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YEAR OF FILM

PRIME MINISTER'S 20-POINT ECONOMIC PROGRAMME...

1. Continuance of steps to bring down prices of essential commodities. Streamline production, procurement and distribution of essential commodities. Strict economy in Government expenditure.
2. Implementation of agricultural land ceilings and speedier distribution of surplus land and compilation of land records.
3. Stepping up of provision of house sites for landless and weaker sections.
4. Bonded labour, wherever it exists, will be declared illegal.
5. Plan for liquidation of rural indebtedness. Legislation for moratorium on recovery of debt from landless labourers, small farmers and artisans.
6. Review of laws on minimum agricultural wages.
7. Five million more hectares to be brought under irrigation. National programme for use of underground water.
8. An accelerated power programme. Super thermal stations under central control.
9. New development plan for development of handloom sector.
10. Improvement in quality and supply of people's cloth.
11. Socialisation of urban and urbanisable land. Ceiling ownership and possession of vacant land and on plinth area of new dwelling units.
12. Special squads for valuation of conspicuous construction and prevention of tax evasion. Summary trials and deterrent punishment of economic offenders.
13. Special legislation for confiscation of smugglers' properties.
14. Liberalisation of investment procedures. Action against misuse of import licences.
15. New Schemes for workers' association in industry.
16. National permit scheme for road transport.
17. Income Tax relief to middle class - exemption limit placed at Rs.8,000/-.
18. Essential commodities at controlled prices to students in hostels.
19. Books and stationery at controlled prices.
20. New apprenticeship scheme to enlarge employment and training, especially of weaker sections.

...AND THE GAINS

On June 25, 1975, the President proclaimed a state of Emergency, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by Clause (1) of Article 352 of the Constitution. The proclamation said, "a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India is threatened by internal disturbance." The proclamation succeeded in easing tension and restoring calm throughout the country. However, the Government was not content with mere re-establishment of law and order.

On July 1, 1975, the Prime Minister announced a "Twenty Point Economic Programme" designed to achieve speedy economic development and to remove many of the evil practices, which had persisted all these years, including bonded labour and rural indebtedness.

These measures and the other steps taken by the authorities and the people have brought a variety of gains in all fields. The important gains are listed below:

ECONOMIC GAINS

1. Wholesale price index at the end of March 1976 was back to the level of March 1974 with the reversal of inflationary trends of past two years. According to the report of International Monetary Fund, the consumer prices registered the big drop in India during 1975 while in most other countries the prices rose. Consumer prices for industrial workers came down by 9.1 per cent at the end of December 1975, and for agricultural labourers by 19.5 per cent as compared with October 1974. Even the normal seasonal price rise and the pre-budget price increase was mostly absent this year.
2. The overall increase in industrial production in 1975-76 is estimated at 4.5 per cent as against 2.5 per cent in 1974-75 and a negative rate of growth in 1973-74. All the public sector undertakings maintained their improved performance. To quote a few examples; during 1975-76 steel production touched a record figure of 72.51 lakh tonnes, 10 lakh tonnes more than that of 1974-75, coal production hit an all-time high of 998.8 lakh tonnes, 115 lakh tonnes more than previous year and copper production was 23,888 tonnes against 15,801 during 1974-75. Power generation was 13 per cent more than in 1974-75.

The climate of industrial relations remained good and the number of man-days lost through industrial unrest was almost negligible. Along with it, action was taken to prevent unnecessary lay-offs and retrenchment of workers. For this purpose laws were amended suitably.

3. The prices of all foodgrains declined. A record production of 114 million tonnes of foodgrains was achieved.

4. Land ceiling laws in all the States have either been revised or new laws enacted in line with national objectives. A total of 11.9 lakhs returns have so far been filed. Of these, 600,000 cases have been disposed of yielding 930,000 acres of surplus land. The work relating to allotment of surplus land to the landless has been taken up in a few States and about 120,000 acres have already been allotted.

5. Over 60 lakh house-sites have been allotted to the landless and weaker sections. Of these more than 368,000 house sites are developed sites. Some States like Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal, have taken up programmes for construction of houses on the sites allotted to the landless and 200,000 houses have been constructed so far.

6. A law abolishing bonded labour has already been enacted. So far about 58,400 bonded labourers have been freed in various States.

7. All States having the problem of rural indebtedness have imposed moratorium on recovery of debts from landless labourers, marginal and small farmers and rural artisans. To provide for weaker sections with alternative sources of credit, cooperative institutions have been strengthened. Ten Regional Rural Banks have been set up. Fifty more are planned to be established during the current financial year.

8. The States have revised minimum agricultural wages and in most States wages have been enhanced.

9. During the current year, allocation for irrigation and power schemes was increased by about Rs.100 crores and additional central assistance of Rs.85 crores was given to the States with a view to accelerating work on irrigation and power projects. More than 20 lakh hectares of additional irrigation potential is expected to be created.

