

Hailing reforms, Murmu sets the stage for Budget session

IN PARLIAMENT. Lists GST 2.0, labour codes, inflation control among govt achievements

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President Draupadi Murmu on Wednesday said the free trade agreement between India and the European Union will boost manufacturing and services sector, and create job opportunities.

Addressing the joint session of Parliament, marking the commencement of the Budget Session, Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the President's address as "comprehensive and insightful".

"It reaffirmed our collective commitment to further speed up the 'Reforms Express' and the emphasis on innovation and good governance," he said.

Highlighting the conclusion of the FTA negotiations, President Murmu said, "It will give an impetus to the manufacturing and service sectors and create employment opportunities for the youth." On Tuesday, India and the EU announced conclusion of the deal. India now expects that post legal vetting and ratification by the legislatures in EU member



POSITIVE NOTE. President Droupadi Murmu addressing the joint session of Parliament on Wednesday

countries, the deal could see the light of the day in the current calendar year itself.

Murmu said that the country's economic foundation has grown significantly stronger over the past 11 years. "Despite various global crises, India has remained the fastest-growing major economy in the world," she said, while adding that the country has further improved its record in keeping inflation under control.

"It is directly benefiting the poor and middle-class families of the country. As a result of the policies of my government, the income of citizens has increased; their

savings have grown, and their purchasing power has also improved," she said.

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Murmu also said that her government is chugging ahead on the 'Reforms Express' path. Rules and provisions are updated to meet future needs. Everyone has witnessed how the historic next-generation reform in GST has filled citizens with enthusiasm, she said, adding that it has ensured savings of ₹1 lakh crore for citizens.

Revamping of the Income Tax law, a historic decision, was done to exempt income of up to ₹12 lakh from taxation. These reforms are

providing unprecedented benefits to the poor and middle-class families. It has also given the country's economy a new impetus.

She further highlighted the need to safeguard workers' interests. This is also the primary objective behind the implementation of the new labour laws.

For a long time, the country's workforce was entangled in dozens of labour laws, Murmu said. These have been consolidated into just four codes, making it easier for workers to receive fair wages, allowances, and other welfare benefits. "From these reforms, the country's youth and women in particular will benefit significantly," she said.

The President noted that during the last 11 years, over 7,200 km of national highways have been laid in the North-Eastern region, increasing connectivity to remote and border areas. Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, approximately 50,000 km of rural roads have been come up, Murmu said, adding that it has improved access to markets, hospitals, and schools.