MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, do you agree?

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Yes, Sir, definitely.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Okay. We shall now take up the Appropriation (No. 4) Bill, 2012. Mr. Namo Narain Meena to move the Appropriation (No.4) Bill, 2012.

GOVERNMENT BILL

The Appropriation (No. 4) Bill, 2012

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): Sir, on behalf of my senior colleague, Shri P. Chidambaram, hon. Finance Minister, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of India for the services of the financial year 2012-13, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration".

Sir, the first batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants 2012-13 is being sought for gross additional expenditure of Rs. 32,119.50 crore. This gross additional expenditure will be matched by surrender in other sections and enhanced receipts and recoveries amounting to Rs. 1,314.43 crore. Further, Rs. 0.94 crore is being sought as token supplementary to facilitate re-appropriation. In all, net cash outgo will be Rs. 30,804.13 crore.

Net cash outgo comprises of two major items: Rs. 28,500 crore as compensation to oil marketing companies for under-recoveries and Rs. 2,000 crore as equity to Air India for turn-around plan.

The net cash outgo will be matched by savings in other Departments and will not result in expenditure higher than the Budgeted level.

Sir, the Supplementary demand is kept by the Government of very limited size. This is essential in view of fiscal consolidation measure being taken by the Government.

The question was proposed.
SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL (Maharashtra): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir. I stand today to discuss the Appropriation Bill, but obviously, the Appropriation Bill does not have much to discuss because, as the hon. Minister said, they are broadly allocating money to the oil marketing companies to compensate them for the high losses or subsidies that they are incurring in the marketing of oil products. But we do take this opportunity to highlight some of our concerns which emanate from the mismanagement and mishandling of the economy by this Government. This Government, which came on the plank of aam aadmi, which talks of reform on many public fora in and out of Parliament, which talks of bringing about change and often alleges that "others" are not cooperating with them whether in the garb of coalition politics or because of opposition politics, has, in fact, completely Failed in all measures to turn around the economy, to bring relief to the common man and spur the investment climate in the country. If you look at their own paper, the Mid-Year Economic Analysis, which they presented to Parliament yesterday, they have held out an outlook of growth, stability and recovery of the economy. I don't think anybody in this world, and certainly none of the learned Members in this august House is taken in by these empty assurances of this Government. They have been talking of this kind of growth, stability and recovery for the last three years. We have heard from them empty assurances of taming in inflation. We have heard from them promises of growth, promises of growth figures in industry, in manufacturing and in agriculture, quarter upon quarter only to be belied when the actual figures came out. They have tried to fob off the failure of their Government in maintaining a high growth path or sustaining the growth, growth that was initiated by the NDA Government with the fiscal structural improvements that the NDA Government brought out in the period of 1999-2004, which this Government has miserably failed to sustain and continue. I mentioned this before, Sir, that when we came to power in 1998, we were saddled with a significantly depressed economic outlook, high inflation, high interest rates, very high fiscal deficit, high current account deficit and an economy which was looked down upon on almost all economic parameters all over the world. We were looked down upon for the failure of their Government. However, due to fiscal and structural improvements in the economy, we were able to take up the economic growth of this country to a real GDP growth of 8.3 per cent in 2003-04 when we
demitted office. At that time, we had left behind a strong economy with large foreign exchange reserves, current account surplus for last three years of our Government, low fiscal deficit, very high earnings through exports and an economy which was on the path of growth, an economy which was given a lot of impetus to spur investment and a reform-oriented economy.

This Government in the first five years of the UPA did nothing blaming compulsions of coalition politics. They had no excuse for the abysmal failure in bringing about improvements in the economy. They were able to get away with a reasonably good growth in the economic numbers only because of a strong base which was left behind by the NDA. In the UPA-II, they are now having to face the impact of the failure of the UPA-I in carrying out structural reforms, economic reforms and creating an atmosphere which would be conducive to investment and growth.

Today, they are blaming the low economic growth numbers of 5.4 per cent in the first half of this year on global factors. I beg to disagree with this Government that global factors are to be blamed, because India is a large domestic economy. India is an economy which has 1.2 billion people. It has a domestic market which the world craves to come into. And here we have a Government which is giving sorry excuses for their failure in attracting international investment and in enabling Indian entrepreneurs, Indian industry to take on projects and invest in this country. Instead of blaming the world for the problems of India, I think, it is high time this Government accepted their failures and started taking certain steps which would be in the interests of faster economic growth. In their statement, Sir, they have tried to blame low agricultural growth to the shortfall in rainfall. I thought that was an excuse which could have cut ice in the initial months of the monsoon season. However, as we are all aware, the monsoon did pick up and I don't think except for a couple of States, may be Karnataka and Maharashtra, to some extent, by and large, large parts of the country have been able to make up for the deficient rainfall and I do not think that they can blame the low agricultural growth to rainfall.

They have also tried to blame the problems of the Euro zone and the high level of crude prices to the problems of the Indian economy. Sir, I am extremely
surprised how this Government can make a statement which is completely far from the truth. Global crude prices are actually quite stable and on the contrary, have been falling. If you see global prices one year back, they were higher than the prices that prevail today. I don’t know what they mean by blaming the global crude prices for the increased inflation in this country. On the contrary, we have a situation where because of the bad policies of this Government, the Indian rupee, which should have appreciated, has depreciated against the US dollar. Considering the global situation where almost all economies and all currencies have fared better than America and have improved when compared in relation to the US dollar, India is one country whose rupee has depreciated sharply by over 25 per cent in the last one-and-a-half years. Sir, why did that happen? This process of rupee depreciation started after the Budget of this Government in 2011. Since then, there have been a series of misadventures, a series of bad policies, policy paralysis that this Government is facing in terms of economy for the last one-and-a-half years and the flip-flop in policy — they brought in GAAR in the Budget of 2012 only to withdraw it thereafter.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN) in the Chair]

They brought in retrospective taxes which affected the investment climate worldwide and India became an unpreferred destination, a destination to be shunned away. And that caused the flow of FDI and FII in India to fall, resulting in sharp devaluation of the rupee. They also seem to blame domestic factors such as tight monetary policy, impediments to project completion and lower investments in new projects for the slowdown in industrial growth. Sir, who is to blame for that? Who is to blame for the impediments to project implementation? It is but for their own Government, the different arms of the Government — whether it is the Environment Ministry, whether it is the Home Ministry, whether it is the Rural Development Ministry. Every one of them has only brought impediments to growth and have been an impediment to project implementation. The Finance Ministry seems to blame the Environment Ministry. The Environment Ministry blames the local State Governments and it is a kind of merry-go-round between the various arms of this Government which are to blame for investment falling in this country.

They have also talked about lower investment in new projects. Obviously, there will be lower investments. What about this Government’s role in not creating
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an environment conducive for attracting foreign capital and Indian entrepreneurs? Today, Sir, there is a situation where even Indian entrepreneurs are looking outward rather than investing in our own country. I know many companies which are small cap companies. In the normal course, they would have preferred to invest in India, a growing market and an economy which was booming for so many years, but in this climate of uncertainty, they are looking outward. They are looking at international shores. They are looking at investments beyond the shores of India and in the process of economy slows down. There is no growth in manufacturing. The services sector has also slowed down. Job creation is at risk. The only solution that this Government can come up with, to solve the problems of the unemployed youth, the lack of opportunities for employment, is that they come up with a scheme which will provide doles to the unemployed and make them actually not skilled, not able to do better work or vocation, but depend on this Government for their livelihood.