10. The Central Government provided loans totalling Rs.427 lakhs to clear the accumulated stocks of handloom cloth. A comprehensive programme for revitalisation and development of the handloom industry

has been undertaken. Thirteen intensive development projects at a cost of Rs.185 lakhs each and 20 export promotion centres at a cost of Rs.40 lakhs each, are being taken up.

11. Since July 1975 the number of retail outlets for the supply of controlled cloth has increased to 40,694, of which 80 per cent are in the rural areas. An amount of Rs.234 lakhs has been provided to the cooperatives, entrusted with the responsibility of distributing controlled cloth, for raising bank finances.

12. The Urban Land, Ceiling and Regulation Act, 1976 came into effect from February 17, 1976. The Act prescribes a ceiling limit in respect of vacant land in urban areas to be held by a person, prohibits transfer of vacant land within the ceiling limit and lays down the maximum plinth area of dwelling units to be constructed in future.

13. Under the Voluntary Disclosure Scheme, over 250,000 declarants disclosed income and wealth exceeding Rs.1587 crores, yielding a tax revenue of Rs.249 crores. As a result of the drive against tax evasion, the collection of direct taxes since July 1975 has been 27.4 per cent higher than in the corresponding period of last year.

14. The Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators Forfeiture of Property Act has been passed by Parliament making it unlawful for certain categories of persons, who have been convicted/detained under certain specified Acts, and their relatives and associates, to hold any illegally acquired property. The Act is being implemented by specially appointed high officials. The top smugglers were put behind the bars and stringent actions taken against foreign exchange racketeers. On March 19 this year, 42 smugglers were declared as absconders and their property seized.

15. Various steps have been taken to liberalise the industrial licensing policy so as to stimulate investment by small entrepreneurs and to ensure growth in priority areas and fuller utilisation of installed capacity. Review of the distribution and price controls has been undertaken in a number of industries and as a result controls in various industries like aluminium, white printing paper, tyres and tubes, baby food, cement, agricultural tractors, and commercial vehicles, etc. have been relaxed. Import and export policies have been liberalised.

16. A detailed scheme for workers participation in industry at the shop level and plant level was announced in October 1975. The scheme, which provides for setting up Shop Councils and Joint Councils

in manufacturing and mining industries employing 500 or more workers, has been implemented in over 200 undertakings, including 47 Central public sector concerns.

17. Bottlenecks in inter-state movement of goods transport by road were eased with the introduction of National Permit Scheme. Over 500 permits have already been issued.

18. The rates of income-tax at all levels of personal income have been reduced in the new budget and the exemption limit has been raised to Rs.8,000. On the other hand, a nation-wide survey has been undertaken to discover new assesseees. As a result, 2,40,000 assesseees have been brought within the tax net.

19. The scheme for supply of essential commodities to students through cooperatives now covers about 6,138 student hostels benefitting about 762,000 students.

20. Text books and exercise books are now freely available in all parts of the country and their prices have come down because of supply of white printing paper at concessional rates. Book Banks have been opened in 74,868 colleges and schools to provide relief to poor students particularly those belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

21. New trades and industries have been brought under apprenticeship scheme bringing the total number to 103 trades and 216 industries. Additionally 17,000 apprenticeship seats have been added bringing the total to 128,000 seats. More than 121,000 seats have been utilised. At present, there are over 24,000 apprentices belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections of society.

22. The atmosphere of tension, violence and agitation, which prevailed before the proclamation of emergency, was defused. Calm was restored throughout the country.

23. Regional and sectarian differences have been forgotten and long-standing disputes between states settled. A few examples: The long-standing Godavari river water dispute was resolved with an agreement by the concerned five states-Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa. Bihar and Orissa reached an accord on sharing the waters of the Subarnarekha ending the decade-old inter-state dispute. The 10-year-old dispute over the sharing of Ravi-Beas waters between Punjab and Haryana was settled.

24. Complete communal harmony has prevailed and there is total absence of any communal violence.
25. The long-standing problem in Nagaland has been more or less settled. The rebels in Mizoram laid down their arms and the ground was prepared for peaceful progress.
26. Peace returned to the University campus. Self-appointed student leaders were deprived of their capacity to create mischief. Examinations were conducted in an orderly manner and the pernicious practice of copying was eliminated.
27. The Railways lifted 196.19 million tonnes of revenue earning traffic during 1975-76 setting a new record. This was 20.9 million tonnes more than the previous best performance of 175.3 million tonnes achieved in 1972-73.
28. Attendance in Government offices showed a vast improvement and disposal of work became more prompt and efficient. More than 23,000 officials were retired at the Centre and many more in the States under a plan to weed out the corrupt and the inefficient. Over 50,000 cases are under review.
29. A nationwide campaign has been launched against social evils like dowry which had in the past brought economic ruin and misery to millions of families.
30. A new dimension has been imparted to family planning and the programme is now being implemented more vigorously.
31. There is a significant improvement in external relations. Old ties have been strengthened and new ones forged. After a break of more than 13 years, diplomatic relations with China will be at Ambassador's level. Diplomatic ties with Pakistan, snapped in 1971, are to be restored along with resumption of air links, road and rail traffic.

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