures on agriculture, rural development and national health care scheme of medical coverage of 10 crore households upto Rs.5 lakhs per year. The health care

* Speech was laid on the Table.

scheme is a mere repackaging of the existing one and no additional allocations have been budgeted. It is clear that this scheme will also be used to give hand-outs to insurance companies. Experiences have shown that health or crop insurance schemes have resulted in a profit bonanza for corporates rather than benefits to the people.

This is a contractionary budget. This means that there will be further reduction of employment opportunities and social welfare expenditures. The government expenditure to GDP has now reduced further from 13.2 per cent to 13 per cent.

Last year, the levels of capital expenditure on central social schemes were below the budgeted targets, meaning a cut to meet the fiscal deficit target by reducing expenditures for people's welfare. That the tax revenue collection's growth indicating to be below the targets, the government has reduced its expenditures directly affecting adversely the people's livelihood.

The expenditure on agriculture and rural development, as percentage of GDP, is reduced from 1.15 per cent to 1.08 per cent; the total health expenditure has fallen from 0.32 per cent of the GDP to 0.29 per cent; Central expenditure on education has fallen from 0.49 per cent of the GDP to 0.45 per cent; the gender budget has fallen from 0.68 per cent to 0.65 per cent of GDP; allocations for welfare off STs is below 1.6 per cent of the total budget and for

SCs, it is 2.32 per cent. This is totally inadequate seen in proportion to the share in population. The allocation for MNREGA has remained unchanged and Rs. 4,800 crores are still owed to state governments from 2017-18.

Yet again, the government promises to declare a minimum support price at least one and a half times the production costs. The Finance Minister misled the country that the government had already declared such an MSP for a majority of Rabi crops. This has never been seen in implementation across the country. Similarly, other claims of extended crop loan facility etc are not concretised in budgetary allocations. The allocation for food subsidy and procurement of crops is grossly inadequate to provide either support to the farmers or commitments under the Food Security Act. There is no mention of a loan waiver for the farmers groaning under debt burden and been pushed to commit distress suicides.

The middle classes have seen no direct benefit. The employees see a reduction in the earnings on their savings. Even the so-called relief of Rs.2 per litre of petrol and diesel is offset by increasing the cess from Rs. 6 to 8 per litre.

In sum, this budget is a typical propaganda packaging exercise by this Modi government to hoodwink the people. This contracts

expenditures and disinvests public sector to reduce the fiscal deficit to appease international finance at the expense of imposing greater burdens on the Indian people.

Let me recall the economic context in which this Budget has been presented. I draw my facts from the official document of the government, namely, the Economic Survey that was presented on 29 January 2018.

There are two macro-economic situation vulnerabilities fiscal account and current account. The real effective exchange rate (REER) has appreciated about 21 per cent since 2014 affecting India's export competitiveness, but the domestic political economy (meaning BJP) favours a stronger, less competitive exchange rate.

In the last four years, the level of real agricultural GDP and real agricultural revenues have remained constant. Jobs is the number one issue. Jobs are not being created. Industry especially MSMEs create jobs. Industrial GVA growth has declined from 9.8 per cent in 2015-16 to 6.8 per cent in 2016-17 to 2.7 per cent in 2017-18.

The last number on investment (GFCF) was 28.91 per cent of GDP in the second quarter of 2017-18. The last number on CPl inflation was 5.21 per cent in December 2017. The last numbers on

credit growth are: Non-food credit 10 per cent and credit to 'Industry' 2.1 per cent

The Metro work was supposed to be initiated, but due to funds constraint, it was not done. I pray to sanction Budget for Metro work in Bhubaneshwar.

In my constituency, Khorda-Balangir Railway line needs more budget to implement the project.

The world class railway platform at Bhubaneswar and Puri has not been done yet.

One direct train [Railway line) from Bhubaneswar to Konark may be initiated to attract more foreign tourists in Odisha.

At the outset, Government has not made any provision allocating budget for bringing the change in the languages and using various languages in all the castes according to the Constitution. Necessary fund may be allocated to the regional language to be discussed by the Advocates.

As the Government assured "PAIKA VIDROH" was the first freedom struggle under British rule, the Government has announced that they will include in the courses of CBSE and ICSE Syllabus, but not done yet.

At the same time, we demanded Rs. 200 crore to preserve the heritage of ' VPAIKA' but it has not been done yet.

HEALTHCARE: The promise of Rs.5 lakh per family for secondary and tertiary healthcare is a big jumla. The target group is 10 crore families. There is, as yet, no scheme. Assuming that each family will avail of Rs. 50,000 (one-tenth of Rs.5 lakh), the amount required per year will be Rs.5 lakh crore. If the insurance companies will foot the bill, the premium at Rs.5000-15,000 per family will require an outgo of Rs. 50,000 -1,50,000 crore per year. Is the FM serious?

JOBS: The FM has no new ideas and has fallen back on the tried and failed Mudra scheme. The average size of the Mudra loan is Rs. 43,000. This is tokenism and will not create even one job. More Mudra loans will mean more tokenism, but no additional Jobs.

INVESTMENT and CREDIT: There was nothing in the Budget to boost private investment There was nothing in the Budget to encourage banks to lend, and investors to borrow, for new investment The FM seems to have given up on private investment altogether.

TAX RELIEF: There is no tax relief to the average tax-payer. Only corporates with income up to Rs 250 crore get a tax relief of 5 per cent" For individuals, Standard deduction is back, but Long Term Capital Gains Tax is also back. For the middle class earner and saver, one cancels the other. Actually, by way of LTCG and 4 per

cent cess, the taxpayers pay will the government Rs. 31,000 crore more whereas the gain through Standard deduction will be only Rs. 800.

SLASHING ALLOCATIONS: The most disappointing part of the budget is the cut in the outlays on major schemes for 2018-19. Some important schemes that will get constant or reduced outlays are: MGNREGA, PMAY, National Drinking Water Mission, Swachh Bharat Mission, National Health Mission, Midday Meals Scheme, Interest Subsidy for Short Term Farm Credit, Northeastern Investment Promotion, Price Stabilisation Fund and Gram Jyoti Yojana.

[Translation]

DR. BANSHILAL MAHATO (KORBA): I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak. This Budget is dedicated to farmers, the elderly, women and all categories of workers. For the first time, such a Budget has been presented in the country.

15.08 hrs **(Shri K. H. Muniyappa *in the Chair*)**

This Budget takes care of the common citizens. Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, more than six crore toilets have already been constructed, and a provision has been made for two crore more. In this manner, two crore additional toilets will be constructed. Education will expand, and health services will witness improvement in the coming days. Similarly, the coverage under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana has been increased to four crore, and in the times to come, all the poor will get houses. The budgetary allocation for the defence sector has been doubled. With growth returning to the manufacturing, services and export sectors, India will now move towards achieving an economic growth rate of more than eight per cent.

In the Rabi and Kharif crops, prices have been fixed at one and a half times the cost of production. This will greatly benefit farmers, the common citizen will be happy, and development will continue to progress day by day.

The plan formulated by the Hon. Finance Minister for education from play school up to Class XII will certainly make this Budget useful for ordinary children and youth. With an improvement in the standard of education, the progress of the country will be assured. In this manner, a good education system should be implemented in the coming times on the basis of model schools. I would like schools that impart values, like those run on the Vidya Bharati pattern, to function so that children imbibe values and are able to become good citizens of India in the future.

Sir, in the Budget for the year 2018-19, 99 per cent of small enterprises will benefit. The tax rate, which was 30 per cent for traders with a turnover of Rs. 250 crore, has been reduced to 25 per cent. This will certainly lead to growth in industries. There will be significant benefits in the agriculture sector. Twenty-two thousand rural haats will be developed as rural agricultural markets. In the coming times, greenhouses will be set up for agricultural production. Certain manufacturing activities will be undertaken on the basis of food processing.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, tomato production in Chhattisgarh is very high. Tomatoes are spread out in markets and even on roads, where they get trampled upon. For this purpose, the Food Processing Department will construct the best possible basic infrastructure so that tomatoes can be stored there, enabling them to be sold at appropriate prices during periods when production is low. Similarly, onions are thrown on roads in Madhya Pradesh or Maharashtra. The Government has also taken measures to prevent this. In the coming times, the Government will provide relief to people from such crises.

The launching of the National Bamboo Mission will be highly beneficial. Earlier, bamboo was treated as a tree or a shrub, but our Government has changed this approach. A provision of Rs. 1,290 crore has been made for this. This will promote bamboo cultivation in people's fields. People will not face any difficulty in cutting bamboo, and it will be put to productive use. We import a large quantity of paper from abroad. This will lead to savings in foreign exchange, as there will be no need to import paper from foreign countries. Bamboo is a plant that has the highest capacity to absorb carbon dioxide and releases a large amount of oxygen. It is one of the most useful plants.

The loan amount provided to women Self Help Groups has been increased to Rs. 75,000 crore. This will lead to women

empowerment. A country where women are respected will certainly progress. Such schemes have been formulated for women Self Help Groups. Substantial facilities have been provided for senior citizens. Income tax exemption on interest income up to Rs. 50,000 has been provided, and the exemption limit on income from deposit schemes has been enhanced. On depositing an amount of Rs. 15 lakh, no tax will be levied. This will certainly provide considerable relief to the elderly. This Government is one that takes care of senior citizens as well as young children. The Child Welfare Department has also paid significant attention to nutrition. Our Government has made a provision that if a woman becomes pregnant for the first time, an amount of Rs. 6,000 will be deposited in her account. Similarly, health insurance of Rs. five lakh will be provided to 10 crore people, which will benefit nearly 50 crore people. An amount of Rs. 14.34 crore will be spent on livelihood generation in rural areas. Under the Rural Skill Development Scheme, skill development centres will be opened in every district. Twenty-four new medical colleges will be opened in the country. Similarly, young boys and girls will be provided nursing training, which will benefit the common people. The shortage of nurses in hospitals will also be addressed. LPG gas connections are being provided to the lower middle classes. When a woman cooks on a traditional stove, smoke equivalent to nearly 400 cigarettes enters her body, leading

to lung diseases. This measure will protect her from such health hazards.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, houses will be provided to the poor in villages across the country. This will also be highly beneficial. Similarly, in place of the existing exemptions for transport allowance and reimbursement of miscellaneous medical expenses, a standard deduction of Rs. 40,000 has been provided. It has been proposed to extend the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana up to March 2020. Trusts and institutions will not be permitted to make cash payments exceeding Rs. 10,000. Long-term capital gains exceeding Rs. one lakh will be taxed at the rate of 10 per cent. The education and social welfare cess has been increased from three per cent to four per cent. Under the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, more than 1.26 crore accounts have been opened. This gives meaningful effect to the Government's 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to say a few words about my area. My parliamentary constituency, Korba, is in Chhattisgarh. In Chhattisgarh, these schemes have been implemented much earlier. At the time of last year's Budget, it was seen that in Uttar Pradesh and other States, people did not receive proper prices for their agricultural produce. Paddy and wheat were procured at the rate of Rs. 800 or Rs. 900 per bag. Chhattisgarh is the only State

where 100 per cent of the produce is procured at the Government-fixed price, and the Government provides substantial benefits to farmers. The Chhattisgarh Government was the first to provide interest-free loans to farmers, where no interest is charged on farmers' loans, and no interest is levied on equipment purchased for farming.

My parliamentary constituency, Korba, has witnessed the implementation of several schemes by the present Government under the Bharatmala Project. Routes such as Champa to Katghora covering 64 kilometres, Bilaspur to Pathalgaon covering 195 kilometres, and similarly Bilaspur to Katghora covering 96 kilometres have been included under the Bharatmala Project. This will result in the construction of four-lane roads and will lead to the development of the region in the coming times. As far as railways are concerned, one long-pending demand of my parliamentary constituency, Korba, namely the rail route from Nagpur Halt to Chirmiri, is now being constructed at a cost of Rs. 114 crore, through which Manendragarh will also be connected.

With regard to the establishment of medical colleges, the proposal to set up one medical college for three parliamentary constituencies is a very good proposal. I would like a medical college to be established in Korba on the PPP model. There are large industries there, and with the participation of all stakeholders, a

good medical college can be set up there. ... *(Interruptions)* The previous Government had only announced the setting up of a medical college in Manendragarh in Korea district, but it was not established. ... *(Interruptions)* I would like that, as our Hon. Coal Minister had stated, Rs. 100 crore be provided from the Coal Ministry and Rs. 100 crore from the Ministry of Power, so that more medical colleges may be started. ... *(Interruptions)* I thank you for having listened to me patiently. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAM KUMAR SHARMA (SITAMARHI): Sir, I express my gratitude for giving me the opportunity to speak on the Budget for the year 2018-19, dedicated to the theme of "Prosperous Farmers, Healthy India".

Through this General Budget, after a long time, a hope has arisen that the winds of development will not always blow only from cities to villages, but that in a country of villages like India, rural areas will also develop independently and live with dignity.

If the thinking and efforts of the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, and the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, which are moving in this direction, translate into reality on the ground, then New India is not far away. That New India where villages will stand shoulder to shoulder with cities, migration will become a thing of the past, and perhaps the country will be freed from the curse of unfortunate incidents such as farmers' suicides.

The Budget provides that, in order to ensure remunerative prices for the produce of small and marginal farmers, small rural haats and markets will be converted into mandis. For this purpose, 22,000 such rural markets have been identified across all States. MGNREGA and other schemes will be utilised for their infrastructural development. These markets have also been exempted from the mandi laws. In these mandis, farmers will be

able to sell their produce directly to consumers, wholesalers and buyers. Earlier, due to deficiencies in the mandi laws, this facility was not available to farmers. These mandis have also been kept outside the provisions of e-NAM, that is, the National Agriculture Market. The announcements to provide water to every field and to improve the financial condition of farmers by fixing the Minimum Support Price for Kharif crops at one and a half times the cost of production will prove to be far-reaching steps. This will increase farmers' income and improve the condition of villages.

At a time when the entire world is looking towards India, the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister have taken forward steps to translate their dream of farmers' prosperity and a healthy India into reality. Moving ahead in the direction of building a New India, the launch of the world's largest national health protection scheme is a welcome step. This ambitious scheme will benefit ten crore families, that is, nearly 50 crore people. It will not only increase the life expectancy of ordinary Indians but will also put a check on the arbitrary practices of private health centres. In addition, the Hon. Finance Minister has made a budgetary provision of Rs. 1.38 lakh crore for various development-related schemes in the education and social sectors. This is a welcome step and will help move the country forward in the direction of improving the ease of living.

Proper planning of the youth population will be possible only through employment-oriented and higher education. In this direction, the proposal to invest Rs. one lakh crore over the next four years to strengthen the higher education framework is a noteworthy initiative. This amount will be utilised to promote research and infrastructure. The 'RISE' initiative is an important step by the Government towards strengthening the higher education sector. This initiative will be implemented through the Higher Education Financing Agency, HEFA, and these measures will make our higher education institutions world class. The Pradhan Mantri Research Fellowship announced in the Budget is also a welcome step.

Women empowerment has been accorded high priority by the Government through several important measures. In this direction, the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' and the 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana' will prove to be milestones. Under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, the target was to provide free LPG connections to five crore poor women. In view of its popularity, the target has been enhanced to eight crore poor women in the Budget for the year 2018-19. Similarly, keeping in view the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' initiative, the 'Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme', launched in January 2015, has been highly successful. At present, 1.26 crore

accounts have been opened across the country in the name of the girl child, with deposits amounting to Rs. 19,183 crore.

The Government is also working towards the promotion of medium, small and micro enterprises, and provisions for this have been made in the Budget. By fixing a target of Rs. three lakh crore, the Government has decided to impart momentum to this sector as well. In addition, the Budget provides for tax incentives to companies generating new employment in the organised sector, along with employment generation through infrastructure construction in rural areas. Along with this, the proposal to establish skill development centres in every district to make the youth skilled is also a commendable step by the Government. The slogan of building a New India will not remain confined only to cities and select sections. Due care has been taken in the General Budget in this regard.

I would like to draw your attention towards my area, Sitamarhi, where the Government has made a provision in this Budget to open 19 new medical colleges, which is indeed a welcome step. I urge the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister that I come from Sitamarhi, the birthplace of Mata Janaki, and there is not a single medical college there. I request that out of the new provision made for opening 24 medical colleges, due

attention may certainly be given to Sitamarhi. With these words, I conclude my remarks. Thank you.

[*]SHRI MOHANBHAI KALYANJIBHAI KUNDARIYA (RAJKOT): I support the Budget presented by the Hon. Finance Minister.

In this Budget, the Hon. Finance Minister has made provisions, keeping in view the development of the country, for farmers of all sections, the poor, youth, industries, and for the development of other sectors as well.

If I speak about Gujarat, I would like to thank the Hon. Finance Minister for initiatives such as the six-laning of the Ahmedabad–Rajkot road, the Rajkot International Airport, the doubling of the Sundarnagar–Rajkot railway line, the construction of a new hospital in Rajkot, and the construction of road overbridges on National Highways.

There is a demand from the people of Gujarat and Saurashtra that provision be made for an AIIMS hospital in Gujarat, so that the residents of all Lok Sabha constituencies of Saurashtra may benefit from it.

Due attention has been paid to the construction of railway road overbridges and road underbridges, for which I thank the Union Government.

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[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

The construction work of the Ahmedabad–Rajkot six-lane road is underway.

I urge the Union Government to extend this road further up to Shapar Veraval by an additional length of 15 kilometres beyond Rajkot.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, bank accounts have so far been opened for nearly 31 crore poor people. Under this scheme, about 10 crore loans have been sanctioned so far, and credit exceeding Rs. four lakh crore has been disbursed. Nearly three crore people are such who have, for the first time, availed themselves of the benefits of this scheme and have successfully started self-employment.

Through the Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Kendras, about 800 types of medicines are being made available to the poor at affordable rates. The number of these centres has crossed 3,000.

Under the Deendayal Amrit Scheme, through 111 outlets, concessions ranging from 60 per cent to 90 per cent are being provided on more than 5,200 life-saving branded medicines and surgical implants.

Along with medicines, the prices of stents for heart patients have been reduced by up to 80 per cent. The prices of

implants used in knee replacement surgeries have also been regulated.

Through the Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme, in more than 500 districts, over 22 lakh dialysis sessions have been conducted at concessional rates for about two and a quarter lakh patients.

To increase the availability of doctors, 13,000 MBBS seats and more than 7,000 postgraduate seats have been approved.

To ensure quality and transparency in medical education, the Government has also introduced the National Medical Commission Bill in the Lok Sabha.

I am happy to state that the annual growth rate of immunisation in the country, which earlier used to be only one per cent per year, has now increased to 6.7 per cent per year. As a result, children living in remote areas of the country, particularly in tribal regions, have benefited significantly. Recently, my Government has also launched the Intensified Mission Indradhanush.

Education is the foundation for building the future of the nation. My Government is committed to strengthening and

modernising the systems of school education and higher education in the country. Under the Atal Innovation Mission, my Government has already approved more than 2,400 Atal Tinkering Labs, so that the foundations of entrepreneurship and creativity may be laid among children from an early age.

These measures are not only reducing the concerns of farmers but are also lowering their expenditure on agriculture. It is the result of the Government's policies and the hard work of farmers that the country has achieved record production of more than 275 million tonnes of foodgrains and nearly 300 million tonnes of fruits and vegetables.

The Government is committed to doubling farmers' income by 2022. In order to ensure that farmers receive remunerative prices for their produce, work is underway to connect agricultural mandis across the country online. Through the e-NAM portal, agricultural commodities worth more than Rs. 36,000 crore have been traded so far. The work of completing 99 irrigation projects that had been pending for decades is also progressing. Through production bonuses in the pulses and oilseeds sectors, the Union Government is also safeguarding the interests of farmers. Due to the new policy formulated for pulses, there has been an increase of more than 38 per cent in the production of pulses compared to the previous year, which is a record.

To enhance farmers' income, an ambitious scheme has been launched in the dairy sector through a Dairy Processing and Infrastructure Development Fund of Rs. 11,000 crore.

Urea production has increased, and after 100 per cent neem coating, the black marketing of urea has also been curbed. The Government is working rapidly towards reviving fertiliser plants at Gorakhpur, Barauni, Sindri, Talcher and Ramagundam.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, affordable and simple insurance services are being provided to farmers. During the year 2017, a protective cover was provided to five crore seventy-one lakh farmers for Rabi and Kharif crops under this scheme.

The Government has made insurance schemes accessible to the poor at a premium of Re. 1 per month and 90 paise per day. So far, more than 18 crore poor people have been covered under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana. Under these schemes, claim amounts of nearly Rs. 2,000 crore have already been paid to the poor.

Our country is the youngest nation in the world. In order to enable the youth of the country to fulfil their dreams and take up self-employment, my Government is implementing programmes such as the Start-up India Mission and the MUDRA Yojana.

To impart skills to the youth in accordance with present-day industrial requirements, my Government has recently approved two schemes, namely, SANKALP and STRIVE.

Industries or companies that are creating new employment opportunities are being provided financial assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana. More than 20 lakh beneficiaries have already received assistance under this scheme.

[English]

***SHRI ARKA KESHARI DEO (KALAHANDI):** I represent Kalahandi Parliamentary Constituency in the state of Odisha and it is one of the backward districts in the state as well as in the country.

The Union Budget 2018-19 is in my opinion a "Balanced Budget", the Finance Minister has given more weightage to the rural economy for its development. The growth of tourism will no doubt attract foreign tourists but also home tourists and thereby generate income for the local people of the nearby areas. There are many ancient temples and natural habitat and waterfalls in my district which would attract a large number of tourists if a "Tourist Circuit" may be developed at par with other Tourist destinations in the country. These destinations are – Karlapat, Phurlijharamn, Dukhichanchala, Patal Ganga, Sunabeda wild life sanctuary etc.

People of my district mainly depend on Agriculture for their livelihood. Agriculture activities continue for three months in a year and the remaining nine months these people are sitting idle, or migrate to neighbouring states in search of work. So, a large scale infrastructural activities – construction of roads, buildings, bridges, expansion of railway line can generate job opportunity for the

* Speech was laid on the Table.

people of my district and to some extent solve the unemployment problem.

The Insurance Policy (Ayusman), which covers 10 crores people, is a path breaking step taken by the Government but its implementation in letter and spirit is very important. The selection of hospitals, digital connection of the health insurance beneficiaries and the Insurance Companies all need to come in a single platform to give the benefits to right people at the time of an emergency. Here I suggest the Government to open "Satellite Health Service at Bhawanipatna" for the patients of my districts when experts' opinion is needed by doctors for critical operation.

Chichiguda is very famous for silk saree in my districts, the look, artisan who are master craftsmen are facing financial problem to sustain in their trade. So, the Union Textile Ministry may give a one-time financial package for purchasing modern loom and impart training facilitation centre and easy availability of raw materials to revive silk saree clusters of chichiguda.

For the all-round development of my district i.e. – Kalahandi, a Special Financial Package may be given to develop the infrastructure, hospitals, roads, buildings, colleges, bridges, cold storages and godowns and expansion of railway lines and widening of Highways, opening of Nurse College and reviving of M/s Konark

Ginning and Spinning Cotton Mills at Kesinga may be taken up during the current Financial Year. With this I conclude my speech.

[*]**SHRI Y. V. SUBBA REDDY (ONGOLE):** I congratulate the Government for presenting predominantly a people centric Budget focused on the agrarian and the rural economy and even the sector like healthcare, agriculture, MSMEs, education and skill have been given priority.

India's economy still has dominant rural and agricultural component and that has been overarching focus on this year's budget. Export of pulses to be liberalized, rural housing, roads and infrastructure spending is likely to increase and correspondingly will boost employment.

The Government has promised of doubling the income of farmers by 2022 by announcing various additional allocation and funds in this sector. The move to increase the minimum support price for crops by one and half times of their production cost will benefit farmers and to implement this a statutory body has to be appointed.

The tax exemption to food processing sector is also likely to be beneficial as the future belongs to this sector. Operation Green with an outlay of Rs.500 crore to take care of the challenge of price volatility of perishable commodities like tomato, onion and potato

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

is a good step but the amount needs to be increased to atleast 1,500 crore.

The well balanced budget focuses on addressing the fundamental needs of education in the country. The budget rightly focuses on movement from traditional blackboards to digital boards which offer enhanced learning experience to students. I believe that the promotion of digital platforms and use of technology will increase reach and ensure superior outcomes. The need for quality of education and setting up of higher education finance agency, integrated B.Ed programme and revitalizing infrastructure and systems in education by 2022 with one lakh crore in next four years is step in right direction.

But the real problem of Indian education lies in a domain beyond the budget. The Government needs to liberalise the archaic laws governing education in India. This is essential to attract the private investment into education and enabling to set up a very large number of schools and colleges particularly in remote areas of the country.

Another notable feature of the budget has been generous increase in the centre's health insurance package with a cover of five lakh annually per family for hospitalization. This is no doubt a

welcome move but to what extent it can be funded and what its reach will be remains to been seen and watched.

Corporate income tax has been reduced to 25% for companies with a turnover of up to Rs.250 crore, but this will only marginally help job creation. The big worry for the country has to do with jobs and inequality. India's inequality especially wealth inequality is rising with the rich getting steadily richer and at the other end the slowdown in job creation is hurting not just destitute but even the middle class.

For the middle class, there is little to cheer. Another cess of one percentage was added to the existing levy in order to fund Government's education and health care spending. This will have far reaching affect on the middle class people. There is need to look in to this.

The Union Budget 2018 has poured water on the assurances given to the Andhra Pradesh in the Reorganisation Act by showing empty hands to the people of the State. There has been no mention on Polavaram Project and its finances. Backward Rayalaseema was to get about 1,200 crore from the centre which was not addressed till now. There was no commitment on special status to AP. Even there was neither a mention of setting up of separate Visakhapatnam Railway Zone as agreed by the Union Government earlier nor any

mention of allocation of funds to pending Railway projects like construction of rail over Bridges in various districts of the State. People of the State are also disappointed as there has been no reference of steel plant in Kadapa in the Union Budget as the setting up of steel plant was included in the AP Reorganisation Act. The demand of setting up of Dugarajapatnam Port has also not been touched upon by the Union Government in this budget.

I would urge upon the Government to fulfil the aspiration of the people of Andhra Pradesh by implementing the assurances made in the AP Reorangisation Act.

[*]**SHRI KESINENI SRINIVAS (VIJAYAWADA):** A moment comes, but comes rarely in history. Our Hon. Finance Minister has failed miserably and come out with an unimaginative budget- A budget which willfully ignores our beloved Andhra Pradesh. It is true that one cannot please everyone, but at the same time, it is equally hard to aggravate everyone. Shri Jaitley has achieved that rare distinction wherein he has come out with a budget that not even his allies can support. Such callousness and audacity can only manifest for two underlying emotions- overconfidence or sheer stupidity, both a worrisome point for a party-in-charge of a country. Such is the sorry State of affairs that I have to say that "a party" is solely in-charge despite technically being in alliance with more than a dozen parties.

When two parties enter into a contract, the underlying principle is reciprocity. This basis of an agreement is so universal in nature that we, the TDP, inherently assumed its presence in good faith. It is now, in hindsight that we grimly realize that the honour of keeping their word means naught to the BJP.

We realize that the challenges faced by our State Andhra Pradesh, especially after the unscientific and unjustified bifurcation of 2014, were steep. And we immediately put our money where our

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

mouth was. We followed the alliance dharma and supported all decisions of the centre in the hope that our demands will get equal priority. What we demand is simply what we were promised. I regret to see that we have come to a point where an entire population, an entire State has to resort to dharna, no to demand something new, but to simply obtain what it was promised by the Parliament in the Andhra Pradesh State Reorganisation Act, 2014. I raise only the following 19 specific points, promised and yet undelivered to us, in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014:

1. Special Category Status
2. bridging the Resource Gap
3. Polavaram Project
4. Establishment of a Railway Zone
5. Financial Assistance for Amaravati
6. Greenfield Crude refinery and petrochemical complex.
7. Institutes of National importance
8. Duggirajupatnam Port in Nellore
9. Increase in seats in assembly
10. Fiscal measures including tax incentives
11. Steel Plant at Kadapa
12. Vizag-Chennai industrial corridor

13. Metro Rail facility in Vishakhapatnam and Vijayawada-Guntur-Tenali

14. Rapid rail and road connectivity from the new capital, Amaravati

15. Development Assistance for Backward States

16. Payment of power dues to State Discoms

17. Appointment of Schedule IX institutions

18. Appointment of Schedule X institutions

19. Greyhound training centre

Patience is a great virtue but I warn the BJP of testing a friend's patience for too long. Budget after budget we waited patiently for our turn to come. This was the last complete Budget by the Government and it too like the previous ones failed to deliver. Not even a single of our demands finds a mention in the budget. Are the wishes of 5 crore people so insignificant? Is the road from Amravati to Delhi so far?

We are torn between our commitment to the people and our commitment to the alliance. At the end of the day our commitment to the alliance is derivative of our responsibility to the people of Andhra. They have been hanged out to dry for too long. We are at a crossroad and if for the prosperity of Andhra, we have to diverge

paths from the BJP, so be it. What pains me is the simple fact that saddest thing about betrayal is that it never comes from your enemies.

[*]**SHRI K. ASHOK KUMAR (KRISHNAGIRI):** I express my hearty gratitude and indebtedness to our beloved immortal Leader Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA, before I place my views on the Discussion on the General Budget 2017-18.

Total expenditure for 2018-19 estimated to be over Rs. 24. 42 lakh crore. The total income expected is pegged at about Rs. 24 lakh crores. The total debts and other liabilities of the Government expected is about 90 lakh crores by the end of this financial year.

A strong and forward-looking India that places within the reach of its people the opportunities and development promised by our Constitution. This philosophy is enshrined in Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas. In Tamil Nadu our AMMA has adopted the vow Makkalal Naan, Makkalukkaka Naan which means "I am by the People , I am for the People".AMMA is very keen that the empowering rays of opportunity should reach the every person. Poverty Eradication, Farmers' Prosperity and Massive Employment Generation has given utmost priority.

Tamil Nadu has been implementing various schemes for the betterment of Poor and deprived people. There is a saying in Hindi: "Roti Kapda aur Makkan" "Food, Clothes and House to live" are mandatory for all. One of the first decisions of Puratchi Thalaivi

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

Amma on assumption of office in May, 2011 was to announce and implement the free supply of 20 Kilogrammes of rice per month through the public Distribution System to about 1.83 crore families in the State. I urge upon the Government to provide the same level of supply food grains like Rice and Wheat, Sugar and Kerosene to Tamil Nadu without reducing the quantity and Subsidy. Tamil Nadu's Universal Public Distribution System commended both within India and elsewhere is a model food security programme. This is a vital programme, which requires constant vigil and monitoring so as to ensure that the benefits continue to reach the deserving persons and to plug leakages. The Union Government should support this good initiative.

Tamil Nadu has been implementing the provision of 20 KG Free rice and distribution of dhoti-saree for all poor people in Tamil Nadu under Public Distribution System. I would like the Government to implement this as a new project to provide job opportunities for millions of textile workers in the country to earn their livelihood.

The Amma Canteen scheme, a brain child of the Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, which is now renowned across the world and studied by governments and experts from different parts of India and the world, has also had a salutary impact on keeping a check on food prices in Tamil Nadu. The availability of food at such lowest

prices really penetrated deep into the hearts of the poor, deprived and under-privileged people of Tamil Nadu. This is a model scheme which provides food for all, need to be implemented throughout the country.

I would like to lay emphasis on the pending demands of the People of my Krishnagiri Parliamentary Constituency. Large number of Industries in all the sectors, textiles, Automobiles, Electronics and Electricals, IT and ITES are in Hosur which needs greater attention. I urge the Union Government to provide a special Package for development of Pharma Park in Hosur. This will provide revenue and job opportunities.

There is a long pending demand for the start of a pucca airport in Hosur which is going to be the corporation city very soon. I urge the Government to take steps to start Airport in Hosur soon. Another long pending Railway demand of the people of Krishnagiri Parliamentary Constituency is the establishing a Railway link between Jolarpettai and Krishangiri. This will fulfil the wishes of several lakhs of people living in this area. The work on National Highway 77 between Krishnagiri and Tindivanam is pending for a long time. This is very important road connectivity and therefore needs to be provided with adequate funds and expedited. Thank You.

***DR. THOKCHOM MEINYA (INNER MANIPUR):** I oppose the Union General Budget 2018-19 presented by the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitly on February 1, 2018.

May I congratulate the Hon. Finance Minister for presenting his last full budget of the 16th Lok Sabha, although the Budget have simply failed to address even the fundamental NDA Government Mantra-Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas.

The Union Budget 2018-19 has very little space in terms of its budgetary allocation towards solving the issues of our immediate concern; namely, GST; demonetization; emerging trend of national intolerance; slowdown in economic growth; governance deficit; black money, corruption, terrorism; internal security and of course International relations.

I have always been mentioning in almost all my interventions that in a developing country like ours, empowering our citizens should be the top priority. However, it appears that at present NDA Government has never tried to do it. May be the present dispensation in the Union Government is quite directionless.

There is no doubt that the toilets are constructed everywhere including our primary schools. However, having no proper water supply these toilets do perish an untimely death. Here I urge upon

* Speech was laid on the Table.

the Union Government to provide compulsorily a good school in every Indian villages. A good school requires good roads leading to the school, proper water and power supply over and above the required qualified trained teachers and proper physical infrastructure of the school. I hope, the Government does understand it! It is only Education that can meaningfully empower our citizens. By properly empowering the citizens, democracy will bear fruits.

My State Manipur was an independent Kingdom till we lost our independence to the British in 1891 in the last famous Anglo-Manipur War of 1891. After this, Manipur remained as a Princely State. In 1947 when British suzerainty lapsed in this part of the world, Manipur automatically became an independent princely state.

In early 1948 Manipur had elected its first State Assembly on the basis of adult franchise. Manipur State assembly consisted of 53 members including 2 nominated members. Our last Maharaja Shri Bodhachandra Singh was called to Shillong, the capital of Assam and made to sign the Manipur Merger Agreement on September 21, 1949 to merge the erstwhile independent Kingdom of Manipur with the Union of India on October 15, 1949.

On adoption of the Constitution of India on 26 January 1950, Manipur became a part C State and then a Chief Commissioner State under Union Territory (Laws) Act, 1950. This continued till the election of 30 members of the Territorial Council in 1957. The Territorial Council was later converted into the Territorial Legislative Assembly in 1963, consisting of 30 elected and 2 nominated members. The Assembly started functioning from 23 July 1963.

Manipur had a Legislative Assembly consisting of 30 elected members under the Government of the Union Territories act, 1963. Manipur became a full-fledged State on 21 January 1972 by the North-Eastern (Reorganization) Act, 1971. The structure of the State Legislature is unicameral. The State Legislative Assembly now consists of 60 members. Manipur has two Lok Sabha Members and one Rajya Sabha Member.

I come to the most interesting part. That is, Manipur's position in the country vis-a-vis the Constitution of India. We the people in Manipur feel that had Manipur been merged into the Union of India as a full-fledged state at the time of the merger in 1949, most of the problems the state is now facing might not have occurred. The fact that it remained a Part-C State with an administrator till 1950, a Union Territory till 1956 and statehood only in 1972 has come really very late.

In 1963, when the erstwhile autonomous District of Naga Hills of Assam was granted statehood, the two princely states of Manipur and Tripura could have been granted statehood. Unfortunately it did not happen. These demand-driven actions of the Government of India do more harm than good.

With the abolition of the then permit system for entry into and exit from the State of Manipur in 1950, Manipur is now facing a huge demographic challenge. Now, the people of Manipur are demanding for such a law for the state to tackle the continuing demographic challenge.

We know that till Manipur attained statehood, the people did not have any say whatsoever. But in 1972, when Manipur was granted full-fledged statehood, all that Manipur had before its merger into the Union of India could have been restored to Manipur by the Union Government.

These include the protection of territorial Integrity of the state, the regulatory system of entry into and exit from Manipur by outsiders, the Tribal status for all the indigenous people of the state, the re-deeming and renewal of Rs. 500 tax/tribute for Kabaw Valley by the Burmese Government under Treaty of Yandaboo. Unfortunately, these things did not happen.

Even the merger agreement had not been implemented at all and has been completely forgotten. What a tragedy!

Art 371 C of the Constitution of India pertaining to Manipur was also introduced through the 27th Constitutional Amendment 1971 and became effective only from 15th February 1972, which is very late and insignificant.

The State of Manipur had been facing a serious insurgent movement from around the beginning of 60s, which in my opinion, requires a political solution, the only visible solution.

Instead, Government of India promulgated Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act, 1958 (AFSPA). Under it many lives were lost, many people disappeared, crimes against women including rape were rampant, and many women became widows.This AFSPA is really draconian and a black law.

Many committees, commissions, conferences including most recent Justice Verma Committee and UN Agencies recommended repeal of the act. Nothing concrete has come out so far except the fact that the Government of Manipur had lifted AFSPA in the seven Assembly segments in the capital Imphal of Manipur.

Law and order situation in that part of the country still remain a matter of grave concern. The armed Forces (Special) Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958 has still been being promulgated and here Army is

engaged in counter-insurgency operations under the Act. This Act provides immunity to the army from being tried without the prior permission of the Union Government.

While the Government of India are repealing a number of obsolete laws, I would like to request the Union Government, Ministry of Home Affairs in particular, to include in the list, laws related to the violation of human rights which are also obsolete. One such legislation is the Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958. This law is a manifestation of the colonial law legislated way back in 1942. I once again urge the Union Government to immediately repeal this draconian law.

In order to safeguard the territorial integrity of Manipur, I have moved a constitutional amendment Bill twice to insert an extra Art. 371CC: that 'ART. 3 of the Constitution of India shall not apply in respect of the state of Manipur'. I have also moved another Bill to repeal the infamous Armed Forces (Special) Powers Act, 1958. Till now these two Bills do not get the space for consideration.

Considering all these aspects, on 27 November 2015, on the auspicious occasion of the 125th birth anniversary celebration of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and discussion on commitment to India's Constitution, I did urge upon the union Government to take all possible steps within the framework of the Constitution of India, to

meet the aspiration of the people of Manipur, the erstwhile princely state, at the time of its merger with the Union of India in the best interest of all concerned.

They include among others:

1) Implementation of the Manipur Merger Agreement of 1949 in words and spirit;

2) Protection of the Territorial Integrity of Manipur at the time of merger with Union of India;

3) Political solution of Insurgency in Manipur;

4) Inscription of Erstwhile Manipur National Flag/Emblem in Parliament House;

5) Repeal of armed Forces (Special) Powers (AFSPA), 1958;

6) Total abolition of Restricted/Protected Area Permit (RAP/PAP) in Manipur;

7) Introduction of Inner Line Permit System/Restoration of Permit system for entry into and exit from Manipur as abolished 1950;

8) Scheduled Tribe (ST) status of Meiteis/Meeteis;

9) Extension of financial assistance to the Autonomous District councils in Manipur; and

10) Infra-structural Developments:

(a) Development of infrastructures for Sports, Culture and Tourism

(b) Classical language status for Manipuri language;

(c) Inclusion of Manipur scripts in Currency notes;

(d) More all-weather National Highways (NHs)-NH-2 & NH-37 on top priority;

(e) Dedicated NH protection security forces for smooth flow of goods and passengers;

(f) Early completion of National Project: Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal Rail lines;

(g) Dedicated in-built security arrangement for all National projects in the Northeast;

(h) To make Imphal International Airport fully functional at International norms;

I oppose the Union Budget.

Jai Hind.

[Translation]

***SHRI BHOLA SINGH (BULANDSHAHR):** I would like to congratulate the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister for presenting a historic Budget for the welfare of farmers, youth and women. This Budget is one that will impart momentum to the development of the country.

The farmers of our country have made a historic contribution to national development by achieving record production of foodgrains and fruits and vegetables. To further strengthen the position of farmers and to enhance their income, several measures have been proposed in the Budget. By allocating nearly Rs. 14 lakh crore to the rural and agriculture sectors, a commendable effort has been made to double farmers' income by 2022, when India will celebrate its 75th Independence Day.

In order to make agriculture profitable and to empower farmers, a historic decision has been taken to fix the Minimum Support Price for unannounced crops for the forthcoming Kharif season at least 50 per cent above the cost of production, that is, at one and a half times the cost. This historic decision of the Government will prove to be a significant step towards doubling the income of farmer brothers.

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

Along with this, the decision of the Government to procure farmers' produce at the Minimum Support Price even if market prices fall below the MSP is also a historic decision.

To ensure that farmers receive the right price for their crops, the Government has established 470 mandis and e-mandis, which are benefiting farmer brothers.

For major vegetables such as potato, tomato and onion, the allocation of Rs. 500 crore under Operation Greens is a commendable step in the interest of farmers' development.

Providing comprehensive promotion to the bamboo sector by launching the restructured National Bamboo Mission with an allocation of Rs. 1,290 crore is also a commendable step taken by the Government in the interest of farmers.

In addition, the Government has carried out praiseworthy work by promoting organic farming, providing subsidies on farm machinery used by farmers in their fields, and by taking several other farmer-friendly decisions.

Over the past three years, the focus of Government schemes has remained on the poor, who have been given due importance. The Government has shown concern for the small but significant problems of the poor and has worked to address them.

The poor woman in villages, who used to spend the entire day collecting firewood from forests, making cow-dung cakes, and arranging fuel merely to light the kitchen stove for feeding her family, has been taken care of by the Modi Government. Through the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, the Government has provided free LPG connections to five crore poor families and has set a target accordingly, which will free poor mothers and sisters of the country from the constant worry of fuel.

To ensure round-the-clock electricity in every poor household of the country, the decision to provide free electricity connections to four crore poor families under the Pradhan Mantri Saubhagya Yojana is a commendable step.

Not only this, to safeguard the dignity of poor mothers and sisters, who earlier had to wait for before sunrise or after sunset to go for defecation, the Government has undertaken commendable work by constructing toilets in more than six crore households under the Swachh Bharat Mission and by providing them with dignity through the provision of toilets.

Providing a roof over the heads of the poor through the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana is a commendable effort by the Government, under which one crore families in rural and urban areas have been enabled to realise their dream of owning a house.

Providing hospital treatment cover of up to Rs. five lakh for poor families is a laudable step. In this context, I would like to make a suggestion to the Hon. Finance Minister that this facility may be extended to those families in which there are not more than four children.

An allocation of Rs. 600 crore for providing nutritional assistance of Rs. 500 per month to TB patients is also a commendable initiative.

The Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Suraksha Bima Yojana at Rs. 12 and the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana at Rs. 330 have contributed significantly to the welfare of poor families.

Through skill development programmes, the MUDRA Yojana, and the Start-up India and Stand Up India initiatives, commendable work has been done to enable youth to develop themselves and pursue self-employment.

I would like to urge the Hon. Finance Minister that although my Lok Sabha constituency is part of the Delhi NCR, no development work on the lines of NCR has taken place there. There is neither a train service nor metro connectivity from Bulandshahr to Delhi. Therefore, I request the Hon. Finance Minister to kindly make these facilities available in my Lok Sabha constituency.

I once again express my gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister.

[*]**SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR SINGH (AURANGABAD):** While supporting the General Budget for the year 2018-19 presented in the House by the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, I would like to say that the Budget for 2018-19 certainly reflects several commendable steps taken by the Government for the development of the country, particularly for the welfare of the poor and the common people. These include the objective of doubling farmers' income, fixing the Minimum Support Price at one and a half times the cost of production, and setting a target of providing loans up to Rs. 11 lakh crore. At the same time, in the direction of building a Healthy India, the Government has launched the world's largest health protection scheme, under which nearly ten crore families will be provided insurance cover of up to Rs. five lakh per annum. Tax relief for senior citizens and other such measures are also noteworthy.

I would like to place a few suggestions before the Hon. Finance Minister-

There is a need to rectify the deficiencies prevailing in land records across the country. Due to these shortcomings, crores of cases have remained pending for years, from the lowest levels up to the Hon. Supreme Court. A very large number of land disputes not

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

only give rise to social and familial tensions, but also compel landholders and farmers to make repeated rounds of courts, resulting in unnecessary loss of time as well as physical, mental and financial hardship. The labour and resources that should be utilised for nation-building are instead wasted in litigation. This also acts as an impediment to the country's development. When Governments require land for development works in the national interest, defects in land records lead to multiple claimants coming forward with their respective documents and claims for compensation. Many such matters then move to departments and courts, disputes arise, acquisition comes to a halt, and as a result, development activities come to a standstill.

Therefore, I would urge the Government that within a stipulated time frame, land records should be duly entered in official Government records, and through the ongoing digitisation programme, all land-related documents across the country should be recorded. An effective mechanism should also be constituted for the expeditious disposal of land dispute cases, so that pending cases relating to land disputes in various courts of the country may be resolved in a time-bound manner, and landholders affected by such disputes may be relieved of prolonged litigation, as well as economic and mental hardship.