They talk of inflation. They tried to project that the WPI inflation has declined slightly. But, Sir, I beg to inform them that the common man, the consumer, is affected by the Consumer Price Index which still hovers around double digits as acknowledged by this Government. Again they blame the global factor for that. As I mentioned earlier, the crude prices have, in fact, fallen. They also blame the higher prices of protein rich items because more affluent households have started using them. I think it is shameful that this Government, instead of being happy that certain nutrient products are being consumed in this country, is trying to blame that as a cause for the increased prices. I think the Government needs to address this issue very seriously. They need to look at interest rates. They need to understand that high interest rates are prevailing for the last three years and have been no deterrent to bring down inflation. Therefore, we have a situation for the last three years that we have consistently double digit inflation and very high interest rates.

I recall the days of the NDA Government under Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee when we had an economy which was growing rapidly, investments were fast tracked but interest rates were kept low; and inflation was controlled at very, very low level. The net inflation was 3 or 4 per cent when we laid down office. They
have only managed to bring it up to 10 per cent and sustain it at double digit for the last three years.

We are also very concerned about the Current Account Deficit. The current situation is that exports are falling and imports also are falling, but at lower rate. The Current Account Deficit is only getting worse. How does this Government address the problem of the Current Account Deficit? All that they can think of is bridging it with short-term borrowings by increasing the cap. They have no concrete proposal, no concrete step to boost Indian manufacturing, to boost Indian exports and bring about competitiveness in our products which can help us to tide over this problem. We have certain sectors of the economy which were doing well. We had an IT sector and IT-enabled services which is flourishing for the last few years. What does this Government do? The Finance Ministry sends their people, their officers behind IT and IT-enabled services industry with tax claims and tax demands which are obnoxious and which merit no standing in law and which are only going to be struck down. But in the intervening period, a large number of international companies are looking to exit from India. They are looking to shut shop here and leave. I will give you an example. We have large companies like Microsoft, Intel, Google and international companies which have set up large bases in India. They provide employment to thousands of educated, smart young boys and girls in this country. These companies develop products, they run call centres and they have back office operations in India. Misguided officials of this Government have been slapping huge tax and penalty notices on these companies, more often than not, completely unwarranted and unjustified. There is no check on that. There is no clarity of law. There is no interference from the top to control this and in the process, these lower level officials are running amuck and creating such an uncertain environment. In the process these large companies are considering to shut shop and leave the shores of India.

Sir, I was with the Dean of one of the world’s largest and most prominent business schools two months ago. He is an Indian who is very passionate about this country and very, very concerned about what is happening here. Out of that concern, he shared with me that, in the last six months, that is, broadly after the presentation of the Union Budget of 2012, which brought in the retrospective GAAR provisions without any safeguards, as recommended by the Standing Committee, in the period from March to September—I met him in September
end—a lot of international investors, large companies, large investment banks and large manufacturing companies would approach him to get a sense of what was happening in India and would express their concerns about how/ the Indian Government was working. His personal guess was that those people who talked to him and deferred their plans to come to India and possibly relocated their plans to some other competing economies, have actually caused a loss of FDI equivalent to 4.5 billion dollars, which could have come to India in the last six months. Just one individual who was approached by international investors has this to say that we lost FDI of over 4.5 billion dollars and that, he said, was coming to Indian manufacturing and core infrastructure sectors, which our country has lost. I don't know what permanent damage this Government is going to do to this country and how we are ever going to recover from the mismanagement and misgovernance that we are seeing in the last, particularly, three or four years and possibly in the last eight years of this Government's rein. Foreign exchange reserves are falling drastically and they are only sustained by high debt. Every ratio of this Government is deteriorating. The Forex reserves are falling. Forex reserve as a percentage of GDP is falling. Fiscal deficit is increasing and current account deficit is going up. I do not know what to hope and expect from a Government which has completely failed to fulfil the aspirations both of the common man and of investors and industry. They claim to be a Government of the common man. But what do they do for the common man? They have no concrete scheme to provide jobs to them. The Skill Development Programme is languishing both for lack of funds and lack of will of this Government. They do not approve projects in the rural hinterland of this country for years together. They pass on the burden of increased crude cost to the consumer, not a cost which is caused by global prices but a cost which is caused because of devaluation of the rupee. This Government does not allow Indian entrepreneurs to increase their production of crude oil and gas; for years together this Government does not approve projects and exploration plans of Indian companies and even their own PSUs like ONGC have to wait for three-four years before their plans are approved and to top it all, this Government attacks the middleclass by capping the cooking gas and gas cylinders which are given to the middleclass and the poor people of this country. As against that, we have a Government in Gujarat which invested Rs. 10,000 crores to set up a network.
of pipelines all over the State to provide piped gas to the consumer at probably one-fourth the price at which this Government is going to give us cooking gas cylinders. This Government does not give gas to the State of Gujarat to enable them to give relief to its middleclass consumers and lower middleclass consumers. Then they increase the price of gas cylinders which affects the poor people. I think on every front, whether it is creating backend infrastructure in the rural hinterland for agro products, for farm products, whether it is creating good power plants and adequate power generation in the country to make sure that we don't have outages like the one we experienced this year, whether it is creating large capacity in the case of airports, ports, roads, railways, etc., this Government has failed. There is not even one sector of the economy which has flourished under this Government. Sir, I think, the Hon. Finance Minister doesn't seem to be interested in this debate.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN): A Cabinet Minister is here.

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: We have had a situation where repeatedly we have seen one scam after another. Corruption has reached the highest peak under this Government. And this is not something which the media says or the Opposition says. Scams have become a part of the DNA of this Government. We have a scam a month. The CAG comes out with Reports. The CBI and the CVC are investigating various scams of this Government. And all that this Government can do is, attack Constitutional Authorities and institutions of integrity. Instead of augmenting their resources, instead of supporting these institutions, this Government can only attack the CAG; they can only influence the CBI and other investigative agencies for the misuse of this Government, rather than really addressing the problem of controlling corruption and bringing an end to this misgovernance. Of course, the Government is now claiming to have a positive outlook. Haven't we heard that before? We had the Chief Economic Advisor who used to come up with a statement every quarter, "This is it. In the next quarter, you will see inflation fall." We have a Government which could not predict six months ago that the state of the economy was so bad that having a 6.6 per cent economic growth was, actually, impossible. Where was the possibility of 6.6 per cent growth even at the beginning of the year? And, today, we have a situation where already
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the Government is talking of 5.7 per cent and that also on the back of six per cent in the last six months. Sir, the third quarter is over. We are coming to the end of December. I can only inform this House and the people of this country, through you, Sir,...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN): Mr Piyush, your party's time is over.

SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL: That this year, we will not even achieve 5.3 per cent economic growth. It will be similar to last year. This Government will, probably, leave office in the next year. All indications are that they may not be able to go beyond the next year, what with all the scams and mismanagement. I think this Government will make the impossible as possible. A flourishing economy which they inherited at eight-and-a-half per cent, they are going to bring it back to the Hindu rate of growth of five per cent; leave behind them a legacy of scams, leave behind them a legacy of fiscal poverty, leave behind them high fiscal deficit, high current account deficit, high inflation, high interest rates and an outlook which the world is already downgrading—which Moody's, Standard and Poor's, all are concerned—just one or two measures which they announce off and on is not going to be enough to turnaround the state of this economy.

