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OBITUARIES TO DR. NEELAM SANJIVA REDDY AND OTHERS

10 June, 1996

Hon. Speaker, Sir, while associating myself with the Condolence Resolution moved by your honour in this House, it is my painful duty this morning to associate myself with the Motion paying homage to Dr. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy.

In the demise of Dr. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, the nation has lost an eminent freedom fighter, an able administrator, a clean politician and an elder Statesman. He sacrificed almost everything during the freedom struggle including his higher education by responding to the clarion call of Mahatma Gandhi by taking a plunge into freedom struggle early in his youth and spent several years in Jail. He was from a farming family. By sheer dint of sacrifice, hard work and merit, he became the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. As Chief Minister, he took initiative in launching many projects which later led to an accelerated agricultural development. He was not only a progressive administrator but also an extraordinarily sensitive politician. He was a mass leader and was deeply committed to high standards in public life.

He served the country in several capacities starting as a Member of the Madras Legislative Assembly and the Constituent Assembly of India, as Minister in the State and Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. He was a Member in the Cabinet formed by Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri and later in the Cabinet of Shrimati Indira Gandhi. As an able administrator, he provided mature guidance to several Ministries in the Central Government. It was a tribute to his parliamentary skills that he was elected the Speaker of the 4th Lok Sabha, an office that won him wide acclaim. It was a tribute to his genius that he was again elected unanimously the Speaker of the Lok Sabha in March, 1977 and then went on to be elected unanimously to the highest office of the land.

I had the fortune of knowing him closely for several years. I also had the opportunity of interacting closely with him during his last years when he

made Bangalore his home. As I speak about him today, many of these memories of my association with him are crowding in. The public life of India is poorer by his departure. But he will always remain one of the prime examples of public life for all of us to emulate.

I would also like to place on record our condolences on the passing away of some of our former colleagues.

Shri Ram Charan was a Member of the 4th Lok Sabha who had special interest in social work and uplift of the downtrodden.

Shri Valmiki Choudhary is well known for his close association with our first President Dr. Rajendra Prasad. He has done a signal service to the nation by collecting and compiling papers relating to Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

We also mourn the death of Shri D.D. Puri, Shri P.A. Antony and Shri Vijay Pal Singh. Shri Puri was closely associated with the interest of farmers and the sugar industry. Shri P.A. Antony was an intellectual and a distinguished sportsman. Shri Vijay Pal Singh took special interest and was devoted to the welfare of the working class, peasants and youth.

I wish to place on record the deep sense of personal loss and grief felt by the nation and by all of us on the passing away of Dr. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy and our former colleagues.

May their souls rest in peace!

BACK NOTE

- I. Obituaries to Dr. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy and others,
10 June, 1996.

NIL

**MOTION OF CONFIDENCE IN THE COUNCIL
OF MINISTERS**

11 and 12 June, 1996

**(i) Motion of Confidence in the Council of Ministers,
11 June, 1996**

Sir, I beg to move:

"That this House expresses its confidence in the Council of Ministers"

Hon. Speaker, Sir, before I express my views on the Vote of Confidence Motion, the Leader of the Opposition Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji and the other senior leader Shri George Fernandes raised the fertilizer issue wherein a sum worth about Rs. 133 crores is involved. He has also made a point that the Government should come out with a categorical reply by today evening. I would like to assure this House that there is no question of hiding any facts. I am equally interested to unearth I am equally interested to know the real culprits and I am equally interested to know who are responsible. Kindly; bear with me for a moment. Let us not draw conclusions before the inquiry is completed. The inquiry is going on.

Sir, our respected Leader of the Opposition, who was the Prime Minister, who was sitting in the very same chair for about 15 days, has also gone through this particular case and he has instructed the concerned authorities to speed up the investigation, if I am correct. I am not meddling with the investigation. I have not called any officers and till now, I am only going through the papers. The Papers have highlighted some of the facts. I want to know whether they are true, based on realities. I do not want to go by the press versions. Unless the CBI Director gives me the full information, I cannot come before the House without proper materials. Tomorrow I am going to answer on the Vote of No-Confidence Motion sorry, on the Vote of Confidence Motion. On this particular issue, I would like to place all materials before the House and all, relevant factors before the House. I do not want to suppress any issue relating to this urea scandal.

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Respected Speaker, Sir, I today rise to seek the confidence of this august House as the hon. Rashtrapatiji has called me to take the responsibility of the Prime Ministership. He has also asked me to go before the House, before the 12th of this month and seek the Vote of Confidence.

Sir, I would like to say only a few words at this stage. The composition of the Eleventh Lok Sabha is a unique one for the first time in our Indian history. The composition of the House is consisting of nearly 32 national parties as well as the regional parties.

Sir, I know, there are many more senior leaders, more matured leaders, more experienced leaders in parliamentary life. In this critical juncture the responsibility of taking over the administration as the Prime Minister was thrown upon me because all secular parties including the Congress have asked me to.

Please wait. Please wait for some time. You have got ample opportunity to say whatever you want to say — I am not going to disturb. I will sit throughout the discussion, I will not go out of the House. I will hear every hon. Member's views and then I will try to reply to all the points, what is going to be raised today during the discussion.

Sir, how the situation arose? Before election to the Eleventh Lok Sabha so many political *pandits*, so many columnists had expressed their views that in the Eleventh Lok Sabha the results would be a 'Hung Parliament'. For the last one year, the debate both in public and in private though media is going on in this country that no political party can get clear majority to form the Government at the Centre. This is the opinion which was prevailing before the election to the Eleventh Lok Sabha.

Sir, after the Eleventh Lok Sabha's elections were over, what is the mandate of the people? The mandate of the people is not to any one political party to run this country. Yes, our hon. Leader of the Opposition, who is the former Prime Minister, was asked to take the responsibility of the Prime Ministership and run the country as per the appointment order issued by the Rashtrapati. Because the Rashtrapati in his wisdom thought that this party is a larger party, he gave it an opportunity and asked Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee to prove his majority before 31st May 1996. I do not want now to go in detail about what happened on 27th and 28th May, about the deliberations in the House. On 28th May, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee tendered his resignation. On the same day Rashtrapati called me and gave me the appointment order to form the Government. All the secular parties had met on 15th May and elected me as the leader of the secular front.

Sir, I am not a Member of this House. Even then all the United Front friendly parties took a decision and expressed their confidence in me though I am not so experienced, though I am not so matured a politician in so far as the parliamentary functioning is concerned. They all expressed their confidence in me and asked me to take up this responsibility. At the same time the Congress Working Committee on 12th May had passed a resolution saying that they are not going to form the Government; also they are not going to support the BJP at any cost and if any secular party is going to take up the responsibility they are going to extend their support unconditionally. That is the resolution of the Congress Working Committee. In this background Rashtrapatiji called me on 28th May at about 8 o'clock and asked me to take up this new assignment.

I am too small a man. In this very chair, if we go back to the history, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who was one of the tallest men in our Indian history functioned as the Prime Minister, up to the last one. That is Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji — whether he was there for ten or fifteen days, I have got my own respect and regard for the experience and the maturity he has got in the parliamentary life. I am now succeeding him on the condition of the Rashtrapatiji to prove the majority in the very same House. The deadline is 12th June. That is why I am coming before this august House to seek its final views on this Motion of Confidence.

Let us analyse the present situation. Why was BJP with the allied parties not able to prove the majority? It had been given 15 days time. I am not going to attribute any motive. They had not adopted any foul method to see that the majority is secured from other parties. According to our senior leaders, he had expressed here in this very same House that they did not want to stoop to any type of manoeuvring and they wanted to see that their Government was allowed to continue because they have got a majority in number. That was the argument advanced by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji. If the numerical strength is going to be taken into consideration, if 160 plus the strength of the allied parties comes to about 194 in a House of 542, could it be possible to say that they have got the mandate of the people? I would like to pose this question for your consideration.

Sir, today, I would like to again reiterate that the mandate of the people is for a coalition Government. It is crystal clear. No political party in the Eleventh Lok Sabha was able to muster strength on its own. The Congress got the second place and all other parties put together, I would like to say, barring one or two parties, were able to have 192 Members in the United Front.

Sir, we have got a common programme. The common programme was also placed before the nation. In that common programme, we have spelt out what are the priorities, and all these things that have already been placed before the nation. And the hon. Members of the house can express their views about the common programme.

Sir, I would like to request all the Members of this House, at this critical juncture, when the political atmosphere is so confused, when the political atmosphere is so fluid that we should function with necessary cooperation I only request them to extend their full cooperation where the Government is going on a right path. In case, if they find that the Government is not going on the right path, then, they are free to expose this Government. I have no reservation. I am making this point very clear, if this Government, or if this Ministry, is at fault on any matter, they can expose it. This House has got every right to say about the misdeeds of this Government. I am answerable to this House. I am answerable to 90 crore population of this country. I will assure you this much.

A new chapter has begun. A coalition era has begun. Sir, this was told by the former President of India, Shri Venkatraman, about two years back. The era of coalition Government has begun. This is what he expressed about two years back. It has come true. Today, there is some sort of a doubt in the minds of some friends that Mr. Deve Gowda is going to compromise on all matters. I would like to make myself clear that let me be very clear, let me make myself clear to this august House — Congress, while extending its support has not put any condition. Not only that, up till now on any matter they have not interfered. They have not interfered in any matter about taking any decision. But I myself took a decision not to take any important decision unless the House gives its concrete support, unless the Vote of Confidence is going to be carried through in the House. I issued instructions to all my

Ministers not to take any major decisions till the Twelfth of this month, till knowing the result tomorrow, I do not want to doubt about the present coalition Government's tenure at Office. I would like to make myself clear. The mandate of the people is for a coalition Government and this Government is going to survive for five years. We are going to prove that.

Sir, it is not a question of self-praising. I was the Chief Minister for one-and-a-half years in Karnataka. I have never allowed a single scandal in Karnataka in the last one-and-a-half years. I might tell you, I may be an inexperienced politician compared to other senior leaders, but one word I am going to tell this House.

Sir, as the Chief Minister, what I have done, the days will prove. What is going to be the action of this Government about the minorities, about the backward classes, about the farming communities; what is going to be the action of this Government, that is mentioned in our programme.

Wait for sometime I am not going to run away from the House. Please wait. Let us see. I know full well about the composition of the House and about the seniority of the so many leaders in this very House. There are three former Prime Ministers and there are senior most comrades like Indrajit Guptaji and Somnath Chatterjee. I do not want to name them. I was sitting in the back bench, in the corner three years back. I observed the proceedings as a back bencher. When all these senior leaders used to speak, I was very much attentive — let me learn and I want to learn at least something from the senior leaders. That is my characteristic in my political career. I may tell you very frankly that I am not going to say that I am such a learned man. I am not an economist and I am not a scientist. But I would like to say that I know the problems of the people of this country. I would tell you only one word. Sir, In this very Chair so many stalwarts have functioned as Prime Ministers for 17 years or 18 years. And today if I am here for five years or five months it is not a criterion for me. What I am going to do as Prime Minister of this country, that is important. I am going to spend every minute, every hour, every time for the sake of the nation and I am going to prove what I am for the poorer sections of the society, for the downtrodden people and the minorities of this country. That is what I am going to do. That is my concern. That is how I work. That is how, I worked and I am

going to say this with all sincerity at my command. I am going to give a word of promise. If I commit any mistake, I am subject to scrutiny of this House. I have subjected myself to the scrutiny of this House. I would like to tell you only one thing. Sir, I do not want to take much time of the House because there are so many speakers. So many senior leaders are going to participate in this debate and I think our former Prime Minister Shri Vajpayeeji is going to speak today. I only assure you that on all the points that are going to be raised, I am going to reply tomorrow in detail and I am not going to avoid any information whatever that is required by this House.

With these words, I would request all the hon. Members of this House humbly and with all humility to see that this Confidence Motion is carried through.

**(ii) Reply on Motion of Confidence in the Council of Ministers,
12 June, 1996**

The hon. Speaker, Sir, since yesterday several senior Members including two former Prime Ministers participated in this Motion of Confidence.

Sir, I have gone through the manifesto of the Bharatiya Janata Party and also the speeches of the former Prime Minister and the present Leader of the Opposition on 27th and 28th May, 1996, delivered in this House. At the same time, he has expressed his dissatisfaction, his dejection at one stage by saying "I wanted to retire from politics but things are not coming in favour of my retirement." That is what it is when it is translated from Hindi to English. I have gone through that. Why has such a situation happened in this country? A person like Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee expresses that type of dejection in public life, why? What exactly is the reason for this? Today, we have all assembled here. We are representing nearly 90 crore population and nearly 545 Members sitting in this highest, apex institution.

Sir, I was here only for a short span of time, just three-and-a-half years, sitting in the back bench. I used to hear the speeches of all the senior leaders and I was just observing myself as to what for I came here. In fact, honestly I will tell you today, what for I came here. Is it for this type of

performance in the House? Sir, to what extent this institution has been denigrated! I must feel sorry - whether the Member belongs to that side or this side. Is it not the responsibility of everyone of us to maintain the dignity, decency and decorum of this House? When everybody was talking, I was sitting silent, I was keeping quiet, I did not even open my lips. Whatever may be the type of criticism, I tried to keep mum and hear them with all rapt attention. The former Prime Minister, Shri Chandrashekhar, today stood up in anger and said, how can we run this House if this is the situation! In utter disgust he has mentioned that, if I am correct.

Sir, I do not want to take the issue of corruption first. If you want to deliberate on corruption- from the days of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, I have gone through the proceedings in the library.

But I have at least tried to understand the corruption issue that is prevailing in this country.

Let us start from the days of Independence when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was sitting in this very place as the Prime Minister. It was Pandit Nehru who is one of the tallest statesmen of this country who brought Haridas Maniwarke. At that time, his son-in-law, Feroze Gandhi had brought that issue on the floor of this House. Today, let us touch our hearts. Only for two weeks the BJP was in the Government. In how many States the BJP Governments are there? Are there not any corruption charges? I am going to prove it...*(Interruptions)*

When I speak, I speak based on certain background. When Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was speaking, I never opened my lips. I do not want to go into the merits and demerits of it when the former hon. Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition said, 'both father and the son are very intelligent people and there is no need of any guru to protect them'.

I am sorry to say this but it is not correct on the part of anybody to make insinuation unless the matter is proved otherwise. Unless the issue which is now under investigation is proved. I cannot accept this position.

Sir, I will come to the corruption issue later on. I am going to deal with all these matters.

Yes, we are all corrupt people sitting on this side pleading for secularism. Only the saintly people are sitting on that side. Yes, that is why the people have given them only 23 percent of votes. They have come here and now they are pleading that the people's mandate is for them and all other people sitting on this side are corrupt and only they are the people who have come from heaven with all virtues.

Yes. I say it. Please, for God's sake, do not argue.

Sir, that an amount of agony? Your good self, I hold highest respect for you. Even now whether we sit either on that side or this side, I will say only one word that in my 35 years of political life, I have never attributed a single word either to Advaniji or Vajpayeeji.

He took up the RSS issue. Even now I say that on that particular day I applauded the role played by the RSS at the time of Emergency. But what happened subsequently? My whole speech has not been quoted. I have brought all those details but I do not want to waste the time of the House. Mr. Arun Shourie is not a Member of this House and that is why I do not want to take up all those issues that have been said on that particular day. All those things are reported here.

Sir, corruption is a part of the issues which we have before us. There are other burning problems in this country which, according to me, are major issues. I am a humble politician. I am not the tallest personality in the Indian politics. There is no lust for power in me. They have said that 'the United Front comes with a programme and convinced that old bitter experience will not be repeated due to political ambition and lust for power'.

Shri Chandra Shekhar is sitting in the last row. I would have become the Chief Minister of Karnataka in 1983. It is he alone who prevailed on me not to attempt to become the Chief Minister of Karnataka in 1983.

It was because of you, I sacrificed that position. I am a person who tendered my resignation to the office thrice. If you know my background, I have not come to Delhi in search of any office. My people of Karnataka, 5 crore population of Karnataka, have given the mandate to run the State without the mercy of, without the support of anybody. I had that courage to

tell this august House. I had the people's support and on the people's support, I sat in Karnataka as the Chief Minister and ran the State Government for one and a half years. I myself accepted this responsibility. Yes, all the senior leaders who are sitting here tried to prevail on me and said, "In the given situation, you should take the responsibility." When all these senior leaders who are much more experienced than me asked me to shoulder this responsibility, at that time I bowed my head.

Sir, while accepting this responsibility. I know the position. I know the composition of the House. I know the complicated problems of this country. Knowing fully well, I have accepted this responsibility. I will try my best to discharge my duty. The people and the party, the United party, the United Front including the Congress support have reposed confidence on me. I am going to discharge my duty not to satisfy these people but to satisfy the nine hundred million people of this country. That is my one pledge here. Whether I may remain here for five years, whether I may remain here for five days. I am not going to be afraid of that. I am totally a different man. You please note these words. Please mark these words. I am not going to be afraid of any of these things. That is my temperament. I may talk at a very low profile. But when things come, I am not going to yield to anybody. That is my temperament. I had fought many more battles in my life to come to this position.

Sir, let us now go back to our achievements. Let us go back to our achievements. It is not a thing to be laughed at. Construction of a *mandiris* not the issue today before this country when the people are suffering for the basic necessities like drinking water, communication facilities. The village has not road today. The people have no drinking water. This House is debating all this. My hon. esteemed colleague Members, whichever political party they may belong, whichever side they may belong, whichever side they may belong, I am not going to say anything wrong. Is this House to discuss about the drinking water problem? Is this the House to discuss about the communication facility to village? That is the responsibility of the State Government. But what is the position today? Even after 48 years of independence, today you yourself have said, the late Rajivji had said that 'for one rupee central grant is released, only 16 paise reaches the grassroot'. That is what is quoted in your speeches. That means, corruption is at all levels. In every walk of life, corruption is there. Lastly you have said one word about corruption, we should all sit together and

take a conscious decision so far as corruption is concerned. Before taking up that issue, the Lok Pal issue, I am going to deal with other matters.

Sir, I must compliment the Congress Government for one thing. When the former Prime Minister was sitting here, he said, "I am going to provide this time a sum of Rs. 30,000 crore for the rural development". That was one major area in which he had changed the programme, for which I appreciated on that day itself.

Sir, today I would like to give one more suggestion. I have not taken any major decision. I am going to change certain priorities in consultation with all of you, friends. The priorities are: first is drinking water, second is communication, third is primary education, health care and then housing. Sir, on public distribution. ...*[Interruptions]*

Please wait. You may appreciate it or you may not be going to appreciate. It is left to you, left to the august House. What I am going to say in this House is about what I have done in the last one-and-a-half years as the Chief Minister. That was my first concern. I am going to say that if you all agree, if the Chief Ministers of the concerned States agree, I would like to again revive the priority.

In Karnataka, when I took over as the Chief Minister, I called a meeting of all District Collectors. I had asked them to enumerate how many villages had no roads, how many families had no houses, how many villages had no drinking water facilities. I gave one month's time to enumerate all these deficiencies, the shortfalls in every village. That was the first decision I took in the District Collectors meeting. For your Information, for the Information of the august House, I will tell you that In Karnataka-it is not a big State; it has a 'population of five crores-in my home State, there are 19.86 lakhs persons who are without houses or sites. This is after 48 years of Independence and after implementing so many programmes. From the time of Shri Nijalingappaji and even from the time of the undivided Congress, I will tell you today, housing programmes have been implemented. Today when I asked the District Collectors to go and enumerate how many houses are not there, how many people are without house- I wanted to know that - after enumeration, the figures I got from all the District Collectors are that 19.86 lakhs of families have no houses in Karnataka. When Karnataka situation is like that, I do not know, what is exactly the situation in the whole country. Some people say,

Deve Gowda does not know Hindi; some people say Deve Gowda does not know English; some people say Deve Gowda does not know Meghalaya; some people say Deve Gowda may not know Shimla, Darjeeling. Some people will go to Darjeeling; some people will go to the Kashmir Valley; some people will go to Shimla. For what? They are summer resorts.

I am a person who lives in my village. I am a person who lives with my farmers. I am a person who lives with my peasants. I am a man who lives with my workers. That is how I have come to this position. I may not be able to know the entire India as a whole. At least I have seen it in map what India is. I have seen that much at least as the Chief Minister of Karnataka.

Sir, the decision which I have taken I would like to tell you today. If all the hon. Members including our senior leaders agree in the next Budget to oblige and formulate certain programmes, apart from what the document the United Front has now placed before the nation, I would like to place certain priorities and come before the House to see that the basic necessities in this country, at least, should be completed with a time-bound programme, whether it is drinking water, whether it is primary education, whether it is health and education. These are some of the areas on which my heart is dwelling. I wanted to see that this should not prolong for the Ninth Plan, Tenth Plan and Eleventh Plan. I am not a person to accept that position, whatever may be the position.

Regarding financial implications, yes, your goodself has said with your vast experience, 'Where do you find the resources?' I do agree. This country is not poor. This country is rich but that richness is in the hands of a few individuals.

I will tell you today that in every political Parties, there are good people. Bad people are also there. Do not be under the impression that BJP has no bad people or BJP has no good people. In every political Party, there are both good and bad people. At this juncture, I would like to appeal to everyone of the hon. Members of this side and that side that let us try to make a common effort as to how to mobilize our resources. If you all agree, resource mobilization is not a big issue. We can mobilize the resources. I would like to make this *point ...[Interruptions]*. Please wait, I have also some basic knowledge, at least, about administration.

Even though I am not an expert, I am not an eloquent speaker in Hindi, or an eloquent Speaker in English, a forceful a speech in English or Hindi is not going to solve the problems of the poor man in India ... *(interruptions)* I have seen enough! I have seen enough!

About reservations Shri Vajpayee has asked about what we did in two months. I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. House in two months after I took over, I was here, when the Seventy-Second Amendment and the Seventy-Third Amendment with regard to the Zilla Parishads and Taluk Panchayats and with regard to the municipalities or local bodies were passed. The Amendments were passed in this very same House. I was also a member of the then Joint Committee.

Some States had disagreed for giving reservations to backward classes. We left it to the States. In the Seventy-Second Constitution Amendment it was given to the States. In Karnataka, I would like to bring it to the notice of the House, that for the first time, reservations were made for the backward classes. The debate has been going on from the days of the late Shri Karpoori Thakur in Bihar and Shri Devaraj Urs and so many other people have fought for reservations. May I tell you only one word? We have enjoyed powers for certain periods. I do not want to go back to 5,000 years of old history. Let us think of the present.

I took a decision; there are some communities, it is not on the basis of class, backward classes. Some communities and castes after Independence, were unable to elect even a Panchayat. They were unable to elect even a municipality; they were unable to elect even a corporation. I took a decision to provide 27 percent reservation, what Shri V.P. Singh had given for the backward class in the Central Government service. I applied the same norm for political reservation, to those communities which were unable to participate in any administration.

Today in Karnataka all the institutions whether town panchayats, zilla panchayats, taluk panchayats, city municipality, corporation, all these institutions- my friend Shri Dhananjaya Kumar is sitting there - we have given reservations on the basis of caste. He may be a *Dhobhee*, he may be a barber, he may be a weaver, he may be a Toolmaker, he may be a pottery maker.

He may be a Muslim. For the first time in India Karnataka has given political reservations for Muslims. When Shri Banatwalla was speaking, in the

House, I had gone for taking lunch I heard his speech there. For the first time in India, the Muslim minorities have been given political reservations. This is for the credit of the Karnataka State Government. I would like to bring this to the notice of this House.

I will come to the next point.

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Not only reservations at one stage but even as Chairperson 27 per cent of this community, whether he is a *Dhobhee* or a barber or a goldsmith like that I enumerated, for small small castes for the first time in the Indian history, I gave political reservations. I want them to participate in every field and that they should feel that this Government belongs to them. That is what I have done in Karnataka. If you all agree with me, I want to introduce the same system here. Or otherwise, on this question you can tell hundred and one things. You can tell that God is everywhere. Even God is in the pillars. I have read in primary school. My father was not such an educated man. I was taught that God is present even in pillar through the story of Hiranya Kashyap and Prahlad. You have got a secular face. Shri Narasimha Rao has said that you have got a secular face. That is why they have named you as the future Prime Minister of this country. Otherwise, they would not have named you. I will tell you very frankly. I know what it is. Sir, I have got the highest regard for you. I came to your house. You have advised me on so many issues. I take your advice and guidance for my future administration. You have got some secular face. That is why, they have named you the future Prime Minister of this country. You were able to get twenty or thirty seats more because of that; otherwise things would have been totally different. I would like to tell you this much.