If I speak about my State and my parliamentary constituency of Aurangabad in Bihar, there are thousands of landless persons, the extremely poor, persons with disabilities, and elderly helpless women and men whose names do not figure in the earlier BPL list or in the present Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) list. As a result, such persons are deprived of the benefits of various welfare schemes being implemented by the Union Government and the State Government.

Under the welfare-oriented schemes of the Hon. Prime Minister, the Ujjwala Yojana has empowered a large number of women in villages and cities. However, due to the non-inclusion of the names of such beneficiaries in the BPL or SECC lists, thousands of eligible beneficiaries are deprived of the benefits of this beneficial scheme of the Government.

Therefore, in this regard, I would urge that, as an immediate arrangement, the names of those genuine beneficiaries who have not been included under the BPL or SECC lists, despite being eligible, may be added on the basis of recommendations of Hon. Members of Parliament, Members of Legislative Assemblies, and other elected public representatives.

Under the visionary thinking of the Hon. Prime Minister, with the objective of doubling farmers' income by 2022, the Union

Government has launched various schemes on a large scale, such as crop insurance and irrigation schemes, among others.

I would like to submit that the cost of production on the basis of which farmers are given one and a half times the Minimum Support Price is shown to be quite low in official data, whereas the actual cost of production borne by farmers is much higher. Therefore, I would request that instead of the MSP, farmers should be given a remunerative price.

I would also request that, instead of the temporary subsidies provided by some State Governments on diesel, a permanent provision be made to grant additional subsidy to farmers, as diesel constitutes an important component of agricultural input costs.

Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana - In the third phase, there is a mandatory requirement that villages selected must be included under the CNPL. At present, the third phase of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana has commenced. However, due to administrative or technical shortcomings, there are several habitations in the country with populations of one thousand, two thousand and even three thousand that have not been included under the CNPL. Owing to this mandatory condition, road construction under this scheme cannot be undertaken in villages where there are

no roads, even if there is a genuine need and willingness to carry out such works.

Missing Road- There should be a provision under this scheme to connect one paved road with another paved road. By linking such roads, a stretch of road of about 25 kilometres can effectively be reduced to a construction requirement of only five kilometres. Such an arrangement will not result in any loss of Government revenue, and the completion of road construction over shorter distances will save both time and money for the people. In many areas, road construction has been completed, but due to the non-construction of bridges on these roads, the intended benefits are not reaching the common people.

Therefore, I would urge that, on the basis of physical verification and the recommendations of Hon. Members of Parliament, Hon. Members of Legislative Assemblies and other elected public representatives, the names of habitations excluded from the CNPL list may be included, so that road construction can be undertaken in such deprived villages and habitations. This will enable the construction of missing roads over shorter distances by connecting one paved road to another paved road, and also facilitate the construction of bridges on completed roads, so that the common people may derive practical benefits from road connectivity.

Public Welfare Schemes of Hon. Prime Minister - Several public welfare schemes are being implemented in the country, of which the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Atal Pension Yojana, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, MUDRA Loan, and the National Health Insurance Scheme are particularly noteworthy. These schemes are extremely beneficial for the poor, the destitute, the backward sections and the middle classes. However, due to lack of awareness, these schemes are not proving to be fully effective among a large section of the people.

At the same time, the recent selection of 115 backward districts by the Government is highly commendable. My suggestion is that in the development programmes of these districts, the suggestions and participation of public representatives should be made mandatory, and the recommendations and suggestions of Hon. Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assemblies should be made legally binding in the committees constituted for this purpose.

I would urge that, for ensuring one hundred per cent implementation of these schemes, wide publicity and outreach be undertaken through banks, insurance companies, and also through ASHA workers, assistants, sevikas, Vikas Mitras, Tola Sevaks and Rozgar Sevaks deployed at the grassroots level. Targets should be fixed and the benefits of these schemes should be ensured to reach

the common people within a stipulated time frame. Application forms for all these schemes should be made available to such beneficiaries, and regular monitoring, accountability and transparency should be ensured. With these words, I conclude my statement.

"Ho gayi hai peer parvat si pighalni chahiye

Is Himachal se koi Ganga nikaalni chahiye

Tere seene mein nahin toh mere seene mein sahi

Ho kahi bhi aag lekin aag jalaani chahiye."

("The pain has mounted like a mountain; it must now melt away.

From this Himalaya, some Ganga must surely emerge.

If not in your breast, then let it be in mine.

Wherever there is fire, the fire must be kindled.")

SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH (HOSHANGABAD): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I rise to speak in support of the General Budget for the year 2018-19. Before I begin my remarks, I would like to express my gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, and our Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, for presenting, after a very long time, a Budget that supports villages, the poor and farmers. There is no doubt that this Budget will impart momentum to 125 crore countrymen. The most important feature of this Budget is the provision of nearly Rs. 14 lakh crore for the rural and agriculture sectors, which itself bears testimony to the fact that the Government has focused on villages and farmers while shaping the destiny of India. This Budget provides for the construction of more than three lakh kilometres of roads and more than two crore toilets, the direct benefit of which will accrue to the Dalit, deprived and exploited sections of society. Our Government has set a target of constructing more than 50 lakh houses. I believe this is a major decision that establishes the assurance that before the year 2022, every poor person will have a permanent roof over his or her head. While cooperative societies already enjoy tax exemptions, our Government has made a provision to grant tax exemption for five years to Farmer Producer Organisations, FPOs, in the agriculture sector.

The Hon. Minister of State for Finance is present in the House. I would request him that, as this is a subject from which farmers across the country can benefit, he may kindly explain in detail, while replying, about Farmer Producer Organisations, so that farmers may avail themselves of the benefit of tax exemption under this scheme. Under the Ayushman scheme, a very significant announcement has been made to link ten crore poor people with a health insurance scheme. I believe that through identified hospitals, treatment up to Rs. five lakh per year will be provided to assist people. I would request that the dispensaries to be identified under this scheme should be selected on a regional and State-wise basis. If the identified dispensaries are located at far-off distances, the common poor person is unable to avail the benefit. The distance to the identified dispensaries should be such that people are able to reach those hospitals easily. Our Government has taken another major decision by making a provision to establish one medical college for every three parliamentary constituencies. This is a very revolutionary decision. My parliamentary constituency lies between Jabalpur and Bhopal, and there is no medical college there. In a stretch of nearly 300 kilometres, there is not a single medical college. If a medical college is established in either Narsinghpur or Hoshangabad district, it would be a great benevolence on the part of the Government.

Sir, in the field of education, our Government has taken a major step by moving from blackboards to digital boards. I would urge that the difficulties likely to arise in its implementation should also be addressed. Priority should be given to those schools where infrastructure already exists, where there is a boundary wall, proper buildings, and optical fibre connectivity. If such schools are digitalised first, the outcomes will be much better. The Budget for the year 2018 has raised great expectations among farmers, as an allocation of nearly Rs. 63,836 crore has been made for the agriculture sector. International agri-business experts working in the agriculture field, such as Shri Vijay Sardana, have stated that through this Budget, the Government's intention to help farmers has become very clear. Such views are now being expressed even outside the country. Through you, I would like to submit that the Government has undertaken a major initiative for the welfare of farmers. However, I would also like to submit that there is a need to reconsider our APMC Act. Unless we develop such markets where farmers and consumers can sit face to face and determine policies, I feel that farmers will not truly benefit. Therefore, there is a need to reconsider and re-implement the APMC Act.

Sir, in this Budget, we face the challenge of spending Rs. one lakh twenty-five thousand crore every month. We observe that every time a Budget allocation is made, only 60, 65 or 70 per cent

of the amount is actually spent, and the remaining funds are returned by the departments. We should take this up as a pilot project and treat it as our important responsibility that the department which has received the Budget allocation will utilise it one hundred per cent. The Government has taken a major decision with regard to agriculture, the MSP and fixing prices at one and a half times the cost. On 12 January 2018, while replying to a question, the Hon. Minister for Agriculture gave a very detailed response. The Hon. Minister for Agriculture is present in the House. He had stated in his reply that the MSP for wheat has been fixed at Rs. 1,735, for gram at Rs. 4,400 and for lentil at Rs. 4,250, and that a bonus has also been provided on these. This MSP is not adequate. If we assume a production of five quintals per acre, the farmer will receive only about Rs. 20,000 or Rs. 22,000, whereas the expenditure incurred by the farmer per acre itself comes to Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 17,000. By spending such an amount and earning Rs. 22,000, there is hardly any real benefit to the farmer. I would request the Hon. Finance Minister, the Hon. Minister for Agriculture and the Hon. Minister for Corporate Affairs to coordinate among themselves and reconsider the MSP, so that the intention of the Hon. Prime Minister to increase farmers' income by one and a half times can truly be fulfilled. There is a major anomaly in the sugarcane sector. There is a provision to establish

one industry within a radius of ten kilometres. I would request that relaxation be provided in this regard. There should be a sugar factory every five kilometres, and for this purpose, amendments in the rules are required.

I would like to thank the Hon. Finance Minister for making efforts, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Census, to reach all sections of society such as senior citizens, widows, orphaned children and the deprived. A provision of nearly Rs. 10,000 crore has been made in the Budget under the National Social Assistance Programme.

I have one request to make. In our pension schemes, including old age pensions provided to senior citizens, there should be a provision for a minimum pension of at least Rs. 500, because a pension of Rs. 300 is not adequate to support the poor. Therefore, I would urge the Hon. Finance Minister to consider this request. It would involve only a small additional amount. If a provision of a minimum pension of Rs. 500 is made under the pension schemes, it would be a great benevolence.

I would like to make one more submission. Anganwadi workers in this country play a very important role in protecting children from malnutrition. If the minimum honorarium of Anganwadi workers is aligned with the prescribed minimum daily

wage, and appropriate arrangements are made so that they are able to discharge their duties with ease and satisfaction, it would greatly help them. For this purpose, there is a need to enhance their honorarium.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I will conclude my remarks within two minutes. Our Hon. Prime Minister has focused on the infrastructure sector, and he himself reviews its achievements, as we all know. Through you, I would like to submit that in the year 2018-19, our Government has set a target of completing 9,000 kilometres of National Highways. Under the Bharatmala Project, the Government is working to connect remote and backward regions of the country. Under this project, highways covering a length of 35,000 kilometres are being constructed at a cost of Rs. 5.35 lakh crore. Through you, I would like to request the Hon. Minister for Road Transport and Highways that a National Highway has been announced for my area. Our Hon. Shri Prahlad Patel is present here, and the proposed highway passes through his native region as well. It passes through Ghodegaon and Narsinghpur-Hoshangabad. I hope that funds will be allocated at the earliest for the announced Narsinghpur–Hoshangabad National Highway. This is my earnest expectation.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, one of the most significant areas of work is rural development. Hon. Atal Bihari Vajpayee gave this country the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. If there has been

a major transformation in that scheme for the first time, it has been brought about by our Government. Under Phase III, a provision has been made to create road circuits connecting higher education institutions and hospitals. This is most welcome. Our Chairperson Sir, has also served as the Railway Minister earlier. Therefore, I will conclude my remarks on railways briefly. Our Government has made a major provision for the railways. It is estimated that revenue of Rs. 1.21 lakh crore will be generated from freight. My submission is that in several sections, while freight revenue is earned in one direction, trains run empty in the return direction. This issue has been raised earlier as well. Where trains run empty, no freight revenue is earned. In such cases, there is a need to incentivise freight movement by reducing tariffs and providing a concession of about 20 to 25 per cent, so that wagons running empty may also generate freight revenue.

Thirdly, the Railway Budget has now been merged with the General Budget. Through you, I would like to submit that there is a need to strengthen the zonal system with regard to the policy on stoppages in the railways. Decisions regarding stoppages should be examined at the zonal level by the concerned officials in consultation with public representatives, keeping in view their utility. If the authority to decide where trains should stop and where they should not stop is vested with the zones, it would be a great

facilitation. I once again express my sincere gratitude to the Hon. Finance Minister and the Hon. Prime Minister, the pride of the nation, for presenting such a good Budget, a Budget that will take the country forward. Thank you.

[English]

SHRI RABINDRA KUMAR JENA (BALASORE): Mr. Chairman, Sir, thank you. In an election year, the Government of the day presents a Budget which is generally a populist one. It is true whether it is the UPA Government or the NDA Government or the United Front Government. Of course, there is nothing wrong in doing so. The Budget that the Government presents to the people of the country is the one where a dream is sold, which can be realised in a short to medium term. But there is an aberration which we find in this year's Budget, more particularly with regard to schemes which have been launched with a lot of fanfare. They are sold as dreams in this Budget.

Before I dwell upon such issues, I would like to raise one very important point wherein all the States, including my State of Odisha, your State, Karnataka and for that matter every State is going to be poorer together by Rs. 12,000 crore.

On the one hand, the Hon. Finance Minister has cut the Excise Duty on petrol and diesel by Rs. 2 per litre, and on the other hand, he has increased the road cess. Essentially, what he has done, he has deprived the States of their right to have 42 per cent of divisible pool of that Rupees 2. So, the States like us, Odisha, have lost Rs. 550 crore.

I would urge upon the Hon. Finance Minister to rollback this particular scheme. I would also urge upon all Hon. Members sitting here cutting across all the political parties to please come up and urge upon the Hon. Finance Minister to rollback this scheme, so that we as a State get back our right. This is not cooperative federalism. This is a very, very important point and I would sincerely urge upon the Hon. Finance Minister to look into it. Having said that, I will focus on four important sectors. Time may not permit me to dwell upon more issues. These sectors are - agriculture, health, infrastructure and rural areas.

I will start with agriculture. I come from Balasore Constituency in Odisha, where 80 per cent of the people depend on agriculture as the means of livelihood. The Government of Odisha, under the leadership of the Chief Minister of Odisha, Shri Naveen Patnaik has evolved a mechanism to increase the farmers' income by 104 per cent, whereas the corresponding figure in the entire country is just 34 per cent. The Union Government last year had said that they intend to increase farmers' income by 2022 by 100 per cent. It is a good thing that they have learnt it from Odisha and they want to implement it throughout the country. Possibly, as a part of it, there was a big bang announcement that the MSP would be increased by 50 per cent this year itself. On the face of it, it looks fine, but there are three structural problems in this particular

announcement. What is the base price, based on which they will increase the MSP by 50 per cent? Is it A2 cost or A2 plus FL cost or C2 cost? The farmers demand C2 cost. Nobody is talking about it. Neither the Budget document nor the policy makers are talking whether it is going to be C2 cost or not.

Coming to the issue of lending to the farming sector, Hon. Finance Minister has said that a huge sum of Rs. 11 lakh crore is going to be earmarked for this sector. I have done a drift analysis of this sector. I will explain it by giving one or two examples. Let us take the State of West Bengal, where 55 per cent of the credit goes to Kolkata city alone, 35 per cent goes to Mumbai. Same is the case with Chennai, Bengaluru, Delhi, etc. How many farmers live in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai? The average ticket size in those cities is one crore plus. How many farmers in this country take a loan of Rupees one crore plus? This is a fact which has not been addressed in the Union Budget.

The Economic Survey, which was presented prior to three days of the presentation of the Budget, says that there will be a 25 per cent dip in farmers' income in non-irrigated area. It is a cause of concern. On the one hand, they say that they will increase farmers' income by 100 per cent, whereas on the other hand, there is another 25 per cent dip. To address this, there is a meagre provision of just Rs. 52 crore. These are clear cut bigger issues in

this sector, where the Government intends to bring in large scale reforms.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude.

SHRI RABINDRA KUMAR JENA: I am just concluding. Please give me two minutes. I am a new Member. You are a senior and experienced Member. Please give me some more time.

Coming to health sector, the Government has come up with the world's largest public funded health scheme by providing a policy of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year. It intends to cover 10 crore families. We, as Members sitting in this House, feel that this is a big scheme. But if you go and study the Budget document, you would find that there is no budgetary provision. A simple calculation will say that you require nothing less than Rs. 60,000 crore to Rs.1,00,000 crore to have this. So, how you would implement this scheme is an issue. Health sector has seen a meagre increase of 2.5 per cent in the entire Budget. While I am talking about the health sector, I will urge upon the Hon. Minister to take care of ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers and the National Health Mission workers. The Hon. Prime Minister has also said that they are the backbone of health sector. But, their cases have not been taken into account. How can they ensure that the schemes are implemented at the grassroot level?

I would urge upon the Government to fulfil a simple demand of my Parliamentary Constituency. Five years back, an All India Institute of Medical Sciences was approved by the Union Government to be set up in my Constituency; and the State Government of Odisha has already given land and other facilities. But till now, it has not seen the light of day even though I have taken up this matter, time and again, on the floor of the House with the Hon. Finance Minister.

Sir, I would, therefore, once again, urge upon the Hon. Minister to please set up an All India Institute of Medical Sciences in my Balasore Constituency.

With these words, I conclude. Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI LAKHAN LAL SAHU (BILASPUR): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I am deeply grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak. I rise in support of this Budget.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, this Budget is aimed at fulfilling our country's resolve of building a 'New India'. In this regard, the manner in which the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has set goals before the nation makes it clear that if we wish to uphold the dignity of our youth, women and farmers in the twenty-first century, this Budget will certainly prove to be helpful. I welcome this Budget. As the Hon. Prime Minister had appealed from the ramparts of the Red Fort that by the time we celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, in the year 2019, the country should be clean, I would like to cite an example of its impact. The village that I have adopted as a Sansad Adarsh Gram is Hathnikala village in Mungeli district. There is a Scheduled Caste woman there, Bismilan Bai Patle. She refused to go to her parental home and even during festivals she declined to visit it because there was no toilet there. This change that has taken place within society will certainly take the country forward. The present situation in our country reflects a transformation within society.

If we look at it today, the manner in which toilets were constructed earlier and the decision taken to further strengthen this effort by constructing an additional two crore toilets is something I wholeheartedly welcome. This will enhance the dignity of women and will also lead to their empowerment.

Sir, I would like to cite an example of women empowerment. Chhattisgarh is often identified by many as a Naxal-affected State, and people say one should not go there. However, from this House, I would like to commend the sisters of Chhattisgarh. In the severely Naxal-affected Dantewada district, 51 women from Geedam are today driving e-rickshaws and giving a befitting reply to the Naxalites, conveying that they too wish to live in peace. They are saying that if you believe in democracy, then walk with Shri Modi, walk with Dr. Raman Singh in Chhattisgarh. If anyone has worked to raise the morale of the people with such a message, it is the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. As a result, the dignity of crores of women across the country has been enhanced today.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, several schemes are being implemented today. With regard to farmers, I would like to say that the provision of nearly Rs. 14 lakh crore for rural areas and farmers will lead to the development and strengthening of our rural sector. At the same time, our agricultural sector will also move forward with renewed strength.

Sir, I would like to speak specifically about Chhattisgarh. Paddy is our principal crop. The Government of Chhattisgarh procures every single grain of paddy at the Minimum Support Price. Recently, our Government has provided a bonus of Rs. 300 per quintal, amounting to Rs. 2,100 crore, to 13 lakh farmers. This is a step towards achieving the target of doubling farmers' income by the year 2022.

Along with this, I would like to inform the House that through the Saur Sujala Yojana, nearly fifteen thousand farmers have been provided pump sets costing about Rs. 4.5 lakh for merely Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 10,000. This exemplary effort to enhance agricultural production will give farmers an opportunity to move forward.

Similarly, just as a target has been set at the national level to provide health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh to ten crore families, in Chhattisgarh too, since the year 2012, we have been providing health insurance cover of Rs. 50,000 per family to needy families under the Health Insurance Scheme. This is also an exemplary initiative.

In this manner, I can cite several such schemes, but there is also a limitation of time. I would, however, like to emphasise one point. One of the flagship programmes of Shri Narendra Modi is 'Skill India'. In Chhattisgarh, through Livelihood Colleges in every

district, our Government has made efforts to enable youth to move forward. This is a model for the entire country. Our Chhattisgarh Government has also taken steps to give this initiative a legal framework.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to say a few words about my State and district. The State of Chhattisgarh was formed in the year 2000 by the former Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, along with the formation of three States. Chhattisgarh was formed on the basis of the Chhattisgarhi language. However, till date, this language has not been included as an official language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. The Chhattisgarhi language deserves due recognition, and since the formation of the State itself was based on it, and the Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly has also passed a resolution in this regard, it is the sentiment of the vast majority of people who speak Chhattisgarhi that it should be accorded the status of an official language. I request that our Government may consider this matter in the coming times and grant its approval.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, the airport located at Raipur, the capital of Chhattisgarh, currently has domestic airport facilities. I demand that it be upgraded to an international airport. There are several products originating from forest areas and agricultural produce such as tomatoes, fruits and other vegetables, which are highly

perishable. In order to transport them swiftly outside the State and enable their export, I would like to urge the Government to take necessary steps in this direction.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, Bilaspur is the location of the zonal headquarters of the Indian Railways, and it is also my parliamentary constituency. I would like to make a submission regarding railways. Since Chhattisgarh has become a separate State and the railway zone headquarters is located at Bilaspur, yet for matters relating to the Railway Tribunal, we are required to go to Bhopal to seek justice. I request the Government to kindly establish a Railway Tribunal at Bilaspur as well.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I have one more submission to make, after which I will conclude. Despite Bilaspur being the headquarters of a Railway Zone, there is still no medical college there. I request that a medical college be established at Bilaspur as well. In Mungeli district of my constituency, which is a newly created district, the establishment of a Kendriya Vidyalaya is most essential.

Finally, I would like to conclude by reciting a short poem. In the manner in which our Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, was delivering his speech, and considering the tradition that has been initiated against democracy by the Congress, I would like to

say a few lines. If democracy is to be kept alive and taken forward, this is how it should be done:

"Nafaraton ke is daur mein bhi pyaar hona chahiye,

aao hum sab milkar aisa prayaas karein ki

bhavya Bharat ka nirmaan hona chahiye. ”

(“In these times of hatred, there should still be love.

Let us all come together and make an effort,

So that a magnificent India may be built.”)

Thank you very much.

[English]

***DR. MAMTAZ SANGHAMITA (BARDHMAN DURGAPUR):** Our Union Government (popularly known as Modi Sarkar) started the day (16th Lok Sabha) with many flowery promises which will make Bharat solvent, hunger free, educationally enlightened and complete world finance field with business profits etc. We the public gone with Government's gimmicks and be lived. None of the promises has seen any light and the public (Janta) last hope as they expected something and that also proved to be hopeless.

Indian population at large suffers from insecurity, insecurity in food, shelter, health and education, social security, employment and protection and defence. Union Government's budget addresses none of them in proper sense. GDP growth rate is coming down year by year with some wrong laws and policies. There is turmoil in financial security of people. The Union Government is weakening PSUs which is major the backbone of income and 49% of AIR India share to private partner. It is a shame for short span. AIR travel – 60 airports are taking, but they will never be fulfilled. Demonetisation has ruined small scale business. Wrong policies on export import have also disrupted income from exports. New bank

* Speech was laid on the Table.

policy has raised a question mark for bank investment of common people.

This budget seems to please small people who are the major vote bank, but there also this budget fails. Government is saying by 2022, they will double the income of kisan, but as it requires GDP in the range of 10, it seems totally a misconception. It promises health insurance of Rs. 5 lakh per family of farmer, but they are not clear how much would be the contribution by Government for premium. This idea may be only for solvence of private insurance companies. In Bengal, our Mamata Banerjee led Sarkar have assured farmers by waiving the land revenue and ensured higher price for buying rice and wheat. Even surplus rice and wheat is supplied to FCI for demand of other States, made 122 kisan mandies and yet 184 to come.

This budget is very meagre in case of major public services like health (54667 crore INR) education (85,010 crore INR) and National Social Assistance programme (9975 crore INR) and only 0.3% of GDP. How can this budget fulfil the aim of free healthcare, so many new medical colleges, care of elderly etc.? Moreover, it does not even touch the issue of preventive healthcare which is the main pivot of holistic, health or healthy life. No special allotment for preventive majors for cancer, TB. Communicable diseases, which are major killers. Children and youth are 60% of our

population. Recent survey reports show 60% of children are of sub-standard growth and mal-nutritioned, 70% suffers from anaemia. There is no proper allocation. To improve business facilities and health and food transport, road is very less. This budget does not allot for P.M.R.G.S. Yojana to combat those deficits.

For employment generation, there are several programs like skill development etc., but budget allotment for these are minimum or static. Our inner enemy is atrocities against minorities, SC/STs and other socially deprived ones. This is creating much problem in growth and development. Foreign investment is hampered and people are afraid in making business transaction in India. For this reason leather industry and allied business is decreasing. Bengal was No. 1 or 2 in leather business and this is coming down and creating further unemployment. Government itself agreed that only 10% of workers are formal and 90% are informal. Our Government have given for pension provision for them and provision of remuneration/ scholarship for education of their children. Union Government totally are overlooking these issues. For village employment, MGNREGA have no increased allotment. As far as Rail Budget is concerned, it is mainly for Hi-Fi proposals like bullet train which will not serve even one per cent of population. Where and when is budget allocation for improvement of local and distant

train services allotment of proper man power, railway security etc.? Bengal is totally deprived in this year's budget.

Education seems to be the pillar of nation building. Budget allocation is so poor that it will further deteriorate Sarvashikshsa Adult education, primary education and related nutrition of children.

In my last remark, I would say, instead of heading towards equity in society and lessening economic gap between haves and have nots, this budget is for more solvency of corporates and big businessman not for *aam* Janta.

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN (KOLLAM): Thank you very much, Sir, for giving me this opportunity. Sir, I rise to oppose the General Budget for the financial year 2018-19 as it contradicts the ground realities and known facts.

Sir, the Economic Survey was presented by the Hon. Finance Minister before this House. You may be well aware that the Finance Minister has expressed that there are four major areas of concern. First is the agricultural distress. Second is the unemployment. Third is the skyrocketing of prices of crude oil at the global level. Fourth one is the quality of education. There are some other issues also like the declining trend of savings and investments and also the rates in stock markets. These are the concerns expressed by the Economic Survey. Actually, it was presented by the Hon. Finance Minister before the House. I am only taking four points. I may be allowed to complete all these four points.

Sir, I would like to know from the Hon. Finance Minister and from the Government whether the Budget proposals for the year 2018-19 are sufficient to address the concerns or the challenges expressed in the Economic Survey of 2018. According to me, it is not. The Government has totally and miserably failed in addressing the concerns expressed in the Economic Survey. The concerns in the Economic Survey and the Budget proposals for the year 2018-19 are totally mismatching.

That means, it is not a good Budget as far as I am concerned. That is a general trend which is going on and I would like to establish it.

Agricultural production is coming down and it is in a declining trend. Also, you may kindly see, the Economic Survey is very specific regarding the decline in the farmers' income because of climate change. The change in temperature and precipitation will result in 15 to 18 per cent farm income loss in the irrigated area and there will be 20 to 25 per cent farm income loss in the unirrigated area. In last year's Budget also the Government had announced that by 2022 the farmers' income will be doubled. How will this match? It is because, if you see, by 2022, the farmers' income will be doubled. The Economic Survey says that 20 to 25 per cent of farm income loss will be there because of climate change. There is nothing to address the issue of climate change. Only two measures have been taken so as to increase the agricultural production. The credit facility has been increased from Rs.10 lakh to Rs.11 lakh and MSP has been increased by one-and-a-half times of the cost of production of agricultural produce. The Chairman of the National Commission on Farmers, Dr.Swaminathan has also sought a clarification from the Government as to how the cost of production of agricultural produce is being calculated. I would like to know whether it is calculated as per the directives of the Commission for

Agricultural Costs and Prices that is on the basis of the C2 classification. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister the criteria for calculation of the cost of production.

Coming to unemployment, it is increasing from 4.9 per cent to 5 per cent. What are the measures taken in the Budget? There is only PF contribution exemption. That is one measure. Another one is Mudra loans. There is nothing else other than these two to address unemployment.

Coming to the third point, that is the crude oil price, kindly see, in the current financial year, there is a 14 per cent increase in the global price of crude oil. Increase of 10 dollars in the crude oil price in the global market will bring down GDP by 0.2 per cent. If that be the case, already you have imposed Rs. 19.48 Excise Duty on per litre petrol. On per litre diesel, you have already imposed Rs. 15.33 Excise Duty. Then, how will this issue of escalating price or rocketing price of crude oil be addressed? That will be directly leading to inflation.

Coming to education, the quality of education has to be addressed. That is also there in the Economic Survey. Kindly see, there is a marginal increase of 6. 68 per cent, that is, from Rs. 79,689 to Rs.85,010. Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education (RISE) programme has been announced for which a total

of Rs. 1,00,000 crore will be invested over the next four years till 2022. But, Rs. 25,000 crore will be earmarked for RISE this year. It will be done up to 2022; that means four multiplied by Rs. 25,000 crore, that is, Rs. 1,00,000 crore. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister wherefrom Rs. 25,000 crore will come, whether they will come from the allocation. Going through all these aspects, I have to submit that the Budget proposals are not sufficient to meet the concerns expressed in the Economic Survey.

Coming to fiscal consolidation, in last year's Budget, the Government had expressed that fiscal deficit will be 3.2 per cent of GDP for the year 2017-18 and in 2018-19 it will be 3 per cent of GDP. What is the actual figure? Now, in the current financial year, it is going to be 3.5 per cent and next year it will be 3.3 per cent. That means the Government has miserably failed in maintaining the fiscal consolidation. Kindly see the economic situation. The Direct Tax revenue has increased by 18.7 per cent this year. Rs. 1 lakh crore have been received from disinvestment proceeds. Even after having all these favourable economic situations, the Government is not able to maintain the fiscal consolidation as envisaged in the Budget Estimates. It means, it is a total failure of fiscal management by Government. That is being well established. Kindly see, why this is so. It is because the revenue expenditure has grown by 15 per cent and in the Budget Estimates, it was six per cent.

Regarding the Capital Expenditure, it is a point of development. I have appreciated the Government for the last year Budget Estimate because the Capital Expenditure was 10.7 per cent. The actual Expenditure has come down to 3.9 per cent. All this shows the inefficiency of the Government in managing the fiscal affairs of the Government.

Regarding the GDP, the nature of growth is also equally important along with the size of the GDP. Here what is the nature of development? The nature of development is jobless growth in all the four years of NDA Government.

From 2004-2009 during the UPA time, there was employment growth. That was actual growth. Here jobless growth is there which will only help the corporates and the multi-nationals.

Finally, I am coming to the last point. This Government is giving a benefit by the right hand and taking it away with the left hand. I will give an example of the Direct Tax. Standard deduction of Rs. 40,000 is announced. At the same time, deduction for the transport allowance and medical reimbursement has been withdrawn. If you are having an annual salary of Rs.5 lakh, the benefit that you are going to get out of this announcement is just Rs. 180 per year. That means Rs.15 per month. That is the benefit.

An eminent Member has just cited the example of petrol and diesel. Eight rupees has been imposed as the cess and and an Excise Duty of rupees two has been removed. There is no impact on the consumer. The impact is on the States.

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN: The total loss of revenue to the State is Rs. 11,865 crore. My State is going to lose Rs. 252 crore. That is also an example of giving by right hand and taking it back with the left hand.

This is my constituency matter. Lastly, regarding the cashew industry in Kerala, 2.5 per cent was the customs duty on import of raw cashew nut. I urge upon the Government to withdraw it.

In my constituency, some medium industrialists have committed suicide because the industry is facing crisis. Bank authorities are using stringent procedures of SARFAESI Act. I urge upon the Government to take some action on this too.

[*]**DR. KIRIT P. SOLANKI (AHMEDABAD):** I would like to thank the Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley Ji, for this farmer-friendly, common-citizen friendly and business environment-friendly Budget for the financial year 2018-19 with the aim of achieving a vision of a New India.

This Budget reflects the Government's firm commitment to increase spending on the social sector, from agriculture to education, while simultaneously sticking to fiscal discipline with an estimated Fiscal Deficit of 3.3 % of the GDP, despite an overall 10. 1% increase in Government expenditure over the Revised Estimates of 2017-18. This Government's sound understanding of the needs of the Indian economy and of its people is clear in the prediction of the Economic Survey 2017-18 that real GDP growth should reach 6 ¾ per cent for the year as a whole, rising to 7-7 ½ per cent in 2018-19, making India the world's fastest growing major economy.

Furthermore, with the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), it has been seen that there has been a 50 per cent increase in unique indirect taxpayers under the GST compared with the pre-GST system and there has been an addition (over and above trend growth) of about 1.8 million in individual income tax filers since November 2016. This has also resulted in an increase in the

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

government receipts from both indirect and direct tax collections. As a result, the Government has increased devolution of funds to the States to 12,69,435 crore, with a jump of 1,53,558 crore over Revised Estimates in 2017-18.

It has been acknowledged that only a Swasthya Bharat can lead to the fulfilment of India's economic and social objectives in realization of this fact, the Government has created the world's largest public health programme that is expected to cover 40% of India's population. As a part of this, the allocation for the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana has been increased by 325%. The expenditure of the Union Government on Health Sector as a whole has increased from 39005 crore (Actuals 2016-17) and 48878 crore (Budget Estimates 2017-18) to 54667 crore (Budget Estimates 2018-19) in the current year. The goal of the Government is the "provision of good health to the economically challenged sections of societies", keeping in mind India's demographic dividend.

It is understood that an improvement in the health sector must be linked to proper sanitation and infrastructure development. To achieve this, the Government has identified 115 districts for improvement of quality of life as well as announced the setting up of 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres, which will be imperative in addressing issue of accessibility of primary healthcare. Furthermore, the Government has also addressed the issue of the

need for skilled manpower in the medical sector by giving a considerable boost to medical education by upgrading existing district hospitals in the country to create 24 new Government hospitals and promising that at least one medical college will be set up for every three Parliamentary Constituencies.

In the agricultural sector, which lies at the heart of the Indian Economy, the Government's budget allocation for the agriculture ministry has been increased by 13 per cent to Rs. 58,080 crore for the 2018-19 fiscal, from Rs. 51,576 crore for this year, while the allocation for food processing ministry has been doubled to Rs. 1,400 crore for the said period. Across all agricultural schemes and programs, the Government has increased allocations such as a 21.5% increase for the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, a 27.6% increase for the Krishi Sinchayee Yojana and an 18% increase for the Rahstriya Krishi Vikas Yojana.

Furthermore, to achieve the objective of doubling farmers' income by 2022, the Government has ensured a 1.5 times increase in the Minimum Support Price of Kharif crops. From Rs.10 lakh crores institutional credit extended to the agricultural sector in 2017-18, the Government has increased this to Rs.11 lakh crores for 2018-19. A Rs.500 crore 'Operation Green' has been announced to address price volatility of perishable commodities like potato, tomato and onion and benefit both producers and consumers. To

give fillip to e-NAM (National Agricultural Market) and ensure that fair prices and benefits reach the farmers directly, an Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund with a corpus of Rs. 2,000 crore has been set up.

With this focus on the sectors of health and agriculture, the commitment of the Government towards social progress and rural development is instantly apparent. The Government has announced that Rs.14.3 lakh crore will be spent on livelihood and infrastructure in rural areas. This will be used for creation of employment of 321 crore persons, 3.17 lakh kilometres of rural roads, 51 lakh new rural houses, 1.88 crore toilets, and provide 1.75 crore new household electric connections besides boosting agricultural growth.

In addition to this, this Government has increased the budgetary allocation for the welfare of women by 4%, the welfare of children by 10.1% the welfare of scheduled castes by 7.4% and the welfare of scheduled tribes by 20.4%.

History will bear witness to the achievements and relentless efforts of this Government to create a New India, to uphold the values of liberty, equality and justice as enshrined in our Constitution under the leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and its commitment to leave no one behind on the path to India's progress and development.

[Translation]

***SHRIMATI RITI PATHAK (SIDHI):** I congratulate the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, on this Budget. This Budget strengthens the foundation of New India. It gives due attention to everything from agriculture to infrastructure. While it includes health schemes that address the concerns of the middle and poorer sections, it also incorporates measures that enhance the wealth of small entrepreneurs.

From food processing to fibre optics, from roads to shipping, from youth to senior citizens, from rural India to Ayushman Bharat, and from Digital India to Start-up India, this Budget will prove to be multi-dimensional and beneficial for all sections of the country.

This Budget is farmer-friendly, common man-friendly, business environment-friendly, and also development-friendly. Along with Ease of Doing Business, it focuses equally on Ease of Living.

A record allocation of nearly Rs. 14.5 lakh crore has been made for the rural and agriculture sectors.

The provision of 51 lakh new houses, more than three lakh kilometres of roads, nearly two crore toilets, and electricity

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

connections to nearly one crore seventy-five lakh households will directly benefit Dalits, the distressed, the exploited and the deprived sections.

I appreciate the announcement to ensure that farmers receive one and a half times the cost of production for their produce. Along with this, the Union Government will develop a robust mechanism in consultation with the States.

Operation Greens will prove to be an effective step for farmers engaged in the production of vegetables and fruits.

The Gobardhan Yojana will help in keeping villages clean while also contributing to an increase in the income of farmers and livestock rearers. There are more than 700 districts in India, with nearly 7,000 blocks. Emphasis has been laid on the modernisation, new construction and improved connectivity of around 22,000 rural trade centres in these blocks.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, villages will now also be connected to rural haats, higher education institutions and hospitals.

We have also seen the expansion of the spirit of Ease of Living through the Ujjwala Yojana. This scheme is not only freeing poor women of the country from smoke but has also become a significant instrument of their empowerment.

The Ayushman Bharat scheme will prove to be a boon for the poor and middle classes by relieving them of the major anxiety associated with the cost of medical treatment. Nearly 45 to 50 crore people will come within the ambit of this scheme.

The step to establish nearly one and a half lakh Health and Wellness Centres in major Panchayats across the country is commendable.

The establishment of 24 new medical colleges across the country will provide people with easier access to medical treatment, while also facilitating opportunities for youth in medical education.

In this Budget, senior citizens will receive a minimum interest of 8 per cent on amounts up to Rs. 15 lakh under the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana. In addition, interest income up to Rs. 50,000 on deposits in banks and post offices will be exempt from tax, and income tax exemption will also be available on health insurance premiums up to Rs. 50,000.

The Government will very soon announce concrete measures to resolve the problems relating to NPAs and stressed accounts in the MSME sector.

An allocation of nearly Rs. 6 lakh has been made for rail and metro projects, highways and i-ways, ports and airports, power grids and gas grids, as well as for Sagarmala and Bharatmala. As a

result of this, employment opportunities are expected to increase significantly in the coming years.

I once again extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Hon. Minister and his entire team for presenting a Budget that serves the interests of all sections of society.

[*]**SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR PANDEY (GIRIDIH):** I support the General Budget for the year 2018-19 presented on the Table of the House by the Hon. Finance Minister.

The Budget for 2018-19 is, in many respects, an excellent Budget and one that is distinct from those of previous Governments. Although this is the Budget preceding the next elections, the Hon. Finance Minister has, through this Budget, also laid the foundation for the next Government.

Carrying forward the golden financial journey of the last four years, a blueprint for Ease of Living has been presented on the strength of the success achieved in Ease of Doing Business.

The decision of the Government to expand the highly beneficial Ujjwala Yojana for women and poor families to eight crore families, and to bring ten crore families under a health insurance scheme of Rs. five lakh under Ayushman Bharat, will prove to be milestones. Along with industrial development and the record rise of the Sensex, schemes such as Ujjwala and the health insurance programme stand as evidence of the Government's deep concern for poor families.

Under the Saubhagya Yojana, providing electricity to one hundred per cent of households, the construction of two crore toilets

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, and the strengthening of the education system will give concrete shape to the slogan of Ease of Living in the country.

Farmers are the backbone of India's progress. Without their strength and development, a country of 130 crore people cannot move forward. This Budget has infused new energy among farmers by enhancing the Minimum Support Price to one and a half times the cost. An allocation of more than Rs. 14 lakh crore has been made for agriculture and rural development, which clearly reflects that the Government stands with farmers. The target for agricultural credit has also been increased to Rs. 11 lakh crore.

The Hon. Finance Minister has also taken capital expenditure in the infrastructure sector to new heights. There has been an unprecedented increase in capital expenditure on railways, roads and airports. All these expenditures will greatly promote both industry and employment in the country.

The Hon. Finance Minister has made several changes in income tax. Long Term Capital Gains Tax has been fixed at the rate of 10 per cent, with an exemption up to Rs. one lakh. Those who make large investments should pay a modest tax of 10 per cent. Exemptions for senior citizens and the provision of standard deduction will provide relief to salaried persons.

The effort initiated by the Hon. Finance Minister in 2014 is being carried forward in a systematic manner, because the people are going to give this Government the mandate to present the next General Budget as well.

I would like to draw the attention of the Government and the Hon. Finance Minister towards elected representatives, workers in the unorganised sector, and persons engaged temporarily in Government work.

Like Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assemblies, the honorarium of all public representatives such as Zila Parishad members, Mukhiya, Sarpanch and Ward Commissioners should be properly fixed. All of them devote their full time to public service.

The motivators under the Literacy Mission have been working on an honorarium basis for a long time. All of them should be provided insurance, medical facilities and gratuity. In some places, their honorarium is even lower than that under MGNREGA.

The condition of Anganwadi sevikas and sahayikas, as well as Jal Sahiyas appointed by the Mukhiya, is the same. All of them are women and they constitute the backbone in delivering the welfare schemes of the Union Government and the State Governments to the common people. However, they too do not receive the benefits

of insurance, medical facilities and gratuity. There is also no assurance regarding the tenure of their contracts. As a result, the benefits available to them appear minimal, while exploitation appears to be greater.

In rural areas, several facilities such as LPG connections, ration cards and benefits under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana are provided on the basis of the Backward Region Grant Census. The last Census was conducted in the year 2011. Over the past five years, many people have fallen below the poverty line, but they are not receiving these benefits. I would request that Census figures be updated every year at the district level. Thank you. Jai Hind.

SHRI DADDAN MISHRA (SHRAWASTI): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, you have given me the opportunity to place my views on the Budget for the year 2018-19. I will not go into figures, as many of my colleagues have already placed statistics before the House. I will not repeat them, but will speak to the point. I will try to conclude my remarks within five to seven minutes. This Budget is one that will strengthen India and accelerate the development of the country. It is a Budget that enhances infrastructure for the twenty-first century. It is farmer-friendly, development-friendly, labour-friendly, business-friendly and common man-friendly. It is a Budget that will generate more employment, address the concerns of the poor and the middle classes, enhance the health security of the poor and increase the wealth of small entrepreneurs. It is a Budget that enables greater savings for the middle class and fulfils the aspirations of every section of society. In this Budget, villages, the poor and farmers have been placed at the centre.

Before taking the oath, when our Hon. Prime Minister was elected as the leader of the National Democratic Alliance, in his first address to the nation he had stated that his Government would remain dedicated to the poor of the country. He has demonstrated this in practice. There are so many Government schemes that an entire day would not suffice to describe them. Beginning with the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, we have moved through

measures such as demonetisation and the GST. All these initiatives are aimed at the poor, the deprived, Dalits and backward sections who had been left behind from the mainstream of development, with the objective of bringing them into the mainstream. Schemes are being implemented to provide them with social security.

Our country is a country of villages. Even today, about 80 per cent of the population lives in villages and depends on agriculture. Many Governments have come and gone after seeking votes in the name of villages and farmers, but in the true sense, no Government paid due attention to the condition of villages and farmers. In ancient times, agriculture occupied the highest place in our society. That is why there was a saying that agriculture is the best occupation, trade is secondary, service is inferior, and begging is the worst. However, over time, due to shortcomings in Government policies, agriculture, which once enjoyed the highest status, is gradually becoming a loss-making proposition.

16.00 hrs

Farmers, who are our food providers, are facing increasingly difficult circumstances. The Hon. Prime Minister has risen from very humble beginnings to the highest office of the country. He was born in poverty and brought up in poverty, and therefore, understanding the pain and suffering of farmers, he has brought

forward several concrete schemes and policies. Not only this time, but even when the Government presented the Budgets for the years 2016-17 and 2017-18, efforts were made to implement the core principles of the Swaminathan Committee.

Farmers possess fertile land, but due to lack of adequate knowledge about the soil of their fields, they often make indiscriminate use of fertilisers. As a result, soil fertility is steadily declining and agricultural productivity is decreasing day by day. In such a situation, the Government has introduced the very ambitious Soil Health Card Scheme. Under this scheme, the health of the soil of every field will be tested and every farmer will be provided with a Soil Health Card. This card clearly indicates which nutrients are deficient in the field and what kind of fertilisers are required. Through balanced use of fertilisers in this manner, farmers can obtain higher yields at lower cost. In this way, the Government is working to bring prosperity into the lives of farmers.

Sir, we cannot even conceive of agriculture without irrigation. It is unfortunate that even after 70 years of Independence, Governments were unable to ensure water supply to every field. In many areas of my parliamentary constituency, despite the presence of fertile land, farmers are compelled to depend entirely on the vagaries of nature for cultivation. In this context, the present Government has set a clear target of providing water to every field.

