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PAPER CLIPPINGS

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ಶಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: Publication - Budget Session

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: The Hindu

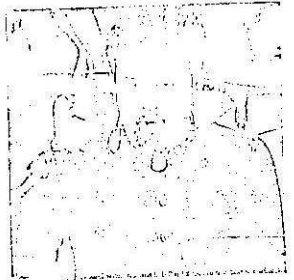
ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 12/12/2011

# Smriti Irani, Anurag Thakur take on Congress leader

## Defending the Budget, they reply to Rahul Gandhi's allegation of crony capitalism in the farm laws

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI**  
Union Minister Smriti Irani on Thursday targeted the former Congress president Rahul Gandhi while intervening in the Budget discussion in the Lok Sabha.  
Speaking a couple of hours after Mr. Gandhi attacked the Narendra Modi government in the Lok Sabha, Ms. Irani hit out at his record as the former Member of Parliament from Amethi, the Lok Sabha constituency that she now represents in Uttar Pradesh.  
Without naming Mr. Gandhi, she said, "This person had said that he's not concerned about the Budget. I am not surprised be-

cause the Budget mentions about the Aatmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana. He is not concerned even when there was not even a CT scan facility at the hospitals of his constituency when he was an MP there."  
"When he was Amethi MP, a trust of his family took farmers' land on the pretext of opening a medical college. But they built a guest house for themselves there. Being Amethi MP, I would like to say that if someone made provision for a medical college here, it was Narendra Modi," claimed Ms. Irani.  
When Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury objected to the charge, she countered that she had facts



Minister Anurag Thakur speaking during the Budget session on Thursday. •PTI

and could produce proof.  
Earlier, Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur not only defended the Budget robustly but fired more than a few broadsides against Mr. Gandhi, who had preceded him as a speaker

during the discussion on the Budget. Referring to Mr. Gandhi's allegation of crony capitalists being encouraged under the Modi government, Mr. Thakur said that the corporates to which he had referred had been given port development projects in Kerala, the State from which Mr. Gandhi was elected.  
"Even the grain silos that Rahul Gandhi mentioned as belonging to these corporates, which he says intend to hoard grain and sell at high prices, were set up under the UPA (United Progressive Alliance) government. He should examine the previous government's dealings with corporate houses," said Mr. Thakur.

"When you say *hum do hamarey do* (us two, our two) you are not referring to anyone but *didhi* and *jijaji* (sister and brother-in-law)," he said, referring to other members of the Gandhi family. "You say you speak for farmers. In various States, members of the first family of Congress have taken over land under dubious circumstances," he added.  
Other Opposition members who targeted the government over Budgetary allocations included All India Majlis-e-Ittahadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) MP Imtiaz Jaleel, who alleged that allocations for minorities-related schemes had been cut by as much as ₹1,024 crore.