Today you must come forward; with your liberal outlook you must come forward. These are the communities which are suffering. They have not got the real benefit after independence. What for is the Independence? For whom is the Independence? For whom and for what purpose is this House? For whose purpose is the Supreme Court and the judiciary? At a later date, maybe in the next Budget Session, I can debate on judicial reforms, electoral reforms and all these things. But today I would like to confine myself what

certain progressive measures we have taken in Karnataka. That is the issue which we can go into to bring to the notice of the hon. Member... *[Interruption*

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You have said in your manifesto about reservation to women. In Karnataka, we have provided 50 per cent reservations in the posts of teachers for women...*[Interruptions]*. You cannot hear these things ...*[Interruptions]*. I would like to mention that if all of you agree, I am going to introduce those things here also. That is what I want to tell you. Out of all the vacancies of primary school teachers in Karnataka, 50 per cent have been reserved for women and in all other posts 30 per cent reservation has been made. We have implemented these things.

I have also written to the former Prime Minister to bring a Constitutional Amendment to see that the reservation for women should be given in the Assembly and in the Lok Sabha. This is the letter I have written to the former Prime Minister. If you all agree and give me cooperation, I will introduce these amendments in the next session itself.

Now, I would like to mention one or two other points. When I say something about the achievements as far as the social justice is concerned, then you feel irritated. I do not know-why. Are you not interested in the poor? Are you not interested in the downtrodden? Let me speak about that. I am not going to say that you have no concern about this section. But when I speak about what I have done in one and a half years, please listen to me. The reason why I am enlightening all those things in this august House is only to get your cooperation, if possible to make it a national programme and see that it is implemented in all the States. I am only mentioning this with that document.

Shri George Fernandes, one of our senior colleagues once upon a time whatever may be the political differences now - has written to me once...*[Interruptions]* I am not going to deliberate upon the achievements which are made In Karnataka. I am now coming to the issues that have been raised here ...*[Interruptions]*

Shri George Fernandes has compared the manifestoes of all the political parties in his speech last time on 27th and 28th of May. He tried to attack as to how these people can come together. How? According to him it is the eighth or ninth wonder of the world. I would like to ask a straight question to him. When the Government of Shri Morarji Bhai stepped down - I am not criticising about the role of Shri George Fernandes at that time - Shri Vajpayee, our senior leader at that time was in the Government. He was in that Government...*(interruptions)* You were also in that Government. Shri Chandra Shekhar was the President of the Party. I was also one of the Working Committee members in the State unit. Shri Vajpayee and Shri Morarji Desai had both contacted me and asked the support of Shri Devaraj Urs to that Government. Shri Devaraj Urs was branded as a corrupt politician and Shri Devaraj Urs was indicted by a commission of enquiry which was appointed by the Government of India. Sir, with all the sincerity at my command I am making this. I am not going to make any allegation. Is it not a fact? Is it not a fact- that is all what I am going to ask.

For political convenience in this country all political parties have played their own role for a temporary gain including Deve Gowda. Yes. Let us search our hearts instead of arguing one against the other. At least let us start a new chapter. If at all you are really interested to restore the dignity, decency and sanctity attached to this institution, attached to our Indian democracy, let us start a new chapter.

I will just quote one word of Shri Vajpayee. I am not going to take others. There are various other issues. I am not going to touch about corruption or about the M.P. Chief Minister's corruptions etc. I have got all those things here. That is a different matter. 'The B.J.P.'s support to the B.S.P. is tactical. The Congress's support to the United Front is opportunistic. Deve Gowda's Party has hardly 45 Member's. The Congress with 136 Members is supporting Deve Gowda'. It is so only to cover up their sins, according to your allegation. How much strength in the U.P. Assembly had Ms. Mayawati got? Sir, for your stature I will tell you that you said one thing yesterday ...*(Interruptions)*

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What was the mandate of the people? Was the mandate of the people to support BSP? Tell me, Sir. You are a seniormost leader, you can advise me,

you can guide me what is right. Day before yesterday, while you were participating in the obituary references, you said one thing- it is still fresh in my memory - that Sh. Sanjiva Reddyji was denied the Presidentship and after ten years he got it. We do not know what is going to happen tomorrow. But for a person of your stature, you should not try to find fault with others when your own party has committed so many mistakes. This is all I want to say ...*[Interruptions]*. Every political party has got its own internal problems. Why do you worry about that?...*[Interruptions]*. When Delhi BJP tickets were distributed, what happened? ...*[Interruptions]*. That is a different matter...*[Interruptions]*. When Delhi BJP tickets were distributed, it was said suitcase politics will not work I do not know Hindi. I cannot speak in Hindi... *[Interruptions]*. In every political party, these issues are there. It is not confined to 'A' political party or 'B' political party. In the present-day politics, in every political party we have got internal problems and we should not try to take mileage out of it. That is my appeal. I do not want to make any further comments on this point.

I would like to make only one or two points more...*[Interruptions]*. Our former Chief Minister and former Governor Barnalaji has said that there is shortage of urea. Do not worry, there is sufficient urea. As a farmer's son, I will take care to provide sufficient urea to all the farmers in this country. I will take care of it.

Our former Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition has expressed his concern about our foreign policy. We have made it clear that there is a large measure of consensus on foreign policy which is based on our traditional values and on the experience gained during freedom struggle and in the post-independence era. Non-alignment is the cornerstone of our foreign policy. The United Front Government will closely adhere to the consensus. We have made it very clear and so far as the other issues which you raised are concerned. I will tell you very frankly that 28th is the deadline for the Geneva Conference and I will consult senior leaders. I am not going to announce anything right now. It is not a thing to be announced in this House. When I came to your house, you suggested some ideas. I will consult senior leaders. It is a very serious matter, a very important matter. I will consult all the Opposition leaders and before making any final decision in this regard, I must weigh both the sides what will be the advantage and what will be the disadvantage. On both the sides, I will take the views of senior leaders and then I will make a final

decision. As I am there as the Prime Minister, I have to take the final decision. I will try to protect the interest of the nation first, the other issues are secondary for me. Without compromising the interest of the nation, the security of the nation, if anything that could be possible on the advice of your senior leaders, I will take a decision very soon...*(Interruptions)*. Shri George Fernandes has given about 15 questions on the fertilisers issue. He has written me a letter and he asked me to reply to all those 15 questions ...*(Interruptions)* Shall I read the questions and the answers? ...*(Interruptions)* He has framed 15 questions.

I think 10 questions per day were framed by one seniormost jurist in those days. I do not want to comment about it, because he was the former Law Minister. He had framed 10 questions per day during the days of Shri Rajiv Gandhi. If you want to frame 100 questions per day, I have no objection ... *(Interruptions)* I have also taken them seriously.

Sir, with all sincerity at my command, I would like to make myself clear- whether you will like it or not - that I am a firm believer in God and I will tell you one thing. I am not going to mix matters. I am a firm believer in God and that is why, I said that destiny has brought me here. I never expected that I am going to be the Prime Minister and that was not my life ambition. There is no excitement for me. I was a little hesitant to accept this responsibility.

With all sincerity at my command, I would like to make myself clear that any Congress leader - you may believe it or you may not believe it- up-till now, has never discussed anything about this particular issue with me. I would like it very clear to the nation that nobody has come to me. I can swear that nobody has interfered in this matter up-till now and I have not asked the C.B.I. to cover up anything in the matter. I have come before this House to inform as to what has happened up-till now. I can give only that much of information to the House now. I cannot give anything beyond that, because there are various phases of enquiry. The full enquiry has not been completed and we have to send our people to trace the money, to find out where the end point is. Within a short span of time, within two or three days we will take the decision. Our former Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition had seen that file and he had signed it...*(Interruptions)* Against me also, several photocopies have been taken in 1987. Chandra Shekharji is sitting here. The destiny has brought me here. What can I do?...*(Interruptions)* But they have tried outside. That is another thing. Do not bother about it.

I will read out what actually the report I have received from the Department:

"The National Fertilizers Ltd. (NFL) had entered into a long term contract with M/s. Karsan Ltd., Ankara for supply of 2 lakh metric tonnes of bagged urea at a price of US \$ 190 per metric tonne on cost and freight (c&f) basis. The contract was signed on 9.11.95 for total value of US \$ 38 million. Shri C.K. Ramakrishnan, MD, NFL (under suspension from 24.5.96) approved the signing of the deal at his level, exceeding his delegated powers."

The terms of the contract envisaged 100 per cent advance payment to the seller who was to supply urea within five months of the payment. At the request of M/s. Karsan Limited, NFL credited the amount of US \$ 37.62 million to their account at Plotet Bank, Geneva, Switzerland on 5.12.95. One per cent of the contract value amounting to US \$ 0.38 million was released on 2.11.95 to enable the seller to take a Lloyds Insurance Policy, which was purported to cover the risk against non-performance as well as non-delivery of urea.

In January, 1996, NFL sought the authorization of Government of India to import 2 LMT of urea to be delivered between February-April, 1996. This authorisation was accorded on 29.1.96. On 13.2.1996 during a review of the performance of the canalising agencies, NFL was unable to provide firm shipping details against the above contract. Thereafter the matter was taken up repeatedly with the then MD. NFL and he was asked on 16.2.96 and 23.2.96 to provide details of the shipping schedules and also indicate the safeguards taken to ensure security of funds advanced in contravention of established guidelines and procedure. Only an interim reply on 6.3.96 was given by MD, NFL stating that he was assessing the situation and would revert within a fortnight. On 20.3.96, MD was reminded again but before any reply could be received, the news about the deal appeared in the Press by Financial Express on 22.3.96, followed by a series of write ups.

It was decided with the approval of the then Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers to depute teams of officers of NFL and the Department to Ankara, Turkey to make an on the spot assessment of the party's credentials as well as their inclination to perform. Accordingly, two teams were despatched, the first comprising the new ED (Marketing), NFL and the additional Chief Vigilance

Officer, NFL was despatched on 3.4.1996. The team was subsequently joined by the Joint Commissioner (Fertilizers Supply and Distribution). Another team comprising MD, NFL and Director (Vigilance of the Department reached on 17.4.96. They were able to interact with the Chief Executive of M/s. Karsan Ltd. only on 23.4.1996. The Indian Embassy was associated to assist the teams. Based on the assessment of the Director (Vigilance) that the urea would not be forthcoming, approval of the then Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers was taken for handing over the case to the CBI. It was stated in the reference made to CBI on 25.4.96 that there appeared to be a criminal conspiracy and misconduct on the part of the public servants.

In the intervening period, NFL Board has held an emergency meeting on 27.3.96 and ordered a vigilance enquiry after finding that the deal was executed with undue haste and without due verification of the credentials of the party. The Executive Director (Vigilance), NFL, enquired into the matter and gave his report on 11.4.96. Confirming that the entire deal was ill conceived, he advised that if substantial shipments of urea are not made before 4.5.96, the entire case may be handed over to the CBI.

The then Managing Director, NFL, kept assuring even upto the first week of May 1996 that the goods would be delivered. In fact, on the basis of assurance and messages from the seller, he informed on 29.4.96 that three ships containing 25,000 tonnes of urea each would arrive in May 1996. However, no shipments came in the month of May. This proved beyond doubt the dishonest intentions of the party. Another significant revelation was made on 15.5.96 that the Lloyds Insurance policy was only a marine insurance and did not cover the risk of non-performance by the seller. This established the fraudulent nature of the deal. On 19.5.96, Executive Director (Vigilance), NFL, lodged a criminal complaint with CBI against two Turkish nationals, Tuncay Alankus and Cihan Kranci, the Chief Executive and Vice-President of M/s. Karsan Limited, respectively, their Indian agent, Shri M. Sambhasiva Rao and Shri D.S. Kanwar, former Executive Director (Marketing), NFL.

After consulting the Cabinet Secretary and the Chief Vigilance Commissioner, it was decided on 24-5-96 with the approval of the then Prime Minister, who also held the charge of the Department of Fertilizers, to place Shri C.K. Ramakrishnan under suspension and entrust the additional

charge of Managing Director, NFL to Shri A.V. Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, Hindustan Fertilizers Corporation.

On 27.5.96, the CBI sought concurrence for registering a regular case against Shri C.K. Ramakrishnan as he was a Board level functionary. Necessary concurrence was given on 28-5-96. The CBI arrested Shri C.K. Ramakrishnan and Shri D.S. Kanwar, former Executive Director (Marketing) on 1.6.96. This was followed by the arrest of M. Sambhasiva Rao.

For recovery of the advance payment, NFL is filing an Arbitration case in the International Chamber of Commerce against M/s. Karsan Limited. They have also alerted Interpol through CBI for keeping a watch on the above-mentioned executives of M/s. Karsan Limited.

Sir, this is the report which I have received.

The enquiry by the CBI is still going on and, after completion of the enquiry, I am going to place all necessary materials before the House. As the enquiry is still on, apart from this, I cannot give any more information to the House. In respect of those queries which Shri George Fernandes had raised, I have got ready replies. There is no need for any suppression of the facts. The Director, CBI, is completely in-charge, who is monitoring the entire enquiry. Several people have been summoned and the enquiry is going on. So, at this stage, I cannot reveal any further information till the enquiry is completed.

Yesterday, a mention was made about the killings in Doda District in Kashmir. It is a history which is known to everyone, to all the senior leaders. In fact, the BJP manifesto also mentions that it should be declared as a disturbed area.

I do not want to take an extreme step now as we are going to hold the election in the near future. There is no need of taking such an extreme step of declaring it as a distress area. I would like to assure this House that as early as possible the elections are going to be held to the Assembly and then the elected Government will take care of the area.

So far as taking action to prevent such heinous crimes is concerned, the Government of India will take all necessary steps to put out the crime with heavy hands. I do not want to take much of your time. With these

words, I would like to request with all humbleness and with all humility, all Members of this House to give their approval for us, to extend their support and to vote the Motion of Confidence.

BACK NOTE

II. Motion of Confidence in the Council of Ministers, 11 and 12 June, 1996.

(i) Motion of Confidence in the Council of Ministers , 11 June, 1996

1. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI (Allahabad): Mr. Prime Minister, what is the difficulty in coming to the House with facts by this evening? This is the simple point. The Leader of the Opposition has requested you to come out with facts by this evening.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: As I told you, the investigation is still going on. So, the officers are in Hyderabad. They have to come back and give all, full particulars. Unless I have the full materials, I cannot answer it. I would not mislead the House. That is why I am telling this. I am clear in my mind. I want to give all the materials.

(ii) Reply on Motion of Confidence in the Council of Ministers, 12 June, 1996.

1. AN HON. MEMBER: You are talking in your manifesto about reservations for women.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : I will come to it later.

2. AN HON. MEMBER: What about *hawala*?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: please listen to me. I know about *hawala*. Please do not bother about it. It is not only Congress but you are also there in *hawala*, everybody is there in the *hawala*. Do not argue on this *hawala* business. *Hawala* business is not going to confine to any one political party. Do not argue on that.

3. SHRI KANSHI RAM (Hoshiarpur): Ms. Mayawati was having 69 M.L.As as against your 44 M.Ps. in this House...*[Interruptions]*

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Kanshi Ram saheb, you have got a great revolutionist. I have got highest regard. I am only attacking their policy...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: He is only attacking the person for whom he has the highest regard ...*(Interruptions)*

**STATUTORY RESOLUTION REGARDING THE STATE OF
JAMMU AND KASHMIR
10 and 12 July, 1996**

**(i) Statutory Resolution Regarding Continuance of Proclamation
by President in relation to the State of Jammu and Kashmir
10 July, 1996**

I beg to move

"That this House approves the continuance in force of the proclamation dated the 18th July, 1990 in respect of Jammu and Kashmir, issued under Article 36 of the Constitution by the President for a further period of six months with effect from the 18th July, 1996."

Sir, the President's rule in Jammu & Kashmir is coming to an end on 18th July, 1996 and we want its extension for a short duration. Though we are asking for extension for a further period of six months, I would like to make it amply clear to this august House that the Government has already taken a decision to hold election as early as possible. In this connection I have discussed with almost all the Opposition leaders and they have also agreed for extension to the President's rule in Jammu & Kashmir for a short duration.

One of the issues raised in the meeting with the Opposition leaders was about certain defects in the voters list. We have issued instructions to the authorities to see that summary revision can be made within a short period of one month. The other apprehension expressed by some of the political parties was about conduct of a free and fair election. Sir, I would like to compliment the Army and the Administration. They tried their best to conduct a free and fair election during the Parliamentary election. I will be failing in my duty if I do not compliment the Army people as well as the local administration and the Election Commission.

Sir, whatever little defects are there in the voters list, those are going to be set right in the summary revision. Nearly two lakh forms were distributed and more than 12,000 people returned their forms with their addresses for registration.

Sir, I have recently visited Kashmir. There also all the local political party leaders have agreed to holding of election as early as possible. People in the valley, in a nutshell I can say, want peace. Peace can come only through holding of early election.

Sir, some people have raised the autonomy issue. In our Common Minimum Programme also, we have mentioned about the autonomy issue. I would like to again assure this House and also the other political parties who represented to me during my visit to Kashmir about what I said earlier, On that day I made it clear that it was better to have a discussion with the elected representatives of the new government so far as the autonomy issue was concerned Sir, I am happy to inform the House that they have all agreed to it.

In this connection, I do not want to make a long speech. Even though we have asked for six months' extension, most probably the election will be held sometime in September or before the end of the first week of October. The date has to be finalised by the Election Commission. I have made it clear during the discussion with the Opposition leaders on the 8th of this month that this is the purpose of extension of the President's rule for six months. I can assure the House that the election will be conducted as early as possible. The date has to be decided by the Election Commission in consultation with the Central Government. I cannot announce the date I will only assure that the election will be conducted as early as possible, if possible in September itself. With these words, I request this august House to give its approval to the Resolution.

(ii) Reply on Statutory Resolution Regarding Continuance of Proclamation by President In relation to the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

12 July, 1996

Respected Mr. Speaker, Sir, while moving the Resolution for the extension of President's Rule for a short period, even though it has been mentioned in the Motion 'for six months'. I assured the House, while moving the Motion for consideration of this august House, the elections would be held either in September or in the first week of October.

Sir, I heard the former Governor of Jammu and Kashmir and the hon. Member of this House who spoke about several events of the past history. We have come to the stage of handing over the State to its elected

representatives debating on the past history starting from 1958 to what happened till 1996 is not going to bring any peace in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It is only a futile exercise, an exercise of showing our talents as to who knows better about the past events. That is not going to bring any solution. I do not want to deliberate particularly about the past events.

This is the first time that I visited Kashmir. I have never been to Kashmir earlier, let me be very plain and frank. When I decided to go to Kashmir last time at night of my journey the emergency was declared. I then cancelled my air-ticket and went back in Bangalore.

During my visit I tend to meet a cross section of people. My purpose of visit was to have a spot study of the natural calamity and to discuss with the officers about the quantum of loss caused by the floods. At the same time, I had given indication to the officers and the Governor that I was equally anxious to meet all political party leaders, if they really wanted to meet me. There was no special invitation offered to them. Sir, I am happy to inform the House that all political parties, including the National Conference, collectively met me and their unanimous demand was that early election should be held in Jammu and Kashmir. Of course, one of the political parties did try to impress upon me on this autonomy factor. In the same meeting where all the political parties were represented including the BJP, they all agreed that the question of autonomy which is mentioned in the Common Minimum Programme of the United Front should not be discussed at that stage.

Let us first go to election. We want early peace. We do not want to allow the neighbouring country to again play with the lives of the people of Kashmir. I would like to mention what they said. They said, "We are a part and parcel of this country. We are an integral part of this country. We do not want to again give scope to the external forces to spoil the atmosphere here".

Sir, there are some forces which tried to propagate and present a distorted picture to various other countries that the parliamentary election that was held in Jammu and Kashmir was not free and fair. They want to create this impression in the international world, I would like to compliment the previous Government and its decision to hold the election even when some of the political parties wanted to boycott them. It is one of the best decisions that they had taken. I must compliment the people of Kashmir and

at the same time I must also compliment the administrative machinery and the Army people who created a congenial atmosphere for a heavy turnout at the polling booths. I do not think any sensible man can call this election a farce or an election that was not free and fair.

Sir, I would like to inform the whole world, through this House, a propaganda being made by the divisive forces that it was only a manipulated election. I would say that it was not so.

Sir, in Baramulla Parliamentary constituency, the turn-out was 46.63 percent in Srinagar Parliamentary constituency, the turn-out was 41 percent in Jammu Parliamentary constituency, the turn-out was 48 percent. In Ladakh Parliamentary constituency, the turn-out was 83.26 percent. In Anantnag Parliamentary constituency, the turn-out was about 51.14 percent. In Udhampur Parliamentary constituency, the turn-out was 53 per cent. This is a clear indication to the whole world that people want their own Government today. Let us have a frank analysis of all these things.

I would like to ask a very senior Leader and a former Governor for whom I have got a great respect — what happened in Gujarat. In Gujarat, in the last Parliamentary election, the polling was hardly 39 per cent. But here is a case where, in no Parliamentary constituency, the polling was less than 42 per cent or 45 per cent. This itself is a clear indication that the people want their own Government. So, we wanted that election to the State Assembly is held as early as possible. I am not interested in who is going to win, which Party is going to participate, and what will be the type of combination. Let me be very plain on this issue. Whether you are going to win or the Congress is going to win or the Janata Dal is going to win, that is not my concern. My concern is that elections must be held and the power should go to the people. Then, the question of autonomy will be discussed with the elected representatives. That is the right method. With whom should the Central Government discuss now? I cannot act according to the taste of individual political Parties. The Central Government will discuss about the quantum of autonomy and some other allied issues with those people who get the people's mandate. You know how they felt during the discussion which they have had with me. Your own Party Leaders were there. When I was discussing with them, they started telling me so many things viz., how they have been treated on the developmental side and so on. I will tell you that they have realised

today the amount of sufferings the common man had to undergo who used to earn his bread through tourism. Today, the common men are in the streets. They are jobless. Their living conditions are very bad. They have honestly realised that they want normalcy. They want to go back to the old Kashmir. It has got its own pride. People want such an atmosphere. The railway-line from Udhampur to Jammu, the power projects and so many other projects have been stopped due to various reasons.

Sir, this Government is prepared to give maximum weightage to see that the people should feel that this Central Government is not going to discriminate, so far as Kashmir is concerned whatever may be the financial constraint I am going to start this process. I tell you very frankly I have given this assurance.

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There is no question of discrimination between Jammu and the Valley of the Hindu Pandits and the Muslims. They have been like one family. I was astonished and happy to hear. I do not want to claim that I know everything about the culture of the Kashmiri people, how they have come up. The Muslims today have stopped eating beef. They treat the cow as a sacred animal. That is the tradition. Hindus will not eat pork. They themselves have said this in my presence. I am so much amazed. I will tell you how they have come up. Do you know, we have destroyed the culture, the old tradition and the bondage between the two communities, we mean, the politicians. I do not want to go back to the past. I only promised this august House that I will try my best to have free and fair elections. This is all what they want.

So far as the omission and commissions in the electoral process *i.e.* in the voting list etc., are concerned. I have told the Governor, the Chief Secretary and other officers to see that proper media coverage is given in the electronic media as well as the newspapers, etc., requesting those people who have not registered their names in the voters list to take advantage of this opportunity and get themselves registered I asked the Governor to get two or three lakh more forms printed and given to various political parties.

Some of the militant youths have approached me. They are also prepared to participate in the elections and they tried to explain certain problems. Of course, when they met me, the Governor was also there with me, there was no question of any secret meeting. I asked the Governor to sit by my side

I told them to first go before the people, show their sincerity to the people and if the people voted for them, then they will also be called for discussion as far as autonomy and other issues are concerned.

There is a change of hearts. Even some of the youths, who were earlier misled by the neighbouring country, have realised this and wanted to see that they should cooperate for normalcy in the entire Jammu & Kashmir State.

In certain areas certain omissions and commissions are there about constituencies etc. All these things are there I cannot set right all these things before September. It will take time and that is why let us hold the election as it is.

Later on in subsequent years, when the elections are going to be held, all these things can be looked into by the coming elected Government Sir, as I have already promised, I will write to the Election Commission it is they who have to fix the date. The Government of India will make all necessary arrangements. We will make security arrangements for Doda District or any other disturbed area. We will give maximum protection and will see there is a heavy turn-out in the coming election.

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BACK NOTE

III. Statutory Resolution Regarding the State of Jammu and Kashmir

- (i) Statutory Resolution Reagarding Continuance of Proclamation by President in relation to the State of Jammu and Kashmir, 10 July, 1996.

NIL

- (ii) Reply on Statutory Resolution Regarding Continuance of Proclamation by President in relation to the State of Jammu and Kashmir, 12 July, 1996.

1. SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA: At the same time there should be no discrimination between Ladakh and Leh.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: All right.

2. SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh): How will you ensure the migrated persons to vote?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: This issue was raised in the meeting of all senior leaders of Parties including Shri Vajpayee. I am telling you there are about 96,000 voters. This time, in the Parliamentary election, about 30,000 people have voted. There were some confusions at that time as to who was to certify that they were the migrants. We have also simplified the postal votes. There will be no question of any hurdle. We have simplified and everybody who wants to vote through postal ballots, will be accommodated. There will be no question of any problem even for those people.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh): Unless you give them a chance, how will they vote? For example, they are sitting in Delhi. They cannot go to Kashmir Valley to fill up the forms for the inclusion of their names. You have to do two things. You give them the option in Delhi. They may fill up the form and you get it verified. That is number one. The postal ballot will not serve the purpose. Why do you not create polling booths for them in Delhi or Calcutta or Chandigarh or wherever they are? Let them go and cast their votes Out of 93,000 only 23,000 cast their votes.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Where to create the polling booths, how many polling booths, in which area whether it is outside India or outside Kashmir, those are left to the wisdom of the Election Commission. It is not for me to say. Your point also will be well-taken. I am not going to argue it is left to the Election Commission so far as creating the polling booths outside Kashmir or inside Kashmir is concerned. I cannot encroach upon the rights of the Election Commission I would only make a suggestion.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN : We want their involvement in the election and also a free and fair election.

MR. SPEAKER : The Prime Minister has well-taken the point.

SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN (Tripura East): You can conduct first round in Delhi, second round in Jammu and the third round postal ballot in Srinagar. We would very much like to have the election on that method.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh) : That you know it much better. You have gone by that method Kindly take the House into confidence about your talks with the militants also. You have said it on the floor of the House that you have talked to the militants. Which were the militant groups that had talked to you? What were the talks? You have talked to the militants but you have not talked to the families affected by terrorists. Coming from the Prime Minister that he had a meeting with them is a very serious matter Please take the House into confidence.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I cannot talk to the individual families.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh): But you have talked to the militants. What was the talk? What was the issue?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: At least you must appreciate that after nine years, a Prime Minister has taken the courage to go there.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh): We appreciate that.

MR. SPEAKER: I think it is already 7.30 p.m. It is enough.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh): You are talking about autonomy What do you mean by autonomy?

SHRI E. AHAMED (Manjeri): Whatever autonomy will be given, it will be within the framework of the Constitution.

MR. SPEAKER : I do not think we have to go into all these details.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : I only assure this august House including our friends on the other side that i will try my best to have a free and fair election and I will take steps to hold the elections in the month of September if possible, or in the first week of October with this assurance. I request all of them to give their unanimous support for the Resolution.

INCREASE IN THE PRICES OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

15 July, 1996

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your kind permission. I would like to appeal to all sections of the House including the former Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition when I try to substantiate with all reasonings about the decision we have taken to increase the prices of petroleum products before the Session starts, five days earlier.

Sir, forget for a moment that this is a coalition Government and this Government consists of 13 Parties and this Government has another big Party supporting from outside. Let us not mix politics in this issue. Let us take a pragmatic view about the decision taken by the Government.

Sir, about propriety, your goodself has given a ruling I do not want to question your ruling I will bow my head when the hon. Speaker from that exalted Chair gave a ruling, we have to respect the ruling of the Chair. I do not want to say anything about it.

I am not going to justify the decision taken by me or my Government. Sir, if you go back to the history. How many times did the hon. Speaker, sitting in the same Chair has given rulings about the decisions of the previous Governments whose numerical strength was so monolithic two-thirds majority and at that time how the administrative prices were increased prior to the Budget session? I can give any number of instances.

What made this Government take such a hurried decision of the decision six days or a week prior to the Budget Session? Let us have a clear picture before we come to any conclusion.

Sir, the issue before us was the same issue which was placed before the previous Government. The same issue was placed before our senior most leader, the former Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition.

I have got the highest regard for Jaswant Singh, Whenever he spoke, I used to sit there and hear his speech very carefully. At times, I was unable to understand some of the words he used or expressed I am not so knowledgeable a person so far as English is concerned but I could understand the message which he tried to convey to the nation from this House.

I am just quoting for his benefit what he said this matter came up before the previous Government. When the file was submitted to the Ministry of Finance, the last views expressed by the Finance Minister were:

"Prima facie it seems inevitable that an across the board increase in POL price is required urgently to eliminate the pool deficit."

That is what he as Finance Minister had observed. I am not going to say that he took that view from the Ministry of Finance.

I have got the highest regard for our former Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition, I respect him, Sir. The Finance Minister has also observed that cumulative oil pool deficit is going to rise to a level of Rs. 11,700 crores at the end of this year from a level of Rs. 5,700 crore last year and as such an across the board, increase in petroleum prices is required urgently to eliminate the pool deficit. I am going to read again the words urgency to eliminate the pool deficit. What was the pool deficit? It was Rs. 5,700 crore for the last year and the figure projected for 1996-97 is Rs. 11,700 crore. "While action on these points shall be taken separately the OEB as approved by the Ministry of Finance is submitted for approval". The then Prime Minister approved it and also directed necessary action to be taken on the observation made by the Finance Ministry headed by Jaswant Singhji. I do not want to mix politics here. Forget that this is a Government which is headed by 13 political parties and supported by you friends. I have not come in search of any job in Delhi. My temperament is totally different.

This is a thing which was forced on me. I highly respect you, wherever you may be Nobody can prevent the destiny. If destiny is there on your side, you can come and sit here and somebody can go and sit there. That is not the issue. But when you attack as a senior parliamentarian I am too small a man. Let me honestly speak, compared to you I am too small a man. The Oil Pool Account deficit must be erased. That is your own decision and I have carried it.

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Sir, I would like to apprise the House and through this House, to the nation what were the circumstances. I am not going to say that you support me. I am prepared to take the blame. But at least through this House I must

also tell the nation under what circumstances I have taken this decision. That much liberty I have got.

Sir, on 17th June one refinery said that FOB payments due to IOC for crude supplies to the tune of Rs. 49 crore had been deferred. Delaying payments to other suppliers, contractors, etc., you will agree, will lead to a serious loss of image. If OCC resorts to further retrenchment of this nature CIL will be expected to serious financial problems which may even lead to the refinery operations coming to a grinding halt. One of the refinery Chairman and Managing Director wrote like this to the Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum Sir, there are series of correspondence between several refineries and the Ministry of Petroleum I would like to quote only one case as I do not want to take much time of the House. It says—

"We are afraid if this situation continues IOC may be under a great stress to default its foreign commitments for imports as well as loan repayments which will adversely affect its credibility in the international market."

They went on stressing the Ministry of Petroleum to take early decision. Some people say that I have done the biggest mistake. Even now by March, 1997 the deficit will be ranging from Rs. 4,700 crore to Rs. 5,000 crore. That is the protected figure.

I would just like to draw the attention of the House to the previous hikes in the prices of petroleum products. I want go back to the previous events that took place so far as the price increases in petroleum products are concerned in 1979, later the Budget was placed in this very august House on 28.2.1979. Shri Morarji Desai was the Prime Minister at that time - the price of HSD was increased by 8.5 per cent, SKO by 8.3 per cent and LPG by 9.2 per cent. When the late Shri Charan Singh became the Prime Minister, on 17.08.1979, six months later the Budget was passed in this very same House, price of the LPG was increased by 20.4 per cent.

When Madam Gandhi was the Prime Minister, on 13.01.1981 — the Budget was placed on 28.02.1981 — one-and-half months' earlier, the price of LPG was increased by 17 per cent and the price of HSD was increased by 18.9 per cent. Within six months that is, on 11.07.1981, in the middle of the year again, the price of HSD was raised by 13.7 percent If you add 18.9 per cent and 13.7 per cent, the total comes to 92 per cent in respect of

HSD alone, the price of LPG was raised by 17 per cent on 13.01.1981 and on 11.07.1981, it was, again, raised by 14.5 per cent. The total price rise comes to 31.5 percent in respect of LPG. The kerosene price was raised by 18.5 percent within six months in two instalments, in two dosages.

Coming to the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi's period on 01.02.1986 — on 28.02.1986 the Budget was placed in this very august House — LPG price was raised by 23.1 percent and subsequently he had given some reduction.

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Sir, I told you under what circumstances we were compelled to take this decision. Our demand — it was placed before you and before me also — in 1994-95 was 65.5 million tonnes and it has gone up to 72.5 million tonnes. It is further expected to go up to 78.5 million tonnes during the current financial year.

As I told you a little earlier, even after this price hike, the projected figure is about Rs. 4,700/- to Rs. 5,000/- deficit by 31st March, 1987.

How much subsidy are we giving? We are giving a subsidy of Rs. 4,870/- on kerosene. We have not raised anything. We are giving a subsidy of Rs. 4.17 paise per litre.

It was as if we have done it by midnight decision. It is not a midnight decision every time when the administrative price hike is going to be implemented. It is only because the decision will be given effect to when almost all the accounts of the oil pumps and petrol pumps will be closed only at about 10.30 or 11 o'clock.

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If you have mentioned it, thank you very much. In my opinion, India can be economically split into two parts: one is rural India and the other is urban India. Do not be under the impression that I am biased towards the urban people or unbiased towards the rural people. Forget that just I am giving you the figures. In Bombay, Calcutta and Madras alone, the Railways suffer a loss of Rs. 220 crores for which we are providing subsidy it is for suburban trains.

Shri Nitish Kumar, about the post-cards, registration and the sale of inland letters, in the Communications Department alone, we are giving subsidy to the tune of Rs. 600 crores.

Who is going to get the benefit? It is the people. There was a massacre in Bihar. I got that message two days back on Saturday morning at 7.30. I told the Home Secretary, "I want to go today afternoon to the place where this unhappy incident has taken place". The Home Secretary contacted the Chief Secretary, Bihar. And he gave me the information within two hours. He said: "Even though you can go to Patna by the Indian Air Force aircraft yet you cannot reach that village by helicopter. We can arrange for a helipad two miles away from that village. You have to walk two miles". This is the true picture of India. You are coming from that State. I am only just giving one instance. What happened on the 27th? I wanted to go to that place on the very same day because it was a holiday and there was no sitting of the House. The Home Secretary conveyed to me, "you have to walk two kilometres; and we are not going to advocate you to go there today". As I told you, economically, we can split India into two parts—one is rural India and the other one is urban India. How much subsidy are we giving to various elite sections of the society? I am not against that. But you must also think in terms of those people who have no voice. This House is meant for those people who have no voice. I have taken a decision which is not going to be liked by so many elite sections of the society I know, they are the opinion-makers. Let them form the opinion against this Government. But so long as I am here, I must tell you very frankly, I am going to take the decision in favour of the rural masses. I am prepared to say this. I am not afraid of this Chair. So long as I am here. I am going to take the decision in favour of my constituents, these people who have been neglected all these 48 years. Certainly, they must be given their due share. There is nothing doing on this issue.

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Sir, with your kind permission, I say that the opposition has got the right to attack. Whatever harsh language they have used, I never opened my lips. Please bear with me for a moment. We are all human beings. We have come here to take care of those people also. It is not a monopoly of Deve Gowda. Please permit me to speak.

If I quote Bangalore, you may say that I always try to quote Bangalore. How much subsidy on milk are we giving in Delhi? It is to the tune of Rs. 50 crore. The Delhi Milk Scheme is subsidised to the extent of nearly Rs. 50 crore. In Delhi for power supply, 40 percent subsidy is there. There is no question of billing. About transport in Delhi alone, Rs. 120 crore subsidy is there.

Let us all collectively think in terms of those people who have no mere basic needs even today.

Sir, I called the Chief Ministers' Conference before this price is increased. I wanted to hear them. I myself had drawn the agenda with my background. I communicated to all the Chief Ministers 12 days earlier, to come prepared with their views, with their opinions and with their stand. Let me also hear them. I sat for two days. Normally no Prime Minister will sit for two days; he will inaugurate and go. I am saying this because I was also the Irrigation Minister of Karnataka for nearly five years and I attended three Irrigation Ministers' Conference. When Madam Indiraji was the Prime Minister and subsequently Shri Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister, they normally inaugurated and went. I sat for two days, for 16 hours because I wanted to hear every Chief Minister. Then we have unanimously adopted — irrespective of any political party—identifying the priorities in seven areas *viz* communication, drinking water, primary health, primary education, public distribution and mid-day meal.

Sir, 48 years after Independence in Uttar Pradesh about 63,000 villages — the Governor of the Uttar Pradesh has given this account. Based on that I am giving the figures, it is not mine — 35,000 villages have no school building. It is the State which has produced six Prime Ministers.

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Who is responsible, who is not responsible is not my concern. My concern is, how best we can help those people. That is all my concern. That is why I called all the Chief Ministers for the Conference. I am happy to inform the House, irrespective of the political affiliations, almost all the Chief Ministers including the BJP Chief Ministers have cooperated to adopt a unanimous resolution to give the upper most priorities for these items which I have just now indicated. It should be a time-bound programme. By 2000 AD we must complete whatever is the shortfall in the next four years. That is our decision. We have unanimously agreed and I am going to tell this august House that we want to increase every year 15 percent of the allocation in so far as these areas are concerned. Every year there is going to be a 15 percent increase in the allocation by the Central Government. We will place

the money at the disposal of the State Government, whether it is run by the BJP or the Congress Party or the DMK, I am not concerned with that. I want to see that at least in the next four years, before the 21st century, in these areas the basic needs would be provided to the common man. That is our concern.

If we want to achieve this object, our hon. Leader of the Opposition and former Prime Minister did ask in his speech on the day of the Vote of Confidence as to where do we get the resources from. His good self has asked; you may have one hundred one-schemes in your mind, but where do you find the resources from? I am quoting the Common Minimum Programme about how do we generate resources. Unless we touch the people who have got something to spare, it is not possible. Can they not give Rs. 26 more per LPG cylinder?

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BACK NOTE

IV. Increase in the prices of Petroleum Products, 15 July, 1996.

1. SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow) : Mr. Speaker Sir. I do not want to interrupt the hon. Prime Minister.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA I am yielding.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Mr. Speaker Sir, the matter of deficit in oil pool account has not been settled yet and prices of petroleum products are soaring high. We being in opposition have been warning the Government for years against it. I have not given orders to convene a session of Parliament. It is your decision to announce an increase in the prices of petroleum products five days before convening of the session of Parliament.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Sir, let the Leader of the Opposition and Shri Jaswant Singh admit that they recommended a steep hike.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (Chittorgarh): Mr. Speaker, Sir, now that I am asked a direct question, I will respond only if you permit me to do so.

Sir, there are two issues involved here. Firstly, references to notings on files—whether those references to notings on files are a matter that has to be discussed and debated here. That is a different matter. That is one thing.

The second thing is that I have been asked by my senior colleague as to whether I had made any recommendation of this nature, of a sudden steep hike No, Sir. I certainly expressed grave concerns at the deteriorating situation that the deficit would go upto Rs. 11,000 plus crore or more.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: The cat is out of the bag.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: It is an estimate. Certainly it was on record that if corrective action was not taken, the situation would be difficult. But that corrective action will be a 30 per cent hike was certainly not part of our notings. We would have found out alternatives to doing it and doing It not on the eve of a Budget Session of Parliament. Definitely not I say this only because this matter was raised.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : This view was expressed on 25.5.1996, about 20 days earlier I took over the office on 1st June and it was to be

proved in Parliament as to whether this is a legitimate Government or not. So, I was unable to touch the file for another 12 days I am not going to just drag the name of the senior leaders for the purpose of defending this decision.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: You are trying to score a debating point. That is all.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Please hear me on the other day, when your goodself was speaking, other hon. Members attacked me so much, I was patiently watching them I did not even react a word to them. Whatever may be the insult, I just swallowed it.

Mr. Jaswant Singhji. Your own Committee — a Committee appointed by the Parliament had recommended that the subsidy on LPG should be gradually reduced. He was heading that committee While speaking to the *Times of India* on Inflation, you said that the Inflation rate has been kept artificially low by not Increasing the administered prices, You further added, this is particularly true in terms of the petroleum sector as there is Rs. 6,000 crore deficit in the Oil Pool Account. This is what you have told the Press.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: They are totally exposed.

MR. SPEAKER: Please, I do not think that is required.

2. SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar): How much was the reduction?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: It was minus nine percent.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: He raised the price and subsequently reduced it.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I am coming to it. That is why. I said, let us forget the party issues now. We have to see as to how we can set right the present crisis. Not only this; there are various other problems and we have to collectively think over those things. In 1991, NSD price was not raised. On 25.07.1991, LPG price was raised by 20 percent, on 16.09.1992. It was raised by 24.1 percent and on 12.01.1994 it was raised by 20.6 percent. In three years, only on LPG, the total price rise comes to 64.6 percent. Later, a reduction was given, which was minus 6.9 percent. It means, 58 percent was the total price rise, in three years, only on LPG. You were all saying that the Prime Minister had no knowledge of the common man's problems. I am prepared to bear all these criticisms.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : They are genuine *bhoomi putras* who are sitting on this side.

3. SHRI HARIN PATHAK: They have to raise.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: That will be there. I do agree, I do not dispute that point. I do agree that all these things are bound to happen. It is not as if I have taken a midnight decision. It is the decision taken by the Department. Yes. It should come into operation the next day. That is why, they will inform the concerned dealers after the closure of their accounts.

Even today we are giving subsidy amount of Rs. 62.50 paise on one LPG gas cylinder.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR (Barh): If subsidy of Rs.62 is being given on LPG then it should be stopped.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: If you want to totally remove that means totally remove... after this Government collapses, if you come to power, you can do that.

If we take LPG users whose monthly income is below Rs. 250/- they come under the purview of below the poverty line. It comes to 3.8 percent.

The percentage of people whose monthly income is Rs.750/- to Rs. 1,500/- comes to 25.9 and Rs. 1501 to Rs. 2,500 comes to 29.1 and Rs. 2,501 to Rs 4,000 comes to 23.5 and over Rs 4,000/- comes to 17.7.

These are the figures I am placing before the House.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: By whom has the survey been done?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: It is done by the Department, not by any news agency. Even after the price hike of Rs. 8.46 per kg. of LPG gas. In India, If you go back to other neighbouring countries, in Malaysia it is Rs. 16.12, in Bangladesh — they are richer than us — it is Rs. 13.58, in Myanmar Rs. 22.37, in Sri Lanka Rs. 13.4 and in Thailand Rs. 15.4 per kg. of LPG.

About the HSD, in the case of road transport, yes, there is some effect on the transportation of the commodities. I do agree. The total consumption by the Road Transport Department in the whole of the country is to the extent of 61.8 percent; in the case of Railways, it is 4.3 percent; in

the case of Shipping, it is 0.4 percent; in the case of agricultural sector, it is 16.3 percent and in respect of the industrial sector, it is 17.2 percent. This is the sectoral consumption of HSD.

About vehicle population, there are 3,10,412 diesel cars; jeeps are to the extent of 5,98,191; commercial vehicles are to the extent of 21,27,504.

I now come to MS consumption profile. The car population is to the extent of 1,36,76,000. The total consumption is 1,98,10,973 metric tonnes. I have given the figures about the sectoral consumption as well as diesel vehicle population, car population and all these things. The consumption is about 1,98,10,973 metric tonnes.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: What about tractor?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I told you how many farmers are using it. I do agree that whenever the price of any commodity is going to be increased, some sections have to bear the burden. I do not dispute that point. But, at the same time, let us also think about the other people. Nitishji, I thought that you are coming from the farming community.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : He has jettisoned it. He has gone to construction of Temple business!

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I have got the highest regards for him. Shri Nitish Kumar. I heard your speech though I was in my office. But I was unable to understand the full speech because you spoke in Hindi. But I tried to get the information. At least, you have not mentioned even a single word about the fertiliser subsidy which this Government has given.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: I have appreciated that. But Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav has not reported it properly.

4. SHRI SHYAM BEHARI MISHRA (Bilhour): Hon. Prime Minister, Sir, the class whom you are trying to benefit will itself be affected adversely by increase in the prices of diesel, petrol and other petroleum products.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the increase in prices of petroleum products is going to affect the poor whom the hon. Prime Minister is proclaiming to protect.

SHRI S.P. JAISWAL (Varanasi): Hon. Prime Minister, Sir, who is responsible if there.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down.

SHRI S.P. JAISWAL: Hon. Prime Minister, Sir, you are the leader of farmers. Can you walk upto 2 kms. on foot.

5. SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI (Jhansi): They have ruined all that...

SHRI SHYAM BEHARI MISHRA: Please reply to my question. What you have done.

SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV (Patna): You are responsible for it.

MR. SPEAKER: Please, order in the House.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Sir, 1.18 lakh villages including some hamlets have no roads. This is the figure given by the State Government.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: Everybody knows, 48 years have passed. But who is responsible for this?

SHRI SHYAM BEHARI MISHRA: A member of your party had been Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. What did he do?

PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA (Patiala): How have you helped the rural people by taking a decision of hiking the price of diesel?

MR. SPEAKER: It is enough. Please.

6. SHRI RAM NAIK (Mumbai North): Ask the CPI (M) people.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I will ask everybody. That is why I said, let us not mix politics.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Our views are principled, yours are not.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: What principle? Just moving from this side to that side.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I do not want to take much of the time of this House. I only appeal to the users of these commodities that they should also cooperate with the Government to overcome the present deficit in the Oil Pool Account.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No. no.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: You do whatever you want. That is your right. How can I prevent that? You have got every right to attack me inside

and outside this House. Nobody can stop that. You have got every right to tell the public that here is a person who has got some biased opinion against the LPG users. You go and tell them. I do not want to prevent you from attacking me both inside and outside the House. But through this House, I appeal to all the consumers, to my sisters and brothers, to cooperate with the Government to overcome the present crisis. That is all the appeal that I can make my primary responsibility is to overcome the present problem being faced by the country.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: This is the reduction slip.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Already we have given 15 percent reduction on diesel.

There is no question of any more reduction.

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI: Now a days, the price of fuel wood is soaring high.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: You have got ample time to attack the Government.

MR. SPEAKER Why do you not listen ?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I will only appeal to all sections of the people to cooperate with the Government for the decision that we have taken now.

NON-PAYMENT OF ARREARS TO THE SUGARCANE GROWERS

18 July, 1996

I welcome the hon. Members from the Opposition. When this issue was raised I was in a meeting and I got a little late.

If you permit me, Sir, I would like to make myself clear about whatever arrears are pending to the sugarcane growers. In so far as the sugarcane growers are concerned whatever you are interested in we are also equally interested. So, there is no question of having a battle here.

I may, tell this august House that after I took over the office the first meeting that I had was with the Chief Secretary of UP with the Cane Commissioner and the Industry Secretary. I called them and I had two days' meeting. Rs. 900 crore is pending for the cane growers and they have been put to a lot of inconvenience. There is nobody to ask about these things: nor is there anybody to tell them. I will tell you very frankly, because there is no elected Government in the State for the last one year. There is President's rule in the State for about one year.

I took a decision here. Not only that. I went to Lucknow and had a meeting there. I would like to inform this House that out of Rs. 900 crore, as a first instalment of Rs. 450 crore would be paid within one month. I have taken the decision. Please listen to me. If I knew that this issue was going to come I would have brought all the detailed material.

I came to know that some factories are not cooperating to draw money from the banks. I have called the banking sector people also and told them to advance money on the stocks whatever stock that is piled up in different sugar factories. But unfortunately the method or the system that has been adopted in UP is something different as compared to other States.

I would like to make it clear that in Karnataka — please do not mistake me if I quote this—Rs. 800 crore worth of sugar is lying in factories stocks having been piled up in sugar factories. There are 28 or 29 sugar factories. But there is no question to such arrears. We tried to clear almost all the amount due to the cane growers. Here and there small arrears of about

Rs. 15 lakh or Rs. 20 lakh or Rs. 1 crore may be there. As a Chief Minister I tried my best to clear all the arrears.

This time they have grown excess cane. So, crushing is a problem. I do agree in Maharashtra it is there; in Karnataka it is there; in Tamil Nadu it is there; in UP it is there; everywhere the problem is there. That is why we have taken the decision to give clearance to all the people who want to establish sugar factories whether in private sector or in cooperative sector. We do not want to keep even a single paisa pending. I instructed my colleague, who is in charge of the Food and Civil Supplies Department in this regard. We do not want to hold up or delay even one sugar factory being put up. We want to clear all the projects.