In my parliamentary constituency, the Saryu Canal Project had been pending since 1975. Its cost kept increasing year after year, yet the project showed no sign of completion. I would like to express my gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Minister for Irrigation for taking up the Saryu Canal Project as a Union project and setting a target for its speedy execution. This work is now progressing at a very fast pace.

Sir, while on the one hand the Government is making efforts to reduce the cost of agriculture through technology, on the other hand it has made a commendable provision to fix the Minimum Support Price at one and a half times the cost of production. While the Government is working to provide better market access to farmers through regulated mandis, more than 86 per cent of small and marginal farmers are not in a position to sell their produce directly in wholesale markets. Keeping such farmers in view, a decision has been taken to develop the existing 22,000 rural haats as rural agricultural markets.

Sir, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that in earlier times, it was in these very markets that farmers sold their produce and were able to obtain remunerative prices. Consumers also received fresh produce at reasonable rates. However, due to the policies of previous Governments, with the emergence of middlemen, the exploitation of our farmers began. While the

middlemen prospered, the condition of farmers kept deteriorating. I believe that this scheme will free farmers from such exploitation and will eliminate the influence of middlemen.

Sir, along with modernisation, this Budget also seeks to revitalise our traditional practices. Under Operation Greens, an allocation of Rs. 500 crore has been made to promote processing and professional management of tomatoes, onions and potatoes, which are used throughout the year. This will certainly bring stability to the prices of these commodities.

Sir, it is a matter of concern that despite being an agriculture-based country, the present agricultural exports of the country stand at only about 30 billion US dollars. In this context, the proposal to modernise 42 mega food parks in order to increase agricultural exports to 100 billion dollars is a commendable step.

So far, the Kisan Credit Card facility was available only to cultivators. Extending this facility to farmers engaged in fisheries and animal husbandry is also a praiseworthy initiative. In my parliamentary constituency, in irrigated areas, people give priority to plantation. Once the trees mature, they cut and sell them to meet expenses such as the marriages of their sons and daughters and other household needs. However, they face considerable difficulties in selling timber. By removing bamboo from the definition of a tree,

relief has been provided to farmers. The Government of Uttar Pradesh had taken a very positive decision in the interest of farmers by exempting shisham and teak from the permit system, but this has been stayed by the NGT. I demand that this issue be examined so that relief may be provided to farmers.

Now, I would like to speak about the Ujjwala Yojana. We have entered the twenty-first century, yet it is unfortunate that even today, nearly 50 per cent of the country's population, our mothers and sisters, are compelled to cook food on traditional stoves. Cooking on such stoves has a severely adverse impact on their health. Experts have pointed out that the amount of smoke and pollution generated by cooking once on a traditional stove is equivalent to smoking 400 cigarettes. Our women, mothers and sisters are the direct victims of this. They are increasingly suffering from various diseases, including lung ailments, tuberculosis and even cancer. Their eyesight is deteriorating prematurely. Our Hon. Prime Minister himself has stated that in his childhood, his mother used to cook food on a traditional stove... ... *(Interruptions)*

[*]**SHRI TARIQ ANWAR (KATIHAR):** When the Budget for the year 2018-19 was presented in the House by the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, people had high expectations that in what is being presented as the final Budget of the Shri Narendra Modi Government, there would be some relief for every section of society.

While there was no expectation of any miracle, there was certainly hope for relief in some important sectors. However, if this Budget is to be commented upon in a single word, it can be described as a highly disappointing Budget. Once again, the Hon. Finance Minister has placed before the country a web of figures.

I recall that when the Bharatiya Janata Party was in the Opposition and Sushri Sushma Swaraj was the Leader of the Opposition, she had said that figures cannot fill people's stomachs. Today, the country is passing through an economic slowdown. Unemployment has reached its peak, and farmers are distressed due to their deteriorating conditions.

In the final Budget of the Modi Government, the farmers of the country had one last hope that, on the lines of the Dr. Manmohan Singh Government, this Government would at least provide them

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

relief from the burden of debt. However, once again, an attempt has been made to offer false reassurance to farmers.

No concrete measures have been outlined in this Budget to provide employment to unemployed youth. Young people have been left to their fate.

During the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the Prime Ministerial candidate, Shri Narendra Modi, and the Bharatiya Janata Party had assured that employment would be provided to two crore youth every year. With this hope, the country's young generation extended wholehearted support in forming the Government led by Shri Narendra Modi. The promise of employment for two crore youth has remained merely a dream. On the contrary, due to demonetisation, lakhs of young people became victims of increased unemployment. A large number of small and medium industries were shut down. Unemployment has assumed an alarming proportion. If effective measures are not taken at the earliest, the situation may turn explosive.

From time to time, the Government has continued to announce various programmes such as Stand Up India, Make in India, Digital India and Skill India. However, none of these are visible on the ground anywhere. All these schemes have remained like paper tigers.

The priority of this Government is no longer farmers, youth, or strengthening the country economically. The only issue that this Government appears to see in the country is that of triple talaq. All of a sudden, the Modi Government has begun to show great sympathy towards Muslim women. However, behind this sympathy lies the politics of the Bharatiya Janata Party, which believes in the politics of polarisation. If there is genuine concern for the women of the country, then why does the Government not get the long-pending Bill for providing reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies passed in the House.

The Hon. Prime Minister, in his speech, referred to women empowerment on four occasions. However, the Government does not bring forward any proposal to provide reservation to women. This pretence of sympathy towards women has been repeatedly practised by this Government from time to time. It would be better if the Government stopped shedding such crocodile tears for women.

Today, the country is passing through a very delicate phase. Communal and social harmony within the country is increasingly becoming a serious challenge. An atmosphere of fear, anxiety and terror is prevailing across the nation. People are hesitant even to speak the truth. Journalists, the media and intellectuals are also

living under a shadow of fear. This Government is proceeding on the path of ‘Divide India’.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, I would like to draw attention to an important issue concerning my parliamentary constituency. I wish to highlight the situation arising out of the continuous closure of the RBHM Jute Mill, a Government of India-owned NJMC unit, located at the district headquarters of Katihar in my constituency.

The Seemanchal region of Bihar is a major jute-producing area. Even before Independence, Katihar had been a central hub of the jute industry. In the year 1979, Bihar’s largest jute factory, the RBHM Jute Mills, Katihar, came under the National Jute Manufacturers Corporation. However, due to mismanagement, by the years 2007-2008, the NJMC shut down this unit.

Again, in the year 2011, under the BIFR scheme, the Union Ministry of Textiles included the RBHM Jute Mill, Katihar, in the plan to revive the closed jute mills of the National Jute Manufacturers Corporation.

Subsequently, after modernising the structures of this factory, it was handed over to a private company for operation. In the year 2016, this company suddenly declared a closure of the factory. As a result, nearly one thousand workers became unemployed. Prior to

the closure, the private company left unpaid wage arrears of about Rs. 50 lakh to the workers and around Rs. 40 lakh towards ESI and PF contributions.

I had drawn the attention of the Hon. Minister for Textiles to this issue in the Lok Sabha and had also written letters repeatedly, requesting payment of the pending dues of the workers and revival of the factory. However, it is a matter of deep regret that no action has been taken in this regard, and discontent is growing among the local workers.

The two concepts of development on which the Modi Government has been placing emphasis for the past four years are closely linked to the existence of the jute industry. The first issue is unemployment, which is a matter of concern for all of us. The jute industry, being labour intensive, offers immense potential for employment. Its closure results in a large number of workers and families dependent on this industry becoming unemployed.

The second issue is related to the environment. Jute production and the jute industry are environmentally friendly and are helpful in addressing the challenges of climate change. Leaving this industry closed, instead of promoting it, is in no way justified. The Union Government is committed to preserving this heritage industry of the country.

I request the Hon. Finance Minister to kindly intervene personally in this matter and issue necessary directions to ensure the reopening of this jute mill and the payment of the outstanding dues of its workers.

I would also like to draw attention to certain issues related to the railways. During its tenure, this Government has diluted the importance of the Ministry of Railways. For several years, the Railway Budget used to be presented separately, and there was a valid reason for it.

Railways have always been described as the lifeline of our country. They do not merely connect one corner of the country to another, but also play a vital role in uniting the nation. However, the decision taken by the Modi Government that it is no longer necessary to present a separate Railway Budget reflects an attempt to diminish the importance of the railways.

Whenever the Railway Budget was presented, all of us Members of Parliament used to make efforts to raise railway-related issues and seek their resolution. From the introduction of new trains to overall development in the railway sector, we all actively worked to pursue these matters.

As a result of one decision of the Modi Government, we have been deprived of information regarding the progress being made in

the railway sector. In any case, like several other Ministries, the condition of the Railways is deteriorating day by day. There has been a rapid decline in railway maintenance.

Here, I would like to confine myself only to the problems relating to my parliamentary constituency and the Katihar Railway Division.

There are certain important railway-related works in my parliamentary constituency, Katihar, and in the Seemanchal region, which are extremely necessary. I recommend that these works be included in the Railway Budget for the year 2016-17:

Renovation and modernisation of Barsoi Railway Station

Under the Northeast Frontier Railway, Barsoi Railway Station is a very important station. It serves as a gateway from Bihar to West Bengal, Assam, Nepal and Bangladesh. A large number of important trains pass through Barsoi Station and halt there. The condition of this station is extremely poor, and it is in urgent need of renovation and modernisation. This work should be accorded the highest priority and included in the Railway Budget for 2016-17.

Under the Sonpur Division of the East Central Railway, Hajipur Zone, the construction work of the approximately 57-kilometre-long railway line from Kursela to Bihari Ganj, which is presently lying stalled, should be resumed at the earliest.

The Katihar-Tejnarayanpur railway line should be further extended from Balua Ghatti (Tejnarayanpur) to Bhaluka Road Railway Station in West Bengal. It may be noted that the survey work for this extension has already been completed. Therefore, this work should be included in the forthcoming Railway Budget.

Near the gaushala in Katihar town, on the approximately 111 acres of vacant railway land along the Katihar-Barauni rail section, provision should be made for establishing rail-based factories such as coach maintenance units, rail wheel and axle manufacturing units, and other allied facilities.

The railway line between Katihar–Kumedpur and Katihar–Mukuria should be doubled.

Air-conditioned coaches should be provided in Train Nos. 18181/18182, Tata Link Express.

Train No. 15227/15228, Muzaffarpur–Yeshwantpur Express, should be operated at least three days a week. It may be noted that this was earlier announced by the former Minister of State for Railways, Shri Muniyappa, during his visit to Katihar.

DMU train services should be introduced from Katihar to Radhikapur via Kumedpur, and from Katihar to New Jalpaiguri via Sonouli.

Halts should be ensured for Train No. 15483/15484, Mahananda Express, at Pranpur Road and Khuriyal stations.

Halts should also be ensured for Train No. 15609/15610, Awadh Assam Express, at Sudhani and Telta stations.

Train No. 08631/08632, the special train operating between Katihar and Ranchi, should be regularised and operated at least three days a week. At present, this service has been discontinued. In addition, in view of heavy passenger demand, two additional Second Class Sleeper coaches and one additional Second Class Air-Conditioned Sleeper coach should be attached to this train.

Train No. 15001/15002, Muzaffarpur-Dehradun Rapti Sagar Express, should be extended up to Katihar.

Train Nos. 15203/150204 Barauni-Lucknow Express and 12553/12554 Vaishali Express should be operated up to Katihar, as was the practice earlier. It may be noted that both these trains remain stationed at Barauni for 24 hours.

Train Nos. 12521/12522 Barauni-Ernakulam Express should also be extended up to Katihar. It is a fact that this train remains stationed at Barauni for 24 hours.

Train Nos. 12753/12754 New Jalpaiguri-Chennai Express should be operated via Katihar.

Train Nos. 15712/15713 Katihar-Howrah Express should be operated on a daily basis.

Train Nos. 15483/15484, which have been running continuously behind schedule for several years, should be ensured to operate as per their prescribed timetable.

Halts should be ensured at Barsoi station for Train Nos. 15611/15612 Kamakhya-Mumbai Karmabhoomi Express.

Kachhocha Sharif is a well-known pilgrimage centre of the minority community in the Seemanchal region, the nearest station being Akbarpur. A halt should be provided at Akbarpur for Train Nos. 15715/15716 Garib Nawaz Express.

One coach each of 2-AC and 3-AC class should be added to the Garib Nawaz Express.

Train Nos. 13425/13426 Malda-Surat Express and 13417/13418 Malda-Digha Express should be extended up to Katihar.

SHRI BHAGWANT MANN (SANGRUR): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me the time to speak. A Budget is a promise made to the people of the country that this is what will be done in the coming financial year. However, I am surprised to see that for the past four days, our friends from Andhra Pradesh have been standing in the Well holding placards saying "Keep Your Promises". This clearly means that even the promises made to the Government's own partners are not being fulfilled. If the promises relating to the Railways and the special package for Andhra Pradesh are not being honoured, how will the promises made to the Opposition ever be fulfilled? This reflects the true condition of the Government. This shows that the Hon. Prime Minister comes to the Number One seat, speaks for one and a half hours, referring to Nehru, Gandhi and many other matters, and then leaves. He only delivers speeches and slogans. ... *(Interruptions)* The manifesto should be treated as a recorded document. Every party's manifesto should be a recorded document. In it, promises are made such as that certain things will be done within one hundred days or that two crore jobs will be provided. If the manifesto is a recorded document, then the Election Commission should monitor it. If a Government is unable to fulfil its promises, accountability must follow. For instance, in Punjab it was promised that the loans of every farmer would be waived, that one member of every

household would get a job, and that every youth would be given a mobile phone. None of these promises have been fulfilled. Nothing has been said in the Budget about chit fund companies. Chit fund companies are looting people across the country. In Punjab, a company named Pearl took crores of rupees from people and then absconded. The Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, says that its Managing Director has been arrested. But what benefit has that brought to the people whose money was invested there? The company owns properties worth crores of rupees, including properties in Delhi and assets worth crores in India and abroad. Those properties should be seized, attached and auctioned, and the money of the people should be returned. In Punjab, potato and sugarcane growers are on the streets. Nothing substantial has been said in the Budget regarding farmers. We had expected that something would be provided for Punjab, because Punjab contributes the maximum foodgrains to the Central Pool. However, neither from the Central Pool nor from the Union Budget has anything been earmarked for Punjab.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, there is a railway line of only 16 kilometres from Chandigarh to Saneta. If a railway line from Rajpura to Saneta, covering just 16 kilometres, is constructed, the entire Malwa region from Ganganagar onwards will get connected to Chandigarh by rail. However, this 16-kilometre railway track is

not being constructed, as it would adversely affect the bus services of the Badal group, and therefore, to benefit them, this rail link is being denied. Why are the Chandigarh and Amritsar airports not being made truly international airports? They are international only in name. From Amritsar, only one flight operates to Birmingham, and from Chandigarh, only one flight goes to Thailand. The Chandigarh and Amritsar airports should be developed as proper international airports.

Every year, on 15 August, the Hon. Prime Minister delivers a speech from the Red Fort. It is the same written and rehearsed speech repeated year after year. In Switzerland, at Davos, the Hon. Prime Minister stated that 600 crore people had voted for him, whereas the population of our country is only about 125 crore. I would like to say that even the pigeons of the Red Fort have memorised these speeches by now. If our destiny cannot be changed, at least the speeches should be changed. I would like to say to my friends in the BJP -

“Lambe safar ko meelon mein mat baantiye, kaum ko kabeelon mein mat baantiye.

Ek bahata dariya hai mera Bharat desh, isko nadiyon aur jheelon mein mat baantiye.”

(“Do not divide a long journey into miles, Do not divide a nation into tribes.

My India is a flowing river, Do not divide it into rivers and lakes.”)

[*]**DR. YASHWANT SINGH (NAGINA):** I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to place my views on the Annual Budget for the year 2018-19. This Budget clearly reflects that the Government is moving in accordance with the principle of *Antyodaya* propounded by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya. In this Budget, as well as in all the schemes of the Government, the poor of the country are at the centre. Through the Saubhagya Yojana, by spending Rs. 16,000 crore, electricity connections have been provided to four crore poor households without any connection charges. Similarly, under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, free LPG connections have been provided to eight crore poor women. The construction of six crore toilets earlier and the target of constructing two crore more toilets this year are, in themselves, major steps that have generated a ray of hope in the lives of the poor. To ensure that the poor have a roof over their heads, the Government has approved crores of houses in rural areas and 37 lakh houses in urban areas under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

For the National Social Assistance Programme, an allocation of Rs. 9,975 crore has been made in the year 2018-19. The construction of Eklavya Model Residential Schools, fully equipped with all facilities, in blocks having a predominance of Scheduled

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

Tribes will enable children from poor families to improve their future. Efforts to bring about fundamental changes in education constitute a major initiative of this Government. Under the existing National Health Insurance Scheme, poor families are provided an annual coverage of Rs. 30,000. However, under the new National Health Protection Scheme, providing coverage of Rs. five lakh per year to ten crore poor families for secondary and tertiary hospitalisation will be a major achievement in itself. Under this scheme, providing assistance of Rs. 500 per month to TB patients for nutritious food, along with treatment, is also a commendable step. The Government has made extensive efforts to improve the condition of farmers. The announcement made by the Hon. Finance Minister that farmers will definitely be provided a Minimum Support Price at one and a half times the cost of production is a very significant announcement. Its proper implementation will usher in a wave of development in the lives of farmers. Such efforts constitute a major step towards the declaration made by the Hon. Prime Minister to double farmers' income by the year 2022. The proposal to develop the existing 22,000 rural haats as rural agricultural markets will also prove to be a boon for farmers. For this purpose, a provision of Rs. 2,000 crore has been made. In our tribal areas, the proposal to promote bamboo cultivation by removing bamboo from the definition of a tree and launching the

National Bamboo Mission with an outlay of Rs. 1,290 crore will be a significant step towards the development of these regions. The amount of institutional credit for the agriculture sector has been enhanced from Rs. 10 lakh crore to Rs. 11 lakh crore. In this manner, by providing comprehensive support to farmers, efforts have been made to further strengthen the Green Revolution in the country.

This Budget clearly reflects the Government's concern for the livelihood of the poor, the education and health of their children, and the manner in which they are to be protected in cases of serious illness. Keeping all these aspects in view, the Government is working towards improving the lives of the poor, farmers and youth of the country.

Thank you.

[English]

*SHRI V. ELUMALAI (ARANI): I express my hearty gratitude and indebtedness to our beloved immortal Leader Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA, before I place my view on the General Budget 2017-18.

Tamil Nadu is one of the most productive states in the country to utilize property the rural employment scheme. Timely release of funds to states to provide work on demand, an electronic fund management system, and consistent coordination between banks and port offices, besides monitoring of pendency of payments, have led to the revival of this employment scheme. Tamil Nadu needs more financial support for this program.

The Government's mission of skilling India has gained momentum and during the last year about 76 lakh people have been trained. The skill training is successful in Tamil Nadu which stands first in producing largest number of engineering graduates and skilled persons suitable for employment in Multinational companies. Youth Power is the future power of the Nation. 65 percent of our population today is below the age of 35. Our youth is our greatest strength and needs to be effectively channelized. It is heartening to note that the Government has taken steps for skilling the youth and improving their employability. The Pradhan

* Speech was laid on the Table.

Mantri Kuashal Vikas Yojana to train one crore youth is commendable. This needs generous funding and institutional support to generate genuine employment opportunities for the educated youth of this country.

Education is eye of the society. It is heartening to see the Government aim to create an educated, healthy and clean India. Our beloved leader Puratchi Talaivi AMMA has focused exclusively for the development of Education in the State and has been taking far sighted initiatives for the welfare of students in the state. AMMA's scheme of provision of priceless Laptop for students is first of its kind in the county. I wish the Union Government to replicate all over India, the schemes implemented in Tamil Nadu.

Women welfare schemes implemented in Tamil Nadu under the visionary of Puratchi Thaliaivi AMMA has been a forerunner for the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, The Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan. The Government has made a revision of Maternity Benefit Act and enhancement of maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks to support pregnant women at the workplace. I wish to record here that in Tamil Nadu Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA had ordered for pregnant women can avail 9 months maternity leave with salary.

As far as my Arani Parliamentary Constituency is concerned there are two very important issues which need to be addressed immediately The new railway line between Tindivanam-Ngari, Tindivanam-Tiruvannamalai has been started in 2006, but still pending die to the inadequate allocation of funds for the years 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18. The paltry amount of Rs. 10 crore allocated every year and is used only for the administrative purpose. I urge the Government to provide substantial amount for the speedy completion of this much required railway project.

In NH-77 between Tindivanam to Krishnagiri via Tirunannamalai, the Tirunvannamalai-Tindivanam section is in very bad condition. There are lots of people from not only Tamil Nadu all over India travelling through this road to reach important temples in Tiruvannamalai, Melamalaiyanur and Gingee fort. As a result of this lots of fatal accidents occur. This requires immediate attention and remedial action from the Union Government.

Under the Sagarmala programmed a total of 199 projects with an outlay of over Rs. three lakh crore have been identified for implementation. Of these, projects of more than Rs. One lakh crore are already under implementation. The seas surrounding the Indian Peninsula contain one thousand three hundred and eighty two of our islands, out of which, to begin with, 26 have been earmarked for integrated development.

I am very sad to say that we have lost strategically important Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka thereby doing gross injustice to the people of our country, particularly the poor fishermen community in Tamil Nadu. We lost the most crucial piece of land without any proper amendment in the Indian Parliament. Our most beloved leader Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA fought in and out to retrieve Katchateevu islands back to our people and I wish the Union Government should take appropriate steps to get back Katchatheevu Island to brighten the life of millions of fishermen community living in Tamil Nadu.

The new Civil Aviation Policy with thrust on air connectivity to small cities will be boon for Domestic Air Passenger traffic which is growing year after year. Tamil Nadu Stand first in many parameters and there have been a consistent rise in the Air traffic in all the airports in Tamil Nadu. I wish the Government pay more attention to improve the airport infrastructure in Tamil Nadu in particular. The Setting up world-class infrastructure for Electronics manufacturing across the county remains a priority for any Government. The country recorded the highest ever software exports during 2015. Tamil Nadu's contribution is second to none. Tamil Nadu requires more financial support from Union Government for the progressive projects.

Most of the initiatives in the Union budget 2018 is done keeping in view of the next elections which is round the corner. There is not much substantial for the productive States like Tamil Nadu or Maharashtra but substantial for North East and Northern Indian States. Budget 2018 is short of substance and will not fulfil the hopes and expectations of Middle class majority in this county. Thank you.

[Translation]

SHRI AJAY MISRA TENI (KHERI): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I support the Budget for the year 2018-19 presented by the Hon. Finance Minister. If we look at this Budget, when our Government was formed in the year 2014, the people had elected the Bharatiya Janata Party with great expectations and hope. At that time, the condition of the country was a matter of concern. The nation was dejected and disheartened. People's faith in elected Governments was steadily declining, and confidence in the democratic system was weakening. In such a challenging situation, the people of this country voted in favour of the Bharatiya Janata Party, and the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, accepted that challenge. By formulating numerous schemes, the Hon. Prime Minister made sustained efforts to pull the country out of these problems and establish it as a developed nation. On the very first day, he had declared that this would be a Government dedicated to the poor. If we compare the Budget of 2014 with the fifth Budget presented for the year 2018-19, a clear continuity is visible. This continuity is reflected in welfare of the poor, empowerment of women, enhancement of farmers' income, and provision of facilities such as roads, schools, hospitals, electricity and water across the country. Along with this, the focus has been on ensuring employment opportunities for people, money in their pockets, and the security

of their dignity and property. With these objectives, our party's Government had begun its work. Maintaining the continuity of the 2014 Budget, nearly four years later, the Hon. Finance Minister has presented the Budget for the year 2018-19 before the country. I can say with conviction that during these nearly four years, the situation in the country has changed. The country which, about four years ago, was dejected and demoralised, whose borders were insecure, whose global standing was declining, where development activities had come to a standstill, and where people's faith in the democratic system was eroding, has today witnessed a change in outlook. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya ji, who was our philosopher and whose foundational principles guide this political party, has always inspired our work wherever and whenever we have formed Governments. We have consistently worked on his philosophy that until the weakest person in the country is provided with basic necessities such as food, clothing, housing, schools and hospitals, our task will not be complete. Our Government has carried out this work with continuity. After four years, we can confidently say that circumstances have changed, conditions in the country have become favourable, and under these favourable conditions, the nation is moving forward.

16.14 hrs (Shri Arjun Charan Sethi *in the Chair*)

The objective of this Budget is to take the country forward. It contains numerous provisions for the welfare of the poor. Along with this, provisions have been made with the objectives of women empowerment and ensuring that farmers receive prices at least one and a half times the cost of their produce. During nearly four years of its tenure, this Government has undertaken several major reforms. These include the introduction of GST, the demonetisation of Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 500 currency notes as a direct strike against black money, the enactment of the Finance Act, 2017, the introduction of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, and steps taken to address NPAs and strengthen the banking system. Efforts have been made to increase foreign exchange reserves, secure the country's borders, and enhance the nation's prestige globally. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya had once stated that since Independence, unfortunately, the country remained in the hands of those who could not ensure its development. Today, the same people raise question marks over us on issues such as employment and road construction. However, whenever we have been given an opportunity, we have made sincere efforts to improve the condition of the country. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya also said in one of his speeches that India's development would not be guided by the

world's perspective, but by India's own traditions and its own outlook. We changed our method of functioning and, in doing so, also changed the world's perception. The Bharatiya Janata Party-led Governments have demonstrated how governance should be carried out. We have placed the poor at the highest priority. Through women empowerment, we have worked to connect nearly 60 crore people with the mainstream of development.

I have been elected from the Lakhimpur parliamentary constituency. If I speak about my constituency, within just three and a half years, development works worth several thousand crore rupees have been undertaken there. Works for flood control have been carried out, railway lines have been extended, a rake point has been constructed, an Adarsh Railway Station has been developed, and along with these, a 200-bed hospital has been constructed, a trauma centre has been set up, and a nursing training centre has been established. We are providing free dialysis facilities in every district. The kind of environment that has been created in my parliamentary constituency is the same kind of environment that has been created across the country. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri Dushyant Chautala ji, please speak..

…(Interruptions)

SHRI AJAY MISRA TENI: On 9 August 2017, right here in this House, the Hon. Prime Minister stated in his speech that the country has now entered favourable conditions. ... *(Interruptions)* He took a resolve to build a New India. ... *(Interruptions)*

[*]**SHRI RAKESH SINGH (JABALPUR):** I rise to support the historic Budget for the year 2018-19 presented by the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, because under the able leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, the resolve we have taken to build a New India is being advanced significantly through this Budget.

The announcement of an ambitious scheme such as "Ayushman Bharat", aimed at providing health care facilities to more than 50 crore people of the country since Independence, is a revolutionary step. I would like to refer here to some of the highly successful schemes of the Modi Government. Under the Jan Dhan Yojana, more than 30 crore bank accounts of the poor have been opened. Under the Ujjwala Yojana, more than three crore women have already been provided with free LPG gas connections. Similarly, nearly 15 crore poor people have been brought under the ambit of the Government's insurance schemes. In the same manner, under the *Saubhagya* Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana, within just a few months, lakhs of free electricity connections have been provided to poor households.

How effective a step demonetisation has proved can be gauged from the fact that after demonetisation, about three lakh suspicious

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

companies were detected, through which black money as well as anti-national activities such as terrorism and narcotics trade were being operated.

Out of these, the registration of about 2,10,000 companies has already been cancelled.

In our country, earlier even the closure of a single company used to lead to processions with black flags. However, it is noteworthy that after the cancellation of registration of as many as 2,10,000 companies, no effigy was burnt and no protest was witnessed anywhere.

You can imagine the scale at which anti-national activities must have been carried out under the cover of these shell companies.

Through a revolutionary step such as GST, undertaken after Independence, 19 lakh new citizens have been brought within the ambit of direct taxation.

Under the ‘Mudra Yojana’, loans amounting to more than Rs. 3.75 lakh crore have been extended to over nine crore account holders without any bank guarantee.

We can only imagine the impact of providing nearly Rs. 3.75 lakh crore, without collateral, to nine crore people. Out of these nine crore beneficiaries, as many as 2 crore and 63 lakh young persons

have accessed bank finance for business for the first time under the Mudra Yojana.

In the area of employment, at the end of March 2014, there were 3 crore and 26 lakh employees in the formal sector who were actively depositing their monthly contributions with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation. Over the last three and a half years, this figure has increased to more than 4 crore and 80 lakh.

This clearly demonstrates that the direction adopted by the Union Government is both appropriate and effective. Since the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, assumed office in 2014, the Government has made determined efforts to bring speed and transparency into governance by taking several welfare-oriented decisions.

For instance, the two principal objectives of *Digital India* are to achieve digital inclusion and digital empowerment. To this end, Aadhaar cards have been issued at a very rapid pace, and I am extremely pleased to state that, as on date, 130 crore people have been linked with Aadhaar, which has now also been accorded legal protection.

Among the values to which we are committed, a foremost commitment is to eliminate corruption and to build a fear-free India.

At various levels, corruption had taken deep roots in the country over many years. Through the use of Aadhaar, this menace has been curbed to a significant extent, and the Government has also placed concrete examples before the House in this regard.

Through fake ration cards, certain corrupt elements used to siphon off benefits meant for the common people. By linking the Public Distribution System (PDS) with Aadhaar, this form of corruption has been effectively checked.

Similarly, there was large-scale corruption in the distribution of LPG, which is an essential daily requirement. By linking LPG distribution with Aadhaar, fake gas connections have been eliminated.

As a result, the Government has saved thousands of crores of rupees, and these financial resources are being successfully utilised for the welfare of the poorest sections of society through schemes such as Ujjwala.

In the same sequence, I would also like to cite a third example. Due to Aadhaar, thousands of fake teachers have been removed, resulting in savings of approximately Rs. 57 crore.

The World Bank, in its *World Development Report* released in 2016, stated that a digital identity system like India’s Aadhaar helps any government in achieving inclusive development. Aadhaar has

provided a new foundation to India's digital achievements. Under the DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) scheme, the number of beneficiaries was merely eight crore in 2014, which has now increased to more than 36 crore. Through Direct Benefit Transfer, the Government has saved approximately Rs. 59,000 crore, which would otherwise have been lost to corruption. In the Ujjwala Yojana alone, savings of more than Rs. 14,000 crore have been achieved due to DBT.

Through this Budget, the Union Government has resolved to utilise the available financial and natural resources for the benefit of the last person in society, and in this direction, the Aadhaar framework is proving to be a milestone.

Under the able and committed leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister, I would like to present another example of the effective management of the Indian economy.

"PRAGATI" (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) is a mechanism that was developed after the Modi Government assumed office at the Centre. It reflects this Government's faith in the policy of the politics of performance, in accordance with the vision of the Hon. Prime Minister.

Through “PRAGATI”, the Hon. Prime Minister personally monitors major projects which play a crucial role in the nation’s development journey.

Under “PRAGATI”, the Hon. Prime Minister himself connects through video conferencing with all Union Ministers, Secretaries of various Departments and the Chief Secretaries of all States, and reviews the current status of these projects.

So far, projects worth more than Rs. 8 lakh crore have been reviewed in PRAGATI meetings. As a result, more than 150 important mega projects which had remained stalled for years have now gained momentum. This has accelerated the process of building new-generation infrastructure in the country. The earlier perception that decisions at the highest level were taken through remote control during previous Governments has now completely changed.

Our Government has placed special emphasis on the development of rural India. A clear illustration of this is that during the tenure of this Government, 76,000 Gram Panchayats have been connected through optical fibre. It may surprise the House to know that this project had commenced in 2011, and between 2011 and 2014, only 59 Gram Panchayats were connected with optical fibre, with the total length of the optical fibre network being merely 358

kilometres. In contrast, today, the work of laying nearly 2,00,000 kilometres of optical fibre network has been completed. The Modi Government has resolved that by the year 2022, when India completes 75 years of Independence, every village in the country will be connected through optical fibre.

This will play a significant role in realising Mahatma Gandhi's vision of Gram Swaraj and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's concept of Antyodaya. Owing to demonetisation and other stringent anti-corruption measures, the Government has achieved substantial success in mobilising financial resources. At the time the Modi Government assumed office at the Centre, the total number of taxpayers in the country was merely 3.7 crore, whereas over the past three and a half years, this figure has increased to more than 6.3 crore. The vacuum that existed in policy formulation during previous Governments has been completely addressed by the Modi Government.

Earlier, acquisition and forest clearance used to take nearly 600 days; now it takes only about 180 days, and the Government is moving further in the direction of reducing this time even more.

Previously, there was no clear policy for the auction of coal and mineral mines. Today, through amendments to the MMDR Act, a transparent auction process has been developed during the tenure

of this Government. As a result, coal mines across the country are now operational, leading to a surplus situation in the power sector. Similarly, the Government has taken steps to simplify the FDI policy in order to encourage foreign investment.

As a result of all these public welfare measures and decisions taken in the national interest, not only the common people but also many experts have now begun to acknowledge that the fundamentals of the Indian economy are strong. With these words, I once again extend my support to this welfare-oriented Budget and conclude my remarks by congratulating the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Jaitley, for presenting a historic Budget under the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi.

[English]

***DR. KULMANI SAMAL (JAGATSINGHPUR):** First of all, I would like to start with the words that this budget has made many provisions for the people at below including the farmers and for the rich who are involved with corporate world. It's understandable in respect of the reason why the Government has shown commitment to increase the income of farmers by 2022 and to substantiate the commitment it has proposed to spend Rs. 11 lakh crore in General Budget, 2018-19 for development of farmers. The Government though in late has realized the pain and anguish of farmers all over the county. That's why the minimum support price (MSP) of all crops has been increased to atleast 1.5 times. But how far it would be implemented the time will tell that. I am putting a question mark on Government's intention because in 2015 they had promised in their manifesto to implement the Swaminathan Committee report which would be beneficial for farmers but did not do that. The Government is talking about MSP hike, but for last three years what they did for which till today 94 per cent farmers of our country are not covered by MSP and more than 80 per cent farmers have small land holdings of only 0.6 acres. Every year the farmers in all parts of our country are committing suicides being suffered with many

* Speech was laid on the Table.

problems viz. debt, failure of monsoon, natural calamities, interference of middlemen, non-availability of market place and overall negligence of Government to focus upon their problems. So my point is if this is the scenario, how can you expect to improve the condition of farmers and agriculture sector as well? It is good to see increasing allocation of funds for various schemes meant for welfare of farmers but real intention could be fulfilled by way of implementation of such declared schemes with flow of funds and for which we should not wait till 2022 since the Government under Modi ji has already spent more than 3 years in power and that too with clear majority. My suggestion is if the Government wants with heart to help the farmers which are the backbone of our society, it should create the infrastructure, reduce the role of middlemen and procure the produce directly from them ensuring their economic development.

Secondly, I would like to emphasis upon the unrealistic health scheme of the Government as it has announced in the Budget about the largest Health Protection Scheme covering over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families launched with a family limit upto 5 lakh rupees for secondary and tertiary treatment. If I am right, the premium at Rs. 5,000-15,000 per family will be required to have an expenditure of Rs.50,000-150,000 crore per year. The scheme announced would mean the Government would be spending at least

Rs.1.2 lakh crore in premiums to private health insurance companies to cover 50 crore People. It sounds music to ears because there is no fund allocation mentioned in the budget to support this huge plan. In this regard, I would like to mention that we have similar schemes that were announced earlier. Initially called the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), the scheme was later renamed as Rashtriya Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (RSSY). Then last year, the National Healthcare Protection Scheme (NHPS) was launched. So, question arises whether we are failed with previous health schemes or we are trying to cover our inefficiency of channelizing the health service through previous plans hence the new one has been replaced with old ones.

However, if the new health scheme is taken with seriousness and implemented appropriately then definitely it would be more than to be praised alone and hats off to such plan of Shri Jaitely Ji.

In this General Budget, the Biju Janata Dal and it Supremo Shri Naveen Patanaik, the Chief Minister of Odisha had attracted attention of the Government to allocate Rs. 6,500 crore for development of Railway sector, but only Rs. 5,252 crore has been made in the Railway Budget of 2018-19 for Odisha which is not at all sufficient. So my request to the Government to kindly consider the issue and increase allocation of funds in respect of Railway in

Odisha because in Odisha, Railway is a productive and profit making department.

The Government has also proposed to set up 24 new Medical College and Hospitals in various parts of the Country. In this regard, I request the Government to allot for setting up of one medical College and Hospital in South Western part of Odisha especially in the regions of Koraput which could be helpful to provide quality health service to the tribal and Naxal affected districts.

Further, I had sought for establishment of a super speciality hospital in Paradip, since Paradip is a major port city and it facilitates many industrial set ups in the locality. As a major port city it does not have a good quality hospital and in emergency people rush to Cuttack and Bhubaneswar for treatment. In many occasions, people meeting with accidents in industries loss their lives due to paucity of time and unavailability of quality medical facilities and infrastructure nearby. Hence, it is pertinent to consider for setting up of a Super Speciality Hospital In Paradip at par with the level of its reputation as a major port city.

With these words, on behalf of my party Biju Janata Dal, I support the General Budget 2018-19.

[Translation]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Shri Dushyant Chautala ji, please speak.

SHRI DUSHYANT CHAUTALA (HISASR): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on the Budget for 2018-19. If we examine the Budget, the Treasury Benches are presenting it before the country as an agriculture Budget, and even the Hon. Finance Minister has used the word 'farmer' more than thirty times in his Budget speech. However, according to the figures released by the Union Government after the Budget, the allocation for agriculture and allied sectors in the previous year constituted 2.38 per cent of the total Budget, whereas in the present Budget, after a reduction of 0.02 per cent, the total allocation has come down to 2.36 per cent. I received an SMS from a farmer, and he said that on looking at this Budget, one thing becomes clear that this Budget is not meant for farmers. The Government has certainly launched a consolation scheme, through which it is attempting to placate the farmers.

The Budget speaks about MSP and states that farmers will get one and a half times the benefit on each crop. The Government should clarify whether it proposes to include the C2 category while determining the MSP. Today, most farmers meet the expenses of their lives and of their families, whether it is medical treatment or education, through their agricultural income.

In the Budget, Rs. 11 lakh crore has been earmarked for Kisan Credit Cards, whereas in the previous financial year it was Rs. 10

lakh crore. I would congratulate the Government for initiating a scheme to increase agricultural credit. But did you increase the limit from Rs. 3 lakh per acre to Rs. 8-10 lakh per acre?

You give a farmer only Rs. 3 lakh against land worth Rs. 40 lakh, and then proceed to attach that land. In this manner, somewhere the Government is strangling the farmer. An allocation of Rs. 55,000 crore has been made for MGNREGA. With this amount, the Government will not even be able to clear the pending liabilities under MGNREGA. If the Government truly intended to ensure full payment to every worker, it should have allocated at least Rs. 82,000 crore for MGNREGA. The Government has spoken of providing relief to taxpayers and claimed that relief has been extended to the common people by granting a benefit of Rs. 40,000. However, if one calculates the entire scheme, the Government has increased the cess from three per cent to four per cent. Economically, the category of taxpayers earning Rs. 5 lakh has been given a benefit of only Rs. 1,032, and the category paying tax on Rs. 10 lakh has been given a benefit of merely Rs. 35. If this is what the Government calls welfare of the common people, then why does it not openly discuss these figures? The Government is very attentive when it comes to benefitting companies based in Gujarat. Even the son of a poor person eats ice cream. Your Government has turned ice cream into a luxury item by imposing

18 per cent tax on it, so that small ice cream makers are forced out of business. A small entrepreneur in a village who sets up a modest dairy and sells ice cream will not be able to survive in the market after paying 18 per cent tax, while large ice cream factories such as Vadilal or Quality, which are based in Gujarat, will in the coming times capture the entire Indian market.

Sir, as far as health care is concerned, the Government has introduced a scheme stating that health care will be made accessible to every individual. I congratulate the Government for taking such an initiative so that the common people may also receive health facilities. However, I would like to ask whether CT scan machines are available today in every civil hospital in our cities. Are MBBS doctors available in all Government hospitals today? You speak of establishing new medical colleges, but first ensure that the existing hospitals have the requisite number of professors and doctors. You yourself proposed to bring a Bill relating to the Medical Council, but somewhere influential persons, by exerting pressure, have ensured that the matter has been delayed through committees. The Government speaks of education. An allocation of Rs. 85,000 crore has been made for education. With such an amount, will we really be able to make our primary schools innovative? The Hon. Finance Minister stated in his speech that smart boards have been installed in classrooms, moving beyond blackboards. Previous Governments

had even installed computers in Government schools, but when there is no electricity in Government schools during the day, how will children receive computer education? This also needs serious consideration. The allocation for the University Grants Commission has been reduced by Rs. 200 crore. Do you intend to reform and remodel the UGC? Today, not even a single Indian university figures among the top 200 universities of the world. This is a serious issue, and there should be a discussion on reforming the UGC. The cess has been increased by one per cent for education. Are you also taking steps to regularise guest teachers working in primary schools? In the coming months, the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games are also approaching. The Government is taking considerable credit in the field of sports. The *Khelo India Sports School Scheme* was implemented in Delhi and crores of rupees were spent on it. However, the customs duty on imported sports equipment has been increased by ten per cent. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Member, please listen to me. The Hon. Minister will reply accordingly. I am requesting you to conclude within five minutes because there is no time. Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey.

[Translation]

SHRI DUSHYANT CHAUTALA: Sir, I am concluding my remarks. Not a single rupee has been provided this time for the Sports Talent Hunt. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: I have already taken his name. Why are you still continuing?

[*]**SHRI HARISHCHANDRA CHAVAN (DINDAURI):** the Budget presented by the Hon. Finance Minister for 2018–19 is one that will provide relief from several problems facing the country and bring prosperity to the faces of farmers. I come from a farming family. From cultivating crops in the fields to taking them to the market, farmers have to face many difficulties. Whether in summer or in winter, trading in agricultural produce requires hard labour, yet farmers are not receiving commensurate and remunerative returns. As a result, the highest number of farmer suicides are taking place in my home State of Maharashtra. This Budget is one that provides relief to women. In this manner, it is a future-oriented Budget that will impart momentum to the economy in a comprehensive manner, with the objective of fulfilling the dreams of the poor, farmers and disadvantaged sections, enhancing employment, and promoting the development of villages.

As you are all aware, farmers today are not receiving the cost price of their crops. The prices of seeds, fertilisers, irrigation and agricultural labour have increased substantially, while farmers are getting lower prices in proportion to the cost of cultivation. This Government has paid special attention to the problems of farmers. In order to provide relief from rising input costs, the Government

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

has announced that farmers will be given a profit of 50 per cent over the cost of crops. At the same time, it has been announced that the Minimum Support Price of notified crops will be increased to one and a half times. Agricultural haats will be opened across the country at a cost of Rs. 2000 crore. By adopting a sound agricultural policy, the Government has achieved record production of 275 million tonnes of foodgrains and 300 million tonnes of vegetables and fruits. In this Budget, a provision of Rs. 400 crore has been made for increasing cold storage facilities and for the expansion of the food processing industry in the country. I come from Nashik district, which has the highest production of onions in Asia, and the livelihood of farmers' families depends on the onion crop. In my parliamentary constituency, the Lasalgaon onion market is the largest onion market in Asia, which has not yet been linked to the e-market. Considering onion production in Nashik district, cold storage facilities as well as onion-based industries and onion-based food processing industries should be established. This will ensure proper utilisation of onions that otherwise rot without use in Nashik and will help in reducing the loss of national revenue. Along with this, high-quality grapes and pomegranates are produced in my parliamentary constituency of Nashik, which are in great demand abroad, but export activities are not being carried out effectively. Schemes should be introduced to promote grape- and pomegranate-

based industries in this district and to facilitate their export. I am pleased that the Government has launched Operation Greens to address the difficulties faced by farmers due to price fluctuations of onions, tomatoes and potatoes, and has made a provision of Rs. 500 crore for this purpose. The food processing industry in the country is growing at the rate of eight per cent every year, and this industry is directly linked with farmers.

To strengthen national integration and promote transport infrastructure, connectivity in the country is being enhanced through measures such as expanding the scope of ports, accelerating the pace of construction of National Highways, building new National Highways, developing new waterways and increasing their length. As many as 82 per cent of villages in the country have already been connected by roads. This Government has made efforts to promote air services in the country and to make them affordable. There is a proposal to increase the number of airports fivefold, and smaller cities are being brought within the network of air services. In this manner, the country's overall connectivity is being strengthened.

Many parts of the country experience drought every year, and at times there is excessive rainfall, the impact of which results in devastation for farmers. Even today, farmers look towards the sky

to irrigate their fields and remain dependent on rainwater for agriculture. There is a need to promote irrigation facilities in the country. Several irrigation projects across the country need to be reviewed and given special attention. In my parliamentary constituency, the work of many irrigation projects exists only on paper. The Detailed Project Report of the Damanganga–Pinjal link has been submitted, but further action has come to a standstill. Moreover, several irrigation schemes in my parliamentary constituency of Dindori are lying in abeyance. In other words, irrigation projects are not being implemented in the manner they should be. If these irrigation schemes are completed, farmers will receive substantial relief. However, the largest irrigation project in my parliamentary constituency, Dindori, namely the Nar–Par project, is still lying in abeyance.