Lastly, Sir, I would like to highlight the fact that my party has stood to support this Government. My party has always offered constructive support in the measures that they could take to improve the economy, to revive the economy, to once again bring about prosperity in this country. My allegation is that this Government prefers to pick up one or two contentious issues on which there is no agreement amongst all sections of the House and divert the attention of the people and Parliament to those contentious issues to use that as a camouflage to hide behind all their scams. And instead of focusing on constructive, positive issues, instead of power sector reform, instead of reform with a human face, instead of reform in infrastructure, instead of reform in environmental laws, fiscal and monetary policy and tax policy, they are, in fact, dividing the society, dividing this House just to divert the attention from scams and corruption. I would urge the Government to bring the focus back to core issues and to once again focus on bringing the economy back on rails. I am sure if we all put our heads together, if
we all work together to rein in inflation, to bring down interest rates, give a spur to the economy, we can once again take this country to better heights.

I don't have much hope from this Government, but, possibly, now that we see a ray of hope emerging from West India coming towards North and East India, we hope that the success of the West and some of the successful States of the West will come towards North and we will see the end of this Government and a better future for this nation. Thank you.

SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNJIA (Odisha): Sir, I rise to support The Appropriation (No. 4) Bill. The hon. Finance Minister in his statement has said that they have brought this Appropriation Bill mainly to accommodate the expenditure for the oil marketing companies, and also the Air India turn-around plan. I support this Bill. I myself do not agree on many points which the hon. Member from that side made. It is an Appropriation Bill. We are expected to talk more about finance. But, anyway, as he has said, mostly in his speech, that the Government is not capable of managing the financial situation of this country and they do not have the hope on the Minister. Sir, I am proud enough to say that this UPA Government has the Prime Minister who has the reputation of being a world renowned economist, and Finance Minister, a reputed economist like hon. Pranab Mukherjee, who was earlier the Finance Minister, and also Mr. Chidambaram who is now the Finance Minister. I am proud to say that these personalities are known not only at the national level, but are even at the global level as the best economists and who are doing their best for the recovery and the management of the financial situation in the country. On many points, he spoke about reforms in the NDA Government, about the disinvestment. I don't understand what he meant. He was pointing towards disinvestment, department creation, or the airport hotel disinvestment or modern food industry disinvestment or BALCO disinvestment about which many things are also going on in an inquiry. I do not know, but I think if the financial mismanagement has happened in this country, the NDA Government is mostly responsible for that. About the financial situation, he mentioned that the Indian growth rate has come down. He was also referring to various countries. My hon. friend must also know what the global situation now is. Before UPA Government came, and after UPA Government took over, there is global slowdown. There are also problems everywhere in this country. What is the
position in other countries? You say that the growth rate of India has come down below 6 per cent. Yes, we do agree. If you say there is a problem of finance in our country, yes, there is a problem. But the question is: Where don't you find the problem? Sir, I want to draw your kind attention to the growth rate of different countries. If you look at the growth rate of the European Union, it is 1.6 per cent. If you look at the East Asia and South Asia growth rate, it was 7.1 per cent in 2010-11 and now it is 5.6 per cent. If you look at the growth rate of Japan, it was -0.5 per cent and now it is 0.5 per cent. If you look at China, which had the growth rate of 9.3 per cent in 2010-11 came down to 7.8 per cent in 2011-12 and is expected to further come down to 7.6 per cent in 2012-13. If you look at the Latin America, the growth rate was 4.3 per cent and now it is 0.8 per cent. If you look at South America, the growth rate was 4.6 per cent in 2010-11 and is now 1.2 per cent. If you look at Brazil, the growth rate was 3.7 per cent and now the growth rate has fallen to 0.3 per cent.

So, if you look at the global scenario, and keeping ourselves in such a situation, at the level of 6 per cent or below 6 per cent, I think, is not the failure of the UPA Government; rather, it is the best management of the financial situation of the Government of India at a time when there is economic slowdown everywhere and we have been able to manage the situation and keep the growth rate, at least, in and around 6 per cent. And, we are expected a better position in the country in the future.

SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN (Tamil Nadu): How are you going to manage the situation? There is no power. There is no coal. How are you going to manage?

SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: We have been managing and we will manage. You just go and see.

Sir, I belong to trade union. You go and look at the world. After recession, we have entered into the market economy in 1991. And, if you look at 2012, the situation which was expected to be created—loss of jobs and employment—has not happened in this country till now. And, that is the UPA Government's theory of reforms with humane face. We have seen the situation in many developing and
developed countries. After entering into the new economy and global economy, such situation has been created.

I do agree that regular jobs have been converted into contractual agreements. I do agree that, at many places, regular jobs are squeezing and contractual jobs are increasing. But the job loss and the chaotic situation which was expected to be created after the global economy has not happened in this country. So, I must thank the hon. Prime Minister and the Finance Minister for that.

Sir, I also want to thank the Government for the historic decision it has taken to give cash directly to the beneficiary. I do agree and demand in this House that subsidy in any form, be it fuel, gas, kerosene, petrol, diesel, fertilizer, rice, wheat, etc., should be given directly, in cash, to beneficiaries. We have experimented right from 1947 till today. And, the World Bank, IMF and all the economists are saying that the developing countries should reduce their subsidy. But the question is, we are giving more subsidy from our revenue, but that is not reaching to the beneficiary. So, now, the Government has taken a decision and started cash transfer scheme in 51 districts as a pilot project to give subsidy directly to the beneficiary. I think, this is the best decision.

Sir, take the case of fuel. The Government is saying that it is giving more than Rs. 1 lakh crores subsidy on diesel and petrol. Who is getting this? I wish to inform this House that to increase the mobile connectivity, we have around six lakh towers in this country. These towers have been put up by multinational companies, and not only monopoly houses but companies which have joint ventures in India. All these towers use diesel. Which diesel? The subsidized diesel! Sir, 25 per cent of the subsidized diesel is being used in operating the towers, which are being run by these monopoly houses directly or indirectly by joint venture companies. Is this the subsidy that we claim to be giving to the people? If one lakh rupees worth of subsidy is given in this manner, that means it will come to a total subsidy of Rs. 25,000 crores that is being given to multinational companies. The hon. Member mentioned just now. He also stated that multinational companies are being harassed since they are being asked to pay excess tax. They are being served demand notices for payment of extra taxes. What are we arguing here? On the one hand, we say that we have a revenue deficit and we should reduce it. But unless we increase our internal resources, we cannot reduce our
revenue deficit. If we do not increase our revenue receipts, how can we manage our revenue deficit? Sir, I am not an economist. But, as a layman, I do understand that the best way of decreasing the revenue deficit is to increase the revenue receipts. To increase revenue receipts, we have to have a higher collection of taxes.

Then, we say that the black money is outside the country and it must come back into the country. I agree with that. But what is black money? It is the money that people earn, but on which they do not pay taxes. That is the black money. So, are we not encouraging those multinational companies, those industrialists, who have invested in the services sector or who are doing business in that sector, who are earning huge profits but are not paying the taxes? They somehow or the other avoid payment of taxes. Should we support them? Is that what we call ‘reforms’? I do not at all agree on this. I am placing this view before the House for its consideration. I demand that the Government must take immediate steps to collect taxes, whether it is the Income-tax or any other tax from those people. They are making huge profits in this country. So, we should collect those taxes so that we can increase our internal resources and our revenue receipts, which will be helpful in our budgeting process also.

