

कर्तव्य समझकर करना है, न कि डर के कारण करना है, यही आज की आवश्यकता है।

महोदय, आपने मुझे यहाँ अपनी बात रखने का अवसर दिया है, इसके लिए आपका बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SASMIT PATRA): The following hon. Members associated themselves with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member, Shri Amar Pal Maurya: Shri Madan Rathore (Rajasthan), Shri Mayankbhai Jaydevbhai Nayak (Gujarat), Shri R. Girirajan (Tamil Nadu) and Shri Mahendra Bhatt (Uttarakhand).

Concern over critical railways safety staffing issues amidst tragic mishaps

DR. SYED NASEER HUSSAIN (KARNATAKA): Sir, I bring to the House's attention a critical issue affecting the safety of the Indian Railways. As of March 2024, over 1.5 lakh safety positions remain vacant, constituting more than 15% of sanctioned roles. This shortage is especially severe in crucial positions like train drivers and inspectors. Recent train mishaps highlight the urgent need for action. Since the tragic Odisha rail accident last year, which claimed over 290 lives, India has witnessed numerous derailments.

(MR. CHAIRMAN *in the Chair.*)

Notably, in the past six weeks alone, three passenger train accidents have resulted in 17 deaths and over 100 injuries. The most recent incident near Barabamboo in Jharkhand, where 18 coaches of the Howrah-Mumbai Mail derailed, has already claimed two lives and injured over 20 passengers.

It is reported that 14,429 loco pilot posts are vacant out of 70,093, and 4,337 assistant driver positions are unfilled out of 57,551 posts. Immediate action is required. I urge the hon. Minister of Railways to prioritize filling these safety-critical positions to ensure the safety of millions who depend on our Railways daily.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The following hon. Members associated themselves with the Special Mention raised by the hon. Member, Dr. Syed Naseer Hussain: Shrimati Sagarika Ghose (West Bengal), Ms. Dola Sen (West Bengal), Shri Jawhar Sircar (West Bengal), Shri A. A. Rahim (Kerala), Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Shri Haris Beeran (Kerala), Shrimati Jebi Mather Hisham (Kerala) and Shri R. Girirajan (Tamil Nadu).

Rest of the Special Mentions will be taken up later in the day.

#GENERAL DISCUSSION

***The Union Budget, 2024-25**

and

***The Budget of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, 2024-25**

MR. CHAIRMAN: All the Members who had given their names to participate in the General Discussion on the Union Budget 2024-25 and the Budget of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir 2024-25 have already participated. Now, the hon. Minister of Finance will reply to the discussion; hon. Minister of Finance.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE; AND THE MINISTER OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): Thank you very much, hon. Chairman Sir. There has been a very robust discussion on the Budget. I understand 83 speakers have participated in the discussion that actually shows the interest that hon. Members have taken on the topic. After a brief introduction which I would like to begin with, I would go by issues clubbing several Members who have spoken on a particular issue and so on for various different issues. I will also try to refer to the names of the hon. Members who have raised these issues while answering.

Sir, this Budget of 2024-25, is actually a continuation of the Interim Budget. So, the features, the critical aspects of the Interim Budget are naturally subsumed into this regular Budget. Since, 2014, the principle which has guided us is the 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas' which continues in this Budget as well and hopefully will guide for the next five years, this set of five years being very critical in taking the first steps towards building a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047. This Budget strikes a fine balance amongst several overriding priorities; growth, employment, welfare spending, capital investments and fiscal consolidation are all equally given a place and we have tried balancing all of them.

Sir, I had promised in this House in 2021-22, the Government would endeavour to attain a fiscal deficit to the GDP level below 4.5 per cent by the year 2025-26. We

Further general discussion continued from 30.07.2024.

* Discussed together.