DR. MAHENDRA NATH PANDEY (CHANDAULI): Thank you, Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to speak from this place. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Pandey-ji, please start your speech. There is no time. .

...(Interruptions)

HON. CHAIRPERSON: I have requested you to please conclude. There is no time available now. I have already taken the name of Dr. Pandey. Dr. Pandey, please continue.

[Translation]

DR. MAHENDRA NATH PANDEY: Thank you, Hon. Chairperson, Sir. I am grateful to you for permitting me to speak on the development-oriented Budget of the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, presented by the Government of the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. The Constitution lays down the very concept of Government, namely, the establishment of a welfare State. I stand here in support of this Budget, which is wholly dedicated to a welfare State, and I extend my full support to it, as each of its schemes is devoted to public welfare.

Hon. Chairperson, Sir, I come from Uttar Pradesh. Having witnessed the discussions over the past several days, I have derived some satisfaction that the youth leader of the Congress has realised at least one thing. A few years ago, I had seen a press note from Amethi in the newspapers where the youth leader had asked at a shop what an item was, as he could not understand a samosa made from potato. However, the Congress has now understood the difference between a samosa and a pakora. For this, I would like to thank them. We are people dedicated to ideology and to the nation. The theme propounded by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, who was devoted to ideology and the nation, was that service to the poorest of the poor is service to Narayan, that is, service to God. Walking on this path, and amidst the distress of the country over the past 70 years, with the exception of the six-year golden period during the tenure of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and keeping in view the challenges ahead, Shri Narendra Modi bowed his head in this temple of democracy and initiated a Government dedicated to the poor. In that Government, not only we, but many Members of Parliament, whether from this side or the other, initially felt that when the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana was launched, what revolution could merely opening bank accounts bring about. However, when one to two crore and subsequently more than two and a half to three crore accounts were opened, it became clear in

which direction the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, wanted to take the country. Thereafter, initiatives such as the Ujjwala Yojana, Mudra, Start-up, the Soil Health Card for farmers, and the Crop Insurance Scheme were launched. Many Governments claiming to be farmer-friendly used to state in their manifestos that farmers should receive one and a half times the cost of cultivation, but no one had the courage to implement it. In this Budget, that courage has been shown, and it has been decided that farmers will be given one and a half times the cost of cultivation. For the first time, this Government has displayed such resolve. Our colleague, the Hon. Shri Manoj, may elaborate on the Swaminathan Committee. He has stated that this was precisely what the Swaminathan Committee Report had recommended, which every party used to mention, but none had the courage to implement. This is what is meant by resolve and courage, that while holding positions of responsibility in Government, this has been accomplished. In the democracy of this country, which has existed since ancient times, the shadow of Government and governance must always remain with the poorest of the poor. If today the courage has been shown to provide every family with a health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh per year, not only in India but among the largest such health benefit schemes in the world, it is the Hon.

Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, and the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, who have demonstrated this resolve.

Today, in support of this Budget of the Government, there are numerous popular schemes on which our Government is working. What is the difficulty? We can understand the pain of the Congress. History bears witness, and this House bears witness, that in independent India, among the leaders who emerged as the greatest champions of farmers, after Sardar Patel, the name of Chaudhary Charan Singh will be written in golden letters. However, after projecting Chaudhary Charan Singh, the Congress pulled down his Government within 21 days. Thereafter, having brought forward another dignified leader of this country, Shri Chandra Shekhar, the Congress again pulled down his Government on the pretext of the presence of two soldiers.

The pain that they are expressing today is that there is a leader firmly established here, one who does not pull others up only to pull them down. If he has brought the Congress down, then the Congress will remain down and will not move forward. ... *(Interruptions)* For this reason, they are experiencing this pain today, and because of this pain, there is restlessness. ... *(Interruptions)*

Sir, with your permission, I would like to say further that today, the Budget of our Government under Shri Narendra Modi,

presented by our Shri Arun Jaitley, is not a Budget that throws crumbs of a Twenty-Point Programme at the poor. ... *(Interruptions)* The Congress used to throw crumbs of the Twenty-Point Programme. ... *(Interruptions)* On those crumbs, it forgot what the Twenty-Point Programme actually was. ... *(Interruptions)* Today, this is a Budget that improves the standard of living of the poor. ... *(Interruptions)* Through this Budget, by extending the benefits of its schemes to every sphere of public welfare, to the youth, the middle class, traders, the affluent, senior citizens, farmers and young people, in one way or another to all sections, this Budget is beneficial to everyone. ... *(Interruptions)*

Through you, I would like to state that the destination of Shri Narendra Modi and the destination of our Party and of this country are complementary to each other. ... *(Interruptions)* We have taken the country forward on this path. ... *(Interruptions)* Today, the collective conscience of the nation, every child of the country, is realising that nearly four years have passed since the Government of Shri Narendra Modi assumed office. If such major qualitative transformations can be brought about in the country, then India is prepared to entrust the next ten years to Shri Narendra Modi, so that he may take the nation forward. ... *(Interruptions)*

Sir, in conclusion, while thanking you, I would like to state that this Government began with Jan Dhan, will strengthen Jan

Dhan, and will ensure the welfare of every citizen. I wholeheartedly support this Budget dedicated to public welfare. Thank you very much.

***SHRI BAHADUR SINGH KOLI (BHARATPUR):** The Budget 2018 presented by the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, is a very well-balanced Budget. Due consideration has been given to all sections of society. Whether it is the youth of the country, women, the industrial sector or salaried employees, everyone had their eyes on this Budget. A Budget presented by any Government is not merely a document of figures; rather, it is an account of development projects for the entire year. The Budget reflects the Government's direction of development.

After Independence, this is a Budget that has given due thought to rural areas and the farming community. Through various provisions, the Government has taken special steps to strengthen farmers, who constitute the real strength of the country. Farmers will receive the Minimum Support Price for all crops, a fund of Rs. 11 lakh crore will be available for credit, and by deciding to provide Kisan Credit Cards to fishermen and livestock rearers as well, and by making a provision of Rs. 500 crore for tomatoes, potatoes and onions, which are crops available throughout the year, our Government has certainly generated positive thinking among rural communities. When agriculture performs well, its benefits extend

* Speech was laid on the Table.

to other sectors of the economy, including the construction sector, and industrial activities also receive a boost.

By taking the bold step of bearing the medical expenses of 40 per cent of the population, this Budget has energised people in a new way. This in itself is a revolutionary step of this Budget, as such a large scheme has been announced for the first time. It has provided significant relief to patients suffering from tuberculosis. An allocation of Rs. 600 crore has been announced to provide nutrition to TB patients.

Special emphasis will be laid on education from pre-nursery to Class XII. Smart boards will be introduced in classrooms in place of blackboards, 24 new medical colleges will be opened, a Railway University will be established at Vadodara, and provisions are being made to open Eklavya schools for tribal students. These are very necessary and significant steps taken by our Government.

By expanding the **Ujjwala Yojana**, efforts are progressing rapidly to increase the number of LPG connections to eight crore. Under the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana**, the Government aims to provide a house to every poor person by 2022. In rural areas, 51 lakh houses are being constructed in the current financial year, and a similar number has been proposed for the next year as well. Across the country, two crore toilets will be constructed. Under the

Saubhagya Yojana, a decision has been taken to extend electricity connections to four crore families in rural areas.

When the NDA Government was formed in 2014 under the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, the challenge of employment generation was very significant. The Government has taken major steps in this direction. For small and medium enterprises, an allocation 20 per cent higher than the previous year will be made for the Mudra Yojana. Through this scheme, employment has been generated for 5.50 crore people. The Government has also envisaged the creation of 70 lakh new jobs across various sectors.

The **Ayushman Bharat Yojana** will prove to be transformative in the economic and social spheres of the country. The reduction in corporate tax has provided relief to small companies. Compared to last year, expenditure on national security will be increased by 7.81 per cent, and a provision has also been made to enhance allocations for minority affairs by Rs. 505 crore.

There is also a programme to increase the number of airports fivefold from the present level. Therefore, this General Budget is a Budget dedicated to nation-building.

During the Lok Sabha elections, the NDA had given assurances to the people of the country, and adequate provisions

have been made in this Budget to fulfil those commitments. Through this Budget, the country’s growth rate will certainly increase, and I firmly believe that there will also be a rapid improvement in the country’s standing within the international community.

[English]

***SHRI P. NAGARAJAN (COIMBATORE):** I express my hearty gratitude and indebtedness to our beloved immortal Leader Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA, before I place my views on the Discussion on the General Budget 2017-18.

A strong and forward-looking India that places within the reach of its people the opportunities and development promised by our Constitution. This philosophy is enshrined in Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas. The total expenditure for 2018-19 estimated to be over Rs.24.42 lakh crore. The total income expected is pegged at about Rs.24 Lakh Crores. The total debts and other liabilities of the Government expected is about 90 Lakh Crores by the end of this financial year.

In Tamil Nadu our Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA had adopted the vow Makikalal Naan, Makkalukkaka Naan which means “I am by the People, I am for the People". AMMA is very keen that the empowering rays of opportunity should reach the every person. Poverty Eradication, Farmers' Prosperity and Massive Employment Generation has given utmost priority. Tamil Nadu has been implementing various schemes for the betterment of poor and

* Speech was laid on the Table.

deprived people. There is a saying in Hindi: “Roti Kapda aur Makan" "Food, Clothes and House to live" are mandatory for all.

One of the first decisions of Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA on assumption of office on May, 2011 was to announce and implement the free supply of 20 Kilogrammes of rice per month through the Public Distribution System to about 1.83 crore families in the State. I urge upon the Government to provide the same level of supply food grains like Rice and Wheat, Sugar and Kerosene to Tamil Nadu without reducing the Quantity and Subsidy.

Tamil Nadu has been implementing the provision of 20 Kg Free rice and distribution of dhoti-saree for all poor people in Tamil Nadu under Public Distribution System. I would like the Government to implement this as a new project to provide job opportunities for millions of textile workers in the country to earn their livelihood.

The AMMA Canteen Scheme, a brain child of the Puratchi Thalaivi AMMA, is now renowned across the world and studied by governments and experts from different parts of India and the world. The availability of food at such lowest prices really penetrated deep into the hearts of the poor, deprived and under-privileged people of Tamil Nadu. This is a model scheme which

provides food for all need to be implemented throughout the country.

I would like to lay emphasis on the pending demands of the People of my Coimbatore Parliamentary Constituency. Large number of Industries in all the sectors. Textiles, Automobiles, Electronics and Electricals, IT an ITES are in Coimbatore which needs greater attention. I urge the Union Government to provide a Comprehensive special Package for development of Textile Park and Small scale Industries in Coimbatore. This will provide revenue and job opportunities and rejuvenate the sick textile mills as well as large numbers of SSI units in this Kongu Region.

There is a long pending demand for the expansion of the Coimbatore airport where the footfalls from both domestic and international travellers are high and increasing. I urge the Government to take steps like allocation of funds and administrative clearance for the expansion works soon. The NH connectivity Coimbatore and Mettupalayam and Coonoor requires generous funding for expansion works. This is very important road connectivity and therefore need to be provided with adequate funds and expedited. The Coimbatore to Sathaymanglam National Highway needs to widen. This also requires additional funds from the Union Government. There is an urgent need to construct and establish a Metro Train System in Coimbatore city for the benefit

of millions of people working in small scale sector and Industries in and around Coimbatore. There is a requirement for expedition of the National Highway work between Sulsur to Chinthamanipudure. I urge the Union Government to allocate more funds for this project.

Thank You.

[Translation]

SHRI VIJAY KUMAR HANSDAK (RAJMAHAL): Hon. Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak on the Budget. ... *(Interruptions)* Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are with you; kindly give us a little opportunity to speak as well. ... *(Interruptions)*

The Financial Budget is misleading because the manner in which demonetisation and GST were introduced has been followed by repeated changes. ... *(Interruptions)* I feel that even after the manner in which this Budget has been presented, it will undergo several changes during the course of the year. ... *(Interruptions)* Today, people are in a state of confusion, because it is not at all clear what this Budget offers to poor farmers, workers, the unemployed, businesspersons, salaried employees, married women and the middle class. ... *(Interruptions)* A medical insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh has been announced for five crore people, but no criteria or framework has been clearly defined as to how the contribution under this scheme will be shared between the beneficiaries and the companies. ... *(Interruptions)* GST has remained unstable from the very beginning, and the frequent changes made to it have adversely affected taxpayers and, along with that, have disturbed the country's financial situation. The losses suffered by each State should, in one way or another, be

compensated by the Union Government. ... *(Interruptions)* At the same time, central collections have also declined. ... *(Interruptions)* To put it plainly, the Government's policy lacks clarity, because no explanation has been provided for the increase in cess. ... *(Interruptions)* Exports, the private sector, investment and agriculture have suffered significantly over the past year, and along with this, employment in the country has declined. The Government should reflect on this and ensure that national policy decisions are taken only after due deliberation. ... *(Interruptions)* The Clean Energy Fund is not being utilised in accordance with the purpose for which it was constituted and for which collections are being made. ... *(Interruptions)* Further, with regard to clean energy, particularly solar energy, a target of 100 gigawatts had been set, but so far only a target of 13 gigawatts has been achieved. ... *(Interruptions)*

The Government is stating that there is surplus energy and that surplus energy is being generated, yet there are four crore households that have still not received electricity. The Government should also state by when it will be able to provide electricity to them.

In the manner in which one and a half times the cost of cultivation is proposed to be given to farmers in this Budget, there is no explanation provided anywhere. There is a need to explain,

with a year-wise break-up, how farmers' income will be doubled by the year 2022.

Sir, the irony is that the Government needs to respond to the deception inflicted upon the youth of the entire country in the name of employment. Adding insult to injury, statements made by those occupying the highest positions in the Government are so insensitive that they cause anguish to the large number of unemployed people in our country.

If we speak of middle-class families, they have been completely ignored in this Budget, because the prices of everything have continued to rise. Whether it is education, healthcare, petrol, diesel or gas, the prices of all essential items have increased, and today it has become difficult for middle-class families to sustain their livelihoods. If this Government claims that it is enhancing facilities, then instead of increasing prices, there should be a discussion on reducing them. There should be no talk of increasing the tax burden on them. The money deposited in banks, whether deposited or withdrawn, should not be subjected to exploitation from both sides.

There are two large districts in my parliamentary constituency of Rajmahal, namely Pakur and Sahibganj. At the national level, these two districts are, in one way or another, among those placed

at the lowest rung. I would like to demand that one more Kendriya Vidyalaya be established each in Sahibganj and Pakur, so that the level of education there may be improved.

Sir, I will take just one more minute. In our State of Jharkhand, the dream of a Ganga bridge from Sahibganj to Manihari, which was cherished by the people of Sahibganj district, saw land acquisition completed, and the Hon. Prime Minister himself came and laid the foundation stone. However, one year has already passed, and it has remained merely an election agenda. Not a single brick has been laid there so far. I would like the work on this project to be commenced at the earliest.

[English]

SHRI C. N. JAYADEVAN (THRISSUR): Thank you for giving me an opportunity to participate in this discussion. The Union Budget 2018-19 presented by the Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley on the 1st February is considered to be the last full Budget of the NDA Government, rather the last Budget as indications are there that the general elections would be advanced to the end of this year itself.

The current Budget has chosen to tilt heavily in favour of the Modi Government's priorities mainly with an eye on the next general elections. This Budget was presented at a time when the economic situation in the country is very bad. The economic growth has been very low, the agriculture sector is in deep crisis, and the unemployment problem is hurting the feelings of the youth as never before.

The Economic Survey presented on the opening day of the Budget Session has indirectly admitted that if the Government fails to take drastic corrective measures at least in the fields of agriculture, education, and employment, the crisis will further deepen.

The Union Budget presented by the Finance Minister does not have anything to solve any of the present-day problems of the desperate people in all these sectors.

The main problem that our economy has been facing is the declining gross capital formation both by private corporate investment and public investment. The increase in spending on capital account proposed in this Budget is less than what was budgeted for 2017-18. The Budget proposes a 13 per cent increase in Union Government expenditure. But during the last three years of Modi Government, the average Government expenditure growth was only seven per cent against an average growth of 13. 5 per cent during 2004-05 through 2013-14. How this Government propose to increase the expenditure this year? Capital investment is an important factor in generating employment opportunities and public demand. *...(Interruptions)*

When we go through the plan outlays for different sectors such as rural development, health, education and social welfare, we find a lack of increase as compared to previous years, in contrast to the high emphasis given in the Budget speech. *...(Interruptions)*

The total Budget of the Health Ministry stands at Rs. 56,226 crore, an increase of 12 per cent over the previous year. The National Health Policy 2017 indicated that health expenditure

would increase to 2. 5 per cent of GDP but the goal is still far as it is 1. 2 per cent of the GDP at present. ...*(Interruptions)*

I do not know what is the use of speaking at this time. ...*(Interruptions)* I would like to say one thing to my friends from Andhra Pradesh. My Party's Andhra State Committee supports your struggle but at least you should listen to what I was saying. I am sorry, I do not want to speak much. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRIMATI KAVITA KALVAKUNTLA (NIZAMABAD): Thank you, Hon. Speaker, Madam, for giving me an opportunity to speak on the Budget. ... *(Interruptions)*

First of all, I would like to state that with regard to the A.P. Reorganisation Act, the promises made by this Government in respect of all the demands of both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, which were assured on the floor of the House, ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI C. N. JAYADEVAN: Did you hear anything of what I was saying? …* My Party's Andhra State Committee supports you.*…(Interruptions)* You are shouting here. *…(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: That will not go on record.

SHRIMATI KAVITHA KALVAKUNTLA: We demand that whatever has been promised to us, on the floor of this House, in the AP Reorganisation Act has to be honoured. *…(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: It will not go on record. Madam, you may continue.

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* Not recorded.

SHRIMATI KAVITHA KALVAKUNTLA: Governance is a continuous process whether it is the Congress Government or the BJP Government. We sincerely urge that you may fulfil the promises made to both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States. Since past two to three days all our Andhra Pradesh brothers, both YRSCP and TDP, have been agitating. We support their agitation. But being in alliance if they are agitating, it is clearly sending a very wrong message to this nation. So, kindly address this issue as soon as possible.

I would also like to bring it to the notice of Shri Arun Jaitley that this effectively is the last Budget of this Government. The entire nation was looking up to this Budget.

[Translation]

Sir, our farmers were waiting with great hope that they would receive some relief from this Budget. However, I regret to say that after seeing this Budget, our farmers have become quite disappointed. There is nothing in this Budget for farmers. From its very first Budget, this Government has been stating that it will double farmers' income within five years.

Sir, I would like to make a sincere appeal. Whenever any Government takes a stand, a strategy is formulated for it, a supporting budget is allocated, and supporting policies are put in

place. You have been stating from the first Budget itself that farmers' income will be doubled, but we have not seen a supporting budget, nor have we seen the requisite policies to achieve this objective. I would, however, like to appreciate this Government on one count. In one sector, you have done commendable work. You have worked very effectively, with great determination and sincerity, towards improving the ease of doing business. This is why, today, in the international arena, India has moved up by 41 ranks. I would like to remind you that for improving the ease of doing business, you adopted a clear approach. You formulated a strategy, then provided income tax relaxations, thereafter introduced GST, worked in coordination with the States, and constituted a GST Council. It is only after all this that the result has emerged, with India moving up by 41 ranks.

I would like to request and ask why the Government's approach in the field of agriculture is not similar. In this very House, all of us together have passed 31 Bills over the past four years to make doing business easier. However, with regard to agriculture-related legislation, we have passed only two Bills in this House in four years. I would like to remind you that the Pesticides Bill, which originated in 1968, is still pending. This Government has not taken it up. The Bill that was introduced in 2004 also lapsed. It should be passed. The NABARD Bill is pending, the Seeds Bill is pending,

and the Cold Storage Order Bill is pending. Until these policies are framed, how farmers' income will be doubled is beyond my understanding.

We also support this Government. On all serious issues, be it GST or demonetisation, we have supported you. If the Government can stand with industry, from start-ups to corporates, why can we not stand with farmers, from sowing to selling their produce in the market? This is all that I want to understand. I do not wish to say much more.

I would like to make a very sincere request. In your Budget for 2016-17, it was stated that fertiliser subsidy amounts to Rs. 70,000 crore. This is the second largest subsidy provided by any Government after the food security subsidy. At the same time, it was stated in the Budget that instead of giving this subsidy to companies, it would be given directly to farmers. What has happened to that? Please do inform the farmers of this country. I find this difficult to understand. The Congress made a mistake. For a long time, the domestic production of fertilisers, which should have been strengthened, was never increased. When the BJP Government came to power, why were fertiliser companies not established in our country? This is a very important issue for farmers. Kindly give me two more minutes.

Only three companies import fertilisers into this country from abroad. Why is this so? Nobody understands this. Because only three companies are given this opportunity, there is invariably a delay of 60 to 70 days in importing fertilisers. As a result, farmers across villages in this country are made to suffer. We must increase domestic fertiliser production. The subsidy that we provide to fertiliser companies should certainly be diverted towards farmers.

I would like to draw your attention to one more point. Of the total cultivable land in the country, only 51 per cent has irrigation facilities. Yet, if we look at the allocations made by this Government over the past five years, including the provisions in this year's Budget, only Rs. 35,000 crore has been allocated for irrigation water. If farmers' income is to be doubled, adequate provision for irrigation will have to be made. We are constructing a very large project called the Kaleshwaram Project. We have requested several times that it be accorded the status of a National Project. If the Union Government cannot directly implement such projects, it must certainly extend support to the State Governments.

I would also like to remind you of one more aspect. Our Hon. Prime Minister repeatedly states that more cultivation must be achieved with every drop of water, that is, micro-irrigation must be promoted. The Union Government provides only 35 per cent subsidy for micro-irrigation. All the Hon. Members present here are

aware that this 35 per cent subsidy reaches farmers after a delay of one to one and a half years, as a result of which they derive no real benefit. There are States like ours which provide 100 per cent subsidy for micro-irrigation to SCs and STs.

On behalf of the Telangana Government and the TRS Party, we place a demand that, in the matter of insurance, farmers should be treated equally, with the farmer considered as a unit while implementing schemes. There is a need for clear thinking in this direction. If farmers' investment is to be reduced, then MGNREGA should certainly be integrated with farming activities. The last important issue is that you have spoken of providing Minimum Support Price at 50 per cent above the cost. You are aware that MSP is provided for 26 crops.

[English]

HON. CHAIRPERSON: Please conclude now.

SHRIMATI KAVITHA KALVAKUNTLA: You have to shake up the system to make sure that the farmers double their income. *[Translation]* Out of the 26 crops for which MSP is declared, only two crops are procured from us by the Union Government. Wheat is procured to the extent of 30 per cent and rice also to the extent of 30 per cent. This means that there will be no additional financial burden on the Union Government. *[English]* So, my sincere request

to the Government is that please give MSP to all the crops. It will be a revolutionary move and it will help you in the elections also.

[Translation]

***SHRI RAMCHARAN BOHRA (JAIPUR CITY):** I extend my full support to the Budget for 2018-19 presented by our Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley.

The Budget presented by our Hon. Finance Minister is, as always, inclusive, balanced and progressive. This time as well, the Government has followed its earlier policy of presenting the General Budget and the Railway Budget together in February. This is highly commendable. Through this Budget, the Government has extended welfare-oriented initiatives for the poor, development-oriented measures, support for the middle class, farmers, industry, Dalits, women and the youth, which are truly for the welfare of all. Upholding the principles of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', our visionary Prime Minister is building a strong, capable and world-class India.

Maintaining a sustained growth rate of the national economy and ensuring that a prosperous India and people of Indian origin benefit from it is an extremely challenging and difficult task. However, with the Government's honesty, dedication, ideology and firm resolve, the country is moving forward by taking all sections

* Speech was laid on the Table.

of society and State Governments along. This is clearly reflected in India's emerging image on the global stage.

In the Budget for the year 2018–19, the Government has estimated total expenditure at Rs. 24.4 lakh crore. This is expected to have a wide-ranging impact on our economy and to accelerate the pace of development. From the consolidated outcome budget and the status of implementation of announcements, we are also able to assess how much expenditure was incurred and how much work was accomplished by our Ministries and Departments in the previous year. A study of these clearly indicates that the Government is fully discharging its responsibilities arising from the mandate of the people.

In the year 2018-19, while fulfilling its commitment, the Union Government will transfer total resources amounting to Rs. 12.69 lakh crore to the States and Union Territories. This includes the devolution of States' share in taxes, grants and loans, and funds released under Centrally Sponsored Schemes. This amount is approximately Rs. 1.53 lakh crore higher than that of the previous year. This will assist the States in coping with the challenges arising from the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax.

Our country is still predominantly agrarian. Keeping in view the declining agricultural land and its decreasing contribution to

agricultural GDP, the Government has accorded the highest priority to our farmer brothers in this Budget. Accordingly, to raise the agricultural growth rate beyond two per cent, the Government has not only focused on farming and farmers, but has also announced schemes enabling farmers to participate in allied activities such as beekeeping and fisheries. Financial assistance to farmers is also being extended through RuPay cards.

This Budget focuses on operationalising the ambitious plan of the Government to fulfil its commitment of doubling farmers' income by 2022. It reflects the seriousness with which the Government is working for the welfare of farmers and agriculture. The Budget provision of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare was Rs. 51,026 crore for the year 2017-18, which has been increased by 12.8 per cent to Rs. 63,836 crore for the year 2018-19. This year, with emphasis on the Minimum Support Price, the Government has decided to increase it by up to 50 per cent by accepting the recommendations of the Swaminathan Committee. This decision clearly demonstrates our commitment towards farmers.

The number of mandis currently linked to the e-NAM platform will be increased from 250 to 585. For this purpose, each mandi will be provided Rs. 75 lakh for basic infrastructure such as cleaning, grading and packaging. To achieve the objective of 'more crop per

drop', a dedicated Micro-Irrigation Fund will be created with an allocation of Rs. 5,000 crore. Among the major schemes, the outlay for crop insurance has been increased from Rs. 10,698 crore to Rs. 13,000 crore in the Budget Estimates for 2018-19, and the allocation for micro-irrigation has been enhanced from Rs. 3,000 crore to Rs. 4,000 crore. For potatoes, onions and tomatoes, the Government has also announced the introduction of the 'Operation Green Scheme' on the lines of Operation Flood, so as to control periodic price rises and, at the same time, ensure that farmers receive appropriate and remunerative prices for these crops. An allocation of Rs. 500 crore has been made for this scheme. For the development of infrastructure in the animal husbandry and fisheries sectors, the Government has also announced the creation of two new funds of Rs. 10 crore each, which will prove to be far-sighted and progressive steps. To strengthen agricultural markets, an expenditure of Rs. 2,000 crore will be incurred so that 22,000 rural haats can be upgraded and integrated as modern agricultural markets, ensuring fair prices for crops for both farmers and consumers. The Government has also taken several steps this year to promote organic farming, under which women's self-help groups will be encouraged to take up agricultural activities through the National Livelihood Programme. This year, the Government has announced an increase in agricultural credit to Rs. 11 lakh crore for

farmers. The allocation for the food processing sector has also been doubled from Rs. 715 crore to Rs. 1,400 crore, in order to further accelerate its average growth rate. In addition, several announcements have been made to provide farmers with basic facilities such as electricity and water. Undoubtedly, all these measures will prove helpful in strengthening farmers and agricultural labourers economically.

Defence expenditure of Rs. 2,95,511 crore has been proposed. With an increase of more than six per cent in this year's defence budget, the Union Government has made it clear that no laxity whatsoever will be shown in safeguarding the country's borders. Ten per cent of the total Budget has been allocated to this sector, whereas in the previous Budget the share of the defence sector was approximately 13 per cent. This amount will be spent on the modernisation of all three wings of the Armed Forces, on salaries, maintenance of establishments and on pensions.

The work implemented by our Government for the development of the country's basic infrastructure is evident to all. As compared to an average of 73 kilometres during the period 2011-14, during 2017-18 we have accelerated road construction under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and achieved an average of 133 kilometres of road construction per day. A target of constructing 9,000 kilometres of roads has been set for the next

year. Our Government is committed to completing the current targets under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana by 2019 and, as promised, we will connect the remaining 13 per cent of villages to towns within this period. In addition to the development of highways, we have also initiated projects for the development of transport resources that were not addressed by previous Governments over the past 70 years. Today, India is working on the development of national waterways as well as air transport facilities. Be it the Sagarmala Project, the plan to develop Jawaharlal Nehru Port as a smart port, or the UDAN Scheme to connect cities like my city Kota with major cities, these initiatives are strengthening connectivity. Along with transport infrastructure, the Government has also constructed and dedicated several bridges in various States this year, which have provided significant convenience to the public.

This Government is dedicated to the poor. I say this because under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin), the Budget Estimate of Rs. 23,000 crore allocated in 2017–18 has been increased by three per cent in the Budget for 2018–19. We have committed to completing one crore houses by the year 2019 for people who are homeless or living in kutcha houses. To facilitate the construction of these houses, the Government has also constituted a corpus fund. For the modernisation of villages, under

the Digital India Programme, we have initiated steps to strengthen one lakh panchayats. One lakh Gram Panchayats will be connected with high-speed broadband, and five lakh Wi-Fi hotspots will be established, enabling even a poor child sitting in a village to learn about the entire world through the internet. For this purpose, the Government has made an allocation of Rs. 10,000 crore. Through these initiatives, we will be able to connect the entire society from top to bottom. Along with the Saubhagya Yojana, the Government has set a target of increasing electricity connections in rural areas to four crore families.

Our Government is equally attentive to the youth. In childhood, both physical and mental development are essential. Therefore, our Government has formulated schemes not only for education but also for sports in the Budget. To enhance the standard of education, several projects and policy reforms have been undertaken this year, prominent among them being the 'Institutes of Eminence', the 'Atal Innovation Mission', and the conduct of all-India common examinations for medical and engineering education. For conducting all entrance examinations for higher educational institutions, a National Testing Agency has also been established as an autonomous and self-sustaining premier assessment organisation. It is a matter of great satisfaction that, through the use of information technology, an online platform

named ‘SWAYAM’ has been launched to impart education in various courses, which is an excellent example of digitisation. Along with this, the Government has initiated a unique educational initiative for the welfare of tribal communities through Eklavya schools, for which funds have also been earmarked. To promote research, the Union Government has decided to provide scholarships of up to Rs. 1 lakh to 1,000 PhD scholars, which is commendable. The education budget has been increased by 3.38 per cent, taking the total allocation to Rs. 85,010 crore. India has also been promoting sports over the past few years, and in this direction, initiatives such as ‘Khelo India’ and the ‘Sports Talent Search Portal’ have been launched. In addition, sports like football, badminton and kabaddi are gaining momentum across the country. Arrangements have also been made for fellowships, scholarships and coaching for our sportspersons. Further, for employment generation, a target has been set under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana to provide loans amounting to Rs. 3 lakh crore. Tax concessions will be extended to promote employment in the footwear and leather industries, and the Government will also bear 12 per cent of the EPF contribution for new jobs.

Our Government is dedicated to women. In order to safeguard the health of poor women, the Government has decided to extend the benefits under the Ujjwala Yojana to eight crore women. At present, this number stands at approximately three crore sixty lakh. Skilled women are an asset to the nation, and therefore, the Budget Estimate for Women and Child Welfare has been increased from Rs. 22,094 crore in 2017-18 to Rs. 24,700 crore in the Budget for 2018-19. For the empowerment of women, the Government has also formulated several women's safety schemes under the Nirbhaya Fund, with an additional investment of Rs. 500 crore. For women's safety and empowerment, Rs. 267 crore has been allocated to the Mahila Shakti Kendras, as against Rs. 64 crore provided in the previous Budget.

Our Government is dedicated to social welfare. For the year 2018-19, the Union Government has increased the Budget allocation of the Ministry of Minority Affairs by about Rs. 505 crore to Rs. 4,700 crore, which is a record for the past four years. In 2017-18, an allocation of Rs. 4,195 crore had been made for the Ministry. For the upliftment of backward sections, the Government has made provisions this year of Rs. 39,135 crore for Scheduled Tribes and Rs. 56,619 crore for Scheduled Castes. Along with this, the expenditure to be incurred in these sectors has been brought under the outcome-based monitoring mechanism of NITI Aayog,

so that transparency is maintained. Further, recognising the importance of bamboo in the lives of tribal communities, the Government has removed bamboo from the category of trees and redefined the bamboo policy in a new manner, which is a unique step in itself. This year, the Government's agenda includes improving the quality of governance, empowering various sections of society, and freeing the country from the evils of corruption, black money and opaque political funding. In this direction, our Government is continuously making efforts to increase investment in the basic infrastructure sector. The Government has also announced the Ayushman Bharat scheme to provide insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh to 10 crore families in the country. Till now, under the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, an insurance cover of only Rs. 30,000 per year was available. From this perspective, this is a significant enhancement. A target of Rs. 80,000 crore has been set for disinvestment in the year 2018-19. By merging three public sector insurance companies, namely National Insurance Company Limited, United India Insurance Company Limited and Oriental Insurance Company Limited, a single insurance company will be formed. The Government has also continued its initiatives to simplify several procedures, the result of which is an improvement in India's global image, which has also been acknowledged by the World Bank.

I would like to place before the Government certain demands pertaining to my parliamentary constituency of Jaipur, namely,

- Rajasthan University should be promoted under a Centre of Excellence and Research Project and provided with a dedicated and oriented budget, including projects related to foreign policy and international studies.
- S.M.S. Hospital, Jaipur, should be developed on the lines of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.
- On the basis of the Jaipur Smart City Mission, budgetary support should be provided for the development of all major parks in Jaipur on the lines of Central Park.
- The Delhi-Alwar CNG gas pipeline should be extended up to Jaipur, and domestic gas connections should also be integrated into it, so that the Smart City project can be effectively developed.
- A high-speed train service should be introduced between Jaipur and Delhi to provide better facilities to the public.
- A direct rail service should be started between Jaipur and Shirdi, as Shirdi is a major religious destination and thousands of people travel from Jaipur to Shirdi every month.

- The Delhi-Agra-Jaipur Golden Corridor should be developed to promote tourism..
- Jaipur is facing a serious water crisis. Keeping in view the increasing population and the need to provide water to farmers, Jaipur should be connected with the Ramgarh Dam, the Kalakh Dam and the Chambal River. This will ensure the availability of fluoride-free water, and the presence of water in the Ramgarh Dam will also promote tourism.
- Handloom, carpet and jewellery are the traditional industries of Jaipur. In order to enable them to stand firmly in global competition, it is necessary to provide a special package for these sectors.

[*]**SHRI OM BIRLA (KOTA):** Hon. Speaker, Madam, I extend my full support to the Budget for 2018-19 presented by our Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley.

The Budget presented by our Hon. Finance Minister is, as always, inclusive, balanced and progressive. This time as well, the Government has followed its earlier policy of presenting the General Budget and the Railway Budget together in February, which is highly commendable. Through this Budget, the Government has extended welfare-oriented initiatives for the poor, development-oriented measures, support for the middle class, farmers, industry, Dalits, women and the youth, which are truly for the welfare of all. Upholding the principles of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', our visionary Prime Minister is building a strong, capable and world-class India.

Maintaining a sustained growth rate of the national economy and ensuring that a prosperous India and people of Indian origin benefit from it is an extremely challenging and difficult task. However, with the Government's honesty, dedication, ideology and firm resolve, the country is moving forward by taking all sections of society and State Governments along. This is clearly reflected in India's emerging image on the global stage.

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[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

In the Budget for the year 2018–19, the Government has estimated total expenditure at Rs. 24.4 lakh crore. This is expected to have a wide-ranging impact on our economy and to accelerate the pace of development. From the consolidated outcome budget and the status of implementation of announcements, we are also able to ascertain how much expenditure was incurred and how much work was accomplished by our Ministries and Departments during the previous year. A study of this indicates that the Government is fully discharging its responsibilities arising from the mandate of the people. In the year 2018-19, while fulfilling its commitment, the Union Government will transfer total resources amounting to Rs. 12.69 lakh crore to the States and Union Territories. This includes the devolution of States' share in taxes, grants and loans, and funds released under Centrally Sponsored Schemes. This amount is approximately Rs. 1.53 lakh crore higher than that of the previous year. This will assist the States in coping with the difficulties arising from the Goods and Services Tax.

Our country is still predominantly agrarian. Keeping in view the declining agricultural land and its decreasing contribution to agricultural GDP, the Government has accorded the highest priority to our farmer brothers in this Budget. Accordingly, in order to raise the agricultural growth rate beyond two per cent, the Government has not only focused on farming and farmers, but has also

announced schemes enabling farmers to participate in allied activities such as beekeeping and fisheries. Financial assistance to farmers will also be extended through RuPay cards.

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The number of mandis presently linked to the e-NAM platform will be increased from 250 to 585. For this purpose, each mandi will be provided Rs. 75 lakh for basic infrastructure such as cleaning, grading and packaging. To achieve the objective of 'more crop per drop', a dedicated Micro-Irrigation Fund will be created with an allocation of Rs. 5,000 crore. Among the major schemes, the outlay for crop insurance has been increased from Rs. 10,698 crore to Rs. 13,000 crore in the Budget Estimates for 2018–19, and the allocation for micro-irrigation has been enhanced from Rs. 3,000 crore to Rs. 4,000 crore. For potatoes, onions and tomatoes, the Government has also announced the introduction of the 'Operation Green Scheme' on the lines of Operation Flood, so as to control periodic price rises and, at the same time, ensure that farmers

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budget, the Union Government has made it clear that no laxity whatsoever will be shown in safeguarding the country's borders. Ten per cent of the total Budget has been allocated to this sector, whereas in the previous Budget the share of the defence sector was approximately 13 per cent. This amount will be spent on the modernisation of all three wings of the Armed Forces, on salaries, maintenance of establishments and on pensions.

The work implemented by our Government for the development of the country's basic infrastructure is evident to all. As compared to an average of 73 kilometres during the period 2011–14, even during the period 2017–18, under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, we have accelerated road construction and achieved an average of 133 kilometres of road construction per day. A target of constructing 9,000 kilometres of roads has been set for the next year. Our Government is committed to completing the current targets under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana by 2019 and, as promised, we will connect the remaining 13 per cent of villages with towns within this period. In addition to the development of highways, we have also initiated projects for the development of transport resources that were not addressed by previous Governments over the past 70 years. Today, India is working on the development of national waterways as well as air transport facilities. Be it the Sagarmala Project, the plan to develop

Jawaharlal Nehru Port as a smart port, or the UDAN Scheme to connect cities like my city Kota with major cities, these initiatives are strengthening connectivity. Along with transport infrastructure, the Government has also constructed and dedicated several bridges in various States this year, which have provided considerable convenience to citizens.

This Government is dedicated to the poor. I say this because under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana–Gramin, the Budget Estimate of Rs. 23,000 crore allocated in 2017–18 has been increased by three per cent in the Budget for 2018–19. We have committed to completing one crore houses by the year 2019 for people who are homeless or living in kutcha houses. For the construction of these houses, the Government has also constituted a corpus. For the modernisation of villages, under the Digital India Programme, we have initiated steps to strengthen one lakh panchayats. One lakh Gram Panchayats will be connected with high-speed broadband, and five lakh Wi-Fi hotspots will be established, enabling even a poor child sitting in a village to learn about the entire world through the internet. For this purpose, the Government has made an allocation of Rs. 10,000 crore. Through these initiatives, we will be able to connect the entire society from top to bottom. Along with the Saubhagya Yojana, the Government

has set a target of increasing electricity connections in rural areas to four crore families.

Our Government is equally attentive to the youth. In childhood, both physical and mental development are essential. Therefore, our Government has framed schemes not only for education but has also made provisions for sports in the Budget. To raise the standard of education, several projects and policy reforms have been undertaken this year, prominent among them being the Institutes of Eminence, the Atal Innovation Mission, and the conduct of all-India common examinations for medical and engineering education. For conducting all entrance examinations for higher educational institutions, a National Testing Agency has also been established as an autonomous and self-sustaining premier assessment organisation. It is a matter of great satisfaction that, through the use of information technology, an online platform named SWAYAM has been launched to impart education in various courses, which is an excellent example of digitisation. Along with this, the Government has initiated a unique educational initiative for the welfare of tribal communities through Eklavya schools, for which funds have also been earmarked. To promote research, the Union Government has decided to provide scholarships of up to Rs. 1 lakh to 1,000 PhD scholars, which is commendable. The education budget has been increased by 3.83 per cent, taking the

total allocation to Rs. 85,010 crore. Over the past few years, India has also been promoting sports, and in this direction, initiatives such as Khelo India and the Sports Talent Search Portal have been launched. In addition, sports like football, badminton and kabaddi are gaining popularity across the country. Arrangements have also been made for fellowships, scholarships and coaching for our sportspersons. Further, for employment generation, a target has been set under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana to provide loans amounting to Rs. 3 lakh crore. Tax concessions will be provided to promote new employment in the footwear and leather industries, and in addition, the Government will bear 12 per cent of the EPF contribution for new jobs.

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allocated to the Mahila Shakti Kendras, as against Rs. 64 crore provided in the previous Budget.

Our Government is dedicated to social welfare. For the year 2018-19, the Union Government has increased the Budget allocation of the Ministry of Minority Affairs by about Rs. 505 crore to Rs. 4,700 crore, which is a record over the past four years. In 2017-18, an allocation of Rs. 4,195 crore had been made for the Ministry. For the upliftment of backward sections, the Government has made provisions this year of Rs. 39,135 crore for Scheduled Tribes and Rs. 56,619 crore for Scheduled Castes. Along with this, the expenditure to be incurred in these sectors has been placed under the outcome-based monitoring mechanism of NITI Aayog, so that transparency is ensured. Further, recognising the importance of bamboo in the lives of tribal communities, the Government has removed bamboo from the category of trees and redefined the bamboo policy in a new manner, which is a unique step in itself. This year, the Government's agenda includes improving the quality of governance, empowering various sections of society, and freeing the country from the evils of corruption, black money and opaque political financing. In this direction, our Government is continuously making efforts to increase investment in the basic infrastructure sector. The Government has also announced the Ayushman Bharat scheme to provide insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh

to 10 crore families in the country. Till now, under the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, an insurance cover of only Rs. 30,000 per year was available. From this perspective, this is a significant enhancement. For the year 2018–19, a disinvestment target of Rs. 80,000 crore has been set. By merging three public sector insurance companies, namely National Insurance Company Limited, United India Insurance Company Limited and Oriental Insurance Company Limited, a single insurance company will be formed. The Government has also continued its initiatives to simplify several procedures, the result of which is an improvement in India's global image, a fact that has also been acknowledged by the World Bank.

As a representative of the Kota–Bundi region, I would like to place before the Government certain demands that merit consideration. Kota is a city that strengthens education across the entire country. Every year, lakhs of students come to Kota to secure a brighter future. This city has set exemplary standards in education. However, even today, the city continues to yearn for a premier institution of higher education. Earlier, on the initiative of the State Government, a proposal had been made to establish an IIT in Kota, but due to the Congress Government at the Centre at that time, this rightful opportunity of Kota was later taken away. I am fully confident that our Government will make sincere and successful efforts, in accordance with the hopes and aspirations of the

hardworking students of Kota and Rajasthan, to establish institutions of higher learning of the stature of an IIM, an IIT and an AIIMS.

Our Government has carried out unprecedented work in the aviation sector. It has formulated such an action plan that even a middle-class person can undertake air travel. Kota is an important and emerging city of the State and, owing to its excellence in education and learning, it welcomes lakhs of students from every corner of the country along with their parents every year. In view of this, the people of Kota expect that inter-State air services will be commenced there at the earliest. Therefore, I request that air services be started in my parliamentary constituency of Kota, so that this city may develop at a faster pace and new employment opportunities may also be created for the people here. Considering the Government's plans for the expansion of inter-State air services and the growing requirements of the many institutions present in Kota, including educational institutions and establishments related to energy, nuclear power, gas and fertilisers such as Chambal Fertilisers Limited and Kota Thermal Power Limited, I also demand that a new airport be constructed in Kota. Further, daily air services should be provided from Kota to Delhi, Mumbai and other major cities, so that Kota may be connected with the entire country. I hope that the Government will take prompt action in this regard. Our

Government is committed to the welfare of farmers. It has resolved to bring about transformative changes in the standard of living of farmers, and I not only hope but firmly believe that under the able guidance of the Hon. Prime Minister, we will certainly accomplish this objective.

Our Government has announced an increase in the Minimum Support Price for farmers. However, years of neglect have rendered the economic condition of our farmers extremely weak. To pull them out of this vicious economic cycle, a substantial increase in the support price was necessary, and now, due to the Government's efforts, it appears that the future of farmers will improve. I would like to demand from the Government that, in order to realise the enhanced Minimum Support Price in practice, the Union Government and all State Governments should work together on a comprehensive action plan to make the process simpler and more user-friendly. While formulating a strategy for market intervention, appropriate support prices should be fixed. All crops should be included in this framework, especially fruits and vegetables, so that farmers may receive the full and fair price for their produce.