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There are certain problems. Before taking a decision I must also take care of the interests of the sugar factories established under the cooperative sector. Whether it is Maharashtra or UP indiscriminate establishment of sugar factories without knowing the cane position is going to damage the cooperative sector. That is also one point we want to bear in mind. Before we delicense it, we must examine thoroughly about the implications of the delicensing business. That is why I have not taken a decision. The matter is under the consideration of the Government. But there is one point that I want to make clear. The State Governments also have got certain responsibilities. Do not be under the impression that the entire burden is going to be carried by the Central Government.

In Karnataka, I have taken a decision to go the extent of giving nearly Rs. 42 crore relief to the cane growers. With all my financial constraints. I never hesitated to go to the rescue of the farmers. Though I do not want to tell this, the other States should also adopt this very same procedure that we have adopted. We have done it and here in Uttar Pradesh even after I made the Finance Secretary and the Banking Secretary agree to cooperate with the sugar factories to release a certain amount of money pledging the stocks, the money goes to the cooperative societies. These are the middlemen there. The money will not go to the cane growers. The system in Uttar Pradesh is somewhat different. This is a new system which I have experienced only now. It is totally different. The money is not going to the cane growers directly from the sugar factories. The cooperative societies are the middlemen.

They are going to distribute the money. What is going to be given from the factories after this arrangement is being made? That is what I want to say. They have to pay that. There is the middlemen between the grower and the factory owners another organisation and that is the cooperative society.

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I want to know that I do not want to cast aspersions on the system I am going to examine this system as to whether it is advantageous from the point of view of the growers or it is not going to help the farmers. This issue is going to be examined thoroughly by the Government and if it is not going to help the farmers we want to avoid the middlemen. Directly the cane grower should get the price for what he is going to supply to the factory I have asked the Chief Secretary to examine that because I cannot directly take any decision. It is only through the Chief Secretary and the Governor that I have to handle this issue till elections are held. After the elections, if you come to power, we will see what you are going to do and if we come to power you will see what we are going to do.

In the meanwhile this Government is not blind. This Government is not sleeping I would like to tell you very frankly that so far as the farmers are concerned I am going to do what best I can I want to clear Rs. 450 crore in a month. That is the instruction I have given. They have already made the payment up to Rs. 240 crore or Rs. 250 crore and for the balance of nearly Rs. 200 crore payment is going to be made.

BACK NOTE

V. Non-payment of arrears to the sugarcane growers, 18 July, 1996.

1. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT (Nagpur): Delicense them.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Please listen to me I am grateful to you for the advice given.

2. SHRI MUKHTAR ANIS (Sitapur): But Sir, these societies belong on the cane growers.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: That is all right I know that already. Why should that system be there and what is the advantage?

STATEMENT ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

23 July, 1996

I would like to make the following statement about development works in Kashmir. As hon. Members are aware, the massive unemployment of youth in the State of Kashmir has been a contributing factor in the growth of militancy. Similarly, the State is deficient in power which is an essential infrastructure for development of industry and even for tourism. Government therefore, propose to take up some important projects also to complete the on-going projects on top priority.

Government would be taking up the construction of the 290 km. railway line from Udhampur to Baramulla as a national project to be financed by Government of India outside the Railways' Plan. The project is estimated to cost Rs. 2500 crores and would be a great factor in integrating Kashmir with the rest of the country. In addition to providing employment in the State itself, on completion, the rail communications would help in the mobility of people from the State to the rest of the country for employment, education, trade, etc. The survey work from Udhampur to Banihal has already been completed and survey work up to Baramulla will be over by March, 1997. The line would pass *via* Katra-Riasi-Banihal-Qazigund-Srinagar.

The Railways would take up the work of construction of the Udhampur-Katra Section immediately, to be completed in four years' time. Government would provide Rs. 200 cores for this phase of the work. With adequate funding, the entire line upto Baramulla could be completed in 8-10 years' time.

Mughal Road

The Jammu-Kashmir National Highway, the only surface link between the Kashmir Valley and Jammu, is at present beset with problems of frequent blockades as a results of landslides and snow avalanches. To provide a dependable alternative link between the two regions of the State, the Government would take up the Mughal Road Project under the Centrally-Sponsored Scheme of "Roads of Economic Importance". The Project spread over a length of 85 Kms. is estimated to cost Rs. 77.40 crore (1994-95 costs). The project cost would be shared between the Centre and the State in the ratio of 50:50. The

road joining Jammu to Srinagar - *via* Rajouri-Shoplan and Pulwama, and scheduled to be completed in six years time will generate considerable employment potential along the entire stretch passing through backward areas of the State. When completed, the road apart from generation of economic activities, will help in mitigating the sense of isolation of the people of Kashmir. For speedy execution it would be entrusted to the Border Roads Organisation.

Hon. members are aware that work on the Dulhasti Hydro Electric Project (3 x 130 MW) came to halt in 1992 with the withdrawal of the French Civil Contractors. An amendment to the overall agreement with the French consortium has been finalised in July 1995, as a result of this, while the machinery is being supplied by the French consortium, the remaining civil works could be taken up by other contractors. Tenders for the balance civil work have been obtained and processed and a decision is expected to be taken shortly by the National Hydro Power Corporation to award the contract Government would ensure that the Civil works are commenced at the earliest and would also see that the funds for the balance civil works would be mobilised through various sources including Governmental assistance and market borrowings.

Hon. Members are aware that another major hydro-electric project, namely, the Uri Hydro Electric project (4x120 MW) is under construction in the State. The work on this is going on according to schedule and the first unit is likely to be commissioned during this year itself beginning December, 1996. This should provide the much needed relief to the power-starved State.

I have already assured in the very same House that the elections are going to be held very soon I think within a day or two the Election Commission is going to announce the poll dates. That is why I am making this statement. When I went there, almost all the political parties insisted on taking up these works. So, the Government has taken a decision to see that some of these works are taken up in the current year itself.

BACK NOTE

**VI. Statement on Development works in Jammu and Kashmir,
23 July, 1996.**

NIL

**STATEMENT REGARDING DEBT RELIEF, CENTRAL PLAN
ASSISTANCE, FACILITIES AT MIGRANT CAMPS,
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN
RELATION TO THE STATE OF
JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

2 August, 1996

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I would like to make the following statement in connection with some of the relief measures that we have taken about Jammu and Kashmir.

1. *Debt relief to small businesses affected by militancy:* Hon. Members would kindly recall that on 23rd of July, 1996 I made a Statement in the House relating to certain long term infrastructural projects in the sectors of communication and power in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Hon. Members would agree with me that tourism, horticulture and handicrafts form the backbone of the economy of Jammu and Kashmir State. Other activities like small scale trade and industry, transport and hotels subserve the tourism sector. This sector was the worst affected because of militancy during the last 6-7 years. Tourist arrivals in the Valley declined from a peak figure of seven lakhs in 1986-87 to almost a trickle during the last few years. This has affected the livelihood of thousands of families deriving sustenance from tourism and related activities. The affected units and individuals who had taken commercial loans from banks have not been able to repay the loans since there was no cash flow and have fallen into debt trap. The State Government have identified that about 31,000 borrowers from the sectors of small scale trade and industry, transport, hotel and houseboat businesses took loans to the extent of Rs. 181.87 crore. During the last six years, there has been hardly any repayment and the interest on these loans itself amounts for another Rs. 212.79 crore. Hon. Members would agree with me that while militancy hindered tourism, loss of tourism led to a great degree of unemployment, and growing of militancy, setting up a vicious circle. Now that the democratic process is being re-established and all efforts being made to restore normalcy, it is necessary to provide some relief to those hapless victims, especially the smaller borrowers. The Government, therefore, proposes to write-off the outstanding loan and interest of all borrowers whose original borrowing is less than or up to Rs. 50,000/-. This would enable these small borrowers to get fresh loans from the banking sector to restart their

businesses. As regards the borrowers above Rs. 50,000/-, an Inter-Ministerial Committee is being constituted to look into the questions of a moratorium and rescheduling of their loans, reduction in interest rates, and any other reliefs that could be given.

2. *Special Central Plan Assistance to J and K State for 1996-97:* In view of the precarious resource position of the Jammu and Kashmir State, resulting from militancy, the Central Government has been helping the Jammu and Kashmir State by providing special Central assistance not only to meet a reasonable Annual Plan set up but also to bridge gaps on the non-plan side. As a result of this effort, the State Government's tottering budget has been stabilised during the last three years. Last year, namely, 1995-96, the Parliament passed a balanced budget for the State with built-in Central assistance to meet the non-Plan gap so that the Approved plan outlay of Rs. 1050 crore could be preserved. In view of the fact that the State for the first utilised almost entire plan outlay last year, the outlay for the current year has been fixed again at Rs. 1050 crore. However, even with Central assistance at the level of last year, the State budget during the current year has a deficit of Rs. 352 crore on current account, resulting from additional commitments of the State Government on different accounts.

Unless this resource gap is bridged by a special Central assistance of an equal amount, the State will have no option but to reduce its plan size to Rs. 698.00 crore. Any reduction in Plan outlay at this crucial juncture when the State is on the path to total normalcy, needs to be avoided. Therefore, the Centre has decided to provide a special Central plan assistance of Rs. 352 crore to balance the State budget during the current year so that the entire plan outlay of Rs. 1050 crore can be utilised for development schemes without having to divert any part of it to meet the non-Plan gap.

3. *Improvement of facilities at migrant camps in Jammu.* Hon. Members are aware that 27,000 families of migrants from the Valley are living in Jammu either on their own arrangements or in camps. The facilities provided at 13 camps in Jammu need to be improved. These relate to provision of sanitation facilities like latrines and bathrooms, construction of more one-room tenements, buildings for schools being run in the camps, improvement of drainage facilities in the camps, etc.

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Government would be providing an additional sum of Rs. 6.6 crore to provide the aforementioned additional facilities in the camps to be completed during the current year.

4. *Infrastructure development for tourism in Leh District:* While Kashmir Valley is a traditional tourist destination, new tourist areas have come up in the Districts of Jammu, Udhampur, Leh and Kargil. Leh, in particular, has become an important tourist centre and the State Government already has a plan for refurbishment of the monuments in the District. To give a further fillip to tourism in the area, I propose to allocate an amount of Rs. 2.40 crore for setting up of a Convention/Conference Centre at Leh.

5. *Development of Airport at Kargil:* Hon. Members are aware that Kargil remains cut off from the rest of the State for seven months in a year as a result of the closure of the Srinagar-Kargil Highway in Winter due to heavy snow at Zojila. Government have, therefore, given high priority to the development of an Airport at Kargil at an estimated cost of Rs. 25 crore. The work has already been assigned to the Border Roads Organisation, which would be completing the work of development of the airstrip in two year's time so that Kargil is ready to take regular commercial services. In the meanwhile, Government proposes to have a weekly helicopter service to Kargil in the Winter months instead of the present arrangement of a fortnightly service. Necessary subsidy would be borne by the Government.

6. *Upgradation of Status for Jammu City:* There has been a long-standing demand that Jammu City should be given B-2 status. The threshold population for grant of B-2 status is four lakhs. However, hon. Members are aware that population census could not be held in the State in 1991. The Registrar General of India, however, has estimated the population of Jammu City to be 4.30 lakhs. Therefore, we have decided to upgrade the status of Jammu City to a B-2 City.

7. I hope these measures would go a long way in reviving economic activity in the State. As mentioned by me earlier, travel and tourism trade is of vital importance to the State. Government of India would, in consultation with the State Government, take all necessary measures to provide the requisite infrastructural facilities as well as assistance to individuals and units involved in this trade to ensure that Kashmir gets back its status as a tourists' paradise at the earliest.

8. I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate the Government's commitment to give maximum autonomy to the State. Once an elected Government is in place, we would hold consultations with them to arrive at a consensus. While doing this, we would also ensure that the aspirations of all regions in the State, namely, Ladakh, Kashmir Valley and Jammu are taken into account.

9. I appeal to all the political parties to help in the restoration of democracy in the State, in the restoration of normalcy and in the economic rejuvenation of the State.

Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the suggestions of the hon. Members will be taken note of.

Shri Rajesh Pilot, who is the former Internal Security Minister and who was the incharge of Kashmir Affairs for some time, has given certain suggestions and the Government is prepared to consider all those suggestions.

One more thing about the recent killings by the militants. It is a little bit on the higher side. After the Parliamentary Elections in Jammu and Kashmir are over, again the militants have been encouraged by our neighbours, and who are those neighbours, there is no need for me to express in this august House — the whole world knows it.

Sir, I would like to assure this august House that the Government will take all necessary stern action to put down these militants and see that the Assembly Elections are going to be held with free and fairness.

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This thing happened today morning when I was not here. It is not the question of a mere Statement. The previous Government had taken a decision to provide more transparency so far as the Affairs of the Kashmir is concerned. I have tried to get the information from the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir after this matter was discussed in the House and merely, 112 foreign diplomats have been allowed to go to the Kashmir out of which there were 67 foreign parliamentarians, previously in their regime. And, this has been permitted including the ambassadors, parliamentary delegations and Senate Members of various countries. The very object is that the Government of India does not want to keep anything secret. They want more transparency and that is why the decision was taken by the previous Government. I do not find fault with the decision of the previous Government.

One of the issues raised today in this House is that the Ambassador has gone to Srinagar and has met so many people. It was with the prior permission of the Home Minister and the External Affairs Ministry that he has gone there. It was informed to the Governor and on the basis of that he is meeting those people. Apart from that there is nothing to suppress the information in this House. He has taken the permission of the Home Ministry and the Ministry of External Affairs to go there. It was informed to the Governor. He is also going to meet the Governor and the Chief Secretary tomorrow along with other officials. In the presence of the Chief Secretary he has a programme to meet even one or two Army Officers.

The other thing is, he is meeting some leaders of political parties, including Dr. Farooq Abdullah. Today he has met some of the other political party leaders and he is going to meet them tomorrow also. This was informed earlier. So, there is nothing new in this.

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BACK NOTE

VII. Statement Regarding Debt Relief, Central Plan Assistance, Facilities at Migrant Camps, Infrastructure Development in Relation to the State of Jammu and Kashmir, 2 August, 1996.

1. SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): Why was a copy of the Statement not made available to us? This is not the system which was being followed earlier. Is it a new system which they are following?

2. MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please sit down. Do not interrupt.

Mr. Prime Minister, there was a reference regarding the American Ambassador.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Sir, I will just mention this because I have to go to the other House also.

3. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah): I thoroughly disagree. How can the Home Minister allow the US Ambassador to meet Army Officers? How can the Home Minister decide about it?

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR: The Home Minister was very much present in the House this morning. But he did not disclose this fact to the House.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I will tell you that I have to go to the other House. Otherwise I would have read out the entire statement about whom the 112 foreign dignitaries, including Ambassadors, have met in the last four years, date-wise and with whose permission. All these things have been given by the Home Ministry. It is with me. All these things are with me.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Let this not become a debate.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: That is not the point. We totally agree with the hon. Prime Minister.

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA: On this issue we have already given a notice that we would make a detailed statement. The hon. Members may appreciate that the Prime Minister has to go to the other House. The detailed statement is ready and we can read out the statement and on the basis of that you can make submissions.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: There is nothing new.

STATEMENT REGARDING AMARNATH YATRA

26 August, 1996

Sir, with your kind permission, I would like to make the following Statement as the hon. Home Minister has still not reached Delhi from Jammu. As you have directed. I am making the Statement. Apart from this, any further details will be available to the House after the hon. Home Minister comes back. I think, tomorrow. It may not be possible today.

1. Sir, the Amarnath Yatra this year has been struck by tragedy because of unprecedented bad weather, heavy rain, snow, landslides and flooding. According to available information, 121 persons have lost their lives, mostly due to heart and pulmonary failure, and exposure. Relief operations have been severely hampered due to continuing inclement weather, which has disrupted all forms of communications, and also prevented airborne rescue and relief operations.

2. The Yatra commenced this year on 16 August and was to be completed by 3 September, after the main Darshan scheduled on 28 August. Elaborate Planning was done and arrangements made for the Yatra in anticipation of participation of around one lakh yatris as compared to around 70,800 in 1995 and 40,000 in 1994.

3. The following main arrangements had been made for the Yatra this year:—

- (i) 1200 tents each were pitched at the staging camps at Chandanwari, Sheshnag and Panchtarni, *i.e.*, a total of 3600 tents, as against a total of 900 and 750 tents in all these locations during 1995 and 1994 respectively. In 1995, it is only 900 tents and in 1994, it is only 750, but this year we have made 3600 tents in these three areas. The original plan was to set up around 1900 tents, which was increased to provide greater comfort to the yatris, and, as a contingency, in case of a larger than anticipated number of pilgrims coming for the Yatra. In addition three concrete sheds each were constructed at Sheshnag and Panchtarni. Provision was made through these arrangements for accommodating around 18,000-20,000 pilgrims each at Sheshnag and Panchtarni respectively.

- (ii) 25 metric tonnes of rice and atta, 7 tonnes of sugar and 8 tonnes of wheat bran were stocked at Sheshnag and Panchtarni. This was in addition to arrangements made by the J and K Tourism Development Corporation at Chandanwari, Sheshnag and Panchtarni, and 39 free "langars" set up at the staging camps between Pahalgam and the Holy Cave for providing food and meals to the pilgrims. Further, a large number of local private shopkeepers had set up shops selling eatables, tea, biscuits, etc., all along the Yatra route.
- (iii) The Government hospital at Pahalgam was made fully operational as a base hospital, and sufficient quantities of medicines were stocked there. Arrangements were also made by the State Government for provision of medical aid at Chandanwari, Zojibal, Mahagunas Top, Panchtarni and the Holy Cave. Large quantities of medicines and Oxygen cylinders were provided and doctors and para medical staff deputed at these places. In addition, the Army and the BSF have also set up medical aid camps at Chandanwari, Sheshnag and Panchtarni.
- (iv) 14,500 blankets were arranged for the pilgrims, to supplement the beddings, etc., carried by the pilgrims.
- (v) Firewood was stocked in adequate quantities at different points on the Yatra route. In addition over a thousand L.P.G. Cylinders were stored at various points for the requirements of the "langars" that had been set up.
- (vi) Ponies and porters were arranged on a large scale for the pilgrimage.

4. The Yatra route from Pahalgam to the Holy Cave traverses a distance of over 45 kms. involving a steep climb over rugged mountains, mostly at a height of over 12,000 feet. At these heights, problems arising, from lack of oxygen arise commonly, which can be serious, particularly for the aged and infirm.

5. Keeping all these factors in view, 'Do's and Don'ts' and basic information of the requirements for the Yatris were printed and published well in advance for the guidance of the pilgrims. With your permission, Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the information pamphlets. These copies

were also widely publicised through the newspapers, etc. The points stressed in these *inter alia* included:

- (i) The Yatris should carry with them items like blankets/sleeping bags, heavy woollens, windcheaters/raincoats, water proof shoes, etc. In fact, it was stated that Yatris not carrying the above items would not be registered for the Yatra. Arrangements were made to see that shops selling these items in Jammu, where the registration for the Yatra was done, remain open till late hours in the night for the convenience of the pilgrims.
- (ii) Every pilgrim was asked to get himself/herself medically examined to ensure that he/she is physically fit to undertake the journey.
- (iii) The Yatris were advised to carry with them eatables like biscuits, sweets, milk powder, tinned food, etc., and a personal medicine kit, and that it would also be advisable for them to get themselves inoculated.

6. The Yatra commenced as per schedule on 16 August and around 25,000 pilgrims left Jammu for Pahalgam on 16 August. By 21 August around 1.2 lakh pilgrims had left Jammu for Amarnath and till then the Yatra had been proceeding smoothly, although 11 persons had lost lives due to cardiac arrest/pulmonary failure.

7. On the night of 21-22 August, the weather took a sudden turn and heavy rainfall began, along with snow and sleet in the higher reaches of the Yatra route, *i.e.*, the Holy Cave, Panchtarni, Mahagunas and Sheshnag. The unprecedented rains and snow, accompanied by chilly winds continued unabated till 24 August and temperatures in the higher reaches dropped sharply. As a result of the extremely heavy rains, there were landslides and flooding at a number of places in the State, and the National Highway and the road between Jammu-Srinagar and Srinagar-Pahalgam was blocked at a number of places. All this also led to the Yatris getting stranded at a number of places between Pahalgam and the Holy Cave and at different places on the route between Jammu and Pahalgam. At the same time, airborne operations for relief and evacuation of pilgrims in distress on the track between Pahalgam and the Holy Cave were rendered impossible because of continuous rain, even though helicopters had been kept ready and on stand-by for launching relief and rescue operations.

8. On 23rd August, about 52,000 pilgrims were stranded in the upper reaches at Panchtarni (27,000), Sheshnag (11,000), and Chandanwari (14,500). In spite of rain and snow, on 24th August the Army and Security force units and the Police deployed along the route, made all out efforts to bring the pilgrims stranded in the higher reaches to the lower areas. As soon as there was a break in the rain after the 24th evening, helicopters were also pressed into service, and most of the pilgrims have been moved to Pahalgam.

According to the latest information available, the number of pilgrims in higher reaches is as follows: At Panchtarni, it is about 150, at Sheshnag, it is 100 and at Chandanwari, it is about 8,000. Around 2000 pilgrims have also been brought to a place called Baltal. On an alternate route to Srinagar from Amarnath and efforts are on to bring them to Srinagar, where camps have been set up for lodging them.

9. Additional food and medicine supplies have also been sent to Pahalgam, and supplies are also in the process of being airlifted to Sheshnag and Chandanwari. Fifty persons who required urgent medical attention were evacuated by helicopter to Srinagar on 25th August. Of those who have died, the bodies of 40 pilgrims have been brought to Baltal and efforts to retrieve the remaining bodies are going on.

10. Lieutenant General Saklani, Advisor for Home and Tourism, Government of Jammu and Kashmir is the overall incharge of the Amarnath Yatra and he has been closely supervising the initial arrangements for the Yatra, as well as the relief measures. He has made a number of trips to all the places along the route and as soon as the weather permitted, rushed to Pahalgam and Panchtarni with medical supplies, blankets etc. The Home Ministry got in touch with the Defence Ministry on 23rd and requested all possible assistance to handle the relief. As a result, the Defence Ministry immediately swung into action. The Union Home Secretary was present in the office throughout Saturday the 24th and Sunday the 25th and instructed the State Government to send the situation reports every three hours. A Special Information Centre was also opened at the Police Control Room, Srinagar to facilitate the families and relations to get information about the pilgrims.

11. About 73 of the dead bodies have been identified and the list has been released to the Press. Since the highway between Anantnag and Jammu is blocked and could take two to three days to be cleared, the possibilities of airlifting the bodies from Srinagar are being explored.

12. The Border Roads Organisation in round the clock efforts to clear the road blocks and landslides so that the downward movement of the stranded pilgrims to Jammu can begin. However, problems are also being encountered because of flooding and submergence of the road between Pahalgam and Khanabal, and between Khanabal and Srinagar on the National Highway which has also created bottlenecks in the road movement.

13. The Ministry of Railways have organised seven special trains from Jammu to clear the pilgrim traffic without any delay.

14. Keeping in view the extreme inclement weather conditions the State Government stopped movement of any yatris forward towards the cave. The 'Charri Mubarak' which was also stranded at Udhampur due to road blocks on the National Highway was airlifted on 25th of August to Srinagar and will be taken with a group of Sadhus to Panchtarni on 27th August for its final traditional journey to the Holy Cave on 28th August. The same day it would return to Panchtarni and be flown back to Srinagar.

15. As in the last two or three years right from the beginning there had been apprehensions of possible threats to the yatris from the militants and there were reports of likely attempts to plant explosive devices etc., at the traditional camp sites. Keeping in view these apprehensions and possibilities the sites of the camps at Chandanwari and Sheshnag were also relocated soon before the commencement of the yatra to ensure the security of the pilgrims. As a result of the security precautions and tight arrangements, the yatra has so far passed off peacefully and without any disruption on this score.

16. It would be seen from the foregoing that there has been a record participation in the pilgrimage this year. The State Administration and the Security Forces had been fully geared up to ensure the safe and smooth conduct of the yatra and the arrangements for the accommodation, food, medical supplies etc. had been substantially augmented as compared to the previous years. Also, this time, all these arrangements were further strengthened by the whole-hearted cooperation of the local employees and participation by all sections of the local population who provide various services for the yatra which was a particularly heartening feature of this year's yatra. The yatra was proceeding smoothly till 21st August when tragedy struck in the form of sudden and unprecedented rains and snow.

The magnitude and unprecedented nature of this would be seen from the fact that the casualties include at least four security force personnel and eight porters and ponywallahs who are generally acclimated to the heights and the local conditions and are physically very fit.

