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Title: Regarding upgradation of existing National Institute of Speech & Hearing in Thiruvananthapuram to National University.

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): Hon. Speaker, the Central Government in the Union Budget of 2015-16 had promised to upgrade the existing National Institute of Speech and Hearing (NISH) in Thiruvananthapuram as the National University of Rehabilitation and Disability Studies (NURDS). The Government of Kerala agreed to allocate 50 acres of land in Thiruvananthapuram District for this purpose and has provided all the necessary clearances.

A Bill to establish the NURDS in Thiruvananthapuram had been prepared by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment in 2016 after consulting NISH, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of HRD and the DoPT. Unfortunately, the Bill was never introduced in Parliament because the Cabinet has not yet cleared it. Suddenly, the Government decided to renege on its public assurance, which was made on the floor of the House also, and dropped its plans to set up the NURDS in Thiruvananthapuram; a shocking decision considering the fact that most of the ground work for establishing the NURDS has already been completed. This is really part of the pattern of the Centre's almost feudal treatment of the State of Kerala.

NISH is known for excellence in its programmes in the field of disability studies. The cochlear implant programme for children done by NISH was expanded across the nation by the Central Government. It has joined academic programmes with internationally reputed universities. It is the ideal place to be expanded into a national university.

I urge the Government to revise its stand, implement the assurance that was made to the people of Kerala and of Thiruvananthapuram in particular, the State Capital where the BJP has a strong presence, and not let the announcement of 2015 and the election promises of 2019 go down as yet another '*Jumla*'.

माननीय अध्यक्ष :

श्री एन.के. प्रेमचन्द्रन और

एडवोकेट अदूर प्रकाश को डॉ. शशि थरूर द्वारा उठाए गए विषय के साथ संबद्ध करने की अनुमति प्रदान की जाती है ।