Today, the Government is connecting the entire country through multiple mechanisms. The system linked to the Minimum Support Price in our country has now become outdated and requires modernisation and strengthening for smooth functioning. For this

purpose, it is essential to ensure that the Government machinery involved in MSP operations and food procurement is equipped with adequate human resources and tools. Appropriate training should be provided for human resource development so that personnel are capable of effectively using these tools. The entire process should also be made online. Further, the procurement of farmers' produce by the Government should be carried out through Gram Seva Cooperative Societies, so that such collectives are also strengthened and developed.

This year the Government has earmarked Rs. 2,000 crore for converting 22,000 rural haats into agricultural markets and has also pledged to provide several facilities for farmers. I request that this scheme be implemented effectively in the Kota–Bundi region as well, so that farmers of Kota–Bundi may also receive facilities for storage and cold storage of their produce and obtain appropriate prices for their crops.

Our Government has made extensive efforts to strengthen MGNREGA. Crops of farmers have always suffered damage from wild animals. Every year, standing crops are destroyed by wild animals. In order to protect crops from wild animals, there is a need for the Ministries of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Development to jointly formulate a comprehensive action plan. I demand from the Government that crops damaged by wild animals should also be

covered under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. Along with this, the work of fencing should be included under MGNREGA, and a comprehensive plan should be prepared in this regard so that farmers' crops are protected from wild animals.

We are extremely pleased that our Government has accorded national park status to Mukundra Park. I demand from the Government that the budget for this park be increased so that better care and maintenance of wildlife can be ensured.

In the interest of the nation, our Government has implemented the Goods and Services Tax as a single indirect tax. This has proved to be a milestone in India's economic history and, because of this, our country is now being viewed as an example across the world. The strongest evidence of this is the appreciation of the Government's reforms by the world's second-largest rating agency, S and P. As a Member of the Government, I am well aware of the benefits arising from the Goods and Services Tax. However, I would like to place before you a problem arising from GST in my parliamentary constituency of Kota, which is related to Kota stone, the national identity of our city. Under the Goods and Services Tax, Kota stone is being taxed at 18 per cent. Since Kota stone has traditionally been used by poor and middle-class households, there is a need for the Government to levy a tax of only five per cent instead of 18 per cent. This would provide relief not only to the

general public, but also to traders and to the Kota stone industry of the region.

In Rajasthan there are more than 16,500 villages where people are compelled to consume fluoride-contaminated drinking water. Children are being afflicted with illnesses at a very young age. A large section of the population of the State is forced to drink fluoride-laden water, and every third village is affected by the problem of fluoride. In addition, due to adverse climatic conditions and the scarcity of water resources, the problem of drinking water in the State is increasing day by day. Rajasthan is a State where drought-like conditions prevail every year in nearly 20 to 35 districts. Due to the failure of the monsoon, water sources have dried up. With the growing population and increasing dependence on groundwater, deep borewells are being drilled to meet water requirements, as a result of which the groundwater level is declining year after year. Various studies have been conducted by governmental and non-governmental organisations in this regard, but these studies soon become outdated, as new villages continue to be added to the list of fluoride-affected areas. In such a situation, there is a need for additional financial assistance to improve the drinking water scenario in the State. Therefore, I demand from the Government that a special scheme be formulated and additional

financial assistance be provided to ensure the supply of safe drinking water to the people of the State.

Railways have been the lifeline of our country for over a century, and the Government has always taken appropriate steps for their development. I have, from time to time, placed before the Government the requirements relating to the Kota railway division, which I would like to reiterate here. Prominent among these are the Dakaniya, Kota-Neemuch and Kota-Sheopur railway lines. Dakaniya Talav railway station is being developed as the new railway station of Kota, and for this development, there is a need to lay loop lines at this station so that a greater number of trains can be halted here. Accordingly, suitable provisions should be made in the Budget for laying loop lines. The condition of the foot overbridge at this station is very poor and it is also extremely narrow, due to which there is always a risk of accidents. Keeping in view its increasing usage, there is a need for the Government to expand the foot overbridge and improve its basic infrastructure. Under the Ramganj Mandi-Neemuch-Badi Sadri railway project, it is also necessary to complete the survey work from Ramganj Mandi to Neemuch and obtain its approval, so that rail services may be commenced between these places as well. I also request my Government to make appropriate provisions by approving the

estimated amount already indicated earlier in the Budget, in order to provide railway services between Kota and Sheopur.

In conclusion, I welcome the Government's initiative in this Budget to include all sections of society and to strengthen social and economic democracy. This Budget is a Budget for all, in accordance with the resolve of our Hon. Prime Minister, 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'. I am fully confident that, over time, this Budget will prove to be a milestone in the country's development and will further strengthen our future mandate.

***SHRI LALLU SINGH (FAIZABAD):** The Budget for 2018-19 presented by the Union Government reflects a comprehensive vision for foundational development. The efforts being made towards meaningful development represent a new leap forward. Farmers and the agricultural sector are reassured that prosperity will flow from the Government's policies. A large proportion of India's population consists of farmers. By developing agricultural produce through a cluster-based model and by converting 22,000 rural haats into marketing hubs, the fields and farmyards will be energised, and a hopeful dawn will arrive in the courtyards of our annadatas. To a large extent, the pain and distress of farmers, who have long sat dejected on the boundaries of their fields, will be alleviated.

For fundamental reforms in education, the RISE programme will take the country in a new direction. In the true sense, this Budget will firmly guide India back towards its original cultural ethos, the 'Rishi-Krishi culture'.

The BharatNet project is transforming villages across the country into global villages. Geographical distances are shrinking. The doubled focus on Digital India is commendable, as it is the need of the hour.

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

There is a pressing need to enhance airport capacity in the country, and this has been accorded due prominence in the Budget. With a fivefold increase in airport capacity, people will experience far greater ease in travel. The Government has decided to develop 56 new airports across the country. I would like to demand that one of these airports be developed at Faizabad.

As far as health is concerned, this Government is extremely serious and sensitive to health-related issues. Through the Ayushman Bharat scheme introduced by the Government, about 10 crore families, covering nearly 50 crore individuals, will be brought under its ambit. This will benefit those poor families who earlier used to be ruined by illness. They will now be protected and will be able to escape the vicious cycle of debt.

Our country is endowed with a rich treasure of history and archaeology. With the development of tourism facilities at monuments, the inflow of tourists will increase. A rise in the number of tourists will generate employment opportunities at the local level. The monuments resonate with centuries-old history, and with the growth in tourism, the culture of those eras will also reach the people.

The light of knowledge in the lives of forest dwellers and tribal communities will be spread through Eklavya Model Residential

Schools. These residential schools will usher in a new dawn of development in tribal-dominated areas in the future. New ideas and awareness will emerge among tribal communities, and better opportunities will be created in the field of employment.

A smoke-free kitchen was, until a few years ago, a dream for crores of families. The question of how food would be cooked constantly troubled them. Several valuable hours every day were wasted in arranging firewood and cow dung cakes. In this Budget, the target of the Ujjwala Yojana has been increased to eight crore beneficiaries. Free LPG connections will be provided to them, which will free half the population of these crore households from smoke. Illuminating poor households with electricity is also a very important step.

From the perspective of basic development, this Budget represents a new leap towards meaningful growth. Efforts have been made to align agriculture with the market. The light of education will spread in tribal areas. A vision has been set to transform the country's villages into global villages.

The present Budget will take the country towards its original cultural ethos, the 'Rishi-Krishi culture', where there will be scholars and technocrats, and along with green fields, there will be smiling farmers.

Thank you.

[*]**SHRI BHANU PRATAP SINGH VERMA (JALAUN):** In almost every discussion, both inside and outside the House, it is said that India is an agrarian country and that the soul of India resides in its villages. Yet, over so many years, instead of nurturing and strengthening the soul of India, we remained concerned mainly with the towns, cities and metropolitan centres.

However, when the Government of Hon. Atal Bihari Vajpayee came to power in 1999, for the first time this Parliament launched the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, through which the remote and far-flung villages of the country were brought into the national mainstream.

Our NDA Government, under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, is a people-oriented Government inspired by the philosophy of integral humanism propounded by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya. From the very first day of the formation of our Government, we have worked towards extending the reach of governance to the last person standing in the queue.

We have taken decisions in the interest of poor labourers and, most importantly, farmers and the common man, and have endeavoured to make their lives easier and more meaningful.

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[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

In the previous Budget, the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, had made a provision of Rs. 10 lakh crore for agricultural credit, out of which loans amounting to Rs. 6.71 lakh crore were disbursed to farmers up to October 2017.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, more than three crore thirty lakh gas connections have been provided across the country. Under this scheme, 67,000 connections have been provided so far in my Lok Sabha constituency of Jalaun–Garautha. These 67,000 families were not affluent households. These were families in which women, even after so many years of Independence, were compelled to live their lives amidst smoke. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, we have provided pucca houses to 15.57 lakh beneficiaries, and there is a plan to directly benefit one crore families by March 2019. Similarly, under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, by proposing an allocation of Rs. 1,30,000 crore this year, and by earmarking Rs. 26,000 crore for the National Rural Drinking Water Mission, the Modi Government has clearly demonstrated its intent to double farmers' income by 2022 and to enhance their prosperity and well-being.

In addition to this, with a separate allocation of nearly Rs. 9,500 crore for agricultural irrigation, and with the revival of 99 irrigation projects that had been pending for decades, I am hopeful that in my Bundelkhand region, farmers who were earlier unable to

cultivate their fields merely due to the non-availability of timely irrigation water will now certainly be able to undertake farming.

In addition to this, as part of a visionary initiative of our Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, in the direction of farmers' welfare, a Budget provision of Rs. 1,300 crore has been proposed this year under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana. This will directly benefit farmers. In my parliamentary constituency of Jalaun-Garautha-Bhognipur, under this scheme, a cold storage facility with a capacity of about 4,000 tonnes has been constructed. I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for Food Processing Industries, Shrimati Harsimrat Kaur Badal, for this. With the construction of this cold storage facility in my constituency, thousands of farming families will get an opportunity to store their produce safely at minimal cost. Earlier, due to lack of space and storage facilities, many farmers were compelled to sell their produce at throwaway prices. Now, they will be able to store their crops securely, wait for price realisation, and obtain the rightful value of their produce.

Further, under the Mudra Yojana, with a budget provision of Rs. 600 crore, many small and medium traders will receive assistance in expanding their businesses and generating employment. With allocations of Rs. 3,800 crore for the Deendayal Gram Jyoti Yojana and Rs. 2,750 crore for the Saubhagya Yojana,

the dream of the NDA Government to provide electricity to households that have remained in darkness since Independence will soon be realised.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to an important demand relating to my Lok Sabha constituency. At present, there is not a single direct train service from my area to Delhi. Therefore, I would like to request that at least one train be operated from Jhansi to Delhi via Kanpur. Further, I demand that a new railway line, for which earthwork had been carried out in 1977 during the Janata Party Government, be included in this Budget. This proposed new railway line should connect stations under the Jhansi Division of North Central Railway to Jalaun, Kuthaund and Dibiyapur.

In conclusion, I once again extend my support to the Budget proposed by the Hon. Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley, which is aimed at the welfare of the poor, the common man and the development of farmers. I also express my gratitude once again to our NDA Government, led by our Hon. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, for this excellent and people-oriented Budget.

With Regards.

[English]

SHRI PREM DAS RAI (SIKKIM): Hon. Chairman, Sir, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to participate in the General Budget discussion.

Sir, while welcoming the proposals of the Budget, I would like to bring to the attention of the House that organic farming has been recognised in this Budget as a major thrust area for the Government. In this connection, I would also like to welcome the efforts of the Speaker's Research Initiative when a talk by experts including the Hon. Governor from Himachal Pradesh presented in front of the Hon. Members of Parliament pointed out the way in which organic farming can actually bring about doubling of income of farmers. My previous speaker, Shrimati Kavita ji spoke about how much actually goes into fertilizer and fertilizer production. If organic farming is taken up with all seriousness across the country, then the need for fertilizers will actually go down and the farmers' income can be doubled.

In this respect we need to congratulate the Chief Minister of Sikkim, Shri Pawan Chamling, for having brought in rapid change in the mindsets of not only Sikkimese but all of India and the world at large to the question of how organic farming can be promoted. The State of Sikkim has been declared by the Hon. Prime Minister

of India on January 18, 2016 as the only organic State in the country. Truly, this is a remarkable feat because organic farming is not only good for farmers, but it is also good for our health and also for climate change.

Sir, I would now like to draw your attention to the Budget allocations on diary and livelihoods and also dovetailing it with MNREGA. I think, that is brilliant because that is the way forward. Dairy is a requirement, especially in mixed farming areas like in the mountains. I would also like to thank the Government for bringing in the change in the definition of bamboo. Bamboo now moves away from being a tree and now becomes a grass. Therefore, State level Missions will have to be established, I think, not at the Central level but these missions should be established at the State level, especially in the North-East because 70 per cent of all bamboo stock is held in the North-East of India. This can be a game-changer if we take the definition of bamboo which has been moved away and now it can be cultivated; it can be used and billions of dollars can be brought in through exports of bamboo products. This is again another area which will also help in the area of climate change because bamboo is known for sequestration of carbon.

Sir, I would like to make just two points and conclude my speech. One is on the infrastructure side and this is about the new greenfield airport in Gangtok which is already ready. We are waiting for it to be inaugurated. We hope that this will be done within March this year.

The other point is about the roads. Doklam has shown the under belly of our infrastructure in areas like Sikkim where the road is so small that even big guns cannot be taken upto Nathu La. I would seriously advocate and tell this House, and through you to the Government that we need to make sure that these strategic roads are widened. Thank you, Sir.

[*]**SHRI D. K. SURESH (BANGALORE RURAL):** This budget being the last full budget of the NDA Government, and the fact that it is coming after the recent fiscal changes (Demonetization and GST), the people of this country had huge expectations from the Government, but the common man has once again been left wondering when the promised "Acche Din" will come.

I would like to say that the Union Budget presented by the Hon. Finance Minister is anti-poor, anti-farmer and anti-people budget. It has utterly failed to meet the expectation of 130 crore people of the country. GST was introduced as the cure all for many ailments and that country would see a revival of the economy. The promise of the fiscal reforms had raised the expectations of people for better days to come, but this budget was the biggest disappointment for everyone concerned.

The budget addresses a very important issue that affects almost all families-healthcare. The proposal to have National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS) to provide 20 crore and vulnerable families with insurance cover of up to Rs. 5 lakhs for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization is definitely a good thought. However, the budget clearly fails to show where the money will come from? Again, this is another ill-conceived scheme that will

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

stand only on paper, just like the promise of smart cities, with no money available to implement such an ambitious plan.

Similarly, there is no clarity on how the NDA Government plans to give 50% return over production costs to farmers while fixing the minimum support Prices (MSP). With regard to MSP and remunerative price, I would like to point out that there is no scientific and comprehensive mechanism put in place to fix Minimum Price and also no step is announced for providing remunerative prices to farmers. I would like to ask the Hon. finance Minister that in such a situation how the Government would achieve its object of doubling farmers income without ensuring remunerative prices of farm produce? How can it would be 'Achche Din' for our farmers.

The Economic Survey notes that successful economic and social transformation has happened only with the rise in agricultural productivity. As per the survey, in the last four years, the level of real agriculture GDP and real agriculture revenues have remained constant. Owing in part to weak monsoons. Farmers' incomes have largely remained the same over the last few years while input and production costs have increased substantially. With these statistics, the NDA Government's goal of doubling farmer incomes by 2022 seems a distant reality and another promise that will never see the light of day.

There has been much talk on crop insurance but too little has been received by the farmers who have lost their crops. Similarly farmers are demanding the waiver of all crop loans sanctioned by nationalized banks. However, the Union Government has not taken any step to waive the Farm loan availed by poor farmers from the Nationalized Banks. Also loan facilities for dry land farmers an SHG's is not made available. Due to this the rural economy remains to stagnated and there is no confidence given to farmers and rural women.

Farmers also expected some big announcements for the agriculture sector. Thrust on improving irrigation infrastructure including inter-linking of rivers and enhancing water storage facilities. However no such steps are taken by the Government in the budget.

The "More Crop Per Drop" slogan remains just that-just another unfulfilled promise. The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana which promised "Har Khet Ko Pani" has not lived up to its expectations. The implementation of this project is lagging far behind. Even though the State of Karnataka has submitted district wise action plan there has been virtually no action. There has been funds to implement the project, there are no special packages and regular grants have been diverted. Another promise, that remains unfulfilled for the farmers.

Housing for all by 2022 remains another far-fetched idea. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) beneficiaries are receiving Rs. 1,50,000. This is not enough to build a house. The State Government has to support the project which puts additional burden on the states. The Union Government should increase its share. Under the UPA Government beneficiaries received Rs. 3,50,000. I request the NDA Government to increase the beneficiary amount to Rs. 5-6 lakhs a part of which can be shared by the State Government.

Midday meal workers, ASHA and Anganwadi workers have been marginalized for a long time now. Their minimum wages should be Rs. 3000 per month along with the state's share. The parliament bill on the same must be implemented at the earliest to provide a better livelihood for these workers, most of whom are women.

Similarly, MGNREGA minimum wages has to be raised. The material component of the MGNREGA should be revised to meet the concerns of the famers. Also, Karnataka has not received the payment it is due for the man-hours worked. Daily wage workers are not happy as the budget does not address the concern of the true requirement. The budget should be provided for a minimum of Rs. 75,000 to 80,000 crores to cover all the potential minimum wages.

The previous budgets of the NDA had promised 3 AIIMS like institutions to be announced every year. However, nothing was announced in this regard in the current budget. Harohalli in my Parliamentary Constituency is an ideal place for an AIIMS like institution to be set up. I have requested the Hon. Prime Minister and Finance Minster for an AIIMS like institution and so had the Government of Karnataka. However no steps have been taken in this direction apart from announcing a few Medical colleges. I request the NDA Government to sanction an AIIMS like institution for Harhohalli in Karnataka.

In Karnataka, the Mahadayi water sharing with Goa is unresolved. The Prime Minster has to directly involve in this matter and resolve in this matter and resolve the issue between the two states in order to ensure sufficient drinking water for the farmers of Karnataka.

The Byramangala Lake in Ramanagaram District is also another burning issue. Just like the Bellandur Lake in Bangalore, which has attracted much attention for all the wrong reasons, The Byramangala is in a similar state. Urgent fund is required to clean up this lake to prevent another Bellandur lake. I urge the Union Government to provide funds for the clean-up of Byramangala Lake.

In Anekal Taluk, which is part of my Parliamentary Constituency, there are several ROB/RUB that need to be construct. Anekal is growing fast and unless these long pending requests for railway ROB/RUB is met, there will be untold misery for the people living in these areas. Also, Kengeri-Kanakapura-Chamrajanagara railway line is progressing very slowly due to lack of funds. I request you to fasten the pace of the implementation of this project, by releasing funds as early as possible.

Overall, this budget has fallen far short of expectations of the common man. It fails to address the realities of the common man and ignores his requirements in order for him to enjoy "Acche Din".

[Translation]

SHRI BHAIRON PRASAD MISHRA (BANDA): I congratulate and welcome the Hon. Minister for presenting this historic Budget. When I visited my parliamentary constituency recently and stayed there till the fourth of this month, the people of the area also welcomed this Budget. I would like to inform the House that while members of the Opposition criticise it here, when we sit together in the Central Hall or meet outside, they praise the Budget. This itself is a major achievement for us. ... *(Interruptions)*

This Budget is dedicated to villages and the poor. It has set a target of doubling farmers' income. Provision has been made, starting from the Kharif season itself, to increase the Minimum Support Price to one and a half times the cost of production, which is certainly a welcome step. The prices of tomatoes, potatoes and onions used to fall sharply and remain unstable. To address this, Operation Green has been introduced. A provision of Rs. 10,000 crore has been made for animal husbandry. This will benefit farmers in my parliamentary constituency of Bundelkhand. I hope that special arrangements for fodder and water will be made for villages affected by stray cattle, and that the Hon. Finance Minister will make suitable provisions in this regard. ... *(Interruptions)*

Now, I would like to come directly to the Bundelkhand region. There has been a continuing demand for a special package for Bundelkhand. My demand is that a development authority should be constituted for the region and a special package should be provided to ensure its comprehensive development.

SHRI RAJU SHETTY (HATKANANGLE): Hon. Chairperson, Sir, the Budget presented by the Hon. Finance Minister has caused great distress among farmers across the country. We had high expectations that the Hon. Finance Minister would bring some relief to farmers by introducing a loan waiver scheme and give them a sense of reassurance. However, that has not happened. Repeatedly, it has been stated that this is a farmers' Budget, but what exactly this Budget contains for farmers has now become evident to us.

I would like to thank the Hon. Finance Minister for making an effort to promote the food processing industry by allocating Rs. 1,400 crore. However, if 42 mega food parks are to be established in the country along with associated processes, this amount is inadequate.

16.59 hrs (Hon. Speaker *in the Chair*)

In such a situation, not even Rs. 100 crore would effectively reach each State. For the irrigation sector, an allocation of Rs. 2,600 crore has been made, which is not even sufficient to construct a single canal. Many assurances were given. I would like to thank you for promoting the Bamboo Mission. I also thank you for granting income tax exemption to Farmer Producer Companies. However, for the past three years, NABARD had been supporting the

construction of warehouses, and now the subsidy for this has been discontinued.

17.00 hrs

As a result, this NABARD programme has come to a halt. If the Hon. Finance Minister says that farmers in our country have achieved record production, then we do not have adequate storage capacity to store that produce. Therefore, there was a pressing need to allocate greater funds for warehouses and cold storage facilities. Unfortunately, this aspect has not been given serious consideration.

Hon. Speaker, Madam, it has been stated that farmers will be given A2+FL along with a profit margin of 50 per cent. However, this year the MSP for the Rabi crop has been declared at Rs. 1,735. If A2+FL with 50 per cent profit is calculated, it comes to Rs. 1,225. This means that even earlier, farmers were already receiving A2+FL with 50 per cent. Therefore, by making an incorrect promise, an attempt has been made to mislead the farmers of the country.

Hon. Speaker, Madam, I would like to say one more thing. The Government has also reduced the allocation for the Food Corporation of India by Rs. 1 lakh crore. Today, the arrears of the FCI have reached approximately Rs. 81,000 crore. This means that

when the arrears of the FCI become so large, it will hesitate in procuring farmers' produce in the future or will try to delay procurement by citing one reason or another.

Madam Speaker, If we look at the overall face of this Budget, it is not the face of farmers. This Budget has been designed for traders and consumers. On behalf of farmers across the country, we humbly request that the burden of debt resting on our heads be removed. Today, farmers are committing suicide over debts of Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 35,000. If such suicides are to be prevented, the Government must hold consultations with the States and provide farmers with viable options. Only when farmers across the country are freed from debt will a New India be built, and only then will the farmers of this country truly be prosperous.

Thank you.

[*]**SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO (JAMSHEDPUR):** The Budget for 2018-19 presented by our Government under the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, is focused on the development of women, the poor, farmers and the youth, and this Budget is dedicated to the all-round development of every Indian.

Special attention has been given to rural development in this Budget. An allocation of Rs. 14.34 lakh crore has been made to strengthen infrastructure in villages. Several schemes are also being implemented under Digital India, with a target of providing broadband connectivity to five lakh villages. By constructing six crore toilets, our Government has given women the right to live with dignity, and it has now set a target of constructing an additional two crore toilets in the next financial year. This is a very significant step towards the Swachh Bharat Mission. A total of 115 districts will be developed as model districts and brought at par with the leading districts in terms of development. Under the Pradhan Mantri Saubhagya Yojana, a target has been set to provide electricity to every household by 2022, of which electricity connections will be provided to 1.75 crore households during this year itself. Efforts are

[*] Speech was laid on the Table

also being made to connect villages with rural markets and good roads.

For the Railways, the Budget allocation has been increased by approximately Rs. 20,000 crore compared to the previous year, and a total provision of Rs. 1.48 lakh crore has been made. Targets have been set for the renewal of 3,600 kilometres of railway tracks and electrification over 4,000 kilometres.

Like every Budget of the Modi Government, the General Budget for 2018-19 is also one that will accelerate India's development. In order to ensure that development reaches the villages, the poor, farmers, Dalits, tribals and labourers of the country, several important measures have been included in this Budget. Special attention has been paid to farmers in this Budget. The Government is committed to the development and welfare of farmers. The Government has taken the historic decision to fix the Minimum Support Price of crops at one and a half times the cost of production, which is the most significant step towards achieving the target of doubling farmers' income by 2022. For the first time, any Government has shown the courage to raise the support price of crops to one and a half times the cost of production. For the welfare of farmers producing potatoes, onions and tomatoes, the 'Operation Green' scheme has been launched with an allocation of Rs. 500 crore, which is an important and commendable step. In addition, the

Government has allocated nearly Rs. 2,000 crore for the development of rural haats, Rs. 1,400 crore for food processing, and Rs. 1,290 crore for the National Bamboo Mission. The amount of institutional credit in agriculture has been increased, with a provision of Rs. 11 lakh crore. The announcement of tax relief for companies engaged in agricultural production as well as agricultural processing is a historic step, which will lead to large-scale employment generation in the agricultural sector across the country. With an allocation of Rs. 1,290 crore under the National Bamboo Mission, not only will new agricultural alternatives become available for small farmers, but there will also be a reduction in the import of bamboo products. Separate schemes have been launched for fisheries, and arrangements have also been made to extend the facility of Kisan Credit Cards to farmers engaged in animal husbandry and fisheries.

Through this Budget, the Hon. Prime Minister has placed before the nation the new vision of ‘Ayushman Bharat’. In order to realise the objective of ensuring good health for every citizen, the Government has made a provision of health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh for nearly 10 crore poor families, which will benefit approximately 50 crore people across the country. This scheme is going to prove a boon for the poor. Provisions have also been made in this Budget for opening 24 new medical colleges. Further, the

Government has set a target that by 2022, one medical college will be established in every three parliamentary constituencies, which will be a major achievement in the field of healthcare.

The Government is committed to strengthening the quality of education, and this is clearly reflected in this Budget. A provision has been made to open one Eklavya Model Residential School in every tribal area by 2022. The establishment of a Railway University at Vadodara will not only enhance railway safety but will also generate employment in the railway sector. Along with this, priority has been accorded in the Budget to the modernisation of schools.

For the Railways, the Budget allocation has been increased by approximately Rs. 20,000 crore compared to the previous year, with a total provision of Rs. 1.48 lakh crore. Targets have been set for the renewal of 3,600 kilometres of railway tracks and electrification over 4,000 kilometres.

For infrastructure development, an allocation of approximately Rs. 6 lakh crore has been made, and several thousand kilometres of new national highways will also be constructed. The current number of airports in the country, which stands at 124, will be increased by nearly five times, and through the UDAN Scheme, efforts will be made to connect air travel with the common citizen.

For groundwater irrigation, a separate allocation of approximately Rs. 2,600 crore has been made, which will prove helpful in maintaining and improving groundwater levels.

Several tax concessions have been provided for the development of small and medium-scale industries, which will significantly aid employment generation and also ensure the protection of these industries. For the welfare of the textile sector, an allocation of Rs. 7,150 crore has been made, which will help in addressing the challenges faced by this sector.

I thank the Government for allocating Rs. 3 lakh crore under the Mudra Yojana for the financial year 2018–19. This will greatly assist in employment generation and will especially benefit women and people belonging to the OBC, SC and ST communities. Separate Budget provisions of Rs. 56,619 crore for Scheduled Caste welfare and Rs. 39,135 crore for Scheduled Tribe welfare have been made. This will not only promote the welfare of the exploited and deprived sections of society but will also significantly help in bringing them into the mainstream. The Government has already achieved notable success in consistently reducing the fiscal deficit, and by limiting the fiscal deficit to 3.3 per cent in 2018, further strength will be imparted to the economy. For the welfare of salaried employees as well as for employment generation, the

decision of the Modi Government to contribute 12 per cent of wages towards EPF is highly commendable.

The General Budget for 2018-19 is yet another important step towards ensuring that the benefits of development reach all citizens of the country. This Budget will play a major role in translating into reality the concept of a New India placed before the people by the Hon. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, and the Hon. Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley. The people-oriented Budget presented by the Government today will, in the times to come, prove to be a milestone in India's development.

Thank you.

[English]

[*]**SHRIMATI V. SATHYABAMA:** India is most progressive and the largest democracy in the world. It has 29 States with a mammoth population of over 128 crores. But States like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana are the most productive and income generating States. Tamil Nadu stands second in the country in income generation. In the GST regime the income generated from Tamil Nadu and other productive states are still increasing. Therefore for the effective and equity distribution of our countries financial resources, the Hon. Finance Minister has taken a surgeon's precision while distributing the funds to the various innovative projects to all the 29 States and UTs in the county. I congratulate the Government for this laudable effort.

The total revenue receipts amount to Rs. 24 Lakh Crores and the expenditure for 2018-19 estimated to be over Rs. 24. 42 lakh crore. The total loan and other liabilities accounts to whopping Rs. 90 lakh crores by 2019. In this scenario it is great responsibility of the Union Government to provide adequate budgetary support to both Developed and under developed States. I request to the Government that while serving the under privileged States the productive states should not be deprived as in the case of Tamil

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

Nadu. Though Tamil Nadu adds lion's share to the central exchequer, in return it gets mice level only. This needs to be addressed by the Union Government.

Tamil Nadu in the last 3 years has been devastated by two back to back calamities in December 2015 and 2016. We have not received requested funds till date for the rehabilitation and restoration works. The same happened during last year when the State was reeling under great drought and requested the centre to provide drought relief fund. The Centre never responded to any of the requests made by the Government of Tamil Nadu whether it is for the Athikadavu-Avinashi Scheme or for the Cauvery Canal Scheme. This needs a remedial measure form the centre. Several genuine demands of the Tamil Nadu for the development of various sectors or projects or Railway proposals were unheeded by the centre so far. Therefore I urge the Union Government to provide Tamil Nadu its due share in proportion to its contribution to the central Exchequer.

I welcome the decision of the Government to bring out industry friendly defence production policy 2018 and the proposal of development of two defence industrial production corridors. Tamil Nadu should be given priority in defence production projects.

The target of Rs. 3 lakh crore for lending under PM MUDRA Yojana is welcome, but it should be disbursed for the real beneficiaries without any partiality or denial.

The allocation for Railways in 2018-19 is Rs. 1. 48 lakh crore is not sufficient for the completion of many long pending projects and could escalate their total cost further. The redevelopment of 600 railway stations and renovation of over 3600 km railway track in current year is a good decision.

The Government's decision to divest 24 Public Sector Units and target of Rs. 80,000 crore for 2018-19 need introspection. The prestigious units like Salem Steel Plant should not be disinvested at any point of time. The creation of 5 lakh WiFi spots for benefit of 5 crore rural citizens and the National program to direct efforts in Artificial Intelligence is welcome. The IT and ITES gap between cities and rural India need to be narrowed. The allocation of Rs. 2. 04 lakh crore for Smart City mission is welcome. But needs more care and caution to monitor and check whether this huge amount is properly utilized in 99 cities selected under this mission.

As far as the Health Sector is concerned the Government has done what has been already done by the Government of Tamil Nadu in the last 6 years. The decision to start 24 new Government Medical College & Hospitals is welcome. The allocation for

nutritional support to all TB patients should have been more than Rs. 600 crore. The National Health Protection Scheme to benefit 50 crore people and health cover of up to 5 lakh per family per year for poor & vulnerable is good.

The allocation of Rs. 10,000 crore for fishery development fund and animal husbandry fund, Kisan credit card to be extended to fisheries, animal husbandry farmers and Rs. 1290 crore for bamboo sector are really helpful.

As far as the demands of the people of my Tirupur Constituency, there is an urgent need to create a comprehensive special package for the Industries of Tirupur which include Textiles, Knit wear, Ready-made garments and dyeing industry. I urge the Government to allocate Rs. 10,000 crore for this Special Purpose Vehicle for the benefit of millions of people in this Kongu region.

The Union Government had announced the setting up of AIIMS in Tamil Nadu during the 2015 Budget. But even after 3 years, the Government has taken no decision on this. There are lots of demands from the people of this Kongu region in Tamil Nadu to establish AIIMS at Perundurai in Erode District. Therefore I urge the Government to announce immediately the setting up of AIIMS in Perundurai in Erode District. Thank you

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Sunil Jakhar.

This is your maiden speech, so speak briefly and well. I should not have to ask you to conclude.

SHRI SUNIL KUMAR JAKHAR (GURDASPUR): Hon. Speaker, Madam, if I say something out of turn, kindly restrain me. You are senior to me, and it is your affection.

Hon. Speaker, Madam, I am deeply grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak in this august and sacred House. This House is truly the sanctum sanctorum of democracy. I have been elected by the people and sent here, and while I feel a sense of pride, I am equally conscious of the responsibility entrusted to me. The people have given me responsibilities through this House, and I shall endeavour to fulfil them by raising their voice here. A farmer's son stands in this august House today and speaks. Repeatedly, it is being said that this Budget has been brought for farmers and rural areas, and I will speak on that as well. However, it is often said that while there is much imagination about decorating the house, one must first decide how to save the house itself.

Hon. Speaker, Madam, B.R. Ambedkar had said that democracy without economic and social democracy is meaningless.

As far as economic democracy is concerned, it is evident before everyone that while slogans of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' are being raised, the reality appears to be 'Sabka Saath and development of one per cent'.

Whatever development has taken place in the last three years has largely accrued to one per cent of the population. This is a matter of concern. An even greater concern is that today an assault is taking place on the social fabric of our country. Our social harmony is under threat. I believe it is the responsibility of this House, and as the newest Member, I can only remind the House of this. I have not stood here to deliver a speech. When the Hon. Finance Minister was speaking today, he spoke of the 'ease of living', not merely the 'ease of doing business'. I would like to remind him that if you speak of the ease of living, then ask those Dalit families as well. ... *(Interruptions)* In Rajkot district, four Dalit children were tied behind a jeep and dragged, and an attempt was made to kill them. I would like to ask what was the fault of Pehlu Khan. ... *(Interruptions)* If there is no sense of trust within this House on these issues, then neither will new investment come to this country nor will an atmosphere of security be created. No matter how many times you go to Davos or how many speeches you deliver, ... *(Interruptions)* no one will be willing to invest in such an antisocial environment. I wish to draw the attention of this House

to this reality. ... *(Interruptions)* Today, there is a concerted attempt to rewrite history. ... *(Interruptions)* This does not worry me, because history has been written by our martyrs and patriots with their blood and sacrifices, and no one can erase it. By resorting to petty tactics, ... *(Interruptions)* you cannot diminish Nehru Sahib, whom people fondly remember as Nehru Chacha. It does not behove this House that a Minister should speak in such a manner and address, with derogatory terms, a person who is revered across the world. ... *(Interruptions)* This too is a matter of concern. If you so wish, consider it our fault, today it is being projected as the fault of the Congress that the Congress Party has made sacrifices. ... *(Interruptions)* I wish to state clearly that sacrifice is not the monopoly of the Congress, nor is it our fault. Rather, consider it our strength, that sacrifice is written into the DNA of the Congress Party. Those who made sacrifices, be it Sardar Bhagat Singh, Lala Lajpat Rai, Chandrashekhar Azad or Ashfaqullah Khan, did not sacrifice their lives for any one caste or community, but for the nation. ... *(Interruptions)* They did not lay down their lives to have their names written in the pages of history. I would say the living legend, Shri Surjit Patar Ji and I am taking a liberty to quote few of his lines. He says:

"Yeh kya kam hai ki is ped ko mere khoon ne seencha,

Koi baat nahin ki iske patton par mera naam nahin hai.

Gam to yeh hai ki mere hatyaare ne mera lahoo Ganga mein dhoya,

Aur Ganga ke pani mein kohram nahin hai. ”

(“This itself is no small thing, that this tree has been nurtured by my blood.

It does not matter that my name is not on its leaves.
My grief is this, that my killer washed my blood in the Ganga,
And yet there is no upheaval in the waters of the Ganga.”)

The leaders of this House, who were given such an overwhelming mandate by the people in 2014, cannot evade their responsibility by saying that a particular Minister comes from a rural background and therefore can say that people belonging to a particular caste or religion should leave India. ... *(Interruptions)* Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad is not present in the House today. When the issue of triple talaq was being discussed here, he mentioned two names. That did create a sense of hope, and I will acknowledge the right thing as right. He mentioned Karimullah Khan, stating that Karimullah Khan from Cherrapunji runs an ambulance on a motorcycle. He referred to him by name, and the Hon. Prime Minister spoke to him on the telephone.

He talked about giving Padmashree to Imran Khan who belongs to Alwar district, we appreciate this. But if the Prime Minister had picked up the same phone call that he made to Imran Khan, he would have made the same call to the family of Pahlu Khan, whose only fault was that he was taking a poor man, who was murdered here. Hon. Minister of Finance and Minister of State from Rajasthan are sitting here. Whatever happened inside Raj Sambandh, Shambhu Lal, who poured oil and set it on fire, is a matter of concern today and I think it is our responsibility.

He also spoke about Imran Khan, who hails from Alwar district, and mentioned that he should be awarded the Padma Shri. We appreciate that. However, if the Hon. Prime Minister could pick up the phone to speak to Imran Khan, then that same phone could also have been used to speak to the family of Pehlu Khan, whose only fault was that he was transporting cattle for the poor, and who was killed here. The Minister of State for Finance from Rajasthan is present in the House today. What happened in Rajasthan, where Shambhu Lal poured petrol and set a man on fire, is a matter of grave concern. I believe that this is our collective responsibility, and we cannot look away from it.

The issue that was discussed the most in this Budget deserves clarity. Many able Ministers are present in the House, and among them, the most able is the Hon. Finance Minister. I would like to

express my gratitude to him. I have come with two words of thanks. First, I thank him for his magnanimity. It was very gracious of him. As the son of a farmer who has been elected to this House, I was invited by him for a meal during the previous Session, for which I am grateful. Second, I wish to thank him for stating that a profit of 50 per cent over the cost will be given. Before my colleagues start thumping their desks, I wish to make it clear that when something is right, I will acknowledge it, express gratitude and also congratulate. However, the Hon. Finance Minister is not present here at the moment. I would like to hear clearly from him. One after another, Members have spoken about A2 plus FL, C2, and the entire alphabet. Amidst all this, many farmers are asking, and I too am asking, where do I stand. Is there something called I2 as well. Am I somewhere in the picture. I request the Hon. Finance Minister that when he concludes this debate, he should make it absolutely clear whether the 50 per cent profit being spoken of is over C2, over the comprehensive cost, or not. A farmer may be uneducated, a farmer may be simple, but a farmer is not foolish.

I have one further request to the Hon. Finance Minister. Do not strike us down with the pen. Learn from ... *, strike us will bullet. If

* Not recorded.

you wish to strike the farmer, do it bullet. ... *(Interruptions)* Farmers were shot in Mandsaur.

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: Nobody's name will go on record.

[Translation]…(Interruptions)

SHRI SUNIL KUMAR JAKHAR: I will refrain from naming individuals. You may take note of the names if required. ... *(Interruptions)* Farmers were shot dead in Mandsaur.

Madam, farmers were shot. If you must shoot us, then shoot us as well. At least then, somewhere, some compensation will reach the farmers' families. But here, farmers are being struck down with the pen. We are being told that the glass is empty, and yet explanations are being offered. I regret that my colleagues from Punjab are not present here today. ... *(Interruptions)* Madam, this is my maiden speech. ... *(Interruptions)* I regret that my Akali colleagues are not present. ... *(Interruptions)* I hold Shri Badal Sahib in great respect. I respect him because he is perhaps the only Chief Minister who has actually tilled the land with his own hands, and therefore, the pain is also felt more deeply. It hurts when his colleagues were thumping the desks here. ... *(Interruptions)* Listening to something incorrect and endorsing it may have its

advantages, but it does not feel right to applaud without understanding what is being applauded. ... *(Interruptions)* What hurts the most is this. I would like to ask the Hon. Finance Minister why, in the entire speech, there was no mention of farmers' debt. Today, farmers are dying, but you are speaking of the year 2022. Who knows who will survive until then. You speak of waiving loans and doubling incomes by 2022, provided farmers remain alive till then. I would like to ask, what is the crux of the matter. It is the cost of cultivation. Which cost are you considering. Madam, this is my maiden speech. I seek your protection. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: As this is your maiden speech, please raise two or three good points. There will be a lifetime to criticise.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SUNIL KUMAR JAKHAR: You have begun to find a smell in the farmer. There should be no such perception about the farmer. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: There is no such perception. Please proceed with your speech.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SUNIL KUMAR JAKHAR: Madam, I am speaking about farmers. When stubble was set on fire in Punjab, smoke spread everywhere. Punjab and Haryana were blamed, and it was said that life had been made miserable for the people of Delhi because farmers had burnt the stubble in their fields. This smoke was visible to everyone. But the smoke rising from the funeral pyres of farmers who are committing suicide has not been felt by anyone. Does the smoke from farmers' funeral pyres not reach this House? In the last three years, 36,000 farmers have committed suicide. If we calculate the average, one farmer has died every 45 minutes. By the time one episode of the Hon. Prime Minister's 'Mann Ki Baat' concludes, one farmer commits suicide. There is no one to take care of farmers, because farmers are not getting a fair price for their crops. This is not the suffering of today alone. My colleagues may say that farmers were committing suicide even during your time. That is absolutely correct. Farmers were committing suicide even during the Congress regime. That is precisely why the people gave you an opportunity to change the situation. Farmers have been suffering for a long time, and farmers are still suffering today. Allama Iqbal wrote- "From the field that does not provide the farmer his daily bread, Burn every ear of wheat in that field." The day such a fire breaks out, smoke will not only choke Delhi but the entire country. Please take care of the farmers. The Hon. Finance Minister has said

that purchasing agencies will speak to the States, and that the FCI will coordinate with the States.

Madam, I will conclude shortly, as I am aware that the Hon. Finance Minister has to reply to the House. Hon. Finance Minister, Sir, I seek your kind indulgence, because Punjab has a rightful claim on you, and I speak considering it as my right. You are large-hearted, and I am confident that you will overlook what I say, because you have the courage to do so. You contested elections there. *[English* But your winning or losing does not reflect on your competence or on your large-heartedness. A man is known by the company he keeps. *[Translation]* The punishment you suffered was on account of those who took you along. You had to bear the consequences because of those involved in the drug menace.

Madam, on 11 March 2017, the results of our Legislative Assembly elections were declared. On 10 March, the Akali-BJP Government transferred Rs. 32,000 crore to the Union Government. *[English]*They had no right. This was a dispute between the FCI and the Government. That dispute was for one-third. There were some claims which were contested between the rates they were giving and the actual cost. But one-third or more than half of it was *[Translation]* on account of irregularities. I request the Hon. Finance Minister that the entire amount of Rs. 32,000 crore, which the Akali-BJP Government transferred to the Union Government in

order to teach a lesson to the incoming Congress Government, should be returned in full. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Please conclude now.

SHRI SUNIL KUMAR JAKHAR: Madam, kindly allow us to sit till eight o'clock and I will listen to the entire reply. There is industry in Batala. Earlier, there used to be freight equalisation subsidy, which has been withdrawn. We are located in remote areas where industry is dying. You speak of providing employment, but employment will be generated there only if the existing industries are protected.

I come from Gurdaspur. Whether it is Gurdaspur, Pathankot district or Amritsar district, these are all border belt areas. There are more than seventy thousand ex-servicemen in our region. There is a soldier in almost every household. After becoming a Member of Parliament, I have visited four families whose young men were martyred on the border. I would like to draw the attention of the Hon. Finance Minister to the fact that although you have made allocations for defence to the best of your ability, the people had placed their trust in your Government. You had said that Dr. Manmohan Singh used to write love letters to Pakistan, and

therefore Pakistan was indulging in frequent intrusions and facilitating infiltration.

I have only one request. To teach Pakistan a lesson, Indira ji divided it into two parts. Bangladesh stands as proof of that. Whether you write love letters, or show a broad chest, or whether infiltration has stopped after demonetisation or not, I would like a clear message to go to those households. The rights of the martyrs and of the soldiers who are fighting must be fully protected under this Government. I will make one final point. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Now make your last point. That is the final point.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Now recite a couplet and conclude.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI SUNIL KUMAR JAKHAR: You take credit for OROP for soldiers, but for those households where the mortal remains of martyrs arrive, I have one suggestion. Dubey Sahib, I have a suggestion. ...*(Interruptions)*

HON. CHAIRPERSON: What is happening? Time is running.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI NISHIKANT DUBEY (GODDA): Madam, it will have to be expunged. Rule 352. *...(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: That name has already been taken.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI NISHIKANT DUBEY: Madam, what he has said about …*, this forms part of the statement. It will have to be expunged.