17. Efforts have been mounted and are continuing on a war footing by the State Administration, the Army and the security forces to provide relief and succour to the pilgrims who are stranded in various places, and to ensure that the road blocks are also cleared at the earliest so that the pilgrims can move to their houses. *Ex gratia* relief of Rs. 50,000 has been sanctioned from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund to the families of those who have lost their lives in the calamity and an equal amount of *ex gratia* relief has been announced by the State Government.

The latest position is about the railway facilities that have been provided. At about four o'clock I got this information. There are only about 15 to 20 yatries left in the Railway Station. All those pilgrims who came to the Railway station have been helped to go to Delhi as a first step. And then subsequently they will go to their own places.

This is the latest position and I have made the statement on the facts available now. After the Home Minister comes back, if any further information is there it will be supplied to the hon. House.

So far as the discussion is concerned, the Government has no hesitation. Whatever decision that has been taken in the all-party meeting, we are ready for discussion. Any other information about the facilities to be provided on the advice of the senior Members of the House, the Government is prepared to consider. I am prepared to have a discussion today or tomorrow as per the decision that is going to be taken.

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR YATRIES TO SHRI AMARNATH JI

Do's

1. Please ensure that you are fit to perform the journey. Do have yourself medically examined. Remember that you have to cross Mahagunas top which is about 14000 feet high.
2. Do carry your own tents, Sleeping Bags, Blankets, Beddings, heavy woollens, wind sheeters, rain coats, water-proof shoes, torches and walking sticks.

3. Kindly carry some eatables like biscuits, sweets, milk powder and tinned food with you.
4. Avail Ration and Fire wood quota especially arranged for you at all stages.
5. Kindly ensure that all your arrangements are in perfect order. Examine the tent(s) that you have hired. Make sure that the ponywalla, the labourer, the dandywalla is properly registered and carries a token.
6. Please ensure that ponies carrying your luggage and eatables etc. remain with you all the time. If you let them remain behind, you are likely to be inconvenienced.
7. Kindly observe discipline on the trek and keep on moving slowly and steadily. Adhere to the instructions issued by the Yatra Officer from time to time. The officials of the Police, Tourism, Health, Food and other Departments are there to help you perform the journey comfortably.

Don'ts

1. Do not overstrain on steep gradients.
2. Do not stop at any point where there are warning notices.
3. Do not break traffic discipline or try to overtake others in difficult stretches.
4. Do not pay more than the prices fixed for porters, ponies, dandies, rations, firewood and for supplies from Dhabas.
5. All medical attendance is free of cost.

Note: Aged, Infirm, ailing and yatries not sufficiently clothed will not be permitted to proceed beyond Pahalgam.

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I requested that the statement will be made by the Home Minister when he comes back. In the morning during the meeting of Leaders of all the Parties in your Chamber, they took a decision about it. I do not know. That is the information given by Parliamentary Affairs Minister that the matter should be taken up for discussion after the Home Minister comes

and makes a statement. This is what was conveyed to me by my Parliamentary Affairs Minister. I have not come here to make a *suo motu* statement. I have never said that the hon. Leader of the Opposition is mixing politics in this very sad tragedy. I have never said it. I have placed on the floor of the House only whatever information that I have.

I am prepared to have a discussion. I am agreeable for a discussion. You say whatever you want to say.

I have no hesitation for that. If any further information is available, after the Home Minister comes, it will also be supplied to the House.

BACK NOTE

VIII. Statement regarding Amarnath Yatra, 26 August, 1996.

1. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ (South Delhi): Mr. Speaker. Sir, if the statement of the Prime Minister is taken as true then whatever the hon. Members have said was untrue. Were all those allegations baseless? Was all the anguish expressed a force. Here every Member is saying that people of his constituency are contacting him/her to seek information. We are further trying to contact officers but they are not available. We are not in a position to tell the people anything. While giving speech, the hon. Prime Minister said that not only the arrangements for the yatra were adequate but it were better and everything was handled properly. When it is the reply of the whole discussion then what is the use of speaking on this subject. It means that whatever we Members have said here irrespective of the party affiliations and placed our experience as well on that of individual constituencies here and the reply of the Prime Minister indicates that what he said was true than what is the use of having a discussion on it?

I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether he has taken notice of all what the hon. Members have said in the morning? Whatever the officers have written, he simply read it out as it. What is the use of that discussion? Were all those facts untrue? This is even not a cover-up.

SHRIMATI JAYAWANTI NAVINCHANDRA MEHTA (Bombay South): Sir, the Prime Minister has not spoken for Mumbai. About 200 yatris from Bombay and stranded in the Amarnath Yatra.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Shri Jaswant Singh and others are saying. If the statement of the Prime Minister is true then there is no need of further discussion on it. Everything is O.K. Whatever was good before is also good now. There is no need of any supervision and rescue work. People are crying. The people are stranded there.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : It has been agreed to have a discussion. This is a direct challenge to the veracity of the statement. In the discussion that can be done. This is a very serious charge. Let us not convert this House into a slanging match.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: There the food, sugar, wheat were all in adequate measure. The medicines were sufficient. Every care was without fault.

This is not the official statement.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow): He has given statement on the basis of reports that have been received. The Home Minister has not returned yet. The Hon. Minister has seen the situation. We would like to hear, his conclusions. After hearing the statement of the Prime Minister, a question comes to the mind repeatedly that if the arrangements were so good then all these deaths were due to the natural calamity? Did not the administration take necessary steps at that time? Why there was delay in calling the army? The Governor was here in Delhi for the last three days. You have not mentioned about it. The Chief Secretary was also in Delhi. But no one could be contacted in Delhi. No control room was set up in Jammu and Srinagar. These are all failures. Are we in a position to deal with sudden tragedy or the arrangements made in advance can be considered adequate? The nature has challenged them and if the administration could not stand up to face that challenge then it should be a matter of concern for the hon. Prime Minister. But the speech of the Prime Minister does not show any concern. So I would like that we should wait for the statement of the Home Minister. The House is ready for a discussion. After all we have to initiate the discussion. But if one thinks that it is a cover up and if after this serious tragedy it is proved that the Government had made all the arrangements but the weather did not favour them, I think it would be injustice with the situation. It even such a situation arose the people should not have been allowed to die. We should have saved them and if there has been any lapse it should be looked into.

Whatever was said in the morning is not an issue of a party. We should find out the truth but the speech of the Prime Minister does not throw any light on it. He has not replied to a number of issues which put the Government in the dock. I would like that the Prime Minister go into this matter in depth. When the hon'ble Home Minister comes tomorrow, we will hear him and then decides in what form the discussion should take place.

MR. SPEAKER: I think, we can wait for the report of the Home Minister.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Sir. I was not prepared to make the statement today. I had requested you about it.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, exactly.

**OBITUARY REFERENCES TO SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDHA
AND SHRI ASHOK KUMAR SEN**

2 September, 1996

Hon. Speaker, Sir, the death of Shri Nathu Ram Mirdha has left a void in the public life of this country. Shri Mirdha was a veteran freedom fighter and an erudite Parliamentarian. He was a Member of either the Lok Sabha or the State Legislature of Rajasthan for nearly half a century. During this long period he held many important positions like Chairman, National Commission on Agriculture. Minister of State for Irrigation, Finance, Food and Civil Supplies and Chairman of many important Parliamentary Committees.

He rendered yeoman service to the cause of the farmers, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections of the society. His services to the farming community will be long remembered. Shri Mirdha has won the recent elections to the Lok Sabha with an impressive margin even without visiting his constituency once due to bad health, which shows his immense popularity with the masses.

A lawyer by profession, Shri Mirdha also rendered invaluable service in the field of education by establishing many educational institutions and hostels.

On my behalf and on behalf of the Government, I pay my humble tributes to the late Mirdhaji and request you, Sir, to convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

We also deeply mourn the passing away of Shri Ashoke Kumar Sen, who was a Member of the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth and Eighth Lok Sabhas. He was an eminent jurist, who occupied the position of Law Minister at the Centre for many years under successive Prime Ministers. He was a Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court and the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association for nearly a decade. He led the Indian delegations to the United Nations Conference on Law, the United Nations Conference on Human Rights and several other conferences. He was a Member of the Rajya Sabha till recently Shri Sen has had several publications to his credit. He was the Editor of Calcutta Law Journal.

I request you, Sir, to convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family of Shri Sen.

BACK NOTE

- IX. Obituary References to Shri Nathu Ram Mirdha and Shri Ashok Kumar Sen, 2 September, 1996.

NIL

REGARDING QUESTION OF REPEAL OF IMDT ACT

26 November, 1996

Sir, with your kind permission, I would like to clarify only one point as regards the IMDT Act of Assam. Your goodself knows and the whole House knows that I visited all the North-Eastern States for about six and a half days. During my visit, I tried to meet all the sections of the society including leaders of political parties, non-Governmental organisations, Governors, Chief Ministers, Ministers and student unions. Like that, I tried to meet all sections of the people during my visit to the North-Eastern States.

In Assam, one of the demands was to repeal this Act. Almost all political parties including the Government party want to repeal it. But the Jamait-e-Islam—one group came in the last and requested me not to take any hasty decision particularly on this Act. I told them that in the present context, unless all political parties were going to cooperate, it was rather difficult for me to repeal any Act and that they also, knew the composition of the House and that the Government would consider the matter with the cooperation of all parties.

Sir, this issue was also raised by the Press in the Press Conference. A majority of the people wants to repeal this Act because the purpose is not served by this Act. This is one of the major contentions. Under this Act, a Tribunal has been constituted to identify the foreigners. I do not want to go into the details like the impact of this Act. Though they have identified about 3.78 lakh people as foreigners, ultimately, the Tribunal passed an order for about 1000 people to be sent back to Bangladesh. So, this is the net result.

I do not want to enter into the merits and demerits now but there is some controversy on this issue. Unless I take the entire House into confidence, the question of repealing this Act at this stage will not arise.

BACK NOTE

- X. Regarding Question of Repeal of IMDT Act, 26 November, 1996.

NIL

**SITUATION ARISING FROM CYCLONE
IN ANDHRA PRADESH**

26 and 27 November, 1996

(i) Discussion Regarding Destruction/Damage in Andhra Pradesh due to Cyclone

26 November, 1996

Sir, with your permission. I would just like to clarify one point. So far as the reply to this particular issue is concerned. I myself am going to reply to it. The hon. Minister for Agriculture has already made a statement and if he wants to add anything more he is free to do so. But what action we have taken, all these things are going to be replied by me after the debate is concluded.

The only point which I would like to clarify is that we are trying to estimate the magnitude of the damage that has been caused in the recent cyclone. To that effect there is some controversy but I do not want to be a party to that. Several delegations have met me in this context. I myself held the aerial survey and I do not want to tell all the details right now. At the time of reply I am going to say about my assessment to the whole situation.

One delegation came to me and said that the loss is around Rs. 15,000 crore: the Government has submitted a memorandum stating that the loss is around Rs. 6,000 crore another delegation came to me and said that the loss is around Rs. 8,500 crore.

So, in their opinion they might have assessed the damage as Rs. 15,000 crore or Rs. 8,000 crore. The Government, in its opinion has submitted a memorandum for about Rs. 6,000 crore. I only said to one delegation: 'The official team is also going. The official team is coming back and it will submit a report. Afterwards I can give my correct views on the quantum of loss'.

Please see, everybody has got his own views. Now I do not want to comment at this stage Fifty lakh coconut trees have fallen. In two districts, as per one assessment, there are sixty lakh coconut trees and out of which, all have fallen. I have not gone to every garden.

Shri Jagannath, please wait for one minute. You can talk afterwards. I only said that each team went on making its own assessment. One team has

assessed it as Rs. 15,000 crore. They have gone and issued a statement that the Prime Minister has no concern about the Andhra damage. Another team came to me. Everybody says that politics should not be mixed. But saying is one thing. This should not happen. That is all. The Government is equally concerned. So far as the accurate damage is concerned, till the official report comes. I cannot say anything, I will reveal every action taken by the Government up-till now in the evening when I am going to reply to this discussion.

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**(ii) Discussion on Relief Measures to Andhra Pradesh
27 November, 1996**

Sir, with your kind permission, I would like to give the details about some of the relief measures that we have taken, so far as the Andhra Pradesh cyclone is concerned.

Yesterday my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, had made a statement and after that several hon. Members of this House expressed their concern about the seriousness of the cyclone and about the amount or the quantum of damage that took place. They said that the Government has not responded properly to see that those people who have suffered due to the cyclone, are given proper relief. This is one of the allegations or charges made against the Government.

First I would like to give the details of the incident that took place and how it has happened. The whole damage took place in four hours on the 6th of last month. That is all. Actually, the wind which had blown at a speed of about 220 kilometers per hour, is the root cause for this. Even though the State Government had given sufficient warning, unfortunately the people living in the coastal areas did not take it seriously. Some of our friends have expressed that people had gone to collect prawn and other fishes. That is why even though the prior warning was given, it was not taken seriously by the unfortunate victims of this cyclone.

I went there on 10th. In fact, I wanted to go on 7th morning itself. I contacted the Chief Minister. He told me that the rainfall was still there, that I

could not land or even make an aerial survey and that it was very difficult to go round in the affected areas. I again contacted him on 8th. On 8th also he told me the same thing. So, on 10th morning, I went there. I contacted the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister.

About Pondicherry, some hon. Member has made a very bitter attack. There is no question of neglecting either Pondicherry or Tamil Nadu or Andhra Pradesh. It is not a question of this region. I tried to contact the concerned Chief Ministers and the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister told me that the damage was not so severe and that he did not think that my visit was required at that stage. When I went to Andhra, the Chief Minister and other political parties' leaders were all there. After my aerial survey, I had a meeting with the officers and the political party leaders and the estimate of the total loss, according to their own assessment, was roughly about Rs. 6,000 crore. They gave the particulars also.

Subsequently, the State Government submitted a memorandum to the Central Government for the relief. According to them, they want an immediate relief of Rs.125 crore. The damage to the horticulture crop that they have estimated is about Rs. 4.136 crore and the relief that they require is Rs. 350 crore. In respect of housing, Rs. 963 crore is the loss and the help that they want from the Central Government is Rs. 1.042 crore. Damage to the agricultural crop is Rs. 396.53 crore and the amount of compensation required is about Rs. 50 crore.

The damage to Andhra Pradesh State Electricity Board was Rs. 102 crore and they want all the amount of Rs. 102 crore to be reimbursed by the Central Government. In the Municipalities sector the damage was Rs. 120 crore and they want a Central assistance of Rs. 100 crore. In Panchayati Raj sector the damage was Rs. 150 crore and the amount expected from the Centre is about Rs. 130 crore. In the Animal Husbandry sector the damage was Rs. 45 crore and the amount expected from the Centre is Rs. 30 crore. In the Roads and Buildings sector the estimated loss was Rs. 35 crore and the amount expected from the Centre is all the amount of Rs. 35 crore.

In the Irrigation sector the damage to some irrigation tanks is Rs. 100 crore and the relief which they sought is Rs. 80 crore. In the Fisheries sector the damage is Rs. 40 crore and the amount asked for by the State Government

is Rs. 40 crore. In the Handlooms sector the loss is Rs. 27 crore and the relief they asked is Rs. 27 crore. In the Industries and Sericulture sector the damage is Rs. 10 crore and they asked for Rs. 6 crore. In the Public Health and Sanitation sector they asked for Rs. 25 crore. The total required amount is Rs. 2,142 crore.

This is the amount which was sought by the Andhra Pradesh Government from the Central Government in their memorandum. Some talk about what action we have taken, or that the Government is callous or that the Government is not responding to the problems etc. has come. It was the reaction of several hon. Members. I welcome it. But I would like to give these details as to what action the Central Government has taken only for the benefit of the hon. Members and also for the benefit of the people at large through this House. I would like to give the details of the action that the Government has taken.

On the day when I went there, I announced Rs. 50 crore Central assistance of finance. The same afternoon I have given that money. I came back by about four o'clock and I told the officers from the air itself that the money should be placed at the disposal of the Andhra Pradesh Government.

The entire amount of Rs. 93 crore being the Central contribution to the Calamity Relief Fund of Andhra Pradesh has been fully contributed. This is according to the Ninth Finance Commission, that the Andhra Pradesh Government was entitled to and it was released. Rs. 93 crore, the full amount, was released. Income-tax exemption up to 100 per cent was allowed for contributions to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister's Cyclone Relief Fund. We brought an Ordinance and that exemption was also given.

From the Prime Minister's Relief Fund Rs. 4.85 crore for the families of those who have died was given. According to the figures given by the Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh about 970 people have died. We released the amount of Rs. 4.85 crore at the rate of Rs. 50,000 per person.

A sum of Rs. 4 crore was released by the Ministry of Surface Transport to rectify the damages that happened to the roads. The Ministry of Power has made available a loan amount of Rs. 30 crore through the P.F.C. for restoration, repair and reconnection of the sources of electricity supply, damaged in the region. We have given Rs. 30 crore from the Government of India.

Orders have been issued for the procurement of paddy with relaxation in the quality of norms for eight districts in Andhra Pradesh. Because of the floods the quality has suffered. Even then we wanted to procure that. The conditions with regard to quality, as fixed by the F.C.I., have also been relaxed. Fifty thousand tonnes of rice has been released as an ad hoc allotment for the Public Distribution System only for those two districts.

An additional allocation of 10,000 litres of kerosene has also been released.

Accelerated devolution of Central taxes and ways and means advance amounting to Rs. 331 crore was offered to the Government of Andhra Pradesh so that the liquidity position of the State Government, to undertake relief operations, was not affected. This is the problem and they declined this offer because they think that it would be adjusted in future days. That is why, they want the full amount of Rs. 331 crore to be given as an outright grant. This is one area where the State Government is not prepared to utilise the amount which we are prepared to release.

The Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment have released an advance installment of Rs.11crore under JRY and IAY to two districts, the West Godavari and the East Godavari. In addition, an extra allocation of Rs. 10 crore under JRY has been released over and above the normal allocation for the two districts. We have done this also.

Then, HUDCO have announced a special package of Rs. 190 crore of which Rs. 50 crore is a grant and Rs. 140 crore is a loan at a concessional rate of interest for reconstruction of completely damaged houses or for repairs of partially damaged houses in the districts. In addition, HUDCO have offered 10 building centres for the cyclone affected districts with a grant assistance of Rs. 1.50 crore.

The other supports being extended to improve the flow of funds to Andhra Pradesh for undertaking permanent relief and rehabilitation works are as follows. We have approved an amount of Rs. 113 crore as the Rural Development Cess. This was an issue pending for the last several years and still the demands from various other States have not been considered. Other States are also demanding the same type of financial assistance so far as the Cess is concerned

and because of resource constraint we have not taken any step in this regard, but particularly in this connection, to help the State of Andhra Pradesh we have taken a decision to release Rs. 113 crore as the Rural Development Cess for procurement of foodgrains. There are demands from other States, but I am not going into details now.

In addition to that, we made an appeal to all the political parties. In fact, the next day through electronic media I myself made an appeal. This is not the question of any party matter and all the political parties should come forward to cooperate. I also requested the Chief Minister to take the cooperation of all the political parties to create confidence among the people that the money which is going to be released is properly spent and told him that there should not be any scope for unnecessarily doubting the *bona fides* of the Government. He told me that he had already constituted an All Party Committee at the district level.

So, in addition to that, on 11th November itself we contacted the World Bank and the World Bank President has agreed to release 100 million U.S. dollars for housing which comes to about Rs. 350 crore which is a soft loan to be repaid in about 40 years. Now they have submitted a concrete proposal and that is submitted to the World Bank for consideration. They have submitted a proposal for Rs. 1,000 crore for housing and the entire project report has been submitted to the World Bank.

Sir, these are certain steps-which we have taken. I do not think the Government has made any mistake while taking decision so far as the relief operations are concerned. I may tell you with all sincerity at my command that this is the highest assistance either in the form of grant or in form of loan or in the form of special assistance which the Government of India has ever given. Cyclones have come earlier also either in Tamil Nadu or in Andhra Pradesh or in Orissa or in West Bengal. These types of damages happened even in the past also. I do not want to narrate how much Central assistance was given in those days. But I would confine myself to what the Central Government has done so far as these districts are concerned which are damaged by the two particular cyclones. I have placed the facts before the hon. House. Sir, there is no question of mixing any politics there; and there is no question of giving any special treatment. But we have tried our best by knowing fully well about the

magnitude of the problem to cooperate with the State Government. I hope the House will be satisfied after this explanation regarding actions that we have taken. I think the House will, at least, agree with me that the Government is sincere particularly in this regard.

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Sir, I would like to clarify the position again about the quantum of Central relief that is going to be given under such circumstances. Till the Ninth Finance Commission recommendation. Whatever may be the quantum of damage caused either due to drought or floods or cyclone, the money that was going to be released by the Government of India was only a meagre amount. Only the Plan assistance was given. The Central assistance is only a meagre amount. I think, for the first time, the Ninth Finance Commission has recommended to create the Calamity Relief Fund. Till then. It was given only as an *ad hoc* assistance from the Centre under Non-Plan. Whatever money that was available with the Government of India, they used to give amounts like Rs. 15 crore, Rs. 20 crore and Rs. 30 crore. I am going to give the details a little later.

The Calamity Relief Fund, as per the recommendation of the Tenth Finance Commission, is about Rs. 1,197 crore out of which 75 per cent is the grant and 25 per cent is the loan portion. The highest amount indicated by the Tenth Finance Commission, in its recommendation, is to Rajasthan Rs. 179 crore. Andhra Pradesh Rs. 124 crore and Gujarat Rs. 139 crore. I do not want to mix politics here. The quantum of damage Bihar is going to have every year due to high floods is severe. There are six or seven rivers.

So is the case with Assam. For Bihar, it is just Rs. 51 crore. I do not want to go back to all these things as to how it has happened. In a restrained way. I am placing only certain facts. Please wait. Let the Andhra Pradesh politics not crop up in this House. I have heard it. What the hon. Member says is that we have not done anything. I would like to just draw the attention of the House to one aspect Madam, you asked me as to what happened in 1934, what happened in 1987 and what happened in May 1990. I will give you the details. In 1990, the number of houses damaged was 13,96,000. This time, according to their figure, it is 6,41,000. I would just like to point out what

was the amount of assistance given at that time. Let us not come to the conclusion that this Government is giving this issue a step-motherly treatment. Let us come to the conclusion that this Government has taken some decision on certain humanitarian considerations.

The estimate of loss at that time, according to the State Government, was Rs. 2.247 crore. The team which went from the Government of India recommended for Rs. 168 crore where the number of houses collapsed was 13,96,000. Out of that, the Inter-Ministerial Group of the Government of India had recommended for assistance of Rs. 167.54 crore in respect of 1990 calamity to the State Government after deducting Rs. 86 crore available with the State Government under the Central Relief Fund. The Ministry of Agriculture had proposed an additional relief of Rs. 81.5 crore. This was put up to the Cabinet in August 1991. The decision on this was deferred. This was considered by the Union Cabinet again in 1992 with the change that 75 per cent of the recommended assistance Rs. 81.5 crore may be treated as grant and 25 per cent as loan. However, this proposal was not approved apparently because the Finance Ministry objected to the grant of any additional assistance over and above the Central share of the Calamity Relief Fund. My hon. Colleague says that this Government has no heart.

Please let us not mix up politics on this issue. I can understand about it. I have given a total package of Rs. 650 crore and apart from, that we want to release Rs. 331 crore. And they say. We do not want it. Raja Sekhara Reddyji you asked for Rs. 1,000 crore. We have recommended to the World Bank for Rs. 1,000 crore for housing. But what was the amount asked for by the State Government? The State Government had asked for Rs. 963 crore for housing. Apart from this Rs. 1,000 crore that we have recommended to the World Bank, we have already taken steps with the HUDCO. I have also given the details of how much it is. The HUDCO has announced a special package of Rs. 180 crore of which Rs. 50 crore is the grant. The Rural Development Ministry have released Rs. 21 crore. Then Rs. 60 crore may come out of the National Calamity Relief Fund. Rs. 93 crore is the Calamity Relief Fund which the State Government should get it legitimately. In addition to that, the cess comes to Rs. 113 crore. The Ministry or Rural Development says this in respect of procurement of foodgrains. We have taken this decision. All these things come

to Rs. 650 crore. I do not know what I should do.

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BACK NOTE

XI. Situation arising from Cyclone in Andhra Pradesh, 26 November, 1996.

(i) Discussion Regarding Destruction/Damage in Andhra Pradesh due to Cyclone, 26 November, 1996.

1. SHRI VENKATARAMI REDDY ANANTHA (Anantpur): The press is going on saying that the State Government is blaming the Central Government and the Central Government is not taking the responsibility. (Interruptions)

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: No. I am not going to say. I said, 'team'. Three teams have come to me. One team has said Rs. 15,000 crore: another team has said Rs. 8,500 crore and the Government's report is Rs. 6,000 crore. So, I had to rely upon the official team. The official team is going to study the entire affected area and it will submit a report. Till then you have to wait.