Sir, during the debate, something had been mentioned about the cap on the supply of subsidized LPG cylinders. We have made a representation to the Government. We have also approached the hon. Finance Minister to reconsider this decision. The Government can put a cap on the supply of subsidized diesel for running these mobile towers. As a consequence, those subsidies can go to the poor. I also request the Government to reconsider the whole issue, completely remove this cap on the supply of subsidized LPG cylinders and increase the number of subsidized LPG cylinders to be supplied to poor people who have been facing this difficulty. They must get some relief and support from the Government.

I want to mention one thing, Sir, and that is about the rate of interest. I fully agree with what my colleague has stated. One way of increasing the investments, as also of managing our financial situation, as the hon. Member, Mr. Piyush Goyal, has mentioned, is that we must try to reduce the rate of interest. In many other countries, the rate of interest is very low; it is one per cent, two per cent, three per cent, four per cent or five per cent. But in our country the rate of interest is
very high. I agree with my colleague on that issue. The Government should seriously consider reducing the rate of interest so that more and more investment can come into the country.

Sir, I also want to submit that the Opposition parties, sometimes maintain double standards. On the one hand, they have been opposing the entry of FDI in retail. At times, they have also been supporting it. Then, suddenly, on one fine day, they blame that the Government is not creating a climate which is conducive for foreign investment, I appreciate the stand taken by the Left parties. They have been taking a firm stand.

I understand their principled stand to oppose FDI. But, others, the BJP leaders, are saying that the Government was not creating the industrial climate, the Government was not making disinvestment, the Government was not selling public sector undertakings like they have sold the hotel at airport, food industries, BALCO and Paradip Phosphates and other industries. I think, we must have a definite principle, one thinking line. Either you should be for investment or you join the Left parties and oppose the FDI.

SHRI BASAWARAJ PATIL (Karnataka): FDI in retail is different and investment in industries is different.

SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTA: I know. I do understand. Take the case of FDI. I want to put a question to you. Three years before, we were discussing here when Reliance Company was going to set up departmental stores. The matter of departmental stores of the Reliance Company and others came here. Nobody opposed that. I know, your party is also not opposing that. But, then, when that proposal came here for a discussion, you oppose that. So, you are arguing for whom? Are you arguing for the Reliance, to protect interests of the Reliance? They have already entered the market. You are now arguing that the departmental stores should not come. That means, those who are opposing are supporting the Reliance. That means, you are protecting the interests of the Reliance Company. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI T.K. RANGARAJAN: Sir, that is not right to ...(Interruptions)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN): Mr. Rangarajan, please sit down ...(Interruptions)....
SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTE: That is not right. I know. I have my way of thinking. But, what I am saying is, you must have a correct stand before the public. Even though I am in the Congress, I am a Trade Union leader. If you go through my speech records in this House, being in the Congress or in the Opposition, I have never changed my stand. What I said as a Member of the Opposition party, the same thing I am saying when in Congress-led Government. And, I will continue to do that. The point is, every political party must have an ideology and we must work for that. That is why, I support. I know, the BJP is for reforms. With an open mind, the BJP must support the Government. If you do not support, you must explain.

I now would like to make two-three important points. One is the non-utilisation of the MPLADS funds. The State Governments are not cooperating. I am not naming any State Government. The State Government officials in the District Administration are not cooperating in the implementation of the MPLADS. They consider it to be an extra work. In my State, it is different. Of course, they are giving instructions not to implement my projects of MPLADS funds and other party Members' projects of MPLADS funds. But, generally, they are not taking interest in implementing the MPLADS projects. I do request the hon. Finance Minister to write a letter to the Chief Minister or find out some framework so that the utilisation of the MPLADS funds is coordinated. We are giving proposals; we are pursuing them. But, in spite of that, the MPLADS projects are not implemented.

The second thing to which I would like to draw your kind attention here is the old-age pension scheme. The Central Government has increased the old-age pension amount last year, but that is not enough. When you give pension to a person so that he takes care of his livelihood, I think, it should be, at least, Rs.1,000 in the first phase. Ultimately, it could be taken to Rs.3,000. In the first phase, please make it Rs.1,000. In the next Budget, if at all the Government is sympathetic towards the poor people who live in this world helplessly, without any source of income, if one has to help them, it must be a minimum of Rs.1,000.

My other point is regarding the Employees Provident Fund Pension Scheme. In the Employees Provident Fund Pension Scheme, sometimes, people are getting a pension of Rs. 100, Rs.300, Rs.500 or Rs. 1,000 only. I would like to draw your
kind attention to the fact that instead of depositing the money they are contributing in the Employees Provident Fund, if they contribute to the pension-linked fixed deposit schemes or pension-linked insurance scheme or any other scheme of any bank, they would get much better benefit than the benefit they are getting in the Employees Provident Fund. Sir, even the Committee has recommended to increase the monthly return of the pension-linked Employees Provident Fund and that has not been done.

Sir, I request the hon. Finance Minister, through you, to consider that and take immediate steps by giving necessary directions to the Labour Department to take action in this regard. But, as I know, though the Labour Department is sympathetic, the Provident Fund Trust has taken a stand that the Finance Ministry is not agreeing to it. That is why they are not able to increase the pension. So, I request the hon. Finance Minister to kindly consider that.

Sir, as far as the Gramin Bank Officers and Employees Pension Scheme is concerned, around 60,000 workers are working all over the country. Sir, these banks were started at the time when Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister of our country. These banks were started with a view to give finance and extend credit to farmers in rural areas. Now, these banks are working all over the country and doing a very good job for credit finance in rural areas. Sir, presently, all banks, excluding the Gramin Banks have got their pension schemes. Earlier, the Reserve Bank of India and the State Bank of India were having their pension schemes. And we are thankful that the U.P.A. Government has taken a decision to bring the officers and employees of all the nationalised banks under the pension scheme. But only the officers and employees of Gramin Banks are not getting pension. Sir, there was a recommendation, there was a case and there was a representation from the Union, and ultimately the Finance Minister, at that time, took a decision to give pension to the officers and employees of Gramin Bank. But that has been kept pending for the last one year and has not been implemented yet. So, nothing is clear in this regard. It is because the Government has said that only those banks which are earning profits will be able to get pension. On the other hand, they have entrusted the NABARD to work out a pension scheme. So, nothing is happening. I request the hon. Finance Minister to expedite the matter so that the officers and employees of the Gramin Banks can also get pension.
Sir, another point I want to make here is this. To encourage the students, the Government has taken a decision to give loans at a lower rate of interest, i.e., five per cent, to those students whose father’s earning is less than rupees five lakhs. For those students whose father’s earning is more than rupees five lakhs, they are charging around 14 per cent interest. I am surprised to see that the Government is giving loans to the small scale industries at 12 per cent or less than that. And to charge 14 per cent interest to students is not fair. So, my request is, even students who father’s earning is more than rupees five lakhs should get loan at a lower interest rate. If it is done, then, it would benefit many students.