Secondly, under Rule 353, he stated that …* had opened fire. Both these references cannot be permitted. ... *(Interruptions)* Therefore, the reference to …* should be expunged under Rules 352 and 353. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: All right, it will be expunged. *[English]* It's ok.

[Translation] ...(Interruptions)

* Not recorded.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Radha Mohan Singh, what has happened now? I will look into it.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR RAY (KODARMA): Hon. Speaker, Madam, I have been given an opportunity to speak on this Budget. *...(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Shri Radha Mohan Singh, what has happened?

...(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE (SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH): Madam, the Hon. Member was referring to the issue of the Minimum Support Price. Even when one of their Hon. leaders was speaking on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, he too stated that the MSP for urad dal was at a certain level but was not reaching the farmers. Whether it was during the tenure of the UPA Government or after our Government came to office, the formula under which a profit of 50 per cent, that is, one and a half times, has been discussed has remained the same. In their time, it applied to pulses, and during

our time it has been increased further, but in all cases it has been more than 50 per cent. On the basis of the same formula under which MSPs for ten commodities are determined, the MSP is more than 50 per cent, that is, one and a half times. However, it has often not reached the farmer. Many Hon. Members have delivered speeches to this effect. There are several crops for which the MSP is not yet one and a half times. Our Government has stated very clearly that where it already is so, it is fine, and where it is not, we will ensure at the time of procurement that all crops are covered at one and a half times. Under the same formula, we will also ensure how the farmer receives the differential amount. The position is very clear. There is no need to remain confused or to mislead the people. Some say that this will place a burden on the exchequer. Our Hon. Prime Minister has stated that there will indeed be a burden on the exchequer, but the first right over the national exchequer belongs to farmers, and therefore the Government will certainly do this.

[*]SHRI CHANDRA PRAKASH JOSHI (CHITTORGARH): Through his Address to both Houses of Parliament, the Hon. President presented a comprehensive panorama of the journey of the Government of India towards pride, dignity and development in the world. I would like to support the Budget proposals.

With the support of the common people of the country, an unprecedented transformation has taken place in the lives of villages, the poor and farmers under the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister. Over the past four years, whether it is the poor, the farmer or the worker, all have begun to look towards the Government with renewed hope. For the first time, farmers, the poor and workers have dreamt of a New India with optimism, and I feel immense pride in stating that this Government is continuously, day and night, setting new benchmarks in the direction of fulfilling this vision of development.

If we compare the tenure of the past 70 years with the last three and a half years, it becomes evident that, for the first time, the country is moving decisively on the path of development. The Hon. Prime Minister has taken a firm resolve that by the year 2022, the income of farmers will be doubled, and the Government is making continuous efforts to achieve this objective. For the first time, a

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

Budget has proposed allocating more than 50 per cent of its provisions for the benefit of farmers. My parliamentary constituency is predominantly agriculture-based. Earlier, farmers there had never received crop compensation to the extent that they have received during the last three years. Whether crops were damaged due to excessive rainfall, drought, hailstorms or any other reason, farmers have been able to receive compensation for their losses. In my constituency alone, compensation amounting to more than Rs. 400 crore has already been distributed among farmers. Through the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, crops are being insured, enabling farmers to live with peace of mind. Earlier, a farmer could not sleep peacefully, from the sowing of seeds to the storage of produce. The annadata farmer, who produces crops through hard labour and toil, often faced a situation where he possessed cultivable land but had no proper arrangement for irrigation. I would like to thank the Hon. Prime Minister for launching the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana with the objective of providing water to every field. In the same spirit, several dams are being constructed in my parliamentary constituency, and efforts are being made to strengthen canals so that water reaches every field. Due to lack of proper information about fertilisers and pesticides, crops often did not receive the required nutrients. To address this issue, the Hon. Prime Minister introduced

the Soil Health Card Scheme, under which farmers can get their soil tested and receive information regarding the nutrients required, which will certainly lead to increased production. Earlier, farmers did not receive fertilisers in a proper manner. Now, fertilisers and urea meant for farmers have been neem-coated, ensuring that urea is easily available to them without any interference. At present, the Minimum Support Price has been fixed at one and a half times the cost of production of crops. Further, Kisan Credit Cards will now be issued to livestock farmers, fishermen and those engaged in agriculture-related activities.

With a view to freeing women from household smoke, the Hon. Prime Minister initiated the Ujjwala Scheme. Under this scheme, provision has been made for providing free LPG connections to eight crore women-headed households. In my parliamentary constituency alone, two lakh families have been selected under this initiative.

In the railway sector, instead of making populist promises, tangible work is now visible on the ground. Rather than offering false assurances, emphasis has been placed on strengthening basic infrastructure. In my parliamentary constituency, an Adivasi region that had remained deprived of railway services since Independence is, for the first time, being connected to the rail network during the tenure of this Government. At the same time, railway electrification

and doubling works are progressing at a rapid pace, and facilities such as a container depot have also been provided, which will give further impetus to industrial development. Further, if trains are introduced from Udaipur, often referred to as the Kashmir of Rajasthan, to South India, the region will gain greater prominence on the tourism map, enabling visitors to become acquainted with the historic and cultural heritage of tourist destinations and the glorious history of Mewar.

Similarly, unprecedented work is being carried out by the present Government in the field of roads and transport, as a result of which the pace of construction of National Highways has doubled. In my region, the Ahmedabad–Kishangarh six-lane project is progressing, leading to a rapid improvement in freight movement and general connectivity. Alongside this, works under the Central Road Fund are also underway. In addition, commendable work is being carried out under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana to extend road connectivity up to the villages.

Under the BharatNet Scheme, all Gram Panchayats across the country are being connected to the Internet through high-speed broadband connectivity. This will provide rural residents, particularly rural youth, an opportunity to integrate with the modern world and will open up new avenues for self-employment and skill development.

It is the result of the farsighted vision of the Hon. Prime Minister that the Government is undertaking the highly ambitious task of providing a roof over the head of every citizen of the country by the year 2022. This initiative will prove to be a milestone in fulfilling one of the most essential needs of crores of people across the nation.

In order to extend the benefits of education to Adivasi communities, a new scheme in the form of Eklavya Model Residential Schools is being launched under the guidance of the Hon. Prime Minister through this Budget. This will promote the spread of education among Adivasis and enable their integration into the mainstream of society.

For the first time since Independence, the Hon. Prime Minister has set a clear target to provide electricity to remote and hitherto unelectrified areas of the country under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana and the Saubhagya Scheme. Through these initiatives, electricity is being extended to villages and *dhanis*, thereby ensuring access to basic amenities for the people residing there. In my parliamentary constituency as well, several villages and *dhanis* have been electrified for the first time, and in forest areas, households have been illuminated through the use of solar energy.

***SHRIMATI PRIYANKA SINGH RAWAT (BARABANKI):** At the outset, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for presenting an excellent Budget for the national economy and the general public. The Budget presented for the year 2018-19 will pave the way for prosperity and progress for all sections of society. The decision of the Government to fix the Minimum Support Price for all crops at one and a half times the cost of production in the interest of the country's *annadata* farmers, to provide a tax rebate of 5 per cent for small entrepreneurs, to extend health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh to 10 crore poor families of the country, to strengthen farmers' income by increasing agricultural credit by Rs. 1 lakh crore to Rs. 11 lakh crore, to grant relief to salaried persons through standard deduction, and to promote women's self-reliance by approving a budget of Rs. 75,000 crore for extending credit to women's Self-Help Groups to economically empower women engaged in household occupations, clearly reflects the Government's vision and its spirit of service towards the common citizen. In the Railway Budget announced by the Union Government, the State of Uttar Pradesh has been allocated nearly Rs. 1,923 crore, which is 567 per cent higher as compared to the UPA period. This will not only help in providing basic amenities in

* Speech was laid on the Table.

railway services but will also accelerate the expansion-oriented policy of the Railways.

It is extremely necessary to address the following pressing issues of my parliamentary constituency, Barabanki. Through my earlier correspondence, I have already brought these matters to the notice of the concerned authorities. However, approvals for these works have not yet been granted. The issues are as follows-

Construction of an Underpass - In Barabanki, a population of nearly 50,000 resides in the area located between the Northern Railway line and the North Eastern Railway line. With the construction of a Railway Overhead Bridge, walls have been erected at the level crossing gates on both railway lines, as a result of which the direct connectivity of the local population with the main town has been completely cut off. This situation is not conducive from a commercial point of view and has also caused severe difficulties to the people in their day-to-day movement. Therefore, in order to redress the problems of the residents of the area, the construction of an underpass appears to be absolutely essential. In this regard, I have personally met the Hon. Prime Minister and requested him for the construction of the underpass.

Removal of Illegal Encroachments - To free land in Barabanki that has been unlawfully occupied by land mafias and criminals associated with the Samajwadi Party from illegal encroachments.

Cultivation of Mentha Oil - In Barabanki district, mentha oil cultivation is the highest in India, and a substantial portion of the produce is exported abroad. However, there is no institution in the district for research on improved varieties of mentha, nor is there any branch of an Export Promotion Council to facilitate export promotion. Mentha oil, which is the principal cash crop of farmers in the region, does not fetch a remunerative price for its produce. Further, mentha oil cultivation is not covered under the Crop Insurance Scheme, due to which farmers do not receive compensation for crop losses in the event of natural calamities. Therefore, I request that a research institute and a branch of the Export Promotion Council be established in the district, arrangements be made for fixing a Minimum Support Price, and mentha oil cultivation be included under the Crop Insurance Scheme. In this regard, I had addressed a letter to the Hon. Agriculture Minister on 13.06.2014 seeking fixation of a Minimum Support Price for the mentha crop.

Promotion of Food Processing Industries - Banana, potato, tomato and sugarcane are the major crops of the district. Therefore, processing-based industries should be promoted to add value to agricultural produce and enhance farmers' income.

Construction of a New railway line - Connecting Barabanki Junction to district Bahraich via Deva–Fatehpur and Suratganj is of vital importance for Parliamentary Constituency No. 53, Barabanki. The tehsils of Fatehpur and Suratganj are predominantly agriculture-based areas. However, owing to frequent floods, the region has not been able to achieve adequate development. In the absence of a railway line, the general public faces considerable difficulty in commuting to the district headquarters, which has also hindered industrial growth. **There are two important religious sites in this region, namely, Deva Sharif and Hetmapur**, which attract a large number of devotees from far-off places. If **the railway line from Barabanki Junction to Deva, Fatehpur and further up to Suratganj**, as mentioned above, is surveyed and connected to the main railway network, it would enable rapid development of the region and facilitate the establishment of new industries. In addition, this would also connect Barabanki district to Bahraich district through the railway network. It may be mentioned that for this route, the then Union Railway Minister had accorded priority for survey at **Serial No. 56** during the year 2011-12. In this

regard, I have also addressed correspondence to the Hon. Railway Minister, Government of India.

Establishment of a Government Women's College - Parliamentary Constituency Barabanki is extremely backward in terms of facilities for higher education for women. There is no Government women's college in the district for higher education. As a result, girl students are compelled to seek admission in Lucknow or other districts for higher studies, or alternatively, their families are forced to bear a heavy financial burden by enrolling them in private colleges. Due to this anomaly and concerns relating to safety, many girls are often compelled to discontinue their education midway. For a considerable period, several organisations in the district have been agitating for the establishment of higher educational institutions for women, but a permanent solution to this problem has not yet been achieved. Therefore, there is an urgent need to establish Government women's colleges at the district headquarters and at Fatehpur Development Block.

Construction of a Bypass near Deva and Fatehpur - On the route from Barabanki to Fatehpur, the town of Deva falls en route. With the increase in population of Fatehpur town, traffic congestion has become a frequent problem. A similar situation arises while travelling from Fatehpur to Belhara, where long traffic jams are

often witnessed in Fatehpur. Therefore, in order to address these persistent problems, the construction of a bypass is necessary.

Construction of a Bridge over the Ghaghra River - There is a requirement for the construction of a bridge of approximately 2.3 kilometres from Hetmapur to Pahruwa Ghat at Suratganj across the Ghaghara River. The construction of this bridge will substantially reduce the distance between Bahraich district and Sitapur district, thereby accelerating the pace of development in this region.

Rehabilitation of Villagers Residing within the Ghaghra Embankment - The villages located inside the embankment of the Ghaghara River face severe flooding every year. During floods, villagers, along with their families and livestock, are compelled to take shelter on the embankment. In situations of storms, heavy rainfall and floods, there have been several instances of loss of life and property. Therefore, in order to address the hardships faced by the villagers, it is essential to rehabilitate and resettle them outside the embankment.

[*]SHRI BIRENDRA KUMAR CHOUDHARY (JHANJHARPUR): I offer my wholehearted appreciation of the Budget presented by the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley. This is a balanced Budget for all sections and all regions of the country. India is an agrarian country, and keeping in view the distress faced by farmers, the Hon. Finance Minister has accorded special attention to agriculture. Under the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister, several programmes have been formulated to ensure that the benefits of structural reforms and higher economic growth reach farmers, the poor and all sections of society, and to promote the development of the less developed regions of the country, so that people at the last mile of society may benefit.

I would like to express my profound gratitude to the Hon. Finance Minister for setting the target of doubling farmers' income by 2022. The Hon. Finance Minister has stated that the Minimum Support Price for most of the declared rabi crops has been fixed at one and a half times the cost of production. To assist farmers, the Government has increased agricultural credit from Rs. 8.5 lakh crore in 2014-15 to Rs. 10 lakh crore in 2017-18, which will greatly facilitate agricultural operations. For safeguarding the interests of

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

86 per cent small and marginal farmers, provision has been made to develop 22,000 rural haats as Gramin Agricultural Markets.

A record allocation of approximately Rs. 14.5 lakh crore has been made for villages and the agricultural sector. The construction of 51 lakh new houses, more than three lakh kilometres of roads, nearly two crore toilets, and electricity connections to nearly two crore households is directly benefiting Dalits, the oppressed, the distressed and the deprived.

In my region, farmers are engaged not only in agriculture but also in fisheries, livestock rearing, poultry farming, makhana cultivation and beekeeping. Provision of loans for all these activities through the Kisan Credit Card is a very effective step.

Through the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, villages and habitations across the country are being connected, thereby opening new avenues for development.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, nearly three crore people have already been provided with LPG connections, and a target has been set to extend this benefit to five crore women. As a result, mothers and sisters have been relieved of several ailments caused by household smoke, and their living conditions have improved significantly. This scheme has also benefited Dalits,

Adivasis, backward and extremely backward sections of society to a large extent.

In the field of healthcare, the Hon. Minister has taken a commendable step by providing for the establishment of nearly one and a half lakh Health and Wellness Centres in major panchayats across the country. This will make healthcare services easily accessible to people living in villages.

The establishment of 24 new medical colleges across the country will not only facilitate better medical treatment for the people but will also make medical education more accessible to the youth. Provision has been made to ensure at least one medical college for every three parliamentary constituencies. In conclusion, while supporting this Budget, I extend my sincere thanks to the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister.

[*]**SHRI HARI MANJHI (GAYA):** I congratulate the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, on this Budget. This Budget strengthens the foundation of New India. It gives comprehensive attention to the entire spectrum, from agriculture to infrastructure. While the Budget contains health schemes that address the concerns of the poor and the middle class, it also includes initiatives that enhance the wealth of small entrepreneurs.

From food processing to fibre optics, from roads to shipping, from youth to senior citizens, from rural India to Ayushman Bharat, and from Digital India to Start-up India, this Budget reinforces the hopes and aspirations of the 125 crore people of the country. It is a Budget that accelerates national development.

This Budget is farmer-friendly, common man-friendly, business environment-friendly, and also development-friendly. Along with a focus on ease of doing business, it also emphasises ease of living. Greater savings for the middle class, new-generation infrastructure for 21st-century India, and improved health assurance are all concrete steps towards enhancing ease of living.

The farmers of our country have made a historic contribution to national development by achieving record production of foodgrains and fruits and vegetables. To further strengthen the

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

position of farmers and increase their income, several measures have been proposed in this Budget. A record allocation of approximately Rs. 14.5 lakh crore has been made for villages and the agriculture sector.

The construction of 51 lakh new houses, more than three lakh kilometres of roads, nearly two crore toilets, and electricity connections to around one crore seventy-five lakh households will directly benefit Dalits, the distressed, the oppressed and the deprived. These initiatives will also generate new employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas. I appreciate the announcement to ensure that farmers receive one and a half times the cost of production for their crops. In order to ensure that farmers receive the full benefit of this decision, the Union Government will, in consultation with the States, develop a robust and effective mechanism.

Operation Greens will prove to be an effective measure for farmers engaged in the production of vegetables and fruits. We have seen how, in the dairy sector, Amul ensured remunerative prices for milk producers. We are familiar with the cluster-based approach for industrial development in our country. Now, keeping in view the agricultural produce specific to different districts, work will be undertaken through an agriculture cluster approach. I welcome the plan to create a distinct identity for agricultural products produced

in various districts and to develop arrangements for storage, processing and marketing of those specific agricultural products. In our country, cooperative societies enjoy income tax exemption. However, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), which function in a similar manner, do not receive this benefit. Therefore, the decision to extend income tax exemption to these Farmer Producer Organisations, on par with cooperative societies, is commendable as it will support farmers. The plan to link women Self-Help Groups with these Farmer Producer Organisations for organic, aromatic and herbal farming will also prove to be a significant step towards enhancing farmers' income. Similarly, the Gobar-Dhan Scheme will not only help in keeping villages clean but will also contribute to increasing the income of farmers and livestock rearers. In our country, farmers, in addition to agriculture, are engaged in several allied activities. Some are involved in fisheries, some in animal husbandry, some in poultry, and others in beekeeping. Farmers have often faced difficulties in obtaining bank loans for such allied activities. The provision of loans for fisheries and animal husbandry through the Kisan Credit Card is, therefore, a very effective and welcome step.

Across more than 700 districts of the country, there are nearly 7,000 blocks. In these blocks, emphasis has been laid on the modernisation, reconstruction and enhancement of connectivity of

approximately 22,000 rural trade centres. In the coming days, these centres will emerge as new hubs of energy for increasing farmers' income, generating employment, and strengthening the agriculture-based rural economy. Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, efforts will now also be made to connect rural haats with higher education institutions and hospitals. This will make life easier for people living in villages.

We have also witnessed the spirit of ease of living being extended through the Ujjwala Scheme. This scheme has not only freed poor women of the country from household smoke but has also become a major instrument of their empowerment. I am pleased that, with the expansion of this scheme, its target has now been increased from five crore to eight crore families. The benefits of this scheme are reaching Dalits, Adivasis and backward sections of society on a large scale.

For the development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, a provision of nearly Rs. 1 lakh crore has been made in this Budget. For a long time, one of the major concerns of the lower middle class and the poor has been the cost of medical treatment. The new scheme presented in the Budget, *Ayushman Bharat*, will free these sections from this major anxiety. Under this scheme, nearly 10 crore poor and lower middle class families of the country will benefit, bringing approximately 45 to 50 crore people within

its ambit. These families will be entitled to free medical treatment of up to Rs. 5 lakh per year in empanelled hospitals. This Government-funded initiative is the largest health assurance scheme in the world to date. The decision to establish nearly one and a half lakh Health and Wellness Centres in major panchayats across the country is commendable. This will make healthcare services more accessible to people living in villages. The establishment of 24 new medical colleges nationwide will not only enhance access to medical treatment but will also make medical education more accessible to the youth. Our endeavour is to ensure that there is at least one medical college for every three parliamentary constituencies in the country.

In this Budget, several decisions have been taken keeping in view the many concerns of senior citizens. Under the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana, senior citizens will now receive a minimum interest of 8 per cent on investments of up to Rs. 15 lakh. Interest income of up to Rs. 50,000 earned on deposits in banks and post offices will be exempt from tax. Income tax relief will also be available on health insurance premiums of up to Rs. 50,000. Similarly, tax relief has been provided on expenditure of up to Rs. 1 lakh incurred on the treatment of critical illnesses.

For a long time in our country, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, that is MSMEs, have been required to pay tax at rates

higher than even large industries. In this Budget, the Government has taken a bold step by reducing the tax rate for all MSMEs by 5 per cent. They will now pay tax at 25 per cent instead of 30 per cent. In order to ensure that MSMEs receive the necessary capital and adequate working capital, arrangements for loans through banks and NBFCs have been further simplified. This will also strengthen the Make in India mission. Due to non-performing assets in large industries, micro, small and medium enterprises have been facing stress. Small entrepreneurs should not be punished for the wrongdoing of others. Therefore, the Government will very soon announce concrete measures to resolve the problem of NPAs and stressed accounts in the MSME sector.

With a view to promoting employment and providing social security to employees, the Government has taken a far-reaching and positive decision. This will facilitate the transition from the informal to the formal sector and generate new employment opportunities. The Government will now contribute 12 per cent to the EPF accounts of new workers for a period of three years. Further, in order to create more employment opportunities for women and to increase their take-home salary, the EPF contribution for new women employees has been reduced from 12 per cent to 8 per cent for a period of three years. However, during this period, the employer’s contribution will continue to remain at 12 per cent.

This is a very significant step towards the empowerment of working women.

To realise the dream of a modern India, to enhance the ease of living for the common people, and to ensure sustainable development, next-generation infrastructure is extremely essential in the country. Accordingly, considerable emphasis has been laid in the Budget on the development of infrastructure related to railways, metro rail, highways, inland waterways, ports, airports, power grids and gas grids, as well as initiatives such as Sagarmala, Bharatmala and Digital India. An allocation of approximately Rs. 6 lakh crore has been made for these purposes, which is about Rs. 1 lakh crore more than the previous year. These initiatives will create immense employment opportunities across the country.

I also express my gratitude to the Hon. Finance Minister for the tax relief provided to the salaried middle class. This Budget lives up to the hopes and aspirations of every Indian. It has ensured remunerative prices for farmers' crops, strengthened the upliftment of the poor through welfare schemes, respected the honesty of tax-paying citizens, supported the hard work of entrepreneurs through a rational tax structure, and paid tribute to the contribution of senior citizens to the nation.

Once again, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Hon. Finance Minister and his team for presenting a Budget that enhances ease of living and strengthens the foundation of New India.

[English]

[*]**SHRI B. N. CHANDRAPPA (CHITRDURGA):** This budget disappointed the people of the country and failed to meet the expectation of them. Hon. Finance Minister raised the health and education cess, levied on all taxable income, to 4 per cent from current 3 per cent, and introduced a social welfare surcharge of 10 per cent to fund social welfare schemes. The budget has reintroduced the tax on long term capital gains of over Rs. 1 lakh made from the sale of shares.

People of the country did not expect such a disappointing budget by the NDA Government as it is full-fledged budget after the implementation of demonetization and the GST in the country. One of the aims of demonetization and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was to increase the formalization of the economy and bring more Indians into the income tax net. It goes without saying that people desired for lower burden of the tax in the budget. So the budget has left the people disappointed.

As far the National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS), announced in the budget, to provide health cover up to Rs. 5 lakh per family for Fifty thousand poor and economically weak families. However, the allocation of Rs. 2000 crore is inadequate to meet the

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

objectives of the scheme. The allocation shows that there is nothing to celebrate as far as the health budget is concerned. There is upgradation of the district and taluk levels hospitals, other there is no use of it. So the Government must pay attention to fill up the vacancies of doctors, nurses, para medical staff and upgrade the district and taluk level hospitals with state of the art equipments and laboratories.

Another point I would like to mention that the present NDA Government experienced a positive trends in terms of crude oil price as it has come down drastically and available about 50 to 60 dollar per barrel. It is a matter of great concern that the NDA Government has failed to meet the expectations of the people by not reducing the petrol and diesel prices.

I want to draw the attention of the Union Government that the fiscal target of 3.2 per cent could not meet for the year 2017-18. The Hon. Finance Minister has revised Fiscal Deficit estimates for 2017-18 to 5.95 lakh crore at 3.5% of GDP and projected as Fiscal Deficit of 3.3% of GDP for the year 2018-19. This will have adverse impact on growth.

In the last four years the NDA Government unable to find solutions for the problems such as un remunerative farm incomes,

unemployment, lack of social security nets. The Government has imposed variety of taxes to squeeze on the middle-class taxpayer.

The economic survey had clearly pointed out that real agricultural income and real agricultural wages were constant for four years. In such a situation the Hon. Finance Minister announced that he is fulfilling a promise made by his party in the election manifesto for the 2014 Lok Sabha elections- the promise of a Minimum Support Price (MSP) that is 50% higher than farmers' cost of production.

I would like to state that the people of Karnataka voted for the congress party is always following the tenets of Equality and Social Justice. Several developmental and welfare measures are initiated with the objective of building a vibrant and a model State. The Congress Government has instilled confidence amongst all sections of society including the weaker sections, minorities, women and the aged. Karnataka Government has focused on People- cantered development model and the person in the tail-end of the State should get food, health, education shelter and employment.

This Government has push crores of people into hardship as demonetization created chaos in the country like poor people including farmers, small traders, daily wagers, unorganized sector workers.

I would like to urge the Government to take stringent actions and to put an end to the repeated incidents of killings of poor and dalits in the name of cow vigilance and religious intolerance in the county. It is very unfortunate that the Government has failed to control its own cadres and Hindutva brigade who are disturbing the peace and harmony in our country.

[Translation]

***SHRI RAHUL KASWAN (CHURU):** The Budget has paid attention to all sectors, from agriculture to infrastructure. It is favourable to all, and will benefit farmers, Dalits and the poorer sections of society, with a clear focus on the needs of rural India. The Government is concentrating on improving the standard of living of the poor and the middle class and on making business easier. In the Budget for 2018-19, the Hon. Finance Minister has announced measures aimed at improving the condition of farmers, the poor and women, rather than making populist declarations. One of the most significant features of the Budget is the announcement of the world's largest health insurance scheme, providing health cover of Rs. 5 lakh to 10 crore families, which will give major relief to the common man. The target for agricultural credit has been increased to Rs. 11 lakh crore. An allocation of Rs. 2,600 crore has been announced for agricultural irrigation schemes. It has been declared that the Minimum Support Price for the forthcoming kharif crops will be fixed at 50 per cent above the cost of production, and the Government has reiterated its commitment to doubling farmers' income by 2022. The Hon. Finance Minister has also announced an allocation of Rs. 2,000 crore for the development of infrastructure

* Speech was laid on the Table.

for 22,000 rural markets, the extension of the Kisan Credit Card facility, and financial support for fisheries, animal husbandry and allied activities. The Swaminathan Committee made an important recommendation that farmers should be provided a Minimum Support Price at one and a half times the cost of production, and by making such an announcement in this Budget, a historic decision has been taken. The Budget has focused on the needs of rural India. Significant progress has been made in road construction. In the railway sector, the greatest emphasis has been placed on rail safety. In my parliamentary constituency, rural residents continue to face serious difficulties due to the absence of manned and unmanned level crossings and Road Under Bridges (RUBs). Because there are no level crossings over stretches of up to 30 kilometres of railway line, traditional rural pathways have been blocked for decades, compelling farmers to cross railway lines unauthorisedly. Road Under Bridges should be constructed at these locations. Despite the many steps taken for farmers, the biggest challenge before the Government is how to reduce the stress prevailing in the agricultural sector. Minimum Support Price is not applicable to many crops, and it should be extended to them as well, with a proper mechanism developed to ensure that farmers are not subjected to injustice. In my parliamentary constituency, during the recent procurement of groundnut, a limit of 25 quintals was fixed, which

resulted in heavy losses for farmers. The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana is a very good scheme, but due to improper implementation, farmers are not receiving its full benefits, and insurance companies are acting arbitrarily.

[English]

***SHRIMATI POONAMBEN MAADAM (JAMNAGAR):** I support for the Union Budget 2018-19. Before discussing this, it is important to focus on the macroeconomic strategy underlying the Budget 2018-19. It is my endeavour to constructively engage with the discussion and contribute to the development agenda of our Government. Last year India has emerged as a 'bright spot' in the economic forces. And this year GDP growth was steady at 6.3% in the second quarter of 2017-18; it has signalled turnaround of the economy and growth in the second half is likely to remain at 7.2% to 7.5%.

I would like to bring to the notice of the Government the policy paradigms of the present Government specifically with reference to the Union Budget, 2018-19 which will help India's growth story reach new heights in about 3 years. Out of the many crucial sectors; this year the Budget has focused on areas that were much neglected and needed to be focused on. Out of all those, I would like to talk about a few of them due to paucity of time.

The first pillar I would like to touch upon is the Health and Social Sector. I think for the first time ever in this country, a transformation in the health sector has been initiated. The

* Speech was laid on the Table.

Government has committed the largest government funded health care programme titled 'National Health Protection Scheme' to cover over 10 crore economically poor and vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) providing coverage of up to 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.

Alongside, Rs. 1200 crore has been allocated for the National Health Policy, 2017, with which 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres will bring health care system closer to the homes of people. The Government has also decided to allocate additional Rs. 600 crore to provide nutritional support to all TB patients at the rate of Rs. 500 per month for the duration of their treatment. Further, the Government will be setting up 24 new Government Medical Colleges and Hospitals by upgrading existing district hospitals in the country.

For decades, there have been a lot of criticism about the Indian healthcare but the previous Government did nothing to bring about reforms in the sector. Also, it is a fact that the sector is in such a dilapidated condition because of the negligence and indifference of the previous Government. This is the first time ever reforms have been commenced in the sector and I sincerely thank our Hon. FM, Shri Jaitley ji and our Hon. PM, Shri Narendra Bhai Modi for

ushering in the biggest healthcare reforms through this Budget and making this sector see the light of the day.

The present Government has not invested in suit and boot but has chosen to give a major focus on furthering the education and social sector. The 'babus' who actually belong to the culture of suit and boot should read this in the Budget. The Government has considered 'Revitalizing of Infrastructure and Systems in Education' by 2022 with a total investment of Rs. 1 lakh crore in next four years. Which Government in the past has ever thought of educational reforms? Education sector is the backbone of our country, the future of the youth depends on this sector and the previous sectors have only contributed to degrading it. And it is a huge task to give this sector a fresh lease of life and I am thankful that this Government has taken up this challenge. Since education should reach everyone especially, the marginal sector of the society, the Government intends that by 2022, every block with more than 50 per cent schedule tribe population and at least 20,000 tribal people will have 'Ekalavya' schools, which will be at par with Navodaya Vidyalayas. Allocation of Rs. 56,619 crore for scheduled caste welfare and Rs. 39,135 crore for scheduled tribe welfare.

Improving quality of education is of utmost importance and the Centre intends to work with states to provide the same. Also

increasing the digital intensity in education and move gradually from blackboard to digital board is the journey ahead.

Senior Citizens have been prioritised in the Budget and it is such a kind move by the Government. They have contributed to our economy at some point and now they need our support, the Government's support. Realising this, exemption of interest income on deposits with banks and post offices are proposed to be increased from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000. TDS shall not be required to be deducted under section 194A.

Benefit will also be available for interest from all fixed deposit schemes and recurring deposit schemes. Hike in deduction limit for health insurance premium and/or medical expenditure from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 50,000 under section 80D.

And as a **Woman** I feel happy that the Government has always kept the interest of women a top priority. Here I take the liberty to highlight this priority across sectors. The Government has proposed to increase the target of providing free LPG connections to 8 crore economically poor women. Since, our Hon. PM comes from a humble background, he understands the pain of the poor mothers and daughters and he has been relentlessly trying to improve their conditions through these actions to the best of his capacity. Also for working women their EPF contributions will be

brought down from 12 per cent to 8 per cent. The Government is actually trying to give more money into the hands of the women so that their savings are higher.

On the loans to Self Help Groups of women, the Finance Minister has increased to about Rupees 42,500 crore in 2016-17, growing 37% over previous year and expressed confidence that loans to SHGs will increase to Rs. 75,000 crore by March, 2019.

Further, 6 crore toilets have been constructed under Swachh Bharat Mission and the aim is to build 2 crore more toilets- this will also benefit a large number of women living in rural India and on the fringes.

'Housing for all. ' *[Translation]* This is a Budget for those whose only dream is to have a small home of their own and to ensure that a hearth burns there twice a day, a dream that could not be realised even after seventy years of Independence, but which our Hon. Prime Minister has demonstrated within three years. He has shown every poor person a dream and, at the same time, given them the right to own a home. To fulfil the target of Housing for All by 2022, more than one crore houses will be built by 2019. Whenever I speak of Housing for All, I am reminded of the “Ghar Nu Ghar” scheme. This dates back to the time of the 2012 Gujarat elections, when the Opposition announced the provision of affordable houses

for economically weaker women in Gujarat. A large number of application forms were filled and deposits were collected, but to this day, neither have those deposits been returned nor has any poor woman received a house in Gujarat. The people were sufficiently aware that the Congress did not come to power in Gujarat, and the voters were not misled. They knew that if houses were not provided in Congress-ruled States, there was no reason why they would be provided in Gujarat. Better late than never. If not in seventy years, then at least in the last three years, the poor, the farmer and the worker have finally found their place in the pages of the Budget.

[English]

Many a times we hear people calling the BJP supporting corporate interests. But this is the first time ever that any Finance Minister has decided to keep MSP for unannounced kharif crops atleast one and half times of their production cost after declaring the same for the majority of rabi crops. And just to remind the House, the volume of institutional credit for agriculture sector from year-to-year increased from Rs. 8. 5 lakh crore in 2014-15 to Rs. 10 lakh crore in 2017-18 and is proposed to rise to a further Rs. 11 lakh crore for the year 2018-19. Fisheries and Aqua culture Infrastructure Development Fund has been prioritised with Rs. 10,000 crore for the two new funds. Never before the agriculture

sector and rural economy was brought under the spotlight as much it has been done under the leadership of our Hon. PM.

On the lines of "Operation Flood" a new Scheme "Operation Greens" was announced with an outlay of Rs. 500 Crore to address the challenge of price volatility of perishable commodities like tomato, onion and potato with the satisfaction of both the farmers and consumers. Every year we have been debating the issue of price rise in Parliament since ages but no other Government ever considered addressing this issue. Development and upgradation of existing 22,000 rural haats into Gramin Agricultural Markets (GraMs) has been announced to take care of the interests of more than 86 % small and marginal farmers. These GraMs, electronically linked to e-NAM network and rest will be connected by this March. And in a remarkable move, the allocation of Ministry of Food Processing has been doubled from Rs. 715 crore in 2017-18 to Rs. 1400 crore in 2018-19.

Under Prime Minister Krishi Sinchai Yojana - Har Khet ko Pani, 96 deprived irrigation districts will be taken up with an allocation of Rs. 2600 crore. The Centre will work with the State Governments to facilitate farmers for installing solar water pumps to irrigate their fields. Realising India' agri-exports potential is as high as US $100 billion against current exports of US $30 billion; the Government has decided that export of agri-commodities will

be liberalized. *[Translation]* The agricultural sector, which had lagged behind under the previous Government, has been infused with new light and renewed hope by the BJP Government.

[English] Bhartiya Janta Party is the only party which takes into the consideration the interest of all sections of the society. *[Translation]* Our Hon. Prime Minister, when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, had given the slogan *"Sanu Saath, Sanu Vikas"* (Gujarati). Even today, this belief and the foundation of the Bharatiya Janata Party remain the same: *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*. The results of this approach are gradually becoming visible across every State of India, from Gujarat to Himachal Pradesh.

[English]

Developing infrastructure has been a non-negotiable for this Government. Considering this, an increase of budgetary allocation in infrastructure was Rs. 5.97 lakh crore in 2018-19 as against estimated expenditure of Rs. 4.94 lakh crore in 17-18. This will emphasize infrastructure growth of the economy which in turn will increase growth of GDP and connect the nation with a network of roads, airports, railways, ports and inland waterways. The Government has made an all-time high allocation to rail and road sectors and is committed to further enhance public investment. The Prime Minister personally reviews the targets and achievements in

infrastructure sectors in a regular basis. Using online monitoring system of PRAGATI alone, projects worth 9.46 lakh crore have been facilitated and fast tracked.

Around 6 lakh crore investment has been made in infrastructure which is about 45% increase than last year allocation. Under the Bharatmala Pariyojana, About 35,000 kms road construction in Phase-I at an estimated cost of Rs. 5.35 crore has been approved. Alongside, road, transport and highways major focus is given to develop other infrastructural platforms like Railways and Air Transport.

For Railways capex has been pegged at Rs. 1.48 lakh crore, up from Rs. 1.31 lakh crore last year. Redevelopment of 600 major railway stations has been taken up and a major focus will on safety, eliminating unmanned railway crossings, maintenance of railway tracks, and increase in use of technology and of safety devices has been prioritised. Work on Eastern and Western dedicated Freight Corridors is in full swing. Over 3600 kms of track renewal is targeted during the current fiscal.

The Budget proposes to expand the airport capacity more than five times to handle a billion trips a year under a new initiative-NABH Nirman and Rs. 60 cr has been announced to kickstart initiative UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik) scheme will connect

56 unserved airports and 31 unserved helipad. The Government is striving hard to make this sector accessible to all sections of the society and for people who have dreamt of flying in an aircraft at some point in their life. This Government wants to fulfil the dreams and aspirations of the people and supporting the cause of people who have dared to dream, who have dared to do something differently, may it just be a small business.

The Budget also proposed to seek to provide relief to salaried tax payers by allowing a Standard Deduction of Rs. 40,000 in place of the present exemption allowed for transport allowance and reimbursement of miscellaneous medical expenses. However, transport allowance at enhanced rate is proposed to be continued for differently abled persons. Further, it is also proposed to continue medical reimbursement benefits in case of hospitalization etc. for all employees even further in reducing their tax liabilities. It will also significantly benefit pensioners, who normally do not enjoy any allowance for transport and medical expenses. 2.5 crore salaried employees and pensioners would benefit from this proposal and the revenue cost would be approximately Rs. 8,000 crore.

Long term capital gains tax of 10 per cent on investments over Rs.1 lakh. Short term capital tax remains at 15%. This has been done focusing on honest tax payers and transparency in payment of taxes. This would actually tax the corporate and the HNIs and the

Hon. FM has been very categorical in declaring that the money generated through this will be invested for 'Swacch Bharat Mission. ‘I think this is a very welcome move where we are taxing the HNIs to generate revenue and invest it in building toilets for rural Indians and for people living on the fringes. And as the opposition says that the BJP led Government obliges corporate interest; I actually want to ask the opposition leaders how is taxing them more can oblige corporate interests? This money in turn will be invested to build a cleaner India; a dream of the Father of our Nation Mahatma Gandhi ji. The opposition claims that they are followers of Gandhi ji but they have only used him for marketing gimmicks. If someone is invested in building the India of our dreams, it is only this present Government who is fighting tooth and nail to deliver that India to our future generations.

Further, in fulfilment of the promise to reduce the corporate tax rate in a phased manner the Hon. FM has proposed to extend the reduced rate of 25 percent currently available for companies with turnover of less than 50 crore (in Financial year 2015-16), also to companies reporting turnover up to Rs. 250 crore in Financial Year 2016-17. This would benefit the entire class of micro, small and medium enterprises, which account for almost 99 percent of companies filing tax returns, he said. The estimated revenue forgone during Financial Year 2018-19 will be Rs. 7,000 crore.

This lower corporate income tax rate would leave such companies with the higher investible surplus, which would create more jobs.

A sum of Rs. 3794 crore has been provided for giving credit support, capital and interest subsidy and for innovations to Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises (MSMEs). This will boost employment and economic growth. MUDRA Yojana launched in April, 2015 has led to sanction of Rs. 4.6 lakh crore in credit from 10. 38 crore MUDRA loans. 76% of loan accounts are of women and more than 50% belong to SCs, STs and OBCs. It is proposed to set a target of Rs. 3 lakh core for lending under MUDRA for 2018-19 as against Rs. 6,000 Crore in 2016. This will give a platform to MSMEs to become more competitive against larger companies and will also enable these enterprises to generate employment. *[Translation]* I would also like to state that, prior to this, there was hardly any concern for these sections. The policies of the previous Government largely benefited big industrialists, while little or no attention was paid to small and medium traders. As a result, small industries in our country have remained weak and are not globally competitive even today. The steps that the Bharatiya Janata Party Government is taking now, had they been taken years ago, would have strengthened even the smallest traders by today.

[English]

Further, the Government recognizes that the young generation or MSMEs or education or healthcare systems cannot go any far without digital infrastructure. To address this NITI Aayog wie initiate a national programme to direct efforts in artificial intelligence.

The Budget doubled the allocation on Digital India programme to Rs 3073 crore in 2018-19. To further Broadband access in villages, the Government has proposed to set up five lakh Wi-Fi hotspots to provide net connectivity to five crore rural citizens. Also, another Rs, 10000 crore has been allocated for creation and augmentation of Telecom infrastructure.

The Government is on a constant endeavour to promote development agenda of the nation and also facilitate ease of doing business in the country. In a major push, to improve ease of doing business, India jumped up 30 notches into the top 100 rankings on the World Bank's 'ease of doing business' index. Thanks to major improvements the government for the first time brought in such reformist initiatives. Never before was any

Government concerned as much about national development and bring international business to the country.

Since, I am discussing the ease of doing business agenda, it is important to mention in this context that just 3 years back, the Road, transport and highways sector was a sick sector. There were hardly any takers for projects. Thanks to the policy paralysis and corruption of the previous Government no players intended to venture in infrastructure projects. However, under the leadership of our Prime Minister, the sector is flourishing like never before.

[Translation]

Mere slogans of "Garibi Hatao" do not eliminate poverty; poverty is alleviated through concrete schemes. It is reduced through the Jan Dhan Yojana, through the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, through the Mudra Yojana, and through the Gram Sadak Yojana. These are the very initiatives that the country needed and which have been provided by our Hon. Prime Minister. Development is shaped by intent and policy, and it is only the intent and policies of the Bharatiya Janata Party that are rooted in the welfare of villages, the poor and farmers.

[English]

As I conclude, I would like to congratulate our Hontile Finance Minister for this budget. However, I would like to seek some clarifications from the Minister with regard to the following. My first clarification would be nearly 84 million people - about 25% of

India's rural workforce - need to move out of agriculture for it to be economically viable. The sector has high "disguised unemployment", which means that there are too many people trying to earn a living from agriculture. Although they seem employed, their employment is not productive, since production would not suffer if they stopped working. How does the government plan to address this problem?

On the health front, the government plans to launch a flagship scheme to cover more than 100 million poor and vulnerable families (approximately 500 million individual beneficiaries). The coverage extends up to 500,000 rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. My second question is how the government intends to pay for or implement such an ambitious scheme?

[Translation]

With these words, I conclude my remarks and would like to congratulate the Hon. Finance Minister and the Hon. Prime Minister for taking our country to new heights.

[English]

Thank You.

[Translation]

SHRI RAVINDRA KUMAR RAY: Hon. Speaker, Madam, a sensitive Budget touching the hearts of villages, farmers and the poor has been presented this time. I understand that, after India's Independence, an effort has been made to give a new direction to the Indian economy. Madam Speaker, two days ago, when the Hon. Prime Minister was addressing the House on the President's Address, all our Congress colleagues were in the Well and, along with them, our Communist friends also joined them. At that moment, I was reminded of the year 1942, when the Quit India Movement was launched and the Congress did not realise on whose shoulder the Communists had placed the gun and at whom they were firing. After the country attained Independence, that very history appeared before me once again. Perhaps both were confused in this matter as to whether the Communist brethren were firing from the Congress's shoulder or the Congressmen were firing from the Communists' shoulder.

I would like to say that the manner in which all democratic norms are being violated in this temple of democracy will have to be reminded again in the coming days that these are the very people who wish to destroy democratic traditions. ... *(Interruptions)*

I want to say that the way the work of breaking all the dignity of democracy is being done in this temple of democracy, now in the coming days we will have to be reminded again that these are the same people who want to destroy the democratic dignity. *…(Interruptions)*

Madam, in villages people narrate the Ram Katha, saying that if one lives life like Lord Ram, perhaps one can lead a good life. ... *(Interruptions)* When some people do not live like him, the elders say that one should keep chanting 'Ram Ram' and life will pass on that way. ... *(Interruptions)* For the first time, the Hon. Finance Minister, Shri Jaitley, presented such a Bill, such a Budget, that today the entire House and the whole of India are speaking only of farmers, farmers, farmers, farmers. ... *(Interruptions)* I was adding that in this Budget, more than Rs. 50,000 crore will be spent directly and indirectly on agriculture, that is, approximately 23 to 24 per cent of the total Budget expenditure will be devoted to the agricultural sector. ... *(Interruptions)* Had you ever imagined that agriculture and farmers would receive a price of one and a half times the cost of their produce? ... *(Interruptions)* Opportunities came many times, but why did no one give it earlier? I would like to say today that after this Budget, the manner in which the name of the farmer has come upon the tongues of politicians, in the history to come and in the future ahead, farmers will no longer be

forgotten. ... *(Interruptions)* This foundation has been laid in this Budget by our Shri Jaitley under the leadership of our Prime Minister. ... *(Interruptions)*

Madam, today I cannot imagine it, though I used to hear that in foreign countries no one dies without medicines and that a sick person there does not worry about himself. ... *(Interruptions)* When the Hon. Prime Minister was speaking, truly speaking, I was deeply moved from my heart. I have seen in villages that elderly people tell their sons, 'Son, instead of spending Rs. 2 lakh on my treatment, it is better that you keep that money.' ... *(Interruptions)* 'Whether I die today, after fifteen days or after five months,' ... *(Interruptions)* 'keep these Rs. 2 lakh, they will be useful for your daughter's marriage.' ... *(Interruptions)* I have witnessed this scene in villages. ... *(Interruptions)* I have heard some elders saying, 'Son, why should ghee be dried up in cow-dung cakes now?' ... *(Interruptions)* 'Let me die, save the money for your children, it will be of use to you.' ... *(Interruptions)* The manner in which such sensitivities have been soothed by Hon. Modi ji and Hon. Jaitley ji is extraordinary. ... *(Interruptions)* Our judiciary says that even if a hundred guilty persons are acquitted, so be it, but one innocent person should not be punished. ... *(Interruptions)* If even one sick person, even one poor person, succeeds in saving his life because of our Budget, then I understand that we will be successful in fulfilling the

responsibility of the Government as a welfare State. ... *(Interruptions)* We are succeeding in fulfilling the oath that we have taken to the sacred Constitution. Village India, farmers' India, poor India, unemployed India, all these existed only in your slogans. Whatever Governments of our Opposition parties came to power, why did they not frame schemes for them? Why did you not bring the Mudra scheme?