SHRI P. UPENDRA (Vijayawada): It was not the political parties who accused of lack of concern for those who suffered in the cyclone. It was the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh who has blamed the Centre for rigid and non-cooperative attitude..(Interruptions)

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Shri Upendraji. I can understand who are all doing politics. Please do not try to drag the issue further. I have not named as to who has said Rs. 15,000 crore. I have not named as to who has said Rs. 8,500 crore. I have only said, 'delegations'. I have not said, Congress. Telugu Desam or another Telegu Desam. I do not want to say the name of any party or parties. I have only said that the teams or the delegations met me and said what they have submitted in their memorandum. I have just brought them to the notice of this House.

(ii) Discussion on Relief Measures to Andhra Pradesh, 27 November, 1996.

1. SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO (Berhampur): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Prime Minister to the fact that thousands of weavers in those two or three districts have been completely stranded and ruined. Everyone has seen that thousands of their looms have been completely destroyed and I would like the Government to take immediate action to give them relief and

also rehabilitate them suitably on a permanent basis. If anything has been done, I would be happy to know from the Prime Minister.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I gave the details regarding handlooms. They have asked for Rs. 27 crore. I have already listed out what amount the Government have released up till now. The total package comes to about Rs. 650 crore. It is apart from the amount which we are going to get from the World Bank as soft loan. Apart from that, up till now, what we have released is about Rs. 650 crore.

SHRI P. UPENDRA (Vijayawada): The Minister of Agriculture told that Rs. 37 crore have been allotted for the coconut plants and Rs. 4 crore has been announced by the Ministry of Surface Transport for repairing the National Highways.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I have told everything. I have already mentioned all these things including surface transport, electricity, repairing of powerlooms, etc. ..[Interruptions]

DR. Y.S. RAJA SEKHARA REDDY (Cuddapah): Sir, since yesterday, we have been requesting the Government that the first phase of the cyclone also has to be taken into account. Unfortunately, in the Prime Minister's reply nothing has been mentioned with regard to the first phase of the cyclone.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : Sir, I would clarify it. Even at the time of first phase of cyclone I went there. We have released Rs. 58 crore for the first phase. The damage is not so much. Out of which Rs. 27 crore was the advance and Rs. 23 crore was the grant.

2. DR. Y.S. RAJA SEKHARA REDDY: The State Government has a very serious financial position. It is like a proverbial jackal sitting under a palm tree and the palm fruit is falling on the head of the jackal.

The State Government's financial position is exactly that. So, they are literally going with a begging bowl to every State, every place possible. So, in view of the serious financial position of the State Governments...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I do not think, it is a question of a begging bowl. When a calamity like that occurs, everybody must trip in.

DR. Y.S. RAJA SEKHARA REDDY: At least, the housing part be taken care of because it also forms part of the Common Minimum Programme of the National Front Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Raja Sekhara Reddy, please. Now, the hon. Foreign Minister will make a Statement on Afghanistan.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: One minute, Sir.

Whatever the hon. Member Shri Raja Sekhara Reddy has expressed, I do not want to react to that. Every State Government's financial position is one and the same. Do not get under the impression that the financial position of Andhra is bad and the other States are financially very strong ...[Interruptions]... We know what it is, including the Central Government ...[Interruptions]... When the previous Government was there, why was it turned down? Do not unnecessarily try to make politics in such a very important decision.

Your goodself have said that the Prime Minister has not made an appeal. For the first time, I have made an appeal through the electronic media, through the print media to the entire country —the State Governments, non-governmental organizations and the financial institutions which has appeared in all the Papers. I do not want to say, Sir, that within three days I sent my one month's salary and I did not want to say this. And I do not want to take any credit for this. I sent the cheque of my salary within three days and I have requested my people also. For God's sake, please do not make politics out of this. The other States are also there. When we want to think of the country as a whole, we should not try to mix politics here...[Interruptions]

DISCUSSION ON DROUGHT CONDITION IN ODISHA

29 November, 1996

Hon. Speaker. Sir, since yesterday several senior Members, the former Prime Minister and the former Chief Minister of Orissa have participated in the discussion on the drought situation in Orissa. Everybody's concern is that the drought situation should be tackled on a war footing and see that nobody should migrate from Orissa to some other State in search of jobs. This is one of the points suggested by the former Prime Minister who represents Orissa State as a Member of Parliament.

Sir, I visited on 14.11.1996 three districts. I took the Chief Minister with me. In fact, I wanted to visit the drought prone area a little earlier. My colleague, Shri Srikant Jena had suggested to me to visit the affected areas, but at that time the Chief Minister was not in the State. He had gone outside on some other work. I do not want to say that he had gone unnecessarily. With a prior engagement to contact various global investors, he had chalked out his programme and told me before he left the country that after his arrival, I could visit the State. That is why I postponed my programme. Otherwise, I would have gone still earlier. The Central team had gone after I visited the area. The Minister of Agriculture also visited before I went there.

I am sorry, he visited afterwards, I visited these districts. Sir, I do not want to cast aspersions on anybody. Money is not the issue. For the purpose of inadequate release of funds, employment, opportunities have not been provided or the people searching for employment there are going out of the State, migrating from Orissa to other States for searching jobs. That is one of the points raised by the hon. former Prime Minister.

Sir, I would like to bring it to the notice of this august House that the total resources available to Orissa are about Rs. 461 crore, the amount released is Rs. 225.54 crore and total expenditure uptill now is only Rs. 187.67 crore. Under Rural Development alone, after I visited. I declared that about Rs. 50 crore would be immediately released. I do not want to cast aspersions on the State Government, how the funds have been used or diverted to various other programmes.

I had a frank discussion with the Chief Minister. I asked him to tell me what exactly was the assistance they wanted from the Centre. Subsequently,

they have submitted a memorandum. A copy of the memorandum is also with me. Their demand is for about Rs. 585 crore. I will give the break-up.

Agriculture Department - Rs. 26.39 crore, Cooperation Department - Rs. 15.95 crore, Fisheries Department - Rs. 2.97 crore, Department of Health and Family Welfare Rs. 4.97 crore, Housing Department about Rs. 8.77 crore, Panchayati Raj Rs. 371 crore. Rural Development Department which includes drinking and rural works is about Rs. 51.32 crore. Department of Water Resources - Rs. 87.23 crore which includes major, medium and minor irrigation as well as lift irrigation Department of Energy — Rs. 10 crore. Emergency Feeding Programme - Rs. 7.20 crore. All this comes to about Rs. 585 crore.

Sir, as I have already mentioned, under Rural Development itself the Orissa State is entitled for about Rs. 461 crore. In the eight affected districts—earlier they were three and subsequently five new districts were formed which is called KBK Special Programme. During my aerial survey, I have come to an opinion that in almost all the three districts in the plain area there are minor irrigation tanks I would like to share my experience with the hon. Members of this august House that in almost all the low lying areas, there are minor irrigation tanks. Everywhere we can see the green patches. When we were going in the car, I actually got down from the car and went to the paddy field with the Chief Minister and other officers. In the same areas where there is some moisture the formation of the grain is comparatively better than the area where moisture content is less. In most of the low lying areas, minor irrigation tanks were being constructed. Due to the shortage of water, with one watering or two waterings the formation of the grain has not been totally satisfactory. I would like to make this point that if only one watering or two waterings could be made available. I think, almost all the paddy area can be saved. Sir, I asked the Chief Minister, can we not extract the ground water? Is there any ground water? Is the potential available? What is the opinion of the State Government? Have you conducted any survey? Sir, I was told by the Chief Minister, that barring one or two districts, if we put up tubewells, there is sufficient ground water and we can use that ground water at the time of shortage of rain or you can call it the drought or whatever the situation that may arise. If we take up tubewells on a massive scale, I think we can save money by not spending it on various unproductive works. Even today, if anybody goes on an aerial survey, he could see that crop is good. But when he goes to the field, he would see that it is not so.

The grains have not been formed because of shortage of one or two waterings. This is the real situation which I have observed. I told the Chief Minister: "You appoint an expert, who is a know geologist, and conduct a survey. The Central Government is prepared to provide any amount of money for the tubewells because drought problem is there in these eight districts, earlier, there were three districts, every year." I think, when Shri Chandra Shekhar was the Prime Minister, he also went there. At that time also, there were reports of several deaths. There were so many types of reports and the situation was grave. Shri Chandra Shekhar also made a visit at that time. The Kalahandi issue was also discussed in Parliament.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that we may spend any amount of money on relief measures, but I would say that it is only a temporary measure. Instead of that, if we take up some permanent measures, we can definitely avoid this type of misery to the local people. I do not want to cast any aspersion because our former Prime Minister has come just now.

The Chief Minister was present with me. I myself asked one or two aged ladies whether they were getting any old age pension. Since I do not know the Oriya language, I asked the officers to translate to me what the old lady was saying. She said that she did not get any old age pension. I asked the District Collector what he was doing. He called for the Sarpanch, but the Sarpanch was not traceable. I do not want to narrate anything because one of our Members, who is sitting here, was there on the spot. The Sarpanch was not available and the District Collector was a little bit shaky to give a correct answer. I told him that whatever happened had happened, that he must select the poorest of the poor when he was going to give such benefits like old age pension or subsidised foodgrains or whatever it is. That was the instruction which I gave to him. He told me that as per the quota fixed for Orissa, whatever may be the ceiling, about 248,000 people have been selected tor giving old age pension and if that number is relaxed, that he can extend the benefit to the remaining people. That is how he made the presentation before me. I took the decision to give the relaxation and to provide this benefit to five thousand more people in so far as these seven or eight districts in Orissa were concerned So, the old people who did not get any old age pension should be identified and this benefit should be extended to them. This was the instruction given to them. On that day, in the presence of the Chief Minister, I declared that we were going to give additional funds to the tune of Rs. 50 crore.

I do not want to take much time of this august House. I will only mention about the monies that are available under each category. Under the JRY, the money available is Rs. 162.67 crore; under IAY, it is Rs. 58.20 crore; under MWS, it is Rs. 16.02 crore; under the Employment Assistance Scheme, it is Rs. 111.45 crore; under IRDP, it is Rs. 30.21 crore; under DWCRA, it is Rs. 1.28 crore, and under Tool Kits, it is Rs. 1.17 crore. When the money is available and if the people are going out in search of jobs, then it means that these monies are being spent in some other areas. The State Government may be having a problem, but they have not given a clear picture.

The money might have been diverted to various other purposes. Anyway, I do not want to take that excuse now and see that the people suffer. The Government of India is prepared to release funds in order to provide any amount of work. I will give you this much of assurance to all the hon. Members of this House who represent Orissa. I am prepared to provide any amount of money that is required to provide employment and the necessary drinking water to those villages. They are saying that about 26,000 villages are suffering from drought. That is one of the reports of the State Government. I am prepared to provide the money for drinking water, to provide sufficient employment and whether it is a grant, whether it is going to be adjusted in future out of the Plan allocation is not the issue now to be discussed. Let us, as our former Prime Minister has said, tackle it on a water footing. Yes, we are ready. What is the quantum of the share of the Centre and the share of the State? All these things can be discussed later. I am going to give a categorical assurance that we are prepared to provide the necessary funds. There is no need for anybody to go out of the States in search of employment. Whatever may be the amount of employment that is required by the State, let them take up the works and we are prepared to provide the necessary funds. This is all what I would like to say.

I have released about Rs. 37 crore as Calamity Relief Fund. Earlier, under Rural Development, what was the money that was available, what was released and what was not spent, is a different matter which I have just mentioned for the benefit of this august House.

For irrigation, the money that has been provided this year is Rs. 800 crores. Out of that, we have released Rs. 46.05 crore to Orissa. The Chief Minister, in his memorandum, has requested for about Rs. 87.23 crore. For Orissa it comes to about Rs. 46.5 crore. He can fully utilise that money. There

is no problem. That is a separate amount. It does not come under Calamity Relief Fund. It is from the General Budget. What we have provided is Rs. 800 crore for major and medium irrigation projects and Rs. 100 crore. Out of that, we have released Rs. 46.5 crore as a share to Orissa State.

The other thing is basic minimum service which does not also come under the category of Calamity Relief Fund. He have provided about Rs. 2,480 crore. Out of that, Orissa will get Rs. 79.26 crore. We are prepared to release all that money. Let them spend under basic minimum services, drinking water, rural roads and all these things, we are prepared to release Rs. 2,480 crore as its quota and as its share. Orissa will get about Rs. 79 crore additional amount. That also I am prepared to release the full amount. Let it be used for the purpose of generating the necessary employment to those people who are searching for jobs and for employment. But there is no need to go for migration to any other neighbouring States.

We have increased even the foodgrains quota which is fixed at 45,000 MT to 75,000 MT now. So, the question of shortage of funds to tackle this problem will not arise. I am not prepared to say anything right now whether it is Rs. 600 crore or Rs. 500 crore or whether it is 100 per cent Central Government grant. Let us discuss this issue and the guidelines and the norms that we have fixed to tackle this drought and the flood damages and how the fund should be shared among the States and the Centre.

All these guidelines are there. But I cannot give you an assurance exclusively for Orissa that all the money that is going to be given is fully a grant. I cannot say that now. Under Irrigation, all the money that is going to be released — Rs. 92.10 crore is a grant. About Basic Minimum Service, the sum of Rs. 79.26 crore is fully a grant. The money that has been released under the Calamity Relief Fund Rs. 37 crore — is fully a grant. So what I mean to say is that apart from the money that is available under various categories of rural development, more than Rs. 100 or 160 crore, the money that has been given now under irrigation, under Basic Minimum Service and the Calamity Relief Fund — all this money is available right now. The State Government should come up to the expectation of the people and see that necessary action is taken either to provide drinking water or to provide the employment opportunities to the rural masses who are suffering.

In addition to that, almost all those blocks which have not been provided with Employment Assurance Schemes have been taken up and for each block, we are going to release Rs. 20 lakh under Employment Assurance Scheme. The Notification has already been issued for those districts. He has said about 26 districts apart from eight districts. Out of 30 districts, 26 districts this time have received scanty rainfall. This is what the Chief Minister told me. Almost all the blocks which have not been covered under the Employment Guarantee Scheme have been covered and the G.O., has been issued. We have also instructed to release Rs. 20 lakh per block under the Employment Guarantee Scheme.

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I would like to mention two or three other points. The Lower Indira Irrigation Project and the lower Suktel project are major irrigation projects where there are some problems. Some people want that the project should be taken up and some other people are opposing it because of land submersion. I told the Chief Minister to submit these two projects and we are going to incorporate them in the Ninth Five Year Plan.

We are constantly in touch with the State Government. In fact, day before yesterday, I asked my Cabinet Secretary to contact the Chief Secretary and ask him to submit those two projects. I am telling you that there is no need for me to suppress any information. They are now preparing all necessary data. I have already assured that these two projects are going to be included in the Ninth Five Year Plan which is going to be finalised in the next two or three months. I have told that already and here also I am going to make a commitment on the floor of the House. This is going to solve major problem and naturally some area is going to be submerged. We have to rehabilitate them. Necessary funds are going to be provided for rehabilitation and resettlement. That is altogether a different matter. The hon. former Prime Minister has suggested about the permanent solution. I have taken this decision because permanent solution as suggested by the former hon. Prime Minister that this is one of the areas where we can find out permanent solution by taking up these two projects as suggested by the State Government. There are other two things suggested by the local people. There is one Medium Zonk Irrigation Project which is expected to irrigate about ten thousand hectares of land should be completed that is under execution. It is an incomplete project. We are continuing to provide money for this.

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It is not the question of eight districts alone. The question is of giving priority to those areas which are suffering from this drought. It is not because of Orissa. Let me be very frank on this issue. Nobody should mistake me that. I am attributing certain motive behind this. The purpose of providing Rs. 800 crore for irrigation this year for the first time is to take care of some of those projects which are pending for the last several years. About those lingering projects, nobody bothers.

This is the first time that we took a decision to provide Rs. 800 crore for irrigation in the Central Government's Budget. My intention is to provide more money for irrigation. This is definitely going to help the areas, where the scanty rainfall is there and every State has got such areas.

I would like to assure the hon. former Prime Minister that Rs. 92.10 crore provided this year will be enhanced. This grant is 100 per cent from the Government of India. There is no question of the State Government's commitment on that. We are going to see that the necessary funds are going to be provided to tackle this problem.

In this regard I have told the Chief Minister to engage an expert who has got sufficient knowledge about the assessment of the ground water, Geologist and conduct survey in all these areas. If the tubewells are going to be taken in a large scale, wherever underground water is available, then it is definitely going to solve the problem of those people who are suffering due to scanty rainfall. Whether it is rain-shadow areas or dark areas. I do not want to enter into all these things, the Government of India is prepared to find out some permanent solution for this area. About the scheme of KBK that is being formulated by the former Prime Minister. I am not bothered as to how much money is released. I am not going into the details of all these things. We want that some permanent relief is given to the drought-prone areas. We have taken a decision in this regard. You have said yesterday that in Cauvery, there is no water; in Ganga there is a lot of water and in Brahamputra, there is a lot of water. I constituted an Expert Committee to go into the point whether we can transfer the water from the surplus basin to the deficit basin. I have given all the guidelines as to what are all the areas they should go into.

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I had put a question to the former Water Resources Minister Shri Shukla. I am already to touch with Department because I am equally anxious

about the irrigation, I know my commitment to the farmers and to the cause of irrigation. I do not want to go into those details. I have already constituted a Committee to find out the feasibility. It should be economically feasible and it should be technically feasible. How best we can make use of the surplus water from the surplus basin to the deficit basin will be examined. As soon as the report comes. I will come before the House for final allocation before implementing it. Shri G.V.K. Rao. because of ill-health, has declined. Shri Hanumantha Rao has been made the Chairman. We have to generate the money also. Money can be generated if we all collectively work together. That is all I can say. For the massive tubewells programme, exclusively we are going to fund it from the Centre.

I only say to all the Members representing Orissa to please have this in their minds. It is not a question of mixing politics because it is a Congress-ruled State. There is no such question. In a jocular way the Whip of the Congress Party has mentioned that.

Whatever money that is necessary to tackle this problem, we are prepared to provide it from the Government of India. Whether it is a hundred per cent grant or whether it is going to be adjusted in the Plan, all these things are not relevant now. Let us with all seriousness tackle the problem in these eight districts. For that, necessary funds will be released. This is the assurance I am giving. If you want. I am prepared to again call a separate meeting and discuss.

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The Chief Minister's report says out of 30 districts, 26 districts are affected, in 26 districts, 2600 villages are affected. That is what he has mentioned in his report. That report contains all the details. I have also indicated the money required. Money is not the issue. We are going to provide the money. Let the State Government start the work with all seriousness.

BACK NOTE

XII. Discussion on Drought condition in Odisha, 29 November, 1996.

1. SHRI PINAKI MISHRA: Will the hon. Prime Minister kindly clarify whether it is "almost all the locks" or "all the blocks"? Those are 314 blocks.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: All the remaining blocks. I will give the details. In fact, I do not want to read everything. The Employment Assurance Scheme should be extended to all the eight blocks in Bolangir and Sonapur districts which are not covered with this Scheme. Rupees 20 lakh per block will be released to each block for starting the work. For Orissa, as a whole, 40 more blocks will be added taking the total to 290 blocks during the year before 30th and the balance blocks, if any. Which have not been covered under the famine-affected districts, we wanted to cover them. We wanted to cover almost all the blocks in the whole country by 1997-98 and those blocks which come under the affected districts will be covered this year itself.

SHRI PINAKI MISHRA: Sir, I will just take one minute.

MR. SPEAKER: We are already encroaching upon the time of the Private Members' Business.

SHRI PINAKI MISHRA: This is an important issue. The hon. Agriculture Minister has already stated that the State Government's Food for Work Programme is going to be basically based on the Employment Assurance Scheme. There are only 24 blocks which are remaining. Yesterday I had beseeched the hon. Parliamentary Affairs Minister to in turn beseech the Prime Minister that sense. There are only 24 blocks which are remaining. All these 24 blocks being covered under the drought affected 26 districts, why does not the hon. Prime Minister commit on the floor of the House itself today that there 24 blocks will also be covered under EAS. If he could do it today itself, it will be much better for us.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: What I suggested to the Chief Minister was that all those blocks which come under the purview of those affected districts should be covered. As our hon. Member has suggested, if 24 blocks are remaining, I am prepared to consider that and I will see that those blocks are also going to be covered.

SHRI JAG MOHAN [New Delhi]: I would like to put one line question to the hon. Prime Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: We are already late. Unless you want to suspend the Private Members' time, it will not be possible. That is not fair.

2. SHRI JAG MOHAN : Yesterday I heard the former Prime Minister as well as yourself this afternoon. One thing that is in between the lines is that there is sufficient fund and there are large number of schemes that can take care of this. What is weak is the administrative machinery there which can really implement and execute the schemes. What help can the Central Government give in this emergency to the State Government to have a most effective machinery which can really implement all the schemes in time? Will you kindly consider this proposal of having some Special Commissioners for this type of job particularly the people who have done work at the time of Maharashtra famine and they did commendable work they may have that experience, so that these things do not go by slow implementation?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I do not want to interfere with the State administration.

SHRI JAG MOHAN: This is sort of a suggestion.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I am not willing to interfere with the State administration to appoint a BDO or to appoint a Gram Sevak. There are vacancies. I do not want to go into details on every aspect as to how many posts of doctors have not been filled up. I am not going to make an issue on all these things. These are all matters which the State Government has to look into.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer): Hon'ble Prime Minister Sir, 180 people have died there but the State Government is saying that these deaths have taken place due to diarrhoea. I would like to know as to what scheme has been formulated for the welfare of the people.

MR. SPEAKER: We have already taken nine minutes of the Private Members business. I am not going to allow Mr Rawat. Prime Minister, can you now kindly conclude?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: In fact, every Chief Minister has been demanding that more powers should be given to the States based on the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission. In one of the meetings that we held with all the Chief Ministers, a sub-Committee has been constituted to give the recommendations. Yesterday, our former Chief Minister also mentioned about giving free, full scope to them so that they could manage themselves. You were expressing that. I do not think money is the issue.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK (Aska): That is not the issue at all.

SHRI H. D. DEVE GOWDA: I will just mention one thing. Our former Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao ji has released Rs. 8.10 crore for starting what is called free feeding centres. We call it *Ganji Kendras* in our area to feed the mass who are suffering in those districts. He had released Rs 8.10 crore in December 1994 and the money that is being spent under that category is hardly Rs. 4.5 crore. He had released it out of the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. I can narrate so many other things. I do not want to go into details about all those things.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not think. Sir, there is any time for you to narrate all this.

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO (Berhampur): Sir, there are two points involved here Briefly, one is the drought situation that has overtaken the State this year and the other is the permanent commitment of the Prime Minister to this particular area containing eight districts — now three districts originally which is called KBK. Now, this will not be finished or even tackled effectively by the State Government alone. It has to receive large doses of help, assistance and attention from the Prime Minister himself. This is what I tried to raise yesterday.

If he is good enough to give me that commitment about this KBK — with happened to be the most backward area in the country — then I think my request will be met.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK: This is not fair for Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao to say this. He promised KBK Rs.4,000 and odd crore. I am very sorry. May be 10 year or 20 years but it must come under the plan.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: He has done for the people and not for himself.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK: He has done nothing for the people.

MR SPEAKER: Patnaikji, it is enough. Please.

SHRI BIJU PATNAIK: Whatever money you give it must be monitored. Do not tell me that you are not going to interfere in the State's affairs. Half the money will go to their pockets. Even Rajiv Gandhi said that 80 per cent of this money goes to the pockets of dalals.

SHRI PINAKI MISHRA(Puri): He visited the State afterwards.

3. SHRI BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA (Rohtak): A lot of work has been done by Dr. K. L. Rao.

SHRI H. D. DEVE GOWDA: That is only on peninsular valley scheme.

4. SHRI PINAKI MISHRA: It is not eight districts, it is 26 districts. It is only because of Kalahandi, Koraput and Bolangir have got publicity that these districts have been highlighted.

OBITUARY REFERENCE TO DR. M. CHENNA REDDY

02 December, 1996

Mr. Speaker. Sir, I rise to pay my heartfelt homage and to place on record the deep sense of loss felt by all of us at the passing away of Dr. M. Chenna Reddy, Governor of Tamil Nadu.