Sir, the Government has taken a decision for disinvestment of certain percentage in some profit-making public sector units like Coal India, NMDC, BHEL and NALCO. Sir, I do agree that the Government has to take various measures to increase its internal resources in order to raise money for development purposes. I do not object to that. Sir, as far as NALCO and NMDC are concerned, they are earning profit. Sir, NALCO have a deposit of more than Rs.5,000 crores in their hands. I just want to give one example here. If the Government decides to disinvest 13.6 per cent from NALCO, they will get around Rs1,600 crores. But the NALCO has got a deposit of Rs.5,000 crores of its own. If they are allowed to purchase their own shares, which they are agreeing to do, the Government can change the rule; the Government can get Rs.1,600 crores without any disinvestment of NMDC, NALCO and Coal India, for which they have given a proposal. So, I put forth this proposal before this august House and the Government so that prospects of the Government of getting money from NALCO, NMDC and Coal India are such that they can get money even without disinvestment.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN (West Bengal): We support you on this. ...(Interruptions)... This should be your firm stand. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: If Government wants Rs.6000 crores by disinvestment of public sector, I would say that they have enough funds in their deposits. They can purchase their own shares and give money to the Government so that the Government is not in a problem. Everybody can be taken care of by
this whether it is local people or the other general public or what the Communist friends are demanding. I think everybody can be taken care of and the Government can also get money. This is my suggestion which the Government can consider and take appropriate action in this regard.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN): Khantiaji, you have got another speaker also.

SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: In one minute, I am concluding. In a critical situation when the UPA Government took over and when the Government started programmes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, when the UPA Government has agreed for various insurance schemes all over the country to take care of health and other remedial measures for citizens, when the UPA Government has taken up various developmental works with 16 flagship programmes in the country, all these programmes and schemes need money, I do think it is a very difficult situation to manage the country. I do agree that we are passing through a very critical situation. Our Government and our Finance Minister, I am fully confident, will be able to manage the situation and take the country ahead. With these words, I once again support this Appropriation Bill. I do expect that it will get the support of all other Members. Thank you very much.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN): Now, Shri Tapan Kumar Sen. Kindly confine yourself to the time limit of six minutes. ...(Interruptions)...

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Sir, in the beginning itself, I pray for your indulgence. This is number one. Number two, definitely, at the outset, I would like to assure everybody that after all we will be passing the Appropriation Bill. We have to pass it. But I take this occasion to express some of our concerns. Let me start with complimenting the Government. To my assessment and understanding, in the last Budget - this is in a continuity of the budgetary debate exercise that -- the Appropriation Bill is coming -- certain good things were done which were widely appreciated by all while presenting the Budget. Concerned about a lot of tax evasion which I consider to be a theft on the public exchequer, the UPA-II Government in its wisdom had introduced two important things to curb the menace by which through backdoor the public exchequer is being looted, that is, through
[Shri Tapan Kumar Sen]

the different mechanisms of foreign acquisition of Indian assets. Now the General Anti-Avoidance Rules were invoked, asserted, and, second, the retrospective taxation was introduced in the matter of foreign takeover of Indian assets such as Vodafone and other case. We appreciated that. But by the end of the day when the Budget debate was concluded, those were deferred for one year and with this assurance — please, go through the record, hon. Finance Minister — given in this House by the then Finance Minister, now the President of the country, the Budget was passed supported by all. Before the ink dried on that assurance, they started telling that it is no more, no GAAR at all and no more retrospective taxation.

The Government, the Ministers are every day seen saying that containing fiscal deficit is the primary concern; otherwise, growth cannot be ensured, growth cannot be sustained. I appreciate your anxiety of containing the fiscal deficit. But, at the same time, you are justifying all your deeds and misdeeds too by this statement. You want to sell out public sector companies, you are justifying that fiscal deficit is to be contained; you are increasing the diesel price; you are justifying that the subsidy is to be curtailed; otherwise, fiscal deficit cannot be managed, and so on and so forth. All deeds and misdeeds are being justified on the ground of containing fiscal deficit. Now, while saying so, you are foregoing two important routes, which you had announced in the Budget. And, you had subsequently told that after one year you would put that into effect. You have sacrificed more than Rs. 40,000 crores only on account of retrospective taxation on foreign acquisition, I would to ask whether this amount of Rs. 40,000 crores, which you have sacrificed, had grown on trees that you can so easily fritter away. Similarly, on GAAR. Though your concern is containing fiscal deficit, you are easily foregoing and you have constituted a Committee to give a tutored report that this is not required for the country. I feel country owes them an answer for this kind of hypocrisy. On one side, there is a nightmare that the fiscal deficit has to be contained; on the other side, you are frantically public exchequer by this kind of myriad concessions to hardly one per cent of your population. I think, that approach must be changed. Definitely, we will be supporting your Appropriation Bill, but on this occasion, while doing so, we, from our side, would like to alarm you, if not warn — if you consider the word 'warn' to be objectionable — because I feel that is our responsibility, please stop frittering away. Money is required
elsewhere. When we say "please do not increase the price of diesel and please do not reduce the subsidy", that much you say that money does not grow on trees. But when you sacrifice Rs. 40,000 crores on retrospective taxation, you give Rs. 5,28,000 crores yearly under revenue foregone. And, it is increasing every year. You are foregoing on the average of Rs. 4.5 to 5 lakh crore every year. Over and above, despite these concessions, the tax arrear is Rs. 2.5 lakh crores annually. Let us see the observation of the CAG. Now, the Government is telling that, at least, fifty per cent of that cannot be collected. Whose money is this? Will you tell me in whose kitchen garden this money is growing? If diesel price subsidy cannot be given because the money does not grow on trees, kindly tell us in whose kitchen garden this money is growing.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN): Tapanji, you have only one minute more.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: No, Sir. Please allow me. नहीं, सर, अभी तो उसके स्पष्टतः भी नहीं हैं, होंगे खाली है! Please allow me.

Now, I come to price-rise. Your Mid-Term Review is telling us that the price is moderating. But is it a fact? Yes, on the average, on the basis of wholesale prices, it is moderating. You go to CPI food inflation. Is it moderating? And, in the morning, when you go to the market, what is your experience? Is it moderating? What we are asking for is that you contain the prices, universalize the public distribution system and stop speculation in the commodity market because speculation in the commodity market is the villain of present-day price-rise. Food prices and all other essential prices are being made to rise to ensure a windfall gain for the speculators in the commodity market. You please submit. We will see that prices will be contained, at least, prices of those commodities required by the common people. What is your response? We have noticed, the Finance Minister may kindly confirm, that you are further liberalizing, deregulating the speculation in the commodity market. Your commodities are being brought under the vortex of future trade. At the same time, you are expressing your anxiety for investment not coming up. If this is the way you promote speculation and future trade, investment will go for speculation, not for commodity production, not for setting up sheds, not for employing people and not for earning profit through value creation. Money will go straightly, दो से चार और चार से आठ बनाने का काम तीन पत्ती में ही होता है!
[Shri Tapan Kumar Sen]

If it becomes profit for you, my pocket gets empty. You are trying to land the economy into that kind of a speculating cauldron. Is it correct? Kindly reconsider your paradigm.