Madam, recently I organised a conference here of the migrant Jharkhandi community. Unemployed boys from villages, illiterate boys as well as educated boys come to Delhi, Bombay, Surat, Ahmedabad and Kolkata to work as labourers. They have no place to live or even to shelter their heads. They do not even have Rs. 10 with them to have an evening meal and then go for work. Today, space has been created for such people under the Mudra scheme, and I would like to make a request in this regard to my Hon. Finance Minister. On the basis of the Aadhaar Card, the entire India is becoming united. On the basis of our permanent address of residence in the village and our Aadhaar Card, even a displaced person coming from a village and a poor person coming from a village is getting a loan under the Mudra scheme.

Madam Speaker, I have seen that a young man went to Mumbai to work as a waiter and today he has become such a big

caterer that he is providing employment to 500 people. I would like to say only this much, that today a perspective has changed.

Madam Speaker, I would like to give a few suggestions. I will give all the suggestions within one minute. Firstly, the irrigation scheme in the form of the 'Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana' has had a great impact, but I would request that a concrete and visible form of it should be seen across the country.

Madam Speaker, I would like to make one more request, that in the life insurance and the 'Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana', some more momentum should be brought. For this, by talking to the State Governments, we should consider involving the Panchayat Sevaks, the Panchayat Samitis and the representatives of the Panchayats in this scheme.

Madam, I would like to make one request. In our State of Jharkhand, there is a need for a Railway Zonal Office, because the State is administered under as many as four Railway Divisions. I would request that a Railway Zonal Office be opened in Jharkhand. I would also like to urge that an EMU train be run between Giridih and Ranchi in my area, which would benefit approximately eight districts in between.

Thank you.

[*]**SHRIMATI KAMLA PAATLE (JANJGIR-CHAMPA):** The Budget for the year 2018–19, presented by the Hon. Finance Minister, has sought to bring farmers, villages, the poor and other weaker sections of society into the mainstream of development, without considering political gains or losses. Along with the world's largest health security scheme, this Budget strengthens the hopes of people of every section and lays a strong foundation for nation-building.

The State of Chhattisgarh is severely affected by Naxalism. It is requested that provisions be made in the Budget for placing the State under Category 'A', on the lines of the North-Eastern States, under the Police Modernisation Scheme; for a special package for housing for police personnel; for the Union Government to bear 100 per cent of the deployment expenditure of the Central Forces engaged in anti-Naxal operations; for opening branches of nationalised banks in eight severely Naxal-affected districts; for an integrated cargo terminal at Raipur; for permitting inland transport subsidy for the development of agriculture-based industries; and for implementing the Sabla Scheme of the Department of Women and Child Development and the Integrated National Horticulture Mission in all the 27 districts of the State.

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[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

My Parliamentary Constituency of Janjgir-Champa, where about 80 per cent of the area is irrigated agricultural land, requires provisions under the BGRF Scheme, the National Horticulture Mission, cold storage facilities, establishment of food processing industries, and revival and restructuring of the Akaltara CCI, which has been closed. Further, as proposed in the Budget, quality medical education is to be ensured by upgrading district hospitals and establishing at least one medical college for every three Parliamentary Constituencies. I demand that such a medical college be established in my Parliamentary Constituency of Janjgir-Champa.

The Gondwana Express, which runs from Raigarh in Chhattisgarh to Nizamuddin, does not have a halt between Raigarh and Bilaspur at Sakti and Janjgir-Naila, the latter being a district headquarters as well. This is the only train connecting the region with the National Capital, Delhi. Therefore, it is requested that this train be operated as a superfast train between Raigarh and Bilaspur, with up and down halts at Sakti and Janjgir-Naila. Stoppage of South-Bihar Express Up/Down has not been done at Janjgir-Naila railway station even after it was found suitable from commercial point of view. The stoppage of this train should be given at Janjgir-Naila soon.

Although the up and down halts of the South Bihar Express at Janjgir-Naila Railway Station have been found commercially viable, the halt has not yet been provided. It is requested that a halt for this train at Janjgir-Naila be granted at the earliest.

At Akaltara, Janjgir-Naila, Champa, Baradwar and Sakti stations, there is only one foot overbridge each, and that too is quite old. At these stations, three railway lines are operational and a fourth line is under construction. Most passenger trains halt at Platform Nos. 02, 03 or 04. Therefore, it is requested that an additional foot overbridge be constructed at these stations. Further, the platform sheds are negligible in comparison to the length of the coaches. I demand that provisions be made in the Budget for the expansion of platform sheds.

[*]**SHRIMATI RAMA DEVI (SHEOHAR):** As we all know, India is an agriculture-based country where about 67 per cent of the people sustain their families through agriculture and allied activities. In order to address the problems being faced by farmers in India, under the leadership of Hon. Shri Narendra Modi ji, the Hon. Finance Minister has presented a farmer-friendly and rural development-oriented Budget for 2018–19, aimed at strengthening agricultural infrastructure. For this, I express my gratitude to the Government. The Budget presented is one that promotes economic activity, employment and enhancement of farmers' income, which is what the people of the country were expecting. The Budget of Rs. 24,42,213 crore presented by the Hon. Finance Minister will strengthen the path of fundamental transformation and development of the country and, on the other hand, will provide solutions to the current problems of the nation and show the way towards development and a quality life. In brief, the Budget presented by the Hon. Finance Minister is one that will take India in a new direction and, in Hindi terms, it can be described as a pleasant and easily comprehensible Budget.

A large section of people in our country is succumbing due to expensive medical treatment, and in the course of treatment people

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

are forced to sell their houses and land. In this Budget, the Union Government has replaced the treatment facility of Rs. 10,000 available under the National Health Insurance Scheme by announcing the National Health Protection Scheme, namely Ayushman Bharat, under which 50 crore poor and vulnerable persons will receive medical treatment up to Rs. 5 lakh in secondary and tertiary hospitals at Government expense. More than 10 crore poor and vulnerable families in the country will benefit from this scheme. Earlier, members of poor and vulnerable families had to spend lakhs of rupees on their medical treatment. In order to extend assistance to patients suffering from communicable diseases like tuberculosis, a provision has been made in the Budget for financial assistance of Rs. 500 per month, and an allocation of Rs. 600 crore has been made for nutritious food, so that poor persons may be able to take nutritious diet during treatment and be protected from this dreadful disease. Twenty years ago, a patient suffering from tuberculosis could hardly escape death. There are no medical colleges in backward and remote areas of the country. In this Budget, provision has been made to establish at least one medical college for every three Parliamentary Constituencies. In my Parliamentary Constituency of Sheohar, there is not a single medical college in the three districts of Sheohar, Sitamarhi and West Champaran, due to which people have to come to Patna or

Delhi for treatment. I would like to request the Hon. Minister for Health to announce the establishment of a medical college in my Sheohar Parliamentary Constituency.

In this country, unprecedented progress has been made in the field of education; however, there are still several areas where literacy has increased at a slower pace compared to other regions due to the lack of educational institutions. In my Parliamentary Constituency, female literacy is lower than in other areas, to which special attention should be paid by the Government. In this Budget, the Union Government has made a provision of Rs. 1 lakh crore and has announced training for 13 lakh teachers. The Budget speaks of strengthening the quality of education, research and infrastructure. In areas where more than 50 per cent of the population belongs to the Scheduled Tribes, Eklavya Schools along with hostels for tribal children will be opened, and fundamental steps will be taken to establish a conducive educational environment for them. Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, interest among village children in attending school has increased, which has helped in raising literacy levels in rural areas. The proposal to extend this Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan from pre-nursery up to Class XII is being appreciated on all sides.

I express my gratitude to Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Shri Arun Jaitley ji, because this Budget has proved to be highly beneficial in enhancing women's empowerment, while also giving due regard to the dignity of women in rural areas. So far, 1 crore 88 lakh toilets have been constructed across the country, and an announcement has been made to construct 2 crore more toilets. This has greatly benefited the lifestyle of women, for which women across the country are expressing their gratitude to the Hon. Prime Minister. Through the Ujjwala Scheme, this Government has provided free LPG connections to 8 crore women, thereby freeing them from smoke. Keeping women's health in view, the Government has proposed a new programme in the Budget called the Gobar Dhan Scheme for solid waste management. This Budget will have a positive impact on women, on girls' education and on the overall health of women. This Budget is one that promotes the development of farmers, improves their lives, addresses their problems and enhances their income. An announcement has been made to provide farmers a price that is 50 per cent higher than the cost of cultivation of their crops. Under this, while fully covering the cost of cultivation, an additional 50 per cent value is being provided, along with easier mechanisms for farmers to sell their produce. The Minimum Support Price for farmers has been increased to one and a half times, as a result of which farmers will

now be able to earn higher incomes. The Union Government has made a provision of Rs. 2,000 crore for agricultural haats and has planned to convert 22,000 haats into agricultural markets, which will help farmers obtain remunerative prices for their produce. Agricultural growth in the country is around 2 per cent, and for promoting agricultural development, agricultural credit has been increased by 10 per cent. Owing to a sound agricultural policy, the country is witnessing record production of 275 million tonnes of foodgrains and 300 million tonnes of fruits and vegetables. The Government has allocated Rs. 500 crore for Operation Greens. Even today, foodgrains, vegetables and fruits worth several thousand crore rupees are getting wasted in the country. In order to ensure proper utilisation of vegetables and fruits, Rs. 1,400 crore has been provided for the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, and a proposal has been made to set up 42 food parks across the country. The Government aims to achieve agricultural exports of 100 billion dollars, which will help in increasing employment. A proposal has been made to increase the crop loan limit from Rs. 10 lakh crore to Rs. 11 lakh crore. The Government has indicated that schemes and provisions will be implemented effectively so that farmers may receive the full benefits of all schemes.

The Hon. Finance Minister has made several provisions in the Budget for farmers, women, tribal people and the poorer sections of society. A target has been set to provide houses to all poor persons by 2020. The launch of the Pradhan Mantri Saubhagya Scheme has been announced, under which it has been proposed to provide electricity to four crore families at a cost of Rs. 16,000 crore. An allocation of Rs. 3 lakh crore has been made for the Mudra Scheme for self-employment and employment generation. Through the Budget, the Government has also assured that 70 lakh jobs will be provided to the youth. Continuous efforts will be made by the Government to link the youth with employment.

Railways are playing an unprecedented role in the development and transport sector of the country. Railways are doing commendable work in reducing backwardness and ensuring balanced development of the nation. It is also the Government's endeavour to lay railway lines in backward regions. I would like to request the Hon. Finance Minister and the Hon. Minister for Railways that the people of my Parliamentary Constituency of Sheohar are not receiving any benefit of railway facilities and the area remains outside the railway network. There is not a single railway line in Sheohar district. The Government should give priority to laying railway lines and providing rail connectivity in Sheohar district. It has been decided to convert all narrow gauge

lines in the country into broad gauge lines. There is a proposal to lay 3,600 kilometres of new railway lines. Double lines will be laid over 18,000 kilometres, and through the Budget the Government has announced that on 4,000 kilometres of track, three or four lines will be laid. This will enable more trains to be operated and will make it easier for passengers to get confirmed tickets. The Government has not increased railway fares. An expenditure of Rs. 1 lakh 48 thousand crore has been announced for railway expansion works.

The Mohni Mandal Railway Halt located in my Parliamentary Constituency should be accorded the status of a railway station, and an immediate announcement in this regard should be made. In public interest, Train Nos. 15228 and 15227 should be operated from Muzaffarpur to Raxaul via Sitamarhi. Of the two trains operating between Raxaul and Sitamarhi, one train should be scheduled in such a manner that it reaches Sitamarhi before 10 a.m. Keeping in view the sentiments of the people, a new railway service should be introduced from Bapudham Motihari to South India and Mumbai. I wholeheartedly support this Budget.

***SHRI NIHAL CHAND (GANGANAGAR):** After the implementation of a uniform tax system in the form of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), this is a Budget for a New India, and for this I congratulate the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Finance Minister. The Budget for the year 2018–19 is, in the true sense, a Budget for a New India and for the upliftment of farmers, labourers, small entrepreneurs, the poor and the Dalit sections. The development of villages, farmers, labourers, small and medium entrepreneurs and backward sections has been the commitment of the Union Government, and from time to time the Government has also proved this by initiating various schemes for their development and ensuring their planned implementation. In the direction of economic reforms, the Government has passed through a challenging period, and its positive results are before the country. Foreign Direct Investment has increased, doing business in India has become easier than before, corruption has been curbed, the new tax system has brought transparency into the taxation system, and by infusing new energy into the banking system, the pace of banking sector development has been accelerated. During the coming year, India's growth rate is expected to be 7.4 per cent. The country is moving firmly on the path towards achieving a high growth rate of more than eight per cent. In the financial year 2018,

* Speech was laid on the Table.

the manufacturing sector is also moving ahead with rapid growth, registering an increase of more than eight per cent. Exports are estimated to grow at the rate of 15 per cent.

- Over the past three years, the country's economy is emerging as the fifth largest economy in the world. The rate of growth in the country is expected to rise from 7.2 per cent to 7.5 per cent.
- Ease of Doing business in India has become easier than ever before, and in this regard India now ranks 42nd in the world.
- Under the Ujjwala Scheme, gas connections have already been provided to four crore poor families, particularly women, across the country. The Government has set a target to provide connections to a further eight crore families under this Scheme.
- For illuminating the homes of about four crore poor families in the country, a provision of approximately Rs. 16,000 crore has been made by the Government for providing free electricity connections..
- During 2016-17, agricultural production recorded a historic output of 275 million tonnes of foodgrains and nearly 300 million tonnes of fruits and vegetables, which is the highest ever.

- The Government has decided that NITI Aayog, in coordination with all State Governments, will work together on the Minimum Support Price, and the difference between farmers and traders will be compensated by the Government. A decision has been taken to fix the Minimum Support Price of all crops at one and a half times the cost of production, which is a historic decision in favour of farmers.
- Forty-two mega food parks will be set up. For institutional credit in the agricultural sector, the provision has been increased from Rs. 10 lakh crore to Rs. 11 lakh crore in 2018–19.
- Tax relief has been provided to companies associated with agricultural production. Arrangements for Kisan Credit have also been made for animal husbandry and fisheries.
- A separate provision of Rs. 200 crore has been made for organic farming.
- For the dignity of women, six crore toilets have been constructed across the country by the Government, and a provision has been made to construct two crore new toilets in the next financial year.
- Under the National Health Insurance Scheme, more than 10 crore families in the country will be covered under a national

health insurance scheme providing medical cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family, thereby benefiting around 50 crore people.

- 24 new medical colleges will be opened. Provision has been made to establish at least one medical college for every three Lok Sabha Constituencies.
- With a view to improving the quality of teachers, special emphasis will be laid on their training, and an integrated B.Ed. programme will be introduced.
- Under Ayushman Bharat, two schemes have been proposed. A provision of Rs. 1,200 crore has been made for the Health and Wellness Sector Scheme, and 1.05 lakh Health Centres will be established to ensure better healthcare.
- By the year 2022, Eklavya Model Residential Schools will be set up in tribal areas.
- Improvements will be made in education from pre-nursery to Class XII. Schools will be modernised, and digital boards will be provided in place of blackboards.
- A Railway University will be established at Vadodara. Under the IIT framework, 18 Schools of Planning and Infrastructure will be opened.

- For Railways, a provision of Rs. 1 lakh 48 thousand 528 crore has been made this time, as against Rs. 1 lakh 31 thousand crore in the previous year.

Suggestions relating to the Parliamentary Constituency-

- The Union Government should provide compensation to farmers for land located near the barbed wire fencing along the India-Pakistan border, as farmers are unable to cultivate their land there.
- Rajasthan's share of water, amounting to 06 MAF, should be ensured to Rajasthan from Punjab.
- A representative from Rajasthan has not been nominated even once to the Bhakra Beas Management Board. A member from Rajasthan should be nominated to the Board.
- Polluted and chemical-laden water from Punjab is flowing into the GNP Canal, due to which thousands of people are suffering from cancer. This should be stopped, and a medical college should be established at Shri Ganganagar.
- Under the UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) Scheme, 56 unserved airports and 31 unserved heliports will be connected.

In this Budget, allocated with the objective of taking the country forward on the path of development in every sector, due consideration has been given to all sections of society.

Strengthening the country's infrastructure and ensuring the safety of citizens form the foundation of this Budget.

For my Parliamentary Constituency of Shri Ganganagar in Rajasthan, in the Budget for 2018–19, I express my sincere thanks and gratitude to Hon. Prime Minister, Hon. Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley ji and Hon. Minister for Railways Shri Piyush Goyal ji for the allocation of Rs. 116.17 crore for connecting the entire Shri Ganganagar and Hanumangarh region with electrification; Rs. 228.87 crore for the Hanumangarh–Shri Ganganagar–Sarupsar–Suratgarh railway route; and Rs. 288.09 crore for electrification of the 331 km Suratgarh–Lalgarh–Phalodi railway section.

[*]**SHRI SUNIL KUMAR SINGH (CHATRA):** I would like to place my views in the discussion on the General Budget 2018–19. For presenting this historic Budget dedicated to villages, the poor, farmers, women and youth, I extend my heartfelt felicitations to Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji and Hon. Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley ji. This Budget will strengthen the foundation of building a New India..

This Budget is a **New India Budget** aimed at making people's lives happier. 'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve Santu Niramayah' is the guiding principle of the Government. Only a healthy India can become a prosperous India. Under Ayushman Bharat, about 10 crore families will receive health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh. For 10 crore poor and lower middle-class families of the country, the world's largest health assurance scheme so far has been implemented for healthcare at Government expense. This scheme will benefit a population of 50 crore. For the treatment of illnesses of poor families, 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres will be opened. For this purpose, the Ayushman Bharat Scheme has been introduced in the Budget with a provision of Rs. 2,000 crore. An additional allocation of Rs. 600 crore has been made for the treatment of tuberculosis..

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

In this Budget, the Ujjwala Scheme has been expanded by increasing the target from five crore families to eight crore families. The benefits of this Scheme are reaching the Dalits and backward sections across the country on a large scale, including the backward districts of Jharkhand.

To ensure electricity reaches every poor household in the country, the Government has launched the Pradhan Mantri Saubhagya Scheme. Under this Scheme, an allocation of Rs. 16,000 crore has been made, through which four crore poor households across the country, including those in Jharkhand such as Chatra, Latehar and Palamu, will be connected with electricity connections without any charge. Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, two crore toilets will be constructed.

The New India Budget is farmer-friendly ; In the Budget, it has been ensured that farmers receive at least one and a half times the cost of production for their produce. The Government has remained sensitive to this resolve and has made this historic announcement for farmers in the Budget. From the coming Kharif season, a decision has been taken to fix the Minimum Support Price of all notified crops at not less than one and a half times the cost of production. This historic decision will prove to be an important step towards doubling the income of farmers. Further, in the procurement of crops, if market prices fall below the MSP,

arrangements will be made by the Government for procurement at the MSP. The Budget provides that agricultural products will be identified in every district of the country and developed under a cluster model. Henceforth, work will be undertaken in different districts through an agricultural cluster approach, keeping in view the locally relevant agricultural products. A plan has been made to develop storage, processing and marketing arrangements for specific agricultural products by creating a distinct identity for such products in the concerned districts. This will benefit districts that have so far remained backward in the agricultural sector. An 'Operation Greens' scheme will be launched for vegetables such as tomatoes, onions and potatoes. Operation Greens will promote farmer producer organisations, agricultural supply chains, processing facilities and professional management. For this purpose, Rs. 500 crore has been provided in the Budget, which will benefit farmers of Jharkhand. An Agriculture Market Infrastructure Fund will be established with a permanent corpus of Rs. 2,000 crore for the development and upgradation of agricultural market infrastructure in 22,000 rural haats and 585 APMCs. In the Budget, institutional credit for the agricultural sector has been increased, with a provision of Rs. 11 lakh crore. A scheme named 'Gobar-Dhan' will be launched to convert animal dung and solid waste into compost, manure, biogas and bio-CNG.

Bamboo is ‘green gold’. Bamboo grown outside forest areas has been excluded from the definition of trees. In order to promote the bamboo sector in a comprehensive manner, a restructured National Bamboo Mission will be launched with an outlay of Rs. 1,290 crore. This will benefit bamboo-growing regions of Jharkhand State, namely Chatra, Latehar, Palamu, Garhwa, East Singhbhum and others. An allocation of Rs. 10,000 crore has been made in the Budget for the Fisheries Revolution Infrastructure Development Fund and the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund. The Government will create an appropriate mechanism to make credit accessible to tenant farmers without adversely affecting the rights of landowners. The announcement to provide bank loans to sharecropper farmers is extremely significant. As sharecroppers do not own land, banks had so far not been extending credit to them. With this change, the overall scenario of the agricultural sector will certainly undergo a transformation. A groundwater irrigation scheme will be launched in 96 districts that are deprived of irrigation, for which an allocation of Rs. 2,600 crore has been made. This will benefit the unirrigated districts of Jharkhand. In this manner, a record allocation of Rs. 14.34 lakh crore has been made for rural development and agriculture. At the same time, institutional credit for agriculture has been increased to Rs. 11 lakh crore.

I would like to urge the Hon. Finance Minister to take decisive steps to provide special encouragement for pulse cultivation in the districts of Chatra, Latehar, Palamu and Garhwa in the State of Jharkhand. At the same time, lac cultivation has traditionally been carried out on a large scale in this region. However, due to governmental apathy and arbitrary decisions of the Forest Department, its condition has become precarious. I would request that special attention be paid to forest produce, including lac cultivation, in the interest of poor, exploited, distressed, Dalit, tribal and backward farmers. This entire region has immense potential in terms of fruit and vegetable cultivation, dairy production, fisheries, poultry and beekeeping. There is an urgent need to take immediate decisions to revive these sectors.

The New India Budget is meant for new opportunities ; This Budget will not only succeed in making our youth skilled from the perspective of employment, but also makes numerous budgetary provisions for employment generation. Under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, a target has been set to provide loans amounting to Rs. 3 lakh crore. The Mudra Scheme will generate new avenues of self-employment in the country. Under self-employment, the youth of India will be capable of providing employment opportunities not only for themselves but also for others in society. The Government will contribute 12 per cent of the wages of new employees towards

their EPF for the next three years across all sectors. This provision of the Government will lead to a rapid increase in employment generation. Further, the tax rate for small and medium enterprises with a turnover of up to Rs. 250 crore has been reduced to 25 per cent. The Government will announce various measures to address the problem of NPAs and stressed accounts of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. This decision of the Government will also prove effective in providing new employment opportunities to the youth. Through the Budget 2018, the Government has announced the creation of 70 lakh jobs. A Prime Minister's Fellowship Scheme has been announced to provide opportunities to 1,000 B.Tech students to pursue Ph.D. programmes at the IITs and IISc.

With the establishment of 24 new medical colleges across the country, access to medical treatment will improve, and at the same time, youth will find it easier to pursue medical education. An announcement has been made to establish at least one medical college for every three Parliamentary Constituencies.

The Budget lays special emphasis on learning outcomes. Teachers will be trained to improve the quality of education. Under the National Apprenticeship Training Scheme, 50 lakh youth will be provided training along with financial assistance in the form of stipends. For women, the loan corpus for Self-Help Groups has

been increased to Rs. 75,000 crore. Employment opportunities will be generated in sectors such as textiles, leather and footwear.

By the year 2022, Eklavya Schools will be established for Scheduled Tribe students on the lines of Navodaya Schools. Eklavya Model Residential Schools will be set up in areas having more than 50 per cent tribal population and in every block having a tribal population of 20,000. These schools will form part of the Navodaya system, and besides imparting training in sports and skill development, they will also promote local art and culture. I would like to urge the Hon. Finance Minister that almost all blocks of the Chatra Lok Sabha Constituency fulfil these criteria. Therefore, I request that necessary directions be issued to the concerned Departments to include the Chatra Lok Sabha Constituency in the first phase for the establishment of Eklavya Schools.

I would also like to urge the Hon. Finance Minister that the Chatra Lok Sabha Constituency is extremely backward and affected by Left Wing Extremism. There is an acute shortage of educational institutions in this region. I request that the establishment of institutions for secondary and higher education is an important requirement of this remote and difficult area, and I urge the Government to take decisive initiatives in this regard. At the same time, the condition of the health system is extremely pitiable. Along with the construction of new hospitals, keeping in view the

geographical expanse of the area, the establishment of a medical college in the Chatra Lok Sabha Constituency is extremely necessary.

The New India Budget is for new infrastructure; An allocation of approximately Rs. 6 lakh crore has been made for infrastructure development. More than one crore houses will be constructed in rural areas. It is the dream of the Hon. Prime Minister that by the year 2022 every poor person in the country should have a house. Accordingly, under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin), provision has been made in the Budget for the construction of more than 51 lakh houses in rural areas and 37 lakh houses in urban areas. The target to complete the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana has been set for the year 2019. An allocation of Rs. 1,48,528 crore has been made for capital expenditure for Railways, with the objective of converting the entire railway network into broad gauge. To make air travel easier and more accessible, the number of airports will be increased more than fivefold. Five lakh Wi-Fi hotspots will be set up to provide internet facilities to five crore rural citizens.

In the Chatra Lok Sabha Constituency, the present Government has upgraded several roads as National Highways. I would like to urge the Hon. Minister to make the necessary budgetary provisions and commence the work at the earliest.

Further, from the perspective of irrigation, the irrigated area in the Chatra Lok Sabha Constituency is less than 10 per cent of the total land area. Therefore, I demand that decisive steps be taken to complete all the pending irrigation projects in this constituency and that new minor and medium irrigation projects be initiated.

The Barwadih-Ambikapur (Chirimiri) railway line project and the Chatra-Gaya-Tori railway line projects have remained pending for decades despite having been approved in the Budget. I urge that adequate budgetary allocations be made to complete these projects.

This New India Budget is welfare-oriented for the common people; Through this Budget, the Government has honoured senior citizens and strengthened India's cultural heritage. The exemption on interest income from deposits for senior citizens has been increased from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000. All senior citizens have been provided an annual exemption of Rs. 50,000 for health insurance premium and medical expenditure. The Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana, offering a fixed return of eight per cent, has been extended up to March 2020 and the investment limit has been increased to Rs. 15 lakh. For the salaried class, a standard deduction of Rs. 40,000 has been provided in lieu of transport allowance and medical reimbursement claims. It is noteworthy that since the present Government assumed office in 2014, continuous provisions have been made in successive Budgets to provide relief to the

middle class and tax-paying citizens. The tax relief granted by our Government, keeping the common people in mind, deserves a consolidated analysis.

This New India Budget is development-oriented; The Government is moving forward on the principle of Antyodaya. Antyodaya means bringing the person standing at the end of the line of development at par with those standing in the front. Our Government does not work on issues in a fragmented manner, but adopts a holistic approach to resolving them. With this perspective, under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, the Government has resolved to build a New India by the year 2022. With the same vision, in order to fulfil the dream of an inclusive society, the Government has identified 115 aspirational districts, keeping in view various dimensions of development, which had so far been left behind in the development journey. The Government has set a target to recognise the potential of these districts and bring them at par with developed districts. These include the districts of Chatra, Latehar and Palamu in the State of Jharkhand. In these districts, investments in social services such as health, education, nutrition, skill upgradation and financial inclusion, as well as in basic facilities like irrigation, rural electrification and safe drinking water, along with rapid and time-bound access to toilets, will lead to an improvement in the quality of life. For the development of

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, a provision of Rs. 1 lakh crore has been made in this Budget.

This Budget is aimed at reducing poverty, accelerating the pace of creation of basic infrastructure and building a strong, confident New India. I extend my hearty congratulations to Hon. Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley ji for presenting a Union Budget focused on the empowerment and reconstruction of rural India and on nation-building. This Budget will strengthen the foundation of building a New India. Under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, a resolve has been taken to build a New India by the year 2022. In this context, the proponent of Integral Humanism, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, had stated- "Through the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, we have set out with the resolve to make the nation strong, prosperous and happy. Therefore, at this juncture, we must make a practical effort towards nation-building. We have also reflected upon our ancient culture. However, we are not archaeologists, nor do we wish to sit as custodians of an archaeological museum. Our aim is not merely to preserve culture, but to give it momentum and make it vibrant and capable. On that foundation, the concept of the nation should evolve, and arrangements should be made so that our society may lead a healthy and development-oriented life. From this perspective, we will have to eliminate many orthodoxies and undertake several reforms.

Whatever nurtures the development of humanity and strengthens national unity, we shall adopt, and whatever obstructs it, we shall remove. ……We shall build such an India that will be more glorious than the India of our ancestors, where a human being, while developing his personality, will be able to realise oneness not only with humanity but also with the entire creation, and will be capable of transforming from 'Nar to Narayan'. This is the eternal, divine and dynamic form of our culture. For the world humanity standing at the crossroads, this is our guiding vision. May God grant us the strength to succeed in this endeavour, that is our prayer." (25 April 1965, Pune) Vande Mataram.

This Budget is development-friendly and will strengthen the vision of New India. With these words, I once again thank the Hon. Finance Minister and conclude my remarks.

Thank you.

[*]**SHRI DEVJI M. PATEL (JALORE):** I would like to place my views in the discussion on the General Budget 2018-19. Under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, the NDA Government presented the General Budget in Parliament on 1 February 2018. This is a historic Budget. It is a Budget dedicated to villages, the poor, farmers, women and youth. This Budget is a roadmap for bringing about transformational change in India, infusing new energy and building a Swachh Bharat. For this, I extend my heartfelt felicitations to Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji and Hon. Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley ji. A conventional approach to Budget-making often involves merely shifting money from one place to another. Most Budgets are an exercise in reallocating funds, either from the rich to the poor or vice versa. However, we believe in the principle that Government money is the people's money, and it is our duty to spend it wisely, especially for the poor and the deprived.

The ten distinct pillars outlined in the Budget will help in building a strong and empowered India: 1. Farmers - The Government is committed to doubling farmers' income over the next five years, 2. Providing employment opportunities and basic infrastructure, 3. Youth - Empowering youth by providing

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

education, skills and employment, 4. Poor and the deprived sections - Strengthening social security, healthcare systems and affordable housing, 5. Infrastructure - To improve efficiency, productivity and the standard of living, 6. Financial sector - Promoting growth and stability through strong institutions, 7. Digital economy - Ensuring speed, accountability and transparency, 8. Public service - Ensuring effective governance and efficient service delivery through public participation, 9. Prudent fiscal management - Ensuring optimal utilisation of resources and maintaining fiscal stability and 10. Tax administration - Honouring honest people.

The Budget 2018 primarily reflects the Government's commitment towards agriculture and farmers' welfare, as well as the resolve of the Hon. Prime Minister to double farmers' income by the year 2022. The budgetary allocation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare was Rs. 51,576 crore in 2017–18, which has been increased to Rs. 58,080 crore in the current year. It is noteworthy that if we look at the agricultural budget during the Congress Government from 2009 to 2014, it stood at Rs. 1,21,082 crore, whereas during the five years of the Modi Government from 2014 to 2019, it has increased to Rs. 2,11,694 crore. This reflects an increase of 74.5 per cent.

While our Government is making sustained efforts to enhance the productivity and production of various crops, it is equally committed to ensuring that farmers receive a fair price for their produce. Under the leadership of the Hon. Prime Minister, the following announcements have been made in this direction:

(a) Henceforth, the Minimum Support Price for various agricultural commodities will be fixed at one and a half times the cost of production for farmers. With this decision, the Modi Government has also fulfilled one of the most important promises made to farmers in its election manifesto.

(b) Our Government has repeatedly made it clear that it does not merely wish to announce the MSP, but is also working to ensure that the benefits of MSP actually reach the farmers. During the past four years of the Modi Government, there has been an unprecedented increase in the procurement of pulses, oilseeds and other crops. Taking this process forward, it has been announced in this Budget that NITI Aayog, in coordination with the Union Government and the State Governments, will create a new mechanism to ensure that MSP benefits reach all farmers.

(c) The Government has also proposed the creation of an institutional mechanism for a long-term import–export policy. Through this mechanism, the ambitious export target of 100 billion

US dollars by the year 2022–23 will be achieved. For this purpose, state-of-the-art testing facilities will also be established in all 42 mega food parks.

(d) Along with this, the Budget also provides for the establishment of an institutional mechanism for Price and Demand Forecasting. Through this mechanism, farmers will be able to take timely decisions regarding which crops to cultivate and in what quantity so as to maximise profitability.

This Budget initiates new reforms for agricultural markets with the objective of ensuring that farmers receive a fair price for their produce. In this Budget, an Agri and Market Development Fund of Rs. 2,000 crore has been announced, which underlines the importance of the retail market in agricultural marketing. These markets have been designated as Gramin Retail Agriculture Markets. Through this initiative, the infrastructure of 22,000 rural haats and 585 APMC mandis will be developed. Tomatoes, onions and potatoes are consumed throughout the year across the country. Over the past 70 years, both farmers and consumers have suffered losses. For the first time, under this Budget of the Modi Government, farmers will be able to obtain remunerative prices for their produce, while consumers will be able to access these products at reasonable prices. For this purpose, a provision of Rs. 500 crore has been made. In order to achieve a higher growth rate in the

agricultural sector, capital investment will have to be increased. Continuing the reforms undertaken in the Budgets of the past two years, this Budget provides for the Fishery and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund and the Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund, with an allocation of Rs. 10,000 crore. Through these Funds, affordable credit will be made available to State Governments, cooperatives and individual investors for fisheries and animal husbandry infrastructure. This will accelerate the development of facilities such as fish landing centres, cold storage, ice plants, transport facilities, processing units and hatcheries.

Ensuring timely availability of credit to farmers is also extremely essential. For this purpose, the total agricultural credit, which stood at Rs. 10 lakh crore in the previous year, has been increased to Rs. 11 lakh crore in this Budget. Farmers engaged in animal husbandry and fisheries will also be provided this credit through the Kisan Credit facility.

In order to promote agricultural and non-agricultural activities, the National Bamboo Mission has been proposed in a new form in this Budget with an allocation of Rs. 1,290 crore. Through this initiative, not only will small industries be established, but new employment opportunities will also be generated.

In this Budget, all types of FPOs, including Farmer Producer Companies, have been granted the benefit of income tax exemption. Small and marginal farmers will be able to avail themselves of this benefit by forming FPOs or FPCs. At the same time, this will also help in addressing the problem arising from fragmentation of small landholdings.

This Budget has also announced a Model Land License Cultivator Act, through which tenant farmers and small farmers cultivating land taken on lease will also be able to access the benefits of institutional credit. For this purpose, NITI Aayog will take the necessary action in coordination with the Union Government and the State Governments.

Our country has favourable agro-climatic zones for the cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants. In this Budget, an announcement has been made to promote such cultivation. This will not only benefit farmers but will also facilitate the development of small and marginal industries. For this purpose, a provision of Rs. 200 crore has been made in the Budget. Large-scale promotion of organic farming has also been announced in this Budget. Measures will be taken to ensure its effective implementation and to link it with markets. This scheme will particularly benefit the North-Eastern and hilly States. Cluster-based farming will also be promoted for horticultural crops on a district-wise basis. For this

purpose, coordination will be established with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries and the Ministry of Commerce.

In the health sector, two important initiatives have been announced. An allocation of Rs. 1,200 crore has been made for 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres, and a National Health Protection Scheme has been formulated to provide medical services to more than 10 crore poor and vulnerable families. With the objective of enhancing access to quality medical education and healthcare, 24 new Government medical colleges and hospitals will be established by upgrading existing district hospitals across the country. This step will ensure that there is at least one medical college for every three Parliamentary Constituencies and at least one Government medical college in each State of the country.

Our Government will spend increased financial resources on creating livelihood opportunities, agriculture and allied activities, and rural infrastructure in rural areas, so that maximum livelihood opportunities are generated in these areas. In 2018–19, an expenditure of Rs. 14.34 lakh crore will be incurred by various Ministries for the creation of livelihoods and basic infrastructure in rural areas. This includes additional budgetary and extra-budgetary resources amounting to Rs. 11.98 lakh crore. Apart from employment generated through agriculture-related activities and self-employment, this expenditure will lead to the generation of 321

crore person-days of employment, construction of 3.17 lakh kilometres of rural roads, 51 lakh new rural houses and 1.88 crore toilets. It was stated that, in addition to providing a boost to agriculture, this will also result in electricity connections being provided to 1.75 crore new families. Under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana – 'Har Khet Ko Pani', the groundwater irrigation scheme will be strengthened and implemented in 96 irrigation-deficient districts, for which an allocation of Rs. 2,600 crore has been made.

The Finance Minister stated that loans to women's Self-Help Groups were increased by 37 per cent over the previous year to about Rs. 42,500 crore in 2016–17. The Finance Minister further stated that the Government hopes to increase the loan corpus for Self-Help Groups to Rs. 75,000 crore by March 2019. In 2018–19, the allocation for the National Rural Livelihoods Mission has been substantially increased to Rs. 5,750 crore.

This Budget of the Government will help in reducing inflation, increasing digital transactions and curbing corruption and black money. Prosperity will come to the poor, youth will get employment and farmers' incomes will increase. The homeless will receive housing, women will be empowered and small traders will benefit. This is a Budget that fulfils basic necessities such as roads, electricity, water, housing and agriculture, and works to benefit

everyone. This Budget will take regions such as Jalore, Sirohi and Sanchore, which have so far lagged behind in the race for development, forward on the path of growth. While this Budget will strengthen financial institutions, it will also enhance financial discipline in Government functioning. It is historic in nature. This Budget, aimed at building a knowledgeable and skilled India, will pave the way for the country's overall development along with economic prosperity. India's growth rate will continue to rise progressively.

***SHRI JUGAL KISHORE (JAMMU):** Under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, the Hon. Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley ji has presented a Budget in the interest of the nation, for which I express my gratitude to him.

In this Budget, due attention has been given to every section of society, as a result of which the common man, the poor and farmer brethren are all expressing satisfaction with this Budget. Steps have been taken in this Budget in the interest of farmers, the common man and traders. We all know that farmers are the backbone of our country and they have made a very significant contribution to the development of the nation. In this Budget, the Modi Government has taken several measures to increase farmers' income, the most important of which is ensuring that farmers receive one and a half times the cost of production for their produce. Farmers of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, along with those across the country, will benefit from this decision. Even farmers producing fruits and vegetables will find the 'Operation Greens' scheme effective.

Earlier, there were irregularities in MGNREGA, due to which corruption was rampant and the country also suffered heavy losses. Now, under the Government of Shri Narendra Modi ji, transparency

* Speech was laid on the Table.

has been brought into this scheme. Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, roads will be connected up to main centres such as educational institutions and hospitals. This will make life easier for people in villages and will prevent migration from villages to cities. Further, under the Bharatmala Programme, a network of roads will be laid across the country, ensuring that there is no village left without a road.

There is considerable enthusiasm among women regarding the Ujjwala Scheme. This Scheme is not only freeing poor women of the country from smoke, but has also become a major means of their empowerment, enabling them to feel dignified and self-reliant. It is a matter of great satisfaction that, by expanding this Scheme, its target has now been increased from five crore families to eight crore families. The benefits of this Scheme will accrue on a large scale to Dalits, poor tribal communities and backward sections across the country.

The Government has addressed a major concern of the common man and the poor. Earlier, a poor person often had to wander from place to place for medical treatment, and due to lack of money for treatment, many families suffered and were even ruined. Now, through the Ayushman Bharat Scheme presented in the Budget, even a poor person will be able to avail free medical treatment up to Rs. 5 lakh. This will provide relief to the common

man and the poor, and about 50 crore people will benefit from this Scheme.

The establishment of 24 new medical colleges across the country by the Government will bring about a transformation in the health sector, and the poor will no longer have to go outside their State for medical treatment. With the setting up of new medical colleges, people will not only receive better medical facilities, but the youth will also find it easier to pursue education, and avenues of employment will increase.

Through the Pradhan Mantri Saubhagya Scheme, every household will receive electricity, and even those who have not received electricity over the past 70 years will be provided with power supply. The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana has proved to be a boon for the poor, and poor people are deriving substantial benefits from it. By the year 2022, every poor family will have its own house.

I would like to draw the attention of the Government towards the State of Jammu and Kashmir. For the development of Jammu and Kashmir, the Government led by Hon. Shri Narendra Modi ji has extended wholehearted support. Several historic steps have been taken, such as the establishment of AIIMS, IIT, medical

colleges, a Central University, as well as National Highways, tunnels and other major infrastructure projects.

I would like to urge the Government that, for people living along the border, each family should be allotted a plot of five marlas at a safe location at the earliest, as this is a long-standing demand of the people. Alternatively, shelter sheds should be constructed so that, during days of firing, people may take refuge for a few days along with their families and children.

I would like to request the Government that, until the construction of AIIMS is completed, an OPD super-speciality hospital should be started in Jammu to provide immediate relief to the public, so that the people of Jammu do not have to go to other States for medical treatment. I would also like to draw attention to the pilgrimage sites of the Jammu Division. There are several historic pilgrimage sites in the Jammu Division, and therefore, I would like to request that a special package be provided for the development of these pilgrimage sites so that maximum number of people may visit them for pilgrimage tourism.

I would also like to draw the attention of the Government to the Jammu rail sector in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. I demand a two-minute halt at Manwal Railway Station for the Uttar Sampark Kranti Express, which runs between Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra

and Delhi, as this halt is extremely essential for the people of the region.

[*]**SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL (DOMARIYAGANJ):** In the year 2014, our Government came into service with a commitment to work with dedication towards the poor, farmers, youth and women. If one properly reviews the work of this Government from the time Shri Narendra Modi ji assumed office in 2014 till now, that spirit of dedication is clearly reflected in its actions.

Several schemes of this Government have worked to empower the poor, farmers, youth and women. Whether it is the Jan Dhan Yojana, the Saubhagya Scheme, the Ujjwala Scheme, Skill India, or Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, many such initiatives have been launched by this Government under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi ji.

I congratulate the Hon. Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley ji for having taken, in this Budget as well, several steps keeping in mind the poor and farmers, which give them confidence in a better and brighter future. If I say that this Budget is one that ensures a better and healthier future for the poor, it would not be an exaggeration. This Budget is a very significant step towards a healthy India. It is the dream of our Hon. Prime Minister to build an India where everyone is healthy, an India where the poor are not deprived of health facilities due to lack of money, and an India

[*] Speech was laid on the Table.

where the Government directly bears the cost of healthcare and welfare of the poor. For this vision and commitment, I would like to congratulate Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji and Hon. Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley ji. Under Ayushman Bharat, the Government is going to open 1.5 lakh centres to provide healthcare facilities near people's homes, for which Rs. 1,200 crore has been allocated, which I wholeheartedly welcome. In this Budget, the Government has announced the world's largest Government healthcare scheme, the National Healthcare Protection Scheme, which will benefit about 50 lakh poor people of the country. For this, I congratulate Hon. Shri Narendra Modi ji and Hon. Shri Arun Jaitley ji and express my support.

Several such steps have been taken by this Government from its very first day, enabling poor farmers to benefit and to live with dignity. Through this Budget, with the intention of ensuring benefits to farmers, the Government has allocated funds in the right manner, direction and magnitude. Today, as a result of the tireless efforts and prudent policies of this Modi-led Government, India's agricultural production has reached record levels. Through this Budget, the Government has ensured that farmers earn at least one and a half times the cost of production of their produce, and the Minimum Support Price for Kharif crops has been fixed at one and a half times the cost of production. The facility of the Kisan Credit

Card has now also been extended to Indians dependent on fisheries and animal husbandry, which will benefit the many people whose livelihoods depend on these activities.