Dr. Reddy had a long and distinguished political career starting with the political struggle in the then Hyderabad State. He was actively involved in State politics since the 1950s and held various important portfolios such as Minister of Agriculture and Food, Planning and Rehabilitation in the then Hyderabad Government. Subsequently, he was Minister for Finance, Education and Commercial Taxes in the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Dr. Chenna Reddy became a Member of the Rajya Sabha in 1967 and held the important charge of the Union Minister for Steel and Mines in the Government of India during 1967-68. He was the Governor of Uttar Pradesh from 1974 to 1977 and Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh from 1977 to 1980 and thereafter during 1989-90.

Dr. Chenna Reddy served the nation ably as the Governor of Punjab, the Governor of Rajasthan and the Governor of Tamil Nadu.

In the passing away of Dr. M. Chenna Reddy, the nation has lost one of its most able administrators and an experienced parliamentarian. It is indeed an irreparable loss.

I am sure all of you will join me today to place on record our homage to the late Dr. Chenna Reddy, and to pray to the Almighty that his near and dear ones are given the strength and forbearance to bear his loss.

BACK NOTE

XIII. Obituary Reference to Dr. M. Chenna Reddy, 02 December, 1996.

NIL

RESOLUTION ON PRESIDENT'S RULE IN UTTAR PRADESH

5 December, 1996

Sir, on 10th October, the election results of UP Assembly were finally declared by the Election Commission. Till 17th October, the Governor had given sufficient opportunity to all political parties including the so-called single largest party to explore all possibilities and come before him as to whether they are in a position to muster strength to form a Government and give a suitable Government. He waited for one week to send the report to the Government of India or to the President. Sir, they have totally failed. No political party was able to muster strength or with the combination of other political parties, they were unable to submit the list to the Governor. Then the Governor had no option except to send his recommendations to the Government of India and also the President of India. Under these circumstances, there was no option except to impose President's rule in UP.

Recently, there were by-elections conducted for Rajya Sabha where the BJP had tried its best to see that their candidates win the elections. All the three candidates of BJP were defeated in Rajya Sabha elections. That itself is a clear indication that the mandate of the people of UP was for secular democracy and our party's commitment is for secular democracy. It is a clear indication.

Sir, I would like to make it clear that even with all the differences amongst ourselves, whether it is the BSP or the Samajwadi Party or the Congress or other parties which are now running the Government, they have got differences all the three BJP candidates were totally defeated in the recent by-elections to Rajya Sabha. That itself is a clear indication and much more than that, it was a secret ballot where they could have played all types of the political manoeuvrings. Sir, with all these things, they failed, I know what all had happened during the period of by-elections. They were unable to muster strength. That itself is a clear indication that what the Governor had recommended was totally on the basis of merit and there was nothing wrong in it. So, I request this august House to see that this Resolution is approved.

BACK NOTE

XIV. Resolution on President's Rule in Uttar Pradesh, 5 December, 1996.

NIL

STATEMENT REGARDING SIGNING OF GANGA WATERS TREATY WITH BANGLADESH

12 December, 1996

Hon Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to make a statement with regard to the sharing of Ganga waters between Bangladesh and our country.

Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh paid an official visit to India from December 10 to 12, 1996 at my invitation. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had meetings with our President, Vice-President, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Leader to the Opposition in Parliament. She held detailed talks with me. She also met leaders of political parties. These talks were held in a most warm and friendly atmosphere. The Bangladesh Prime Minister also paid a visit to Ajmer and Jaipur during her stay in India.

This was the first visit of the Bangladesh Prime Minister to India since she assumed office in June this year. The visit however comes as the culmination of series of exchanges initiated shortly after our Government took office. Earlier the External Affairs Minister had visited Dhaka in September, and we had received the Bangladesh Foreign Minister in November. This period of intense interaction has placed our relations on an entirely new footing. Progress is being made on all issues in our bilateral relations. The Prominent issue in our bilateral ties, over the last two decades has been the issue of sharing of Ganga waters at Farakka. I am honoured to state that I and the Bangladesh Prime Minister have today signed a new Treaty on the sharing of the Ganga waters. We are confident this Treaty would be a landmark in our bilateral relations. The Treaty protects the interests of India and at the same time helps Bangladesh by providing a share of the Ganga waters to that country.

I shall lay a copy of the text of the Treaty with its Annexures on the Table of the House. According to the Treaty, the sharing of Ganga waters at Farakka between India and Bangladesh will be on the basis of a formula which is at *Annexure I*. The key merit of this formula is that it shares available waters on a basis which is fair and equitable. The formula also takes into account the basic requirements and minimum needs of both sides. Therefore, during the critical period within the lean season *i.e.*, from March 1 to May 10, India and Bangladesh each shall receive a guaranteed flow of

35,000 cusecs of water in an alternating sequence of three 10-day periods each. This is aimed at meeting the fundamental requirements of both our countries through a just and reasonable sharing of the burden of shortage. The Treaty also has the merit of being a long term arrangement combined with scope for reviews at shorter intervals to study the impact of the sharing formula and to make needed adjustments. While the Treaty will be valid for 30 years and renewable on mutual consent, there is a provision of mandatory reviews at the end of 5 years and even earlier after two years with provisions for adjustments as required. Pending a fresh understanding after the review stage, Bangladesh would continue to receive 90 per cent of its share in accordance with the new formula. We would thus avoid a situation where there is no agreement on the sharing of the Ganga waters between India and Bangladesh.

The signing of the Treaty between India and Bangladesh is a fitting tribute to the special quality of our relations. Indo-Bangladesh cooperation is based on a history of shared sacrifices, sanctified with the blood of the martyrs who laid down their lives in 1971. It is entirely appropriate that this Treaty comes on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the liberation of Bangladesh which was a momentous landmark in the history of our continent. With the signing of this Treaty, we expect to usher in a new era in Indo-Bangladesh relations. This new relationship should be of immense benefit to India in the long term in all areas of bilateral relations including security, trade and other areas. With the removal of what has been a constant irritant in bilateral ties, we can look forward to an entirely new phase of cooperation. As the House would recall, we have already taken initiatives in the commercial sphere by extending tariff concessions to Bangladesh on a range of products of export interest to them. We propose to extend commercial credits of Rs. 100 crore to enhance trade relations further. We are working together with Bangladesh to ensure appropriate development and security in our entire eastern region.

Sir, we also acknowledge on this occasion that in the past also it had been the endeavour of the successive Governments to strengthen our relations with Bangladesh.

It would be appropriate for me also at this stage to place on record our appreciation of the very constructive role played by the Chief Minister of West Bengal and his Cabinet colleagues in bringing about improved

atmosphere in which the Treaty between India and Bangladesh has become possible. My thanks are also due to my colleagues in the Ministries of External Affairs, Water Resources and Surface Transport for their invaluable support in this endeavour.

Both India and Bangladesh cooperate very extensively in regional fora such as SAARC and it shall be our endeavour to take this cooperation forward so that a new and a more constructive framework of relationship can be built up in our sub-Continent to the mutual benefit of the people of all countries.

The visit of the Bangladesh Prime Minister is an event of historic significance. She herself has reaffirmed the spirit of 1971 in her speech at the banquet in her honour last night. We also recall those times when we worked shoulder to shoulder and we are resolved that in the future, the same spirit of brotherhood will guide us to a new era. I am sure the House would share these sentiments and would support our resolve to advance in this direction.

BACK NOTE

XV. Statement regarding Signing of Ganga Waters Treaty with Bangladesh, 12 December, 1996.

NIL

STATEMENT REGARDING DECISION TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTH CENTENARY OF NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

20 December, 1996

Hon. Speaker, Sir, recently, concern has been expressed in this House as well as outside about the celebration of birth centenary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Let me first of all dispel all doubts in this regard. The Government of India had set up as far back as in November, 1995 a National Committee under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister to celebrate the birth centenary of Netaji in a befitting manner.

The National Committee met on 5th December, 1995 and decided that the celebrations would commence on 23rd January, 1997 and continue for one year thereafter. The National Committee had also constituted a Sub-Committee and had entrusted to it the task of preparing an action plan for the celebrations. This Sub-Committee met on 25th October, 1996 and formulated programmes for the inaugural function on 23rd January, 1997 as well as during the centenary year. I also met the Floor Leaders of both the Houses of Parliament on 9th December, 1996 to discuss the manner in which we should celebrate this event. The Sub-Committee is giving a final shape to the programmes and activities of the centenary year in the light of the suggestions received.

I would like to inform the hon. Members that the Government shall do its utmost to make the birth centenary celebrations of Netaji, in cooperation with the people of India, a memorable event of our national life befitting the great and momentous contribution made by Netaji to our freedom struggle. Netaji enjoys great respect and affection amongst the people of India from all parts and the celebration would be designed to reflect this in full measure.

There is a suggestion that 23rd January should be declared Rashtriya Sewa Divas (National Service Day) or Rashtriya Shourya Divas (National Day of Courage) on the pattern of Children's Day (14th November) and Teachers' Day (5th September). We shall welcome more suggestions in this regard so that the birthday of Netaji is commemorated by posterity in a befitting manner.

It is proposed to declare 23rd January, 1997, the day of the commencement of the centenary celebrations, an administrative holiday and to

have an inaugural function on that day at the Red Fort. A commemorative stamp on Netaji will also be released in that function.

During the centenary year, commemorative coins in the memory of Netaji will be issued; a biographical film will be released: and a biography will be published and circulated. Government of India will also give financial support for bringing out the Collected Works of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

The Government also plans to have a suitable memorial for Netaji and the INA. The memorial of Netaji can be in Cuttack, where he was born or any other suitable place. The INA memorial can be at Moirang in Manipur, the Swatantrata Sangram Sangrahalaya and Swatantrata Senani Smarak set up in the Red Fort—Salimgarh Fort Complex will be strengthened.

To ensure that the birth centenary is celebrated throughout the country. Chief Ministers of all the States and Union Territories have been requested to plan and organise suitable programmes and activities, Seminars, debates, quiz and painting competitions will be organised in schools and colleges throughout the country.

Also, since the birth centenary celebration would eventually overlap with the 50th anniversary of India's Independence, an effort would be made to integrate them in an enriching manner.

I am confident that the cooperation of all the Members of this august House shall be forthcoming in full measure in our endeavour to celebrate this birth centenary in a befitting manner.

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BACK NOTE

XVI. Statement Regarding Decision to Celebrate the Birth Centenary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, 20 December, 1996.

1. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura): Is 23rd January being declared as a National Holiday?

SHRI H.D DEVE GOWDA: 23rd January is declared as a National Holiday for 1997 only.

STATEMENTS REGARDING LAUNCHING OF MISSILE AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

24 February, 1997

(i) Successful Testing and Launching of Prithvi Missile

Sir, with your kind permission, I would like to make a statement in connection with the successful launching of the Prithvi Missile.

Sir, I rise before the House to convey my own congratulations and the good wishes of the entire country to the scientists of the Defence Research and Development Organisation who have successfully tested the 250 km. range version of the Prithvi Missile yesterday. As is known, this version is for the use of the Indian Air Force and will significantly add to our defensive capability. As the House is aware, we have placed special emphasis on self-reliance in this field and the success of yesterday's launch is one more milestone in our programme. The DRDO and its team of dedicated scientists have done the nation proud and I am sure the House will join me in placing on record our deep appreciation for the excellent work done by them.

(ii) Targetted Public Distribution System

Sir, a well targetted and properly functioning Public Distribution System is an important constituent of the strategy for poverty eradication. However, the Public Distribution System as it now stands has been widely criticised for its failure to serve the population below the poverty line, its urban bias, and lack of transparent and accountable arrangements for delivery. Realising this, the Government proposes to streamline the Public Distribution System targeting it on the poor by issuing special cards to families Below Poverty Line (BPL) and selling essential articles under the PDS to them at specially subsidised prices, with better monitoring of the delivery system.

As indicated in the Central Budget 1996-97, a beginning in this regard is proposed to be made where the need is most acutely felt namely issue of foodgrains.

To start with, it is proposed to issue 10 kg. of foodgrains per family, per month, at half the issue prices for all families below the poverty line as per the estimates for 1993-94 arrived at by the Planning Commission using the methodology of the Expert Group under Prof. Lakdawala. Further as recommended by the Conference of Chief Ministers, the average lifting of

foodgrains for the last ten years by the States is proposed to be continued for the benefit of the population Above the Poverty Line (APL) at present getting the benefit of the Public Distribution System. The quantity of foodgrains out of this average lifting which is in excess of the requirement for the population below poverty line, is proposed to be allocated to States as a transitory allocation, at the Central Issue Prices.

Government also proposes to extend the issue of specially subsidised foodgrains to the beneficiaries under the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) and JawaharRozgarYojna (JRY) and issue of one kilogram of Rice/ Wheat per person per day.

It is well known that the Central Issue Prices for rice and wheat have not been revised after 1.2.1994. Subsequently, the Minimum Support Price for both Rice and Wheat have been raised three and four times respectively. Taking into account these revisions and the increase in other incidental charges and at the same time not to cause too much of hardship to the people, Government have proposed to fix the Central Issue Prices for the Targetted PDS as indicated below:

Issue Price (Rs./kg.)	Common	Rice Fine	Super fine	Wheat	Total Subsidy (Rs. in crores)
BPL	3.50	3.50	-	2.50	8282.90
APL	-	6.50	7.50	4.50	

The Targetted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is primarily focused on the poor and will benefit 32 crore people Below the Poverty Line. The food subsidy under the TPDS will be about Rs. 8,000 crore. A quantum of 180 LMT of foodgrains is likely to be issued under the TPDS.

Any State which wants to cover a large number of persons or increase the scale of issue or reduce the price, is free to do so provided it can meet the additional requirement of foodgrains and funds from its own resources.

In implementing the Targetted Public Distribution System, State Governments must identify the beneficiaries under T.P.D.S., issue special cards

to them and ensure delivery of foodgrains to these intended beneficiaries. Detailed guidelines have been issued in this regard and they are placed on the Table of the House. I do hope that the State Governments will follow these guidelines scrupulously and see that the poorest section of our society get their entitled quantum of foodgrains without fail.

BACK NOTE

XVII. Statements Regarding Launching of Missile and Public Distribution System, 24 February, 1997.

(i) Successful Testing and Launching of Prithvi Missile.

NIL

(ii) Targetted Public Distribution System.

NIL

STATEMENT REGARDING FIRE AT BARIPADA, ORISSA

25 February, 1997

Sir, with your kind permission I would like to make the following statement about my visit yesterday to the Orissa State.

I would like to inform the hon. Members about my visit along with Shri Sharad Pawar, the Leader of Congress (I), Shri Karia Munda of the BJP, Shri Biju Patnaik, Shri Anchal Das, Shri Sriballav Panigrahi, Shri Srikant Jena, Kumari Sushila Tiriya, all MPs from various parties. We paid a visit to Baripada yesterday February 24, 1997 the site of the ghastly tragedy by fire which broke out on February 23, 1997.

The facts about the incident are as follows:

About 10,000 devotees had assembled at Madhuban in the Baripada Municipality of Mayurbhanj District, for a religious gathering which began on February 21, 1997 and was to conclude on February 23. On February 23, 1997 a devastating fire suddenly broke out at the site at 3.15 in the afternoon. It has been informed by the State Government that the fire brigade was immediately pressed into service, and while the women's camp site could be protected, the fire spread through the men's camp site and 149 persons died on the spot. Another 175 persons were injured and were admitted to the local hospital and to nursing homes. Of the injured persons, 28 have succumbed to their injuries.

Immediately after the accident, the local administration deployed 43 doctors to attend to the injured. Local voluntary organisations, businessmen and political workers also joined the rescue efforts. A team of medical experts and para-medical staff from the Medical College, Cuttack, has also reached Baripada.

The process of identification of the deceased is on and their relatives and acquaintances are coming for identification.

I would like to inform the hon. Members that the Central Government is going to release rupees 50,000 to the families of the deceased and to those persons who have been disabled permanently. For others who have been injured, the Central Government would provide Rs. 25,000.

The State Government has also announced financial relief of Rs. 25,000 to the next of kin of the deceased and Rs. 10,000 to each of those injured.

I have also requested the Chief Minister to make efforts to have the deceased identified precisely so that the assistance being given reaches the right persons. Given the difficult situation, the local authorities and the State Government are making the best possible efforts to deal with it.

I have been informed that the State Government has instituted an inquiry into the accident to be conducted by the Divisional Commissioner of the Central Revenue Division, Cuttack to ascertain the sequence of events leading to it and to determine whether prompt steps were taken to control the fire and provide medical care to the victims.

I am sure I speak on behalf of all the hon. Members in expressing deep grief at this sad event, and in expressing condolences to the families of those who have died, and wish for the recovery of the injured.

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BACK NOTE

XVIII. Statement Regarding Fire at Baripada, Orissa, 25 February, 1997.

1. SHRI SHARAD PAWAR (Baramati): Mr. Prime Minister, your visit has definitely created a sort of confidence in the minds of the local people. It was a great relief to them. My only request is that whatever financial assistance the Government of India is going to give, has to be released as early as possible.

During the last visit of the hon. Prime Minister to that State at the time of drought, Rs. 50 crore relief had been announced. But the concerned Ministry has not released that money to that State. That is why, it should not happen at this juncture.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: The amount has been released not as a special assistance. As I promised, Rs. 50 crore has been released. But they want special assistance. I will reply tomorrow about what they have released. We have released this amount today itself and I have passed the orders to place the amount at the disposal of the Chief Secretary of the Orissa Government.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI (Deogarh): Sir, only Rs. 13 crore has been released by the Government of India.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Panigrahi, as you know, after making a statement we do not have the convention of any clarification.

SHRI PINAKI MISHRA (Puri): We are a very poor State as it is and on top of that, we are very badly ravaged by natural calamities. That is why, we do not doubt the hon. Prime Minister's intention, but at the cutting edge level his promises are not being fulfilled.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, the hon. Prime Minister has said that he has already released Rs. 50 crore.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow you. After making a statement, there is a convention in this House that there is no clarification sought. I cannot allow you.

SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK (Bolangir): The Hon. Prime Minister should provide maximum funds, especially for providing drinking water. From March onwards we are not going to have a drop of water in Bolangir, Kalahandi, Koraput, Mayurbhanj and other parts of the State. So, my humble

request to the Prime Minister is that he should provide maximum funds to the State as far as drinking water problem is concerned.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Copy of the statement has been circulated.

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: I do not know as to when it was circulated.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think that it has been circulated.

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: We should atleast be informed about the statement made in the House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The copy of the statement will be given to you but you cannot seek any classification on it.

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: At first, I would like to make a submission that amount of compensation is quite meagre and it should be increased.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): All these points will be dealt in detail in Prime Minister's speech on Presidential Address.

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Secondly, I would like to know about Lapses in management of this crisis which have not been mentioned at all.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I am prepared to give all the details.

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

4 March, 1997

Hon. Speaker, Sir, before I start my reply, I would only like to inform my colleague and hon. member who has expressed a serious apprehension about the whereabouts of his family Members, that I also have got the same concern.

It seems. Sir, your goodself has given a consent for having a Short Duration Discussion tomorrow or today itself after my reply. I will sit here and I will hear every word of the events that took place which is going to be either today or tomorrow, any time. I am going to.

This is regarding Uttar Pradesh. I am only saying this to that hon. Member. A serious allegation was made by the hon. Member. Hon. Speaker told me yesterday that there would be a Short Duration Discussion concerning Uttar Pradesh. I do not know under what Rule the Hon. Speaker is going to allow. It is up to the House and the Hon. Speaker. I am only going to give an assurance on behalf of the Government that whatever situation that is prevailing in Uttar Pradesh will be discussed in the House. Sir, you have also given a ruling to constitute an Advisory Committee of the Members of Parliament. So, all these things are going to come up. No, I am not going to...

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Now I am only confining myself to the reply to the debate. That is all I would like to say.

Sir, at the outset, I would like to express my thanks to the Hon. Members who have participated in the 'Governor's Address' I am sorry, the 'President's Address' I am sorry, Sir. That is my habit. That is my habit. All right.

Nearly 52 Members of this august House have participated in the debate. They have given valuable suggestions and constructive criticisms also. I welcome all those suggestions and constructive criticisms, from the point of view of toning up the administration. I welcome all those suggestions made by the Hon. Members and I am grateful to them.

Sir, I would like to go back to the past events. On 1st June 1996, we took over the responsibility of running this country, I do not want to go back to whatever had happened before the 1st of June 1996. I would like to refresh my memory again, only from the 1st of June 1996, as to what are the things that have happened in this country.

Sir, on the 1st of June, I do not think, my party had got any mandate. We are hardly 44 people. Thirteen political parties have formed the United Front. Certain independent Members have also extended me cooperation. This Government was — with the support of the Congress from outside and with the support of CPI (M), also from outside — installed by the respected Rashtrapatiji.

What were the circumstances this Government was facing at that time? Every day, there was a suspicion in the minds of the people, a suspicion in the minds of the bureaucrats, a suspicion also in the minds of the media, a suspicion outside the country and inside the country as to whether this new experiment would work; and how could this Government — of 13 political parties with different ideologies, with different manifestoes and with different programmes — can function?

This was the atmosphere prevailing on that day in the country. Even the bureaucrats were countering whether this Government would survive for three months or one month or two months. I am not going to blame anybody. But that was the atmosphere prevailing in this country on the day when I took over the responsibility with my colleagues to run this country. Sir, with this background, anyway we have completed nine months. And what is that we have actually achieved? Have this Government done anything tangible in these nine months from the point of view of the development of the nation and to create an atmosphere that even this new experiment can successfully manage the affairs of the nation? Whether we have done it or not is a matter which we shall now place before the House.

Let me now try to narrate what we have done in the last nine months Sir, for the first 12 days, there was total uncertainty. The stability of the Government had to be established by the voting and mandate of this House. The vote of confidence was taken on 12th June. From 12th June onwards, we started our functioning.

Sir, we have got our own party programmes, our own party manifesto and our own ideologies. For the smooth functioning of the Government, we all sat together and accepted the Common Minimum Programme. That was our guideline. That is our barometer. We wanted to function very smoothly without creating among ourselves any major areas of difference. We wanted to see that this new experiment should be successful and the mandate given by the people in the Eleventh Lok Sabha should be honoured. No political party was able to get the mandate including the Congress, including the larger party, the BJP or smaller parties. No political party was able to get a clear mandate. With this background, when we took over the responsibility, we wanted to see that this experiment should be made successful with the cooperation of the supporting parties and the parties which are in the Government.

Sir, I am only placing the accountability of the Government, of what we have done in these last seven to eight months, to the nation through this House. I have gone through some of the points raised by the hon. Members about agriculture, regional imbalances and Defence. I have gone through some of the issues raised by the hon. Members in this House. I would like to cover almost all the points, with your kind permission.

Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi has said as to what we have done in the agricultural sector. I have gone through his speech. The first decision which the Government took within fifteen days after the vote of confidence was given by this House was to give Rs. 2,500 crore to the agricultural sector as a subsidy component to di-ammonium sulphate and phosphatic fertilisers. That is the first decision we have taken. I know that the President's Address is a policy document. I will come to the policies and programmes of this Government at a later stage. What have we done in seven months? The people of the nation are expecting us to tell them what this Government has done because they are our masters. We have to place our accounts and achievements in the last seven to eight months.

Sir, today, the result of Rs. 2,500 crore which we have given to the farmers is that in the agricultural sector, our production has gone to 191 million tonnes. That is only one point that I would like to say.

I convened a meeting of all the Chief Ministers because we are working in a different political atmosphere. The regional parties and the national parties

are involved to form this coalition Government. And I do not want to discriminate between one State and another State. So, I convened the meeting of all the Chief Ministers. The Chief Ministers' Conference was held in Delhi for two days. We have arrived at a consensus decision. The decision is for identifying seven areas where we have to give more allocation because they are the priority sectors according to the views expressed by all the Chief Ministers of the States. The first Budget for 1996-97 was placed by Dr. Manmohan Singh. After the election, we got the opportunity to place the second Budget in this very House for 1996-97. For that purpose, in that Budget for nine months, we have provided Rs 2,466 crore or so and distributed the same to all the States. There is no question of any discrimination between 'X' party Government or 'Y' party Government. We have taken a firm decision. This was the second step taken by us.

In our Budget for 1996-97, I am going to highlight some of the issues. I do not want to take credit for this. For a short duration of three years and ten months, I was also a Member of this House. When I used the term "Governor's Address", somebody tried to take it as a sort of this thing. For 35 years, I was there in the Assembly. That is the practice that we follow there. For four years, I was sitting there. Our senior leader, Shri George Fernandes, was here. Shri George Fernandes and myself were together. Fortunately, even when I was sitting there, I was unable to come nearer to him. I was sitting there.