Number three is the question of disinvestment. My friend, Shri Rama Chandra Khuntia said— I wish he must stand firmly, that is a positive development in the country— that all the trade unions — right, left and the centre — are now together opposing disinvestment. Let me quote our previous Finance Minister, present President, who, as Leader of the Opposition in this House, citing the initiative of NDA on disinvestment, said, "Please don't sell your family silver for meeting your day-to-day expenses." Today, when you justify disinvestment for countering fiscal deficit, you are doing the same thing. You are selling your family silver for meeting your day-to-day expenses.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN): Okay, please conclude. Already, I have given you three minutes more.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Please, Sir. Very shortly, I will conclude. So, I think there is a need for a total change in your Economic Policy approach. While supporting the Appropriation Bill, I insist, please shift that paradigm — from one per cent of population — greasing them — to the benefit of 99 per cent of the population. Please do this. The situation demands that. Otherwise, situation will not remain in this form. We are alarmed about the employment situation in the country. Only that day, in this House, the hon. Labour Minister gave some figures. What is the situation? We are growing; we are boosting. Our Economy is growing. The more we are growing, the rate of employment generation is moving just in the opposite direction. Kindly say, what model of growth are you pursuing? When you are growing, your GDP is growing but your rate of employment generation is going down consistently. What kind of model is this? How? And, in that kind of a situation, you are allowing FDI in multi-brand retail, which will straightaway kill about four crore job opportunities, which will, straightaway, put 20 crores people survival at stake. Will you please reconsider this? Okay, you could manufacture a majority in both the Houses by different methods. You could manufacture. But you can manufacture majority only here; the people, at large, will oppose these dubious steps taken, which are to the detriment of the national interest. Please reconsider this.
Sir, my last point is this. I do not want to take much of your time. I, again, insist, please consider when fiscal deficit containment is your anxiety, please put back in place GAAR retrospective taxation on foreign acquisition, presented in the Budget. If you are concerned about the aam aadmi, please don't cut subsidy for the people, which is hardly 1.75 per cent of the GDP till now. Whereas your tax and revenue foregone, if all added together, goes above 4 per cent of the GDP, but what you are subsidising is hardly one per cent of the country's population. You are subsidising one per cent of the population with four per cent of your GDP. But you are so miser that you further aim to cut down 1.75 per cent of your GDP as subsidy to food, fuel and fertilizer. This is not democracy. This is not for aam aadmi. Please reconsider, in view of the price rise, please reconsider universalisation of Public Distribution System and complete ban on the future trade. In the interest of the financial discipline and financial strength of the economy, please reconsider your drive to deregulate and privatise the financial sector of the economy which you are seeking to do through Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill and the Insurance (Amendment) Bill. Please reconsider it. Don't mortgage the sound financial base of our country by privatizing and deregulating financial sector through so-called banking and insurance sector reforms.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN): Thank you. Thank you.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: After all, the Western economics, which have made their own banking and insurance system bankrupt, cannot dictate us how we will reform our financial sector. But, unfortunately, the Government of India is moving in that direction. So, I want you to please reconsider these aspects. Otherwise, people will create a situation by which a compulsion will be created. After all, taking the name of 99 per cent, you are appeasing one per cent. People will not forgive you. Thank you.

SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY (West Bengal): Sir, while we are discussing this Appropriation Bill, I was visualizing the misappropriation which is going on unabated in different Government Departments, including the oil companies for which the additional fund is proposed to be pumped. We have heard enough of predictions from mandarins of Planning Commission as well as we have seen that, all the time, the Government is selling some dreams to the people of this country.
by projecting different figures at different points of time about the fiscal situation as well as about the growth rate, inflation, etc.

Sir, I am having a copy of the Mid-Year Economic Analysis 2012-13. Now, if we look into seriously the pages contained in this book, from page 1 till the end of this Book, we will find that a dismal picture, dismal performance is highlighted in this Book by the Government itself. From the very first page, the Government has admitted that 'the growth rate of the Indian economy, measured in terms of GDP, was 5.4 per cent in the first half of year 2012-13 as against 7.3 per cent in the corresponding time-period of the previous year.' This is the performance of the Government, and the Government has again stated in this paragraph — and I quote, "The slowdown has been all pervasive and almost all the sectors have been affected." So, what is Government doing to arrest the situation? The Government is selling out natural resources in the manner that in future a time will come when there will be nothing left for our citizens, for our future generations.

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA) in the Chair]

Mr. Sen was saying again and again that money does not grow on the trees, but, perhaps, money grows in the coal mines, in the coal blocks and that is why the coal blocks have been sold out regularly, at regular intervals, without having any sort of established procedure of leasing out the coal blocks. (...Interruptions)... Not sold, gifted. So natural resources are being gifted in a manner that nothing will be left for our future generations. Every time the Government is coming with an Appropriation Bill and we cannot but support the Appropriation Bill because, otherwise, the Governmental activities — whatever remain — will come to a standstill. This Government is not only anti-poor, but this Government has absolutely failed in its duty as well because while the proposal has come to allot additional funds for the oil companies, a few months back, a sharp rise was made in the price of diesel. The cap on LPG was inflicted upon the fertilizer subsidy was withdrawn and the poor people are confronted with an unprecedented situation. They do not know how to manage their family budget. Sir, the Government comes up with an Appropriation Bill, but the poor people do not have any appropriation
bills. They have no means of misappropriating Government funds. So, this is a peculiar situation that the whole country is confronted with. The Government is happy with Moody's assessment, but they do not look at assessment at the ground level. As Mr. Sen had suggested, what about employment generation? What about the growth rate? The Government has talked about the growth rate in para 1.35 of its mid-term economic analysis. Now, I would talk about food inflation, as I have already mentioned growth rate. Food is most essential for a man to live. How to contain with the inflation, particularly inflation in essential commodities and food? ...(*Time-bell rings)*...

Sir, kindly allow me a couple of minutes more. This is a serious issue that we are discussing.

Sir, the CPI food inflation during the period April to September of the current year ranged from 7 to 11 per cent. And, who are the worst affected? It is people living below-the-poverty-line, the common man. They are the worst affected. The Government does not have any plan of action to stop the unproductive expenses which are being incurred by the oil companies and other Government departments. Huge amounts of money are being spent in seminars, meetings, tours, etc. The Government does not look into that. What about the realization of the NPAs from the nationalized banks? Who have looted the banks' money? The Government has not come out with any plan of action, within a definite time-frame, for realizing the NPA amount. Let the Government declare the names of beneficiaries of the so-called NPAs.

SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: It is called 'revenue foregone'.

SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY: Revenue to the extent of Rs.95,000 crores was foregone.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA): Yes, you have made your point.

SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR ROY: Sir, it is a very important point. Revenue to the extent of Rs.95,000 crores has been foregone by the Government for the so-called improvements of our economy. I would like to ask the Government, for whom has this revenue been foregone and how has the economy benefited with the foregoing of these NPAs? ...(*Interruptions)*...
Now, talking about the realization of these NPAs, Government does not have any action plan. Rather, the Government is restructuring the loans, especially the big loans. When it comes to the common people who take loans of one lakh rupees or Rs.50 lakh, bank officials go and threaten them and "institute cases under the SARFAESI Act, but the Act is not applicable in the case of big fishes for whom the NPA amounts are written off.

Therefore, while supporting this Appropriation Bill — we have no other alternative but to support it — we appeal to the Government that remedial measures, not in the books but in action, are very much required. Otherwise, the dismal performance which has been highlighted in this book will continue to remain and the people of this country will continue to suffer.