The Ujjwala Scheme has benefited crores of poor women. Even after 70 years of Independence, those women who, due to deprivation, were gradually sacrificing their lives while sustaining their families have today been given relief by Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji. Through this Scheme, the long-standing disparity in the country has been addressed, where women in big cities cooked food on modern gas stoves, while women in villages cooked on crude stoves using coal and firewood. This Scheme has worked to provide equal rights to women across one India. Through this Budget, the Government has enhanced the scope of the Ujjwala Scheme by increasing the target of providing LPG connections from six crore women to eight crore women, a step that deserves the highest appreciation. Even after so many years of Independence, people living in cities were leading their lives in the light of electricity, whereas people in rural areas were still spending their lives in darkness. Under the Pradhan Mantri Saubhagya Scheme, the Modi Government is providing free electricity connections to the homes of the poor. Under this Scheme, free electricity connections will be provided to four crore poor households, for which the Government has allocated Rs. 16,000 crore.

I congratulate Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji and Hon. Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley ji for all the other decisions taken in the Budget, such as the decision to construct two crore additional toilets under the Swachh Bharat Mission, the decision to make an allocation of Rs. 1,200 crore for the Bamboo Mission, the allocation of Rs. 10,000 crore for animal husbandry, the allocation of Rs. 5,750 crore for the National Livelihoods Scheme, and the allocation of Rs. 14.34 lakh crore for employment generation in rural India. I express my support for all these decisions.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Bima Yojana, 5.22 crore Indian families have benefited. Under the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, 1.26 crore accounts have been opened. The Government has allocated Rs. 52,719 crore for social inclusion programmes and schemes for Scheduled Castes, and Rs. 39,139 crore for social inclusion programmes and schemes for Scheduled Tribes.

My demand is as follows-

My district is a very backward district, and every year thousands of children lose their lives due to encephalitis. Owing to the lack of health facilities, many citizens also lose their lives. I would like to request the Hon. Finance Minister and the Hon. Prime

Minister to kindly establish a multi-speciality hospital in Siddharthnagar, so that the children and citizens of Siddharthnagar and the surrounding areas may benefit.

[English]

***SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR (HAMIRPUR):** The budget of 2018-19 presented this year will easily be one of the watershed budgets this country has ever seen. Government's focus on strengthening the agricultural and rural economy will mark the ushering of New India by 2022. I would like to thank Finance Minster to increase MSP for all unannounced Kahrif crops at least one and half times of their production cost after declaring the same for the majority of Rabi crops. Moreover, the setting up of a Fisheries and Aqua culture Infrastructure Development Fund (FAIDF) for fisheries sector and an Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) for financing infrastructure requirement of animal husbandry sector with a total corpus of Rs. 10,000 crore for the two new funds. I am certain this brilliant move will certainly double our farmers income by 2022. While, the previous governments had never focussed on the common Indian's everyday requirements with "Operation Greens" vegetables as important, but often ignored, such as tomato, onion and potato, has been taken care of to ensure they remain always affordable. For my state of Himachal Pradesh, which is primarily

* Speech was laid on the Table.

an agricultural state, each of the initiatives will pave the way towards higher prosperity of farmers.

The allocation of Ministry of Food Processing has been doubled from Rs. 715 crore in 2017-18 to Rs. 1400 crore in 2018-19. This shows the government's acting on the intentions. While India has been producing a large amount of fruits, vegetables and also, other perishables, we lose a lot of them. India is said to lose Rs. 50,000 crores of food as wastes. In this context, it was only appropriate that we focused on food processing.

Women of this country deserve a fair share of the wealth created in this country. Women of this country are as much a participant in our country's workforce as much as they are Citizens of our Nation. Then no wonder our Finance Minister focused significant portion of budget on them. Loans to women SHGs has been increased to about Rs. 42,500 crore in 2016-17, growing 37% over previous year and expressed confidence that loans to SHGs will increase to Rs. 75,000 crore by March, 2019. Under Ujjwala Scheme distribution of free LPG connections will be given to 8 crore poor women. I am taking several social initiatives in my constituency of Hamirpur to empower women. One such is to end the stigma and whispers around sanitary napkins. Women's health

and hygiene are of immense importance, hence I will be helping women SHGs in distributing cheap and safe sanitary napkins.

I am immensely happy that the Government focussed on improving educational outcomes. It was only high time that it was taken into governmental consideration. The phenomenal move by Government to launch the "Prime Minister's Research Fellows (PMRF)" Scheme this year will be a game changer. To provide, 1000 best B. Tech students with facilities to do Ph. D in IITs and IISc, with a handsome fellowship will increase research output in India. We will have a new movement of R&D in India. I thank the Finance Minister to setup a science city in Himachal Pradesh. This will help in making my Himachal Pradesh contribute significantly to country's R&D output.

However, the budget for 2018-19 may be remembered as the door that will pave the way for a healthy India. The heralding of world's largest Government funded health care programme titled National Health Protection Scheme will be a Happy India Scheme. To cover over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries providing coverage up to 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization is a big step towards universal health care.

Government has given a big thrust to Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises (MSMEs) to boost employment and economic growth. Allocating Rs. 3794 crore for giving credit support, capital and interest subsidy and for innovations; MUDRA Yojana launched in April, 2015 has led to sanction of Rs. 4. 6 lakh crore in credit from 10. 38 crore MUDRA loans; 76% of loan accounts are of women and more than 50% belong to SCs, STs and OBCs. It is proposed to set a target of Rs. 3 lakh crore for lending under MUDRA for 2018-19 after having successfully exceeded the targets in all previous years. Himachal Pradesh, with just over 60 lakhs population, had got Rs. 1202 crores of MUDRA loans and led to creation of hundreds of new jobs in MSME sector in 2017-18.

Railways has been allocated Rs. 1,48,528 crore. Over 3600 kms of track renewal is targeted during the current fiscal. Redevelopment of 600 major railway stations is being taken up. All this shows that Government is serious upon not just improving safety of passengers, but also their comfort during the rail journeys. I am greatly indebted to the Government for allocating Rs. 442 crores worth of railway projects to my constituency of Hamirpur, Bilaspur and Una.

Under the Regional connectivity Scheme Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) initiated by the Government last year, 56 unserved airports and 31 unserved helipads would be connected. It is

significant that the Government has considered setting up helipad services across Himachal Pradesh, which will not just kick start higher tourism revenues, but will be helpful in evacuating accident victims in emergencies.

By allocating funds towards establishing two defence corridors, Government is focussing on indigenization of weapon system development.

Every provision of this budget will nudge the India today for the India tomorrow - The New India, which our Prime Minister asks us to spire for, while he is busy building it. I wholly endorse the budget presented by the Finance Minister and congratulate him for presenting such a common India's budget. Jai Hind!

[Translation]

***SHRI DHARAMBIR (BHIWANI-MAHENDRAGARH):** I support the Budget for 2018–19 presented by Hon. Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley ji. Our Government is working at a very fast pace in respect of railway and road projects. Road construction is progressing at the rate of about 30 kilometres per day, which is, in itself, a historic achievement. For this, I congratulate Hon. Shri Nitin Gadkari ji and his team. Railway works are also progressing at a rapid pace.

I would like to place before Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji certain matters of public interest and request that these be duly considered within the framework of this Budget, as follows;

There is no need to explain how distressing the condition of farmers is today, as everyone is aware of it. This issue is discussed everywhere, from Parliament to the streets, yet no concrete steps have been taken so far for the real upliftment of farmers. The country has great expectations from the Government, because you are the first Prime Minister to take swift and bold decisions. After forming the Government, your vision has been to ensure that farmers receive one and a half times the cost of production. This

* Speech was laid on the Table.

has also been announced in this Budget by the Hon. Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley ji. However, the present method of fixing the Minimum Support Price is not satisfactory. What one and a half times the cost of production means to farmers, and what it should actually mean, is that farmers should directly receive prices such as Rs. 5,000 per quintal for mustard and Rs. 2,500 per quintal for wheat. Farmers do not understand conditional or technical language. Under the current MSP mechanism, farmers are not likely to receive these prices. Therefore, I would like to request that the MSP mechanism be reviewed afresh.

It is the vision of the Government to ensure water reaches every field and to interlink all rivers. For this purpose, the Government has taken up 99 projects, on which work is already in progress. In this context, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the water-related issues of Haryana. If these projects are implemented smoothly, the water problems of Haryana, along with several other States, can be resolved effectively. I would like to request that Haryana's largest project, for which an agreement was also entered into with Nepal during the Hon. Prime Minister's visit to Nepal after assuming office, namely the Sharda-Yamuna Project, which covers Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra, be included among the 99 projects. Further, there are projects such as the Ravi–Beas, whose surplus water was to

reach Haryana through the SYL, and the Hansi–Butana Link Canal, on which almost the entire expenditure has already been incurred, but the channels have still not been made operational. I would request the Government to ensure that these channels are made functional at the earliest, so that the vision of the Hon. Prime Minister may be realised.

Our Government has approved several railway projects for my Lok Sabha Constituency of Bhiwani–Mahendragarh, while many others are still pending. These include several ROBs and underpasses, as well as the halting of various trains, for which I have written to the Ministry on several occasions and have also met officials after visiting the Ministry many times. However, several works of public interest have been left out in this Budget. Therefore, I would like to request Hon. Prime Minister, Sir, that all my demands relating to Railways be approved and incorporated in this Budget. Further, approved projects such as the new railway lines from Loharu to Bhiwani and from Farrukhnagar to Dadri, for which 50 per cent of the funding is to be provided by the Union Government and 50 per cent by the Haryana Government, may be expedited. The Haryana Government is getting surveys and related work carried out through one of its companies. Therefore, I would like to request that all these railway works be completed at the earliest.

For the districts of Bhiwani, Mahendragarh and Dadri in my Lok Sabha Constituency of Bhiwani-Mahendragarh, several National Highways have been approved by Hon. Shri Nitin Gadkari ji. Work has commenced on some of them, while others remain incomplete. I request that the incomplete works be completed at the earliest.

A. There are a total of five packages on the National Highway from Rai Milkpura to Bhiwani. Work is in progress on two packages, but has not commenced on the remaining three. I request that work on the remaining three packages also be started at the earliest.

B. Work for four-laning of the Rewari-Narnaul-Chirawa National Highway should be commenced at the earliest.

C. In respect of NH-334B (Meerut-Sonipat-Kharkhoda-Jhajjar-Dadri-Loharu), while a portion has been approved for four-laning, certain stretches are only being widened to 10 metres. I would like to request the Government that this National Highway is extremely busy, with thousands of vehicles plying on it daily. Therefore, instead of merely widening it to 10 metres, the entire stretch should be developed as a four-lane highway.

D. The Rohtak-Bhiwani-Loharu National Highway is being developed as a four-lane road up to Bhiwani, for which the DPR has already been prepared and submitted by the National Highways

authority. I would request the Government that the remaining stretch up to Loharu should also be developed as a four-lane highway.

E. The Bhiwani-Jind-Karnal National Highway is currently being widened to 7 metres. I request that it be widened to 10 metres instead.

F. The new road Hisar-Tosham-Satnali-Kanina-Rewari, for which the DPR has already been prepared, should be constructed at the earliest and be assigned a National Highway number..

I would like to place before the House certain very important suggestions regarding old-age pension provided by the Department of Social Justice. At present, the age eligibility for old-age pension has been fixed at above 60 years for elderly persons belonging to all sections. However, we all know that the life expectancy of persons belonging to BPL families and Scheduled Castes is almost ten years lower than that of affluent persons. There are several reasons for this. Members of BPL and Scheduled Caste families do not get proper nutrition, nor do they receive timely medical treatment or other basic facilities. Secondly, a poor person works much harder than an affluent person, but if he falls ill, he is often unable to obtain timely and proper treatment due to lack of money. I come from a farming family in a village. I, along with all Ministers

and Members of Parliament associated with rural areas, must have observed that even today, a person belonging to a BPL family often seeks treatment from unqualified practitioners. Sometimes they recover, and at other times they lose their lives due to adverse reactions. Even today, a poor person is unable to wear season-appropriate clothing in summer or winter. As we have all seen, a poor person becomes old and weak much earlier and, after the age of 50, is often unable to work. In many cases, even his children do not look after him. In such circumstances, the only support available to an elderly person is the old-age pension.

In view of all these factors, I would like to request the Hon. Minister for Social Justice that, considering the premature ageing and multiple physical ailments faced by persons belonging to BPL families and Scheduled Castes, the age eligibility for old-age pension may be reduced from 60 years to 55 years.

[English]

***SHRIMATI R. VANAROJA (TIRUVANNAMALAI):** I express my gratitude and indebtedness to our beloved immortal Leader Putrachi Thalaivi AMMA, before I place my view on Budget 2018-19.

The extremely heavy rains during the North East Monsoon in December 2015 have caused enormous devastation to standing crops, property and public infrastructure besides loss of livelihood, loss of life and cattle. The State Government's requirement was Rs. 25912 crores. But even a year after the central team had inspected and given its report, the Government had not provided adequate funds to Tamil Nadu.

Similarly in December 2016 Cyclone Vardah had caused severe damages to the coastal regions of Northern Tamil Nadu. The Government of Tamil Nadu had sought Rs. 22,573 crores from the Union Government to undertake reconstruction works in areas affected by cyclone Vardah. But no relief fund was provided. Recently the Ockhi Cyclone has devastated the Southern parts of Tamil Nadu namely Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli Districts. But not enough relief funds were provided from Centre to Tamil Nadu.

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* Speech was laid on the Table.

Earlier this year the Tamil Nadu Government, had declared all 32 districts as drought-affected, and urged the Centre to sanction Rs. 39,565 crore to provide relief to farmers for damages caused due to the drought situation.

A special package for drought affected farmers of Tamil Nadu and cyclone ravaged fishermen and farmers would have been a very welcome. Tamil Nadu was severely affected by drought and scarcity of water for irrigation. I urge the Union Government to release a special package and funds to address the plight of farmers in Tamil Nadu at the earliest.

Tamil Nadu having coastal length of 1076 km is one of the leading States in the country boosting Fishing industry. I request the Hon. Finance Minister to release Rs. 3000 crores for the development of fisheries in Tamil Nadu. The Union Government has promised to form a separate Ministry to develop and conserve the fisheries resources and to enhance the socio economic status of the fishermen community and to provide protection, ensure safety and security of the fishermen. I would like the Government of the day to create a separate Ministry for Fisheries and Development of Fishermen Community in the country and focus exclusively on the subject to provide a permanent and everlasting solution for the serious life challenging problems faced by Indian Fishermen Community.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has urged the Union Government to release Rs. 17,000 crores to enhance power infrastructure in the cyclone-prone Tamil Nadu either as grant or as soft loan. Conversion of 230 KV transmission overhead lines into 230 KV underground cables need to be expedited to facilitate urban growth in the limits of Greater Corporation of Chennai. I urge the Union Government to release Rs. 17,000 crores to enhance power infrastructure, to expedite the Cheyyur Ultra Mega Power Project and to speed up the process of establishing the inter-state green energy corridor.

In Chennai Metropolitan city, the Central and Egmore railway Stations are strategically important in the sub-urban railway EMU line connecting Chennai with several stations in Kanchipuram, Tiruvallur and Vellore Districts. I request the Government to extend this EMU services to Tiruvannamala town so that millions of Pilgrims from all over the world will be benefited.

In my Tiruvannamalai constituency, people are mainly farmers. There are lots of potential for agriculture and floriculture. Flowers like Jasmin, Mullai Sampanki are grown at large scale. This is helpful in the production of scents and perfumes. I urge upon the Union Government to allocate funds for establishment of perfume factory in Tiruvannamalai.

There is an urgent need to increase the storage capacity in Tiruvannamalai to help farmers of this region to store their harvested farm produce and sell it in the markets. I request the Union Government to sanction adequate funds for the establishment of godowns and storages in Tiruvannamalai.

The Tiruvannamalai to Jolarpettai via Chengam requires a new railway line. I urge the Government to initiate this new line for the benefit of the people of my constituency. I also urge the Government to establish an industrial corridor in Tiruvannamalai to encourage industrial growth particularly small scale industries. There is an important pending demand of the people of Tiruvannamalai Constituency to establish and create a Medical College for the benefit of the common poor people. I urge the Union Government to take necessary steps to establish a Medical College in Chengam in Tiruvannamalai Constituency.

[Translation]

***SHRI RAM CHARITRA NISHAD (MACHHLISHAHAR):** Facilities similar to those available under the Kisan Credit Card should also be extended to the fisheries sector. Since bamboo has been removed from the category of trees, the GST rate on bamboo should be reduced to zero per cent, as it currently stands at 28 per cent. Goods manufactured from bamboo should also be brought under zero per cent GST. The Andaman and Nicobar region is still far behind from the tourism perspective. For the past 70 years, adequate attention has not been paid to this region. There is a need to accord much greater focus to its development.

* Speech was laid on the Table.

***SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH JAUNAPURIA (TONK-SAWAI MADHOPUR):** I welcome the Budget presented by the Hon. Finance Minister. This is not an election-oriented Budget, but a Budget for the progress and development of the country. It is highly welfare-oriented for the common people, and this Budget reflects that the country is making significant progress. Hon. Shri Arun Jaitley ji has presented the New India Budget of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, and in this Budget, farmers, the poor, youth, homemakers and entrepreneurs, all sections, appear satisfied.

Four years ago, the Modi Government had promised to provide the country with a progressive, clean and honest Government, which was a very difficult task, because during the period of the Congress, India was counted among weak nations. The country's image was marred by policy paralysis and corruption, and new scams were frequently heard of and witnessed. During the tenure of the Modi Government, no such scams have been heard of or seen. Under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, over the past four years, our Government has placed India among the fastest growing economies of the world. At present, our economy is the seventh largest in the world, and very soon we will

* Speech was laid on the Table.

become the fifth largest economy. India's prestige has increased both within the country and abroad. Hon. Shri Modi ji had given the slogan of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas* and emphasised the concept of minimum Government and maximum governance along with good administration, which has been successfully realised. Today, every section of society, particularly the youth, is moving on the path of leading an honest life. Our Government is committed to ensuring that the benefits of the schemes of the Union Government reach farmers, the poor, weaker sections of society and the person sitting at the farthest end of the village. Although there are so many schemes of the Union Government and the State Governments that one could go on counting them from morning till evening, I would like to mention a few important schemes.

Under this Scheme, cities are being provided with various facilities such as smart roads, solar rooftops, intelligent transport systems and smart road parks. I am pleased to state that two cities from my Parliamentary Constituency, namely Tonk city and Gangapur City, have been included under this Scheme.

Special attention has been given to women in this Budget. Under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, free gas connections have been provided, and this year the Modi Government has set a target of providing free connections to eight crore poor women. The Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana was launched in January 2015, and by

November 2017, 1.26 crore accounts had been opened across the country. The Pradhan Mantri Saubhagya Yojana has also been launched, under which electricity connections have been provided to four crore poor households without any charge, with the Union Government incurring an expenditure of Rs. 16,000 crore. A provision of Rs. 75,000 crore has been made in the Budget for Self-Help Groups, which is 37 per cent higher than the allocation in the previous year.

Emphasising the need to make the lives of the poor and the middle class easier, the Hon. Finance Minister stated that more than 800 medicines are being provided free of cost through over 3,000 Jan Aushadhi Kendras. The prices of stents for heart patients and implants used in knee replacement surgeries have also been regulated. For the nutritional support of TB patients, a provision of Rs. 500 per month has been made in the Budget. Under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme, a National Health Care Scheme has been introduced for 10 crore poor families, providing hospitalisation cover of up to Rs. 5 lakh per year. In the year 2016–17, the corporate tax rate for companies having a turnover of up to Rs. 250 crore has been reduced from 30 per cent to 25 per cent, and companies will also be provided with a unique identification number.

The Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Ltd. has initiated the work of redeveloping 600 major railway stations, and the Modi Government is moving rapidly towards electrification of the railway network, with a target of electrifying 4,000 kilometres. For the electrification work from Sawai Madhopur Railway Station to Jaipur, an amount of Rs. 165 crore has been sanctioned and the work has already commenced. For this, I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to the Hon. Finance Minister and the Hon. Prime Minister.

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: Now, the Hon. Minister to reply.

...(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): I will give an answer. Do not worry. *...(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Please go to your seats.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Hon. Speaker, Madam, Shri Veerappa Moily has initiated the discussion on the Budget. I would like to assure my friends from Andhra Pradesh that the issues they have raised will be addressed by me. ... *(Interruptions)*

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: Please listen to him.

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Please listen to what I have to say on Andhra Pradesh also. Do not worry. *...(Interruptions)* That you leave it to me. *...(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Yes, please.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI ARUN JAITELY: I express my gratitude to Shri Moily ji and 36 other Hon. Members who have spoken on this subject for their comments on the country's economy. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, you should not turn your back to the Chair. You cannot do that.

…(Interruptions)

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Several Hon. Members have also given very positive suggestions. ... *(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, you cannot stand in this manner and turn your back towards the Chair. The rest is fine. Please do not do that.

…(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI ARUN JAITELY: When Shri Moily saheb initiated the discussion, he attempted, in a very elaborate manner, to portray a picture as if the condition of India's economy were extremely worrying and grave. *[English]* He painted a picture that the period between 2004 and 2014 when the UPA Government was in power, was the real period when the Indian economy was doing well. He

should remember that that was also partly a period till 2010, between 2003 and 2010, where there was a boom in the global economy.

When there is a boom in the global economy, there is a corresponding beneficial impact which takes place on a large number of world economies itself. Post 2010, different kinds of slowdowns began. Therefore, obviously, we were also adversely affected. But, notwithstanding that the narratives which we inherited and the narratives which we have now created are entirely different.

During the UPA, nobody spoke in terms of an Indian economy being the bright spot in the global economic picture. *…(Interruptions)* Nobody really mentioned that India in comparison to the rest of the countries in the world was the fastest growing. It only happened now. …. *(Interruptions)*

Madam, data cannot be subjective. In 2014-15, 7. 4 per cent GDP growth was the highest growth in the world; in 2015-16, 8. 2 per cent GDP growth was the fastest growth in the world and in 2016-17, 7. 1 per cent GDP growth was the highest growth in the world. This year what is anticipated is about 6. 7 per cent and the entire global debate is – will India miss the fastest growing status by 0. 1 per cent? …. *(Interruptions)*

The International Monitory Fund (IMF), which is globally regarded – it is not Mr. Saugata Roy or Mr. Kharge, it is the IMF which is the mother of all data – again rates that next year onwards, the next two years, India will be the fastest among the global economies. …. *(Interruptions)* Now, your comments cannot wipe off that reality because data speaks for itself.

You pick up any criteria. The Hon. Member from Telangana referred to India moving up on the Ease of Doing Business rankings. There is still a great potential for us. The Prime Minister has said that we must be amongst the first 50. From 142 we have come to 100. There are still areas and I think I compliment her for making that point, which she did on agriculture. But even beyond agriculture, there are some of the areas where we are lagging behind – enforceability of contracts, land and municipal permissions, trading across customs, etc. Therefore, this facilitation which has to take place between the Centre and the States jointly, if we make those necessary reforms which we are now individually trying to make, I think there is a huge possibility of India moving up the ranking itself.

It is no easy task that after 14 years India earns an upgrade. But we also are conscious of the fact, Moily *Saheb* – whether it is agriculture or it is poverty alleviation or it is creating more employment – that these are challenges and these challenges have

not arisen only in the last four years. There has been historical backwardness. There has been lack of policies in the past. You have been in power for 55 years and, therefore, you just introspect as to how much you contributed in either removing these problems or creating these problems.

Therefore, to say that after four years, some of these challenges still remain is not proper.

Madam, we had the capacity. I cannot recollect, between 2004 and 2014, a single structural reform of the kind being taken that we have undertaken in these four years. Structural reforms may be of momentary difficulty, but in the long run and in the medium run, they bring huge dividends to the economy itself. ...*(Interruptions)* *[Translation]* Shri Saugata Roy ji, when your party was supporting the UPA, the fiscal deficit was more than six per cent. Fiscal deficit means that the Government was running by borrowing. ... *(Interruptions)* When a Government crosses the limit of borrowing, it leaves the coming generations burdened with debt. When we came to office, it was also at four and a half per cent. Every year, it was gradually reduced from 4.5 to 4.1 per cent, from 4.1 to 3.9 per cent, and from 3.9 to 3.5 per cent. This year, our effort was to bring the fiscal deficit down to 3.2 per cent. This year, there was one challenge. A clear challenge was that the GST of a particular month is received in the following month, and because of this one-month

lag, the GST revenue for that month was lower. Due to that one month, there was an impact on the figures and the calculations. It is a statistical difference. Nevertheless, what is called fiscal prudence and financial discipline has been fully adhered to by our Government over the past four years, and we will continue to adhere to it in the coming years.

Currency stabilisation does not merely mean maintaining reserves, but also keeping the currency stabilised. Along with that, despite the major reforms that we have attempted to bring about, the early indications that are now emerging of various kinds show improvement once again. Whether it is core sector growth, demand, exports, PMI data or investment, an environment of recovery is now beginning to take shape across all these indicators.

Madam, I would like to take up the issues one by one. These are my friends from Andhra Pradesh, and I have been meeting them as well. I have complete personal empathy with the situation that arose after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh. Therefore, I will deal with it in full detail. I would request you to kindly exercise a little patience.

As far as the issue of Aadhaar that you have raised is concerned, ever since my younger days, we have heard year after year that subsidies must be rationalised. Subsidies are meant for the

poor; they are not intended for those in society who have greater means. During the UPA Government, an idea had emerged that every Indian should have an identity, and the technological shape of that identity was initiated during the UPA period. There appeared to be some apprehension at that time as well as later, including concerns about whether it might be accessed by non-citizens and what impact that could have. Subsequently, when we came to Government and examined detailed presentations, it became clear that this would not only help in saving administrative resources but would also assist in better targeting of subsidies.

After giving birth to such a good idea, to then disown it and challenge it ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE (GULBARGA): Your method was not correct. *... (Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Mr. Kharge, let me just explain it to you. You brought-in Aadhaar without a support of law. You could not have the law passed. You prepared a draft law, but the draft law said that this is the procedure by which Aadhaar will be created. The law was silent as to for what purpose it will be used. It was absolutely silent on all the privacy requirements. Finally, when we re-looked at that law, we put in a full chapter as far as privacy is

concerned. We are committed to that privacy, and while moving this Bill in Parliament I had an opportunity to move it and I said that even though there is a debate in the Supreme Court whether privacy is a fundamental right or not, but I personally believe that in the year 2015-2016 it is too late in the day to say that it is not a fundamental right.

Therefore, we have put in a full chapter on privacy with not only the procedure and not only the iron walls, which will be created around Aadhaar, but this is the purpose for which Aadhaar will be used. We specified in the law in detail itself. Now, I am still unable to reconcile as to how those who initially floated the idea have suddenly decided to disown it and even challenge it in the court.

Take GST, for example. The kind of campaign that you have carried out, and let me tell you that countries all over the world have taken, *Moily Saheb*, years altogether to stabilize the GST. It is to the credit not only of the Union Government, but each and every State Government that in India within a matter of months we were able to stabilize the GST.

Every State Government knows that it is in its own larger interest. Even your Congress Governments and their Finance Ministers are privy to all the unanimous decisions that we take. We started rationalizing the rates, and let me clarify that initially people

felt that the 28 per cent slab was too high a slab. Why was there a 28 per cent slab? *[Translation]* You were in Government for 55 years. That was the slab where, if the cumulative effect on commodities was taken into account, a duty of 31 per cent had to be paid. We brought that 31 per cent down to 28 per cent. As revenue collection improves, we are gradually bringing that 28 per cent down to 18 per cent and further to 12 per cent. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE: We had earlier said that it should be capped at 18 per cent. ... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: When we came to Government, you said it should be capped at 18 per cent. But when you were in Government, you were charging 31 per cent. Therefore, that argument is also incorrect. There are several countries where there is no BPL population, where there is no population below the poverty line. I recently visited Singapore. There too, there is GST. There, food items attract seven per cent GST, and a Mercedes car also attracts seven per cent GST. In a country like India, where there is such a large BPL population and such wide population disparity, can essential items for the common man and luxury goods be taxed at the same rate?

PROF. SAUGATA ROY (DUMDUM): What was the need for such haste in this?

[English]

HON. SPEAKER: You do not have to answer to everybody as it is not necessary.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Dada, you are so senior that I am surprised to hear this question from you. You have said, why was there such haste? Members of the Congress have also said that it was hastily brought. West Bengal and the Trinamool Congress were always saying that GST should be introduced.

[English] In fifteen minutes, I will come to Andhra Pradesh subject. *[Translation]* You used to say that GST should be introduced. This very House passed the GST, and the Constitution Amendment was brought into force on 16 September, 2016. The Constitution Amendment, which was passed with the support of Shri Saugata Roy ji, clearly provided that the old law could continue for one year.

PROF. SAUGATA ROY: You could have extended it.

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: The Government does not have the authority to extend it; the Constitution does. You had passed the Constitution Amendment with a two-thirds majority, and it was ratified by all the States. *[English]* The outer date for existence of Excise Duty, VAT and Service Tax was 16th September, 2017. I saw an informed political advice being given: Just postpone it. *[Translation]* Postponement would have meant that the new tax did not come into force and, at the same time, the right of both the States and the Centre to collect the old taxes would have lapsed. *[English]* That was a complete charter for anarchy which was being suggested, to postpone it when there was a constitutional deadline of 16th September, 2017. That was the hurry. So, you had to meet the constitutional deadline which each one of you had approved. *[Translation]* Therefore, every State Government was consulted, and every State Government said that, for the first five years, an assurance of revenue should be provided. We have not only given an assurance of revenue, but have also assured that every State will receive a 14 per cent annual increase over the 2015–16 base.. *[English]* Some States fell short in the initial days. Each State till today is being given 14 per cent increase. *[Translation]* After 2015-16, one increase relates to 2016-17 and another to 2017-18. States whose own revenue growth was eight or nine per cent have been given a constitutional guarantee of 14 per cent. Friends from Kerala

were saying that they had expected it to go up to 25 per cent. There is no prohibition even today on increasing it by 25 per cent. If Kerala is able to increase its own revenue by 25 per cent, then we would not have to pay any compensation to them at all. *[English]* We are not saying "Do not increase it".

Moily Sahab, you mentioned about demonetisation which we have discussed in detail. Indeed, it was a difficult decision. It had its own disruptive impact. But, now, let us look back. The year prior to demonetisation, India's growth was 7.1 per cent. In the next year, has there not been a 2 per cent fall in the GDP? You took such monumental decisions. This year, we assume to grow about 6.7 per cent. So, the difference is 0.4 per cent and this is also the impact of GST.

I will tell you how GST impact is there. On 1st July, we touched the lowest growth rate of 5.7 per cent in that quarter because people stopped manufacturing in the previous quarter. Knowing very well that we want to come under the new taxation regime, they destocked, got rid of their existing stocks. So, in that quarter, the service sector grew by over 8 per cent and manufacturing sector grew by 1.5 per cent. That was the impact of the GST on one quarter. That taken together, if it is 0.4 per cent of all the structural reforms, then we are back to normal. We are now seeing personal Income Tax base is increasing, digitisation is increasing and the

impact of all other effects, like tax evasion and quantum of taxes, are increasing itself.

PROF. SAUGATA ROY: I have one simple question. After this mammoth, monstrous, disruptive exercise, how much black money was recovered? We want a reply. The Reserve Bank said that the recovery was very little. That is all.

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Madam, if my learned friend will allow me, I want to finish early. I am sorry, but I have to address my friends from Andhra also.

The IBC, it has completely changed the way. People are now to borrow from banks and do business. Even in this Budget I took care of the middle class as I did in the earlier Budgets. In every Budget I have had a chapter for the middle class and wanted to give them relief. Senior citizens, I gave relief, both in terms of avenues of investment and also in terms of tax concessions. Salaried class, I gave concessions.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No. …*(Interruptions)*.

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: It is a major relief. Madam, the total cost of relief to the salaried class is Rs. 8,000 crore; to the pensioners and senior citizens it is Rs. 4,000 crore. Even in challenging times to give a Rs. 12,000 crore relief was demanding. Yet I kept the

tradition of the last four Budgets and in this Budget also I gave relief.

To the entire SME sector, up to Rs. 250 crore, I reduced the tax rate of small and medium enterprises by five per cent. *...(Interruptions)*.

HON. SPEAKER: Do not reply to anybody now.

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Madam, now under the new proposals of the Government the medium industry is considered to be up to Rs. 250 crore.

An issue of price rise was raised. Supriya Sule-ji raised it. *[Translation]* Now she seems to have forgotten that during the UPA period inflation used to be 11 per cent and 12 per cent. Some amount of inflation will always exist in society. If there is no inflation at all, we could even slip into a recession. However, it must remain within limits. That is why the statutorily fixed inflation target is four per cent plus or minus two, and the Reserve Bank, through its policy measures, attempts to maintain it within that band. We have remained within that limit so far. In most years, inflation was below four per cent, and today it is only slightly above four per cent. ... *(Interruptions)* This is a future projection, and even that is below six per cent. But under the Government of which you were a part, inflation had crossed 11 per cent. The UPA period was

an era of double-digit inflation. ... *(Interruptions)* You also spoke about disinvestment and advanced an argument that it should be undertaken only in times of distress.

Madam, sectors that are strategic will remain with the Government. As for those that are not strategic, if the Government retains them and invests taxpayers' money there, when the private sector can run those businesses, the result would only be losses. On the other hand, there are demands being raised here, including by our friends from Andhra Pradesh, asking for resources to be provided. The choice before us is whether to allocate resources to meet such genuine expectations or to tie up public funds in non-strategic businesses where money would be wasted.

[English]

What is the Government's priority? Should we be spending on the people in each State and fulfilling the demands of these people or just should we be spending money on losing businesses. With 15 per cent market share left, the debt itself is Rs. 58,000 crore. At Rs. 58,000 crore, a fraction of this would have brought smiles on these faces.

SHRI JAYADEV GALLA (GUNTUR): Not a fraction.

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Jayadev is egging me for more.

[Translation]

Madam, for the first time I have seen that at least long-term capital gains should not be imposed, even the Trinamool Congress has started saying so. What is its history? You purchase property, you acquire an asset, and you sell it.

18.00 hrs

If, on selling, you make a profit, then subject to indexation, you have to pay 20 per cent capital gains tax on it. If you invest in the share market and sell within one year, and if you make a profit, 15 per cent capital gains tax is levied on it. However, if you hold it for more than one year and then sell it, it becomes exempt from tax. There was a time when our economy was weak. Money would circulate from here and come back through the Mauritius route, and we would turn a blind eye to it because there was a need for resources. It used to come through Cyprus and Singapore as well. In the year 2015-16, we rewrote those treaties.

HON. SPEAKER: It is six o'clock. If the House agrees, the proceedings of the House may be extended till the conclusion of this discussion.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Madam, I have taken out the figures of the previous year. *[English]* The exempted income on these long-term earnings from the stock exchange, that is people who have invested and sold after one year, is Rs. 3,67,000 crore. Some of these are small investors. So, we said that on profit of upto Rs. One lakh every year, there is no tax. But others are either large corporates, high network individuals, foreign financial institutions or LLPs. So, this was a tax exemption available to the wealthiest and the income which was exempted last year was Rs. 3,67,000 crore. There was a time when there may have been a rationale for exempting it to bring more money into the stock market. Therefore, we thought that at a differential rate this year, if for short term capital gain the tax is 15 per cent, 10 per cent can be imposed. We have imposed 10 per cent tax. Moily *saheb* said there is upheaval in the stock market. The upheaval was also there in the stock markets from Japan to Dow Jones in the US. For three or four days, I am sure India's long-term capital gains did not impact the Dow Jones index. There is a global market for global region.

Madam, whether it is demonetisation, GST or IBC, these are difficult decisions. That is the difference between the UPA and the NDA; we know how to bite the bullet when the decisions have to be taken. Moily *saheb*, your party was stigmatised when you were in the Government because of allegations of corruption. Therefore,

now the new act is; let us manufacture an allegation of corruption against the NDA. So, when you could not find anything, you said, 'please disclose the price of Rafale deal.' I am holding a set of replies given before this Parliament when the UPA was in power, when Shri Pranab Mukherjee was the Defence Minister, when Shri A. K. Antony was the Defence Minister. Tomorrow, if you say, 'you are buying missile from this country; give us the break-up of the cost', the break-up of cost will tell you what the weapon system on that missile is, what the specifics are. So, it is in larger interest of India's security that that price is never disclosed; that is responsible governance. Moily *saheb*, you have been the Law Minister of this country. These security pacts are an inherent part of these defence transactions. You can give an approximate price but when you give specific details, you are giving details of the weapon systems that you possess and the capacity of those weapon systems which you don't want to inform the enemy.

Now, questions are asked. I have a question of 14.12.2005 which says, 'Give the details of the fighting weapon system bought from the Americans and the details and the cost'. ...*(Interruptions)* Shri Pranab Mukherjee replied, 'Details of Government expenses on purchases of arms and weapon systems are classified in their nature and it would not be in the national interest to divulge them on the floor of the House. ' So, please ask your Party President who

has raised this issue to kindly go back to Shri Pranab Mukherjee to learn lessons from him on national security. ...*(Interruptions)*

A question has again been asked, 'Is the Government purchasing long-range missiles from Israel'. Shri A. K. Antony, on 22. 08. 2007 says, 'Divulging these details in this regard to the House would not be in the interest of national security'. ...*(Interruptions)* I have got not one but 15 answers given during the UPA Government's time where item-wise details of armament purchase were not given for the simple reason that these are not in larger interest to make public. ...*(Interruptions)* 'Make public' means 'make known to the enemy what the specified weapon details on each one of the defence equipment is'.

Suddenly, when you find that you are pasted with allegations of corruption all over and Shri Modi has run a clean Government for the last four years, you say, 'Let us manufacture a crisis; let us manufacture an issue'. ...*(Interruptions)* The manufactured issue is: 'You please tell me the details of the Rafale deal. '

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): Would the Hon. Minister yield for one minute? ...*(Interruptions)* Thank you. I do not think, anybody on this side of the House is seeking any national security details involving missiles and weapon systems. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Does that anybody also include your Party President? *...(Interruptions)*

DR. SHASHI THAROOR: Yes. *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: He manufactured this issue falsely at the cost of national security. *...(Interruptions)*

DR. SHASHI THAROOR: Hon. Minister should understand our question. Hon. Minister, the question is this. *...(Interruptions)* You are accountable to Parliament for the expenses of this Government. We are asking for an overall cost and the unit cost without specifying any details. *...(Interruptions)* That is what we have been asking. That is what the Party President has been asking. *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: We are as much accountable to Parliament as the UPA Government was. There is a set of systems which we have followed consistently. *...(Interruptions)*

SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE: We are simply putting a question. You are purchasing it now for Rs. 1,600 crore. That is the difference we are asking about. *...(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Yes, you continue please. You need not answer everybody.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: They had got a chance to speak. Now, it is your chance.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Madam, let me now come to my friends from Andhra Pradesh. *...(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: If he is yielding, I have no objection.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: Do you want to yield?

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Let me complete, Madam.

HON. SPEAKER: Okay, you are not yielding to Shri Rahul Gandhi.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: After I speak, they can always ask a question.

My charge is that they are seriously compromising India's security by insisting on this being made public. *...(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Yes, you please continue now.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: He is not yielding. I am sorry.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: The thing is that you do not wish to hear about Andhra Pradesh.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Let me speak about Andhra Pradesh. *...(Interruptions)* Madam, I want to assure my friends from Andhra Pradesh *...(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: Yesterday also you did the same thing.

...(Interruptions)

HON. SPEAKER: He is not yielding. I cannot help it.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: Please take your seat. This cannot be done in this manner. You did the same thing yesterday as well. *[English]* If he is not yielding, I cannot help it.

...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

HON. SPEAKER: The Hon. Minister has replied to all the points. Please take your seat. This cannot be done in this manner. Kindly go back to your place..

...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Madam, I now want to take up the issue of Andhra Pradesh. *...(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: He is not yielding. I cannot help it.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Madam, they have had their say. Now, they must learn to listen also. *[Translation]* Madam Speaker, they have stated their points. Now please allow us to state our views. I would like to make a detailed statement on the issue relating to Andhra Pradesh. ... *(Interruptions)*

18.13 hrs

(*At this stage, Shrimati Ranjeet Ranjan and some other Hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.*)

...(Interruptions)

PROF. SAUGATA ROY: Madam, allow me to speak on a point of order. ...*(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: He is not yielding. There is no point of order.

...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. SAUGATA ROY: Madam, I am on a point of order under Rule 357. Please allow me to speak. ...*(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I have read the Rule. What do you wish to say?

PROF. SAUGATA ROY: Madam, it says:

> "A Member may, with the permission of the Speaker, make a personal explanation although there is no question before the House, but, in this case no debatable matter may be brought forward."

The Finance Minister referred to the Congress President when he was replying to Mr. Shashi Tharoor. Under Rule 357, he has a right to make a personal explanation ...*(Interruptions)*. Therefore, you should allow him to make a personal explanation. Even if no name was mentioned, it is clear whom he was referring to. He was referring to the Congress President. He should be allowed to give a personal explanation under Rule 357 ...*(Interruptions)*.

HON. SPEAKER: He was answering to the question of Shri Shashi Tharoor.

...(Interruptions)

PROF. SAUGATA ROY: You allow him to make a personal explanation. He has a right to make a personal explanation. He is a Member of this House. He has a right to make a personal explanation*...(Interruptions)*. Madam, please allow him under Rule 357. I do not belong to his Party but I belong to this House and the conventions of this House. If he has been referred to, he has a right to make an explanation*...(Interruptions)*.

HON. SPEAKER: If he is yielding, then only I can allow.

...(Interruptions)

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANTHKUMAR): Madam, unnecessarily there are disruptions while the Hon. Finance Minister is speaking. Please allow him to continue his reply*...(Interruptions)*. Let him continue with his reply.

HON. SPEAKER: I am allowing him.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Madam, Mr. Moily had raised the issue of Rafale. I was, therefore, duty bound to respond to it. I mentioned the stand which he and his Party has taken. Therefore, there is no reason why my speech should be interrupted in the middle. *…(Interruptions)*.

HON. SPEAKER: Mr. Finance Minister, you continue your reply. I am asking you to continue.

…(Interruptions)

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Madam, as far as the issue my Hon. friends from Andhra Pradesh have been agitating for the last few days is concerned, when the State of Andhra Pradesh was created by bifurcation, some of us had actually fought for the rights of people of Andhra Pradesh. Even when we had supported the creation of Telangana, we agreed that Andhra Pradesh is going to be economically at a disadvantage*…(Interruptions)*. Therefore, a particular package was promised to the people of Andhra Pradesh in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act. Now the package involved several aspects. Many of which have been implemented and the work is in progress in some of the aspects*…(Interruptions)*.

18.18 hrs

(*At this stage, Shrimati Ranjeet Ranjan and some other Hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.*)

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: Madam, we have given so far funds as promised for a large number of institutions which are being created because most of the institutions went into Telangana area. Therefore, Andhra Pradesh is entitled to those institutions. The funds have been given and funds will continue to be given for establishment of all the institutions which are mentioned. When an institution is created, as it is being built up, funds will continue to be given…*(Interruptions)*.

As far as creation of capital is concerned, we have made some payments on account of capital. We have made payments for the backward districts. For Polavaram also, Rs. 4.5 Crore have already been paid through NABARD. We have undertaken that substantial part of expenditure on Polavaram and it will be given as far as Polavaram is concerned. So moneys are being given…*(Interruptions)*.

Now, there are two areas which were being worked out. The first was the amount in lieu of this special package. The State had wanted that money to come by way of externally aided projects.

...(Interruptions) Last month, on the 3rd of January, since that is a time-consuming process, the Hon. Chief Minister wrote to me saying that this should be given through NABARD. We have worked out an arrangement yesterday in the meeting. *...(Interruptions)* The officers of the State have gone back to take a confirmation whether the arrangement that we have worked out yesterday with the Department of Expenditure is acceptable to the State or not. *...(Interruptions)* Some arrangement has been worked out between them. We may try and expedite that as soon as we get consent of the State Government. That meeting was held yesterday itself. *...(Interruptions)*

Madam, as far as revenue deficit is concerned, there is another proposal which has been made. The State officers have again gone back and they are expecting something more. We are trying to narrow that gap and bridge that gap. I am quite sure that these two would be worked out in the course of the next couple of days. *...(Interruptions)* The only area is that some other institutions like Railways, Petroleum etc., we are already in discussion with various Ministries. Our friends from the State of Andhra Pradesh are also in discussion and we are trying to find out the best solution which is possible to the satisfaction of my friends from Andhra Pradesh. *...(Interruptions)* We will try and do it extremely early. We are extremely sympathetic to the people of Andhra Pradesh. Therefore,

we are looking at each of these issues extremely sympathetically *…(Interruptions)*

HON. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow.

18.21 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, February 9, 2018/Magha 20, 1939 (Saka).

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