With these words, I conclude, Sir.
यह एक ही बार में बड़ा जाता था। यहुदी बाद है, जब 26 फरवरी को बजट पेश होता था, पूरे देश क्रांति की सुसंदर थी और इसलिए सुसंदर था कि बालू से नए टेक्स उत्पादों और लोग सी फूट चली, सरकार की प्राथमिकता थी। देश के लोग उसी हिमायत से अपनी प्राथमिकता बना लेते थे। लेकिन यहुदी बाद में ताजगीकर है, दुबारा है कि आज यह जो नई क्रांति प्रणाली शुरू हुई है, आज जो हमारी मार्केट की व्यवस्था शुरू की गई है कि हर गाजर को बाजार पर मिला दिया जाए, बाजार के लोग तो बड़ा जाएं, बाजार परते तो दम न पड़े। वह जो नए इकाइयों की आवश्यकता है, उसका निर्णय था वह हुआ है कि हमारा बजट पर चढ़ा दिया जाए, बाजार के लोग तो बड़ा जाएं, बाजार परते तो दम न पड़े। वह जो नए इकाइयों की आवश्यकता है, उसका निर्णय था वह हुआ है कि हमारा बजट पर चढ़ा दिया जाए, बाजार के लोग तो बड़ा जाएं, बाजार परते तो दम न पड़े। वह जो नए इकाइयों की आवश्यकता है, उसका निर्णय था वह हुआ है कि हमारा बजट पर चढ़ा दिया जाए, बाजार के लोग तो बड़ा जाएं, बाजार परते तो दम न पड़े। वह जो नए इकाइयों की आवश्यकता है, उसका निर्णय था वह हुआ है कि हमारा बजट पर चढ़ा दिया जाए, बाजार के लोग तो बड़ा जाएं, बाजार परते तो दम न पड़े। वह जो नए इकाइयों की आवश्यकता है, उसका निर्णय था वह हुआ है कि हमारा बजट पर चढ़ा दिया जाए, बाजार के लोग तो बड़ा जाएं, बाजार परते तो दम न पड़े। वह जो नए इकाइयों की आवश्यकता है, उसका निर्णय था वह हुआ है कि हमारा बजट पर चढ़ा दिया जाए, बाजार के लोग तो बड़ा जाएं, बाजार परते तो दम न पड़े। वह जो नए इकाइयों की आवश्यकता है, उसका निर्णय था वह हुआ है कि हमारा बजट पर चढ़ा दिया जाए, बाजार के लोग तो बड़ा जाएं, बाजार परते तो दम न पड़े।
[SHRI NARESH AGRAWAL]

हैं। आप आईएस, एक नीति बनाईए। कई ताज़ारों-कोरोना सर्किल स्टेट बैंक का कितना-कितना का बाज़ार है, लेकिन उसका प्रेयर्स में कोई वोरी है, श्रीमती, यह बाज़ार का जबरे ज्ञात है।
उसको तत्काल संरक्षण मिल रहा है? माननीय मंत्री जी, आखिर कबी आप इस पर विचार तो करिए।

श्रीमती मैं युन रहा कि महागाई रोकने के लिए फाइनेंशियल गर्मिंस्टॉलर ने सिक्वर बैंक के गवर्नर से कहा कि आप बाज़ार की दर नहीं बढ़ाएंगे। उस पर सिक्वर बैंक के गवर्नर ने कहा दिया कि हम बाज़ार की दर बढ़ाएंगे। आपने एक साल में सात बार बाज़ार कर बढ़ायी। आपने कहा कि हम महागाई रोकने के लिए बैंकों की बाज़ार कर बढ़ा रहे हैं। इससे लोगों की इ-एम.आई. बढ़ी जती गई, लेकिन महागाई नहीं बढ़ी।

श्रीमती, अंत में मैं शिक्षा माननीय मंत्री जी से इतना ही कहना चाहिए कि आप Appropriation Bill पाल कर से, लेकिन आपकी बार जब आप बजट लेकर आए तो ऐसा बजट लेकर आएंगे जिससे इस देश के लोगों को लगे कि एक बार में दो बजट पेश हुआ और फिर जीजिल, पेड़ोल व सर्किल गैंग के दाम न बढ़ाएं। बुडह-बुडह प्यून-प्यून।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA): Now, Shri A.W. Rabi Berma; not present. Dr. Ashok S. Ganguly.

DR. ASHOK S. GANGULY (Nominated): Sir, how much time do I have?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA): You have five minutes.

DR. ASHOK S. GANGULY: Sir. I thank you for the opportunity. Sir, I think that in supporting the Appropriation Bill, one has to recognise that the drop in the economic growth of this country is a responsibility of all the political leadership across the spectrum of this House. It has now been recognised that because of continuous political opposition to all attempts at reforms in every which way, this country has lost its significant growth momentum. Yes, it is true that some natural causes have also assisted in the slowdown. Our exports have been deeply affected by the state of the economy in the United States and in Europe. The uncertainty of the last monsoon has affected the prices of commodities. But, the attitude of our leadership across the spectrum has damagingly delayed, if not deflated, the reform agenda of this country. I must, never the less compliment the leadership of the Reserve Bank of India for preventing a financial crisis in our financial sector since 2008. Yes, I agree with the comments made about the rising danger of non-performing assets. I agree with the comments regarding the high interest rates. But,
the point of the fact is that this House must recognise that the Reserve Bank of India has played a stellar role in avoiding a major financial crisis in this country. The infrastructure sector has been the biggest sufferer in this fruitless debate about growth in India. India has one of the highest growth rates today in the world, next only to China. Please, don't underestimate it. It is the farmers; it is the industry; it is the services; it is the informal sector. All of them have contributed significantly. Do not denigrate the growth achievements of this country in order to score political points. The year ahead is looking encouraging, but what is the part that we are playing to push reforms? I mean, I am just recalling the recent debate on Foreign Direct Investment in retail. What is happening to banking reforms? What is happening to insurance reforms? What is happening to pension reforms? What are we doing for our own economy? Please, let us pause and think. Hon. Finance Minister, please don't seek only additional money; but, please also share with us your anxieties and your anguish as to what is stopping you from driving this economy back to eight to nine per cent growth that we have achieved in the past.

We don't trust Foreign Direct Investment. Are we still afraid of foreigners? After sixty five years, are we still afraid of foreigners, or, are we using foreigners and keeping out foreigners in order to keep our poor even more poor, so that we can go back and tell them how we will improve their lot by self reliance when the time comes to seek their votes.

What is there to be afraid of foreigners? Why are we afraid to manage them? We are a sovereign country; we have sovereign laws but we will keep our reforms backward by the bogie of Foreign Direct Investment. Sir, 2013-14 can be a good year but can not be guaranteed to be a good year. Global warming will continue the weather and monsoon uncertain. India's food production will remain uncertain, and, God forbid, if we have a drought, it will be a disaster. Sir, I will finish within the allotted time. I have always done so. So, please do not look at the watch; that is my request.

Sir, I must compliment you, Mr. Finance Minister. I wish to compliment you for the announcement of the Cabinet Committee on Investments. It is one of the major initiatives taken by the Government for investment proposals which over thousand crores of rupees. This will be critical because the Government itself has hurdles within the Government, which some times, or, say, many times, slow down
Dr. Ashok S. Ganguly:

major investment. I compliment the hon. Prime Minister for having taken the initiative to create the Cabinet Committee on Investment.

So, while supporting with the Appropriation Bill, as also agreeing with many comments from the Right and the Left side of this House, I request my colleagues across the spectrum to please have faith in India, have faith in ourselves because we are a strong economy and we will do well, provided we do not destroy the great opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA): Thank you Mr. Garguly. You always stick to the time. Now, Mr. Kumar Deepak Das.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS (Assam): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to highlight some issues with regard to the North-Eastern Region, particularly, my State of Assam.

Sir, if you examine the economic profile of Assam, you will find that the economy of Assam is dominated by the services and the agriculture sectors. As per latest available information, service sector commands nearly 57 per cent share in the SDP. The agricultural and allied activities contributed towards 24 per cent share in the SDP for the year 2009-10 while the industrial sector commands a share of 19.4 per cent in the SDP.

Sir, on the whole, the economy of the State of Assam grew by 5.3 per cent in comparison to all-India average of 8.7 per cent during 2000-01 to 2009-10. Thus in the both the sectors, the aggregate performance of Assam is below the national average. Going into details of this sectoral growth, of the States' 78.44 lakh hectares geographical area, only 23.86 lakh hectares (leaving out land under tea plantations) is the Net Cropped Area, of which 20.7 per cent is irrigated, 17.6 per cent is chronically flood affected while about 3.5 per cent is chronically drought-prone area. The major crops of the State are rice, wheat, oilseeds and pulses. The State is a major producer of rice and tea in the country.

Sir, tea-making has been an important industrial activity in Assam. The industry has provided huge employment opportunities, especially, in the rural areas, and, that too, to females. After tea, the petroleum refinery industry is there, and,
the refinery at Digboi is about hundred years' old. Despite the presence of these industries, industrialization process has not been widespread in Assam. Sir, trade, hotel and restaurant services have 17.4 per cent share in SDP followed by transport, storage and communication which has 10.5 per cent share in SDP. Tradition services like transport, storage and communication have risen at relatively higher growth rate in the State. Banking and insurance sector has also registered impressive growth rate. In real estate activity in Assam, public sector has relatively higher share in SDP, that is, 6.6 per cent. This is the economic scenario of our State, Sir.

Now, Sir, I am coming to some other problems which are related to development of our State as well as North-Eastern region. We have borders with two countries — China and Bangladesh. Both the countries have got importance in the present context from two different angles. But connected with them are the questions of national security and identity of the people of the North-Eastern region. Sir, I want to raise some questions. How much money are we spending on defence and protecting our people as well as sovereignty of the country? Here, we have included various Ministries for reference of this Bill. What is the allocation of the Home Ministry or the External Affairs Ministry? What has been spent in connection with the implementation of various accords and promises made? Sir, Government has promised something twenty five years back. On 15th August, 1985, Rajiv Gandhi signed an accord and assured that the border will be sealed. But till date border has not been sealed; no floodlight has been given to the border area. The whole problem of our security, the whole problem of our sovereignty comes from the border. So, that has to be sealed, but it has not been done due to non-availability of funds. Sir, this is what is happening in the North-Eastern region, ...(Time-bell rings)...

Sir, if you see the figure of military spending, the size of the economy, the rate of growth, the amount of money spent by each country on infrastructure, electricity production, agriculture produce, research and development, it shows the gap which is enormous between China and India. China is our powerful neighbour and we cannot deny that India and China are not in the same league. It is best to accept the India-China, reality and fashion our responses accordingly. ...(Time-bell rings)...
THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA): Thank you Mr. Kumar.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: We simply have to evolve a method of peaceful cohabitation.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA): Thank you Mr. Kumar.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Sir, diplomacy needs to be more proactive rather than reactive.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA): Thank you Mr. Kumar...(Interruptions)... Kindly conclude. You have already exceeded your time.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: I am concluding, Sir. The problem with our region is that Government should take special care for the growth of the economy of the North-Eastern region as well as the State of Assam.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA): Thank you, thank you, Mr. Kumar.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Sir, we are suffering a lot. We have been deprived with regard to development of our side.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA): Okay, thank you Mr. Kumar. You have made your point.

SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Sir, I request the hon. Minister to take care of the points I have raised in this connection. Thank you, Sir.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA): Thank you Mr. Kumar. Now, Mr. Rabi Bernard. You have got just two minutes.

SHRI A.W. RABI BERNARD (Tamil Nadu): Thank you, Sir. I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill, 2012. I register my request for the allocation of additional funds for Tamil Nadu which has seen severe monsoon failures, electricity shortage inherited from the previous Government and crop failure due to non-implementation of the final award of the Cauvery Tribunal. I suspect the burden of huge debt and deficit left over by the earlier administration and above all the step-motherly treatment of the Central Government has some ulterior motive and hidden agenda against Tamils as a whole. But, Sir, let them know that Tamils will take it.
The Finance Minister is asking for funds to the tune of Rs. 32,000 crore for various Ministries. When we realise that a portion of our budgetary allocations went to the aid of those who massacred 70,000 Tamils during the last few weeks of war in Tamil areas of Sri Lanka, our hearts are broken and cry for justice. Ms. Frances Harrison in her recently published book gives a detailed account of the massacre of Tamils and we all know who stood shoulder to shoulder with the perpetrators of the crime.

Sir, while many South and South-East Asian countries seem to have recovered from financial and developmental setbacks, our country seems to be lagging behind. The World Bank forecast for India published recently says, “India will face a significant slowdown due to low business confidence caused by a lack of policy initiatives and ballooning fiscal imbalances.” Its sister organisation, the International Monetary Fund, has slashed India’s growth forecast for the current year to 4.9 per cent.

All leading banks and international lending agencies like the ADB, the IMF and so on call for greater fiscal tightening. They all urge for greater emphasis on infrastructure sector, especially power. The negligent and sluggish Central Government has failed to modernise power grid of the country as a result of which not just Tamil Nadu, but all the States, except maybe Gujarat, suffer from lack of power/electricity.

Retail inflation has risen to 9.75 per cent. This is one of the highest, if not the highest, inflation rate in Asia and like inflation our fiscal deficit remains the highest among the BRICS Group of emerging economies. The weak rupee seems to become weaker in the coming months. The undeclared devaluation of rupee is a major concern and the Finance Minister should be transparent on this issue. It is due to the demographic dividend of a young population, household savings, middle-class domestic consumption and overseas remittances of very high level that we are surviving. I urge the Government to take decisive steps to stimulate agricultural growth. Had you been decisive in implementing the Cauvery Tribunal Award, our farmers of Cauvery delta area would have had a very good samba crop. Be firm on fiscal consolidation and address infrastructure bottlenecks.

Our hon. Chief Minister, Madam Jayalalitha, has launched an ambitious plan for solar energy production. Our Chief Minister has asked the district administration of the State to make it a "household activity." The Central Government should come forward to support this initiative.
We keep requesting you to support Madam Jayalalitha's efforts for an inclusive information technology growth through the distribution of free laptop computers to higher-secondary level students. The Finance Minister will surely acknowledge the dividends which the country is reaping as a result of educational revolution, particularly in the faculties of engineering and IT brought about by Dr. M.G. R.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA): You have taken twice the time allotted to you.

SHRI A.W. RABI BERNARD: The Free Laptop Scheme of the State Government of Tamil Nadu should also be supported.

Sir, finally, let me quote the Bible. Jesus said, "Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends."

(Hon. Member may kindly fill in Tamil.)

Thank you, Sir.

MESSAGE FROM LOK SABHA

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I have to report to the House the following message received from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha:

"I am directed to inform you that Lok Sabha, at its sitting held on Tuesday, the 18th December, 2012, adopted the following motion:—

"That this House do extend up to the last day of the Budget Session, 2013, the time for presentation of the report of the Joint Committee to examine matters relating to allocation and pricing of telecom licences and spectrum".

GOVERNMENT BILL

The Appropriation (No. 4) Bill, 2012 (contd...)

SHRI ANANDA BHASKAR RAPOLU (Andhra Pradesh): Hon. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the passing of Appropriation Bill is an occasion for mid-term review and from three months now, we are going to have the regular Budget. I am the ninth person