I requested the former Minister of Agriculture, Shri Balram Jakhar, in this very House — our Former Speaker used to sit here — to, at least, restore the subsidy for the phosphatic fertiliser and di-ammonium sulphate; otherwise, the agricultural community was going to suffer. The records will disclose it. There is nothing new for me. I never expected that I was going to become the Prime Minister of this country.

The first decision which I took was that I identified the area of the agricultural community. In the budget for irrigation, we had requested the Government about it not only in this House but also by writing directly to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Irrigation. We have provided Rs. 900 crore for acceleration of irrigation works. Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi is not here in the House. We have provided subsidy for tractors of 18 HP and power tillers.

went to the extent of filing an affidavit before the Court. Whatever allegations were made were only under the political circumstances and there is nothing wrong. That is the situation there.

Why is it that in the Eighth Plan we are unable to achieve the target in power sector? I do not want to go into the details about the figures. Today the power problem in the whole country is very acute, barring one or two States. Even if for three hours, four hours, or maximum six hours, power is made available to agriculturists in a State, that is the happiest State. Except in one or two States, everywhere the power problem is very acute.

In the next five years, if we want to achieve the target that we have fixed for the Ninth Plan not only for power generation but for distribution and allocation — all these things put together come to about Rs. 3,20,000 crore — how do we get the money? How do we generate the resources? Is it possible for us to generate the resources unless we create a climate for investment either domestic or global? We took the decision to see that these projects are not delayed. The impression the overseas investors had got about this Government, first of all, was the suspicion whether this Government will survive, and whether stability will be there. The life of the Government was hanging according to those people. Everyday when you went through the media and the newspapers, the first agenda that you found was that this Government will go day after tomorrow, or next week, and we have completed nine months. Today, I am happy to say that on matters we intended to take decisions, we have taken decisions. Whether the Government is going to survive or not going to survive, is not my concern.

Today, in the whole country and in the whole world an atmosphere has been generated after the Budget is presented by my colleague Mr. Chidambaram. Today, there is all-round appreciation by investors, by industrialists, by the common man. This is the impression that we have created today.

I am going to list out the areas which we have touched in the Budget. Power sector, yes, I decentralised it. I left it to the States. Up to 25 megawatts, the States can clear the projects, there is no need for them to come to us. If they want to go in for a higher magnitude of power project, then they should come, and that too only on three issues. One is the fuel, because we have to allot it. Then comes the problem of allocation, because if they produce surplus power, the national grid has to agree to purchase it.

About the technical feasibility and the price fixation, suppose one State says Rs. 6 per unit, then how can I purchase? Only on these three issues, we have issued instructions to the States to consult the Central Government or the Union Government that within two months or eight weeks we are going to clear the projects. Whatever may be the magnitude and size of the project, we do not want to withhold it, we do not want to unnecessarily delay it. If it is 250 kw and above then they must come before the Central Government. This is how, we have delegated the powers and requested the State Governments to cooperate.

Sir, about some of the pending issues like the *Mahakali* Treaty between Nepal and our country, sharing of river waters between Bangladesh and India, I am not going to claim that we have done a miracle, but we have made sincere efforts to improve our relationship with our neighbours. Whether you are going to appreciate or not, it is for the people to judge, I am not bothered. But only thing is that we have done this in a short span of seven or eight months. I am not going to take it as an individual achievement; it is the achievement of this House because you have all cooperated and we have done our little bit to the nation.

Even on the CTBT issue, if you have not cooperated, if the people of the nation have not cooperated, it would not have been possible for the Government to take such a hard decision. I could say that it is a minority Government. Some people say that we have got 330 hon. Members including the outside support of the Congress. That is a different matter. Unless I get the cooperation of the people, unless I get the cooperation of the House, it is rather difficult for me to take certain hard decisions. Even on the CTBT issue we took a hard decision expecting that the House would stand by us for that. I would like to express my thanks to the entire House for their cooperation.

When we congratulated our scientists for the successful launch of the Prithvi, some people on that day asked, what about Agni? The other side, were also expressing their concern. I would like to tell the House that as far as giving necessary support by the Government to our scientists is concerned we will extend full support. Even on the issue of 'Agni' missile we will extend our full support. That is all I would like to say at this stage.

About the regional imbalance, I would like to say that even today, after 50 years of Independence when we are going to celebrate the Golden

Jubilee year in 1997, I think, six States are more backward, namely, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa .

As far as North-Eastern States are concerned, they altogether, come under different category. In the North-Eastern States, not only backwardness but also insurgency problem is there I am going to give the details as to what we have done there. I took personal interest, and I took all my officers there. I stayed there for six-and-a-half days. Without mixing politics, I had meetings with the Leaders of every political party, the Non-Governmental Organisations, Christian Missionaries, the Governors, the Chief Ministers, the MLAs whichever Party they may belong to. I tried to meet every section of the society for getting a feedback.

Before I left Guwahati, I announced a financial package. After consulting almost all political party leaders, we have identified Rs. 6,100 crore worth of development works. The Home Secretary was there. Some of the senior officers were with me. All those works, I would like to mention today in this august House, have been included in the Annual Budget and some of the major projects were included in the Ninth Five-Year Plan. Sir, some allocations were made for the first year of 1997-98 and some of the very major projects worth Rs. 1,000 crore or Rs. 12,000 crore projects were brought under the purview of the Ninth Five Year Plan.

Similar is the case of Kashmir. I had made three visits. I had also announced certain financial packages. Sir, with all sincerity, we wanted to implement the financial package which we had announced. All those works have been cleared. In this year's Budget also, we have provided certain amount of money. The details of it will be given by the Finance Minister. All those major works also were brought under the purview of the Ninth Five Year Plan.

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Sir, this Document, the President's Address, normally is a policy document. It states our programmes for the next year, that is 1997-98. It also states whether we have made any necessary allocations for the programmes which have been announced through this Address, which the President delivered to the joint Session of both the Houses of Parliament. It further states whether we have taken care of those programmes. I would like to request the hon. Members to please bear with me.

Sir, for the basic minimum service works, last time we have given Rs. 2,466 crore and this time we have increased it to Rs. 3,300 crore. We have given Rs. 8,000 crore for PDS.

George Saheb and myself have addressed a public meeting collectively. On fertiliser subsidy and on food subsidy we collectively addressed the public meeting. At least you must say one word, 'You have done some good work'. You must say that.

Some hon. Members wanted to know as to how much money goes to different States under this category. Please wait. Assam will get a sum of Rs. 472 crore under this category. Kerala's share is the highest one because they have implemented this scheme from the beginning. Kerala, Andhra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu have already implemented this scheme and of course, Maharashtra also, if I am correct. Since all these States have already implemented this and subsidised the PDS, they are going to get a little more. The other States have to identify the people who are below the poverty line and we have requested the State Governments. I will read out the money allotted to every State.

Andhra is getting about Rs. 452 crore; Assam — Rs. 472 crore; Bihar — Rs. 314 crore; Gujarat — Rs. 279 crore and Jammu — Rs. 536 crore. This is based on the Lakadawala norms regarding the people below the poverty line. It is based on the norms and the guidelines that have been adopted by the Planning Commission. And this amount of Rs. 8,000 crore is going to be distributed to the beneficiaries in case the States are going to implement this scheme. If any State is not going to take advantage of this scheme that has been announced, we cannot straightway.

Both the food subsidy and the agricultural subsidy put together comes to about Rs. 17,000 crore. Unless the State Governments are going to implement this scheme, the question of releasing the subsidy amount is ruled out. We are not going to release this amount to any State unless they cooperate, identify the beneficiaries and issue the cards and prepare all infrastructure. Particularly on the issue of diverting this money for some other purpose, we are not going to oblige. We have requested the Chief Ministers of all the States to see that at least in the next two months, the beneficiaries must be identified. This money should not go to the traders. This House will agree with me that this huge amount should not go in the

pocket of the vested interests. That is what I would like to make it clear to all the Chief Ministers through this House. Let them take this opportunity and see that this scheme is implemented as early as possible.

Sir, now I come to irrigation sector. What is the responsibility before us? Shri Sharad Pawarji has mentioned several issues. What are all the responsibilities before all of us now? In the power sector itself, a sum of Rs. 3,20,000 crore is required. For completion of all the pending irrigation works or the works that are lingering on for the last several years, we need about Rs. 40,000 crore.

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Regarding irrigation projects, 194 major and 176 medium projects are lingering on for the last 20-25 years. To complete these projects at the current rate, it requires about Rs. 42,000 crore. After all, we have provided only Rs. 13000 crore. Last year, we had provided Rs. 900 crore and this year, we have provided Rs. 1300 crore.

Sir, for housing, we have provided Rs. 330 crore for the urban people, who are living in slums and for the first time we tried to launch this scheme. I do not think this country belongs only to some affluent sections of society. Those people have no voice. For the rural masses, there is no scheme, for landless labourers, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, we have Ambedkar Yojana or Indira Awas Yojana.

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For the first time, we have launched this scheme to provide financial assistance from the financial institutions whether it is Life Insurance Corporation or Banking Institution to the tune of Rs. 2 lakh per house. This time initially we wanted to identify up to 50,000 beneficiaries. We want to launch this scheme in the rural areas. I myself discussed with the executives of some of the financial institutions who said that in the rural areas, we cannot expect the appreciation value of the house as we expect in the urban area. In addition to that, we cannot take the land as a collateral security. That is why we do not want to risk ourselves. This is the argument they try to advance in response to the question as to why they are not going to advance the housing loan for the rural areas. When I discussed with the officers, they are not prepared for that. In this country, somebody has to broach this subject. I do

not know whether it is the destiny which has been on my head but now this responsibility has been shouldered.

I would like to make myself clear. There were bad debts to the tune of Rs. 39,000 crore in the banking sector.

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Even if it is a State subject, I would like to request the concerned State Chief Ministers, if at all there is any grave deviation, to intervene.

For Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the other minorities the small and marginal agriculturists we have introduced a new scheme called the 'Ganga Kalyan Scheme' to give free water.

And in respect of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, for five years, even the maintenance charges will be borne by the Welfare Department. The money is going to be provided by us and only implementation is the duty of the State Government as we cannot implement it. We need cooperation of the State Governments whether it is the implementation of the Public Distribution System, whether it is the implementation of the Ganga Kalyan Scheme or whether it is the implementation of the Housing Scheme. We are going to provide financial assistance to one million educated unemployed youth this year and identification of those beneficiaries is to be done by the State Governments. I need cooperation of the State Governments. Otherwise, it is practically impossible for us to implement all these schemes. So, irrespective of the party affiliations, I only appeal to all the Chief Ministers to see that they fully cooperate with the Government for implementation of some of the schemes which are going to help the poor sections of the society. This is a very humble appeal I am going to make.

The other thing is about the price rise. It is one of the major issues raised by the hon. Members. Under the Essential Commodities Act, the Centre cannot have any right. I got it examined whether we can make a surprise raid. But they say that it is not possible unless the State Governments cooperate. So, I have written to the Chief Ministers of all the States to see that the hoarders should be tackled firmly under the Essential Food Commodities Act. One or two States have cooperated.

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One of the important issues is about the resource mobilisation. Under the power sector, the outstanding dues from the Central Public Sector Undertakings and the Ministry of Power are Rs. 8,512 crore. Almost all the Electricity Boards, barring one or two, are in red. We do not know how to cooperate with the State Governments. What are we doing now for the National Power Grid for supply of power? A total amount of Rs. 8,512 crore is pending — Uttar Pradesh Rs. 1,791 crore; Bihar Rs. 1,771 crore; West Bengal Rs. 876 crore; Delhi Rs. 863 crore, Madhya Pradesh Rs. 697 crore; Haryana Rs. 571 crore; Jammu and Kashmir Rs. 325 crore.

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Sir, I am not going to deal with the U.P. issue because a separate discussion has been allowed. The successful conduct of Assembly elections and the installation of a popular government in Jammu and Kashmir have been the major steps forward for restoring the normalcy and putting the State back on the path of economic development. There has been a qualitative change in the security situation after the elections in the State. Some violent incidents intended to disrupt peace continue to come in the way of complete restoration of normalcy. That is largely due to frustration of terrorists and their mentors across the border, after the failure of their designs to thwart the democratic process in the State. We are keeping a close watch on the situation and are in regular contact with the State Government. I have visited the State three times during the last few months and have sought to ensure that all the assurances given by our Government have been fulfilled so far as the economic package is concerned.

The disturbed conditions in some of the States in the North-East are clearly a matter of concern. In the recent weeks, there has been an escalation of violence in Tripura. Conditions in Manipur and Assam are also not satisfactory. In October last year I visited all the seven North-Eastern States to study for myself the problems faced by the people of these States. At the end of my visit, I announced a package of programmes containing several 'New Initiatives for the North-East' with a view to restoring normalcy and increasing the tempo of development in the region. We are closely monitoring the schemes and programmes mentioned in this Package. A High Level Commission has been set up to identify gaps in infrastructure and Basic Minimum Services in the North-Eastern States. A High Level Expert Committee

on employment of the educated in the North-East has also started its work in right earnest.

This is a very important thing which I would like to disclose. During my tour to the North-East, I made a public announcement inviting the underground groups for discussions without preconditions, in order to find a political solution which would ensure durable peace in the region. It was also my assessment that the common people in all these areas genuinely desired restoration of peace and normalcy so that they could pursue their avocations without hindrance and unemployed youth could find employment. My call was responded to by National Socialist Council of Nagaland and I had a meeting recently with Shri Isac Swu, Chairman and Shri Muivah, General Secretary of this organisation. It has been agreed that further talks would be held. I also discussed this matter with the Chief Minister of Nagaland and other leaders and they have also agreed to extend their full cooperation so far as bringing normalcy in Nagaland is concerned.

It is a very complicated issue. But the first response was they had given an assurance that they were going to extend cooperation. This is one development which I would like to disclose in this august House.

I take this opportunity to repeal my offer to all the insurgent groups in the North-East to give up the path of violence and come to the negotiating table to work out an acceptable solution. This is one issue about which the House is very much concerned. As regards the North-Eastern States and Jammu and Kashmir, what the Government has tried within its limits is to see that we get cooperation from some of these tribal groups or militant groups. That is why I gave an unconditional call and two leaders, of course, have met me and have given their assurances. With the cooperation of the State Government and the cooperation of other leaders, we have to see that normalcy in some of these three or four States is restored. We must bring normalcy. It is a very difficult task. It is not so easy. It is not so simple. The House knows it. But we will try our best. With all sincerity at my command, I assure this House.

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I promised on the other day about Orissa, about which his impression was that while releasing the funds I had discriminated so far as Orissa is concerned. The whole idea was that I had shown favour to Andhra Pradesh

and not to Orissa. That was the feeling or the impression. I will tell you frankly that on that day, I assured the House that I was going to give a detailed reply so far as the amount that was released to Orissa for the drought-prone areas is concerned. Sir, after I visited Orissa, I made a promise to release Rs. 50 crore. On the other day, these people had doubted that it was not being released. That is one of the issues raised by some of the Members from Orissa. We have released Rs. 106 crore initially and then Rs. 38 crore.

Both the figures put together, we have released Rs. 144 crore under the Employment Assurance Scheme, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, even though the earlier money had not been spent and the utilisation certificate was not given. In addition to that, over and above this, the State Famine Relief Fund, according to the Ninth Finance Commission, was also fully released and as a special case Rs. 50 crore from Famine Relief Fund was also released to Orissa. This is what I would like to say.

Sir, the object of this Government is to see that the infrastructure is provided for agricultural growth and industrial growth. Our intention is not to encourage foreign investors by giving them several concessions. The very object is to see that sufficient private funds or private investments, either domestic or global, are attracted. We need money. There is no question of any hesitation to say this. That is why we have taken certain decisions and we have stated it in the Presidential Address itself.

Sir, I am not an economist. There may be several economists in this august House itself. I have tried to take the advice of several economists. I had a meeting in New Delhi itself on the 30th December, 1996 where I invited industrialists, economists and some of the experts in the investment sector, I had a frank discussion with them. The Finance Minister was there. The Commerce Minister was there and all senior officers were also there. We tried to hear them for one day. We took their views. In addition to that, I have met the global investors in Mumbai. The Chief Minister of Maharashtra arranged that meeting. Then, I separately met the small scale industrialists. I tried to get their views also and ultimately I have come to the conclusion that unless we encourage investments by giving certain concessions, it is practically impossible for this country to grow faster.

Sir, a small country like Myanmar is going to have \$4 billion of global investment. Today, China is a communist country and they are able to get \$ 100 billion of investment. Till now, we are able to get only \$1.7 or \$1.8 billion of investment. We have cleared the projects to the tune of \$7 billion. Our whole objective is that we must, at least, get \$10 billion of investment this year. We have opened up the power sector, mining sector, coal sector and the highways sector. We have opened up some of these areas. I do not think that the opening up of the health insurance sector should hurt you.

We have opened up even the communications' sector. The very object is to see that we must get sufficient investment. Otherwise, wherefrom do we get Rs. 3,54,000 crore required for the power sector? Where do we get this money from? Are we in a position to generate that much amount? How much internal resources have we been able to mobilise in these 50 years? Some honest efforts might have been made.

Sir, we have not only given encouragement to the investors, but we have also given sufficient thought over the growth of agricultural sector, social sector and education. We have increased the allocation to the field of human resource development by Rs. 2,000 crore this time. We have given sufficient weightage to the field of primary education and other educational needs. We have also given sufficient weightage for the social sector and the minorities. We have allocated Rs. 40 crore to the Maulana Azad Trust, Rs. 40 crore to the Minorities Development Corporation and Rs. 70 crore to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes Finance Development Corporation. We have tried to see that sufficient care is taken this time in all these areas.

What I would like to say is that this Government is not only for the industrial growth, this Government is also for agricultural growth. The Government is also here to take care of the poor people of the rural areas whether they are Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes or Backward Classes or the minorities or the poorer sections of the society. We have taken sufficient steps to provide necessary allocation; for these areas.

With these few words. I would like to conclude. Thank you.

BACK NOTE

XIX. Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, 4 March, 1997.

1. SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow): First of all, may I know this? Why can the Prime Minister not agree to have a discussion under Rule 184?

SHRI H. D. DEVEGOWDA: I will agree to whatever the hon. Speaker decides. I do not know.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: But you are not opposed to that!

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I am not going to Please hear me. The hon. Leader of the Opposition wants to bring that Motion under Rule 184. If his intention is that the Motion may be adopted and the Government may go, please do not worry about it. If that is his intention, I am not worried about that. Whether the Motion under Rule 184 is going to be voted here in favour of the Government or against the Government. I am not bothered about that; please do not worry about that.

2. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY (Chhapra): What is the *hawala* amount in it?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Sir, it is totally unacceptable. Was that justified even as an interruption? There is a limit to heckling a Prime Minister when he is replying to the Address and making an allegation of that kind without any basis whatsoever. Does the Leader of the Opposition support that?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I did not hear what he had said. Kindly repeat it.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: He said that what was the *hawala* amount. What does that mean?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: We are not in favour of any interruptions. The Prime Minister knows it.

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): There is a limit to that.

MR. SPEAKER: Why do you not allow your leaders to handle things?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Sir, I would like to tell the hon. Members

of all sides, not only the BJP Members that in these nine months if we have been involved in any scam or in any *havala* — do not try to play politics at every stage — I would repeat again that if any scam has taken place during the tenure of this Government in Office or any *havala* deal has been transacted, let the matter be brought before this House and a No-Confidence Motion moved against this Government. If I am involved, I would tender my resignation in this very House. If my colleagues are involved, I am going to sack them. I can assure you to this extent. Please for God's sake, do not spare us. You have every right and every privilege to move a No-Confidence Motion or bring in any type of motion under the Rules I have no objection to it. But there is no need for a sarcastic remark.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT (Nagpur): The Minister in your Government has not replied to a case involving Rs. 546 crore. This is a big scam. I have received a letter. That has been accepted on the floor of the House but he is not revealing the names. What are they talking about?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I am prepared to hear.

MR. SPEAKER: Let the Prime Minister finish his speech.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I have only said 'this Government', the Union Government headed by Deve Gowda in the last nine months.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: I have received a letter.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: You keep that letter safely. Do not waste that letter. Use it at an appropriate time. That is all I want to say on it.

3. SHRI NITISH KUMAR (Bari): What about Bihar?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: We have not given special package for Bihar and U.P. I have announced economic packages only for the North-Eastern States and Kashmir.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR: You have taken Ganga water from Bihar but you have neglected the interest of Bihar.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Sir, you must come out with a package for these six States also.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: When will you consider economic packages for Bihar and U.P.?

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA (Udhampur): A period of more than six months has elapsed but so far work has not been taken up even on a single project in Kashmir.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Please wait. I will tell you what we have done.

MR. SPEAKER: I do not think the Prime Minister can go on answering to every query. Mr. Prime Minister, you can carry on now.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Do not worry.

SHRI MUKHTAR ANIS (Sitapur): Let the Prime Minister conclude first. Doubts can be raised and allayed later. If hon. Members go on interrupting like this and the Prime Minister continue to reply them, his speech will go benefit of continuity.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Sir, for the benefit of the hon. Member I will read out the figures from the list. This list includes the Central Works including the Annual Plan of 1997-98.

We have given, this year. Rs. 100 crore for Udhampur-Baramulla Railway line. We have also given in the current year's Budget Rs. 300 crore for Uri Hydro-Electric Project; Rs. 112 crore for Dulahasti Hydro-Electric Project; Rs. 12 crore for one year for National Highway; Rs. 10 crore for Mughal Road; Rs. 2.4 crore for setting up of a Convention Centre at Leh; Rs. 23 crore for development of Kargil Airport; Rs. 300 crore for rural infrastructure and basic minimum needs; and Rs. 500 crore for sewerage component of Dal Lake. The debt relief to borrowers comes to about Rs. 118 crore. We have waived-off that component at the rate of Rs. 50,000.

Sir, the list of projects in the Ninth Five Year Plan include Rs. 2,000 crore for Udhampur-Baramulla Railway line. We have also included in the Ninth Plan Dulahasti Hydro Electric Project and have allocated Rs. 3,000 crore for that. Development of Kargil Airport is also included in the Ninth Five Year Plan and we have given Rs. 23 crore for this. We want to complete it but if it is going to be carried over, it will be carried forward to the next year.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Sir, it will create further imbalances.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Rudy, you are in the habit of interrupting too much.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Sir, the hon. Member from Jammu & Kashmir wanted to know what we have done for that State.

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA: Rs. 400 crore was released out of the sanctioned amount of Rs. 7000 crores.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Sir, for the first time, the Annual Plan for Jammu & Kashmir is for Rs. 1550 crore in a financial year.

Similarly, we have given packages for the North-Eastern States. I have got the list which has been cleared and has been included in the current year's Budget and also in the Ninth Plan. I do not want to read out all those things here, but if it is necessary, I will circulate it to all the hon. Members. This first shows the works that we have included in the current year's Budget and also in the Ninth Five Year Plan.

SHRIMATI BHAVNABEN DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA (Junagarh): The Government have not said anything about Narmada Project. Hon. Supreme Court has issued injunction.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Let me complete my speech, then I will answer to your queries. Please cooperate.

4. SHRI NITISH KUMAR: You take care of only Shri Sharad Pawar. Other people have also spoken.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Your goodself has suggested about the basic minimum programme. In your speech under agricultural sector, you have also mentioned all these things. Only on the power sector, you tried to impress what exactly the quantum of the burden that is before all of us. The official figure is Rs. 3,51,000 crore.

5. SHRI P. UPENDRA (Vijayawada): The selection of beneficiary is very faulty.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I know that. I am telling about that. Why do you lose your patience? Indira Awas Yojana and Ambedkar Yojana are for landless and for those people who have no roofs. A person who has got two acres, three acres or five acres of land and who want to construct some houses which will have some modern facilities, there is nobody who is going to advance money for him.

SHRI P. UPENDRA: The selection of the beneficiary is faulty. The money is not being properly distributed. This has been brought to your notice earlier.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Under Indira Awas Yojana and Ambedkar Yojana, the beneficiaries have to be identified for the houses that we are going to allot or the funds that we are going to allot. One of the demands of our hon. Members is to see that the beneficiaries should be identified by us. That is one of the demands. But the only thing is that there are Panchayat Raj Institutions, which we have accepted in principle. The matter whether we should take over the powers again to identify the beneficiaries or to allow them is to be decided again by this House. Sir, I will only be guided by this House. I do not want to interfere at this stage.

SHRI YELLAIAH NANDI (Siddipet): The M.Ps. are not being associated in Indira Awas Yojana. Money is being allotted to District Collectors only. It is a Central Scheme, therefore Members of Parliament should be associated in it.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: We will discuss that issue.

6. SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dumdum): Is Shri P. Chidambaram not doing anything?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: He is doing his best. You want for that. It is not yesterday that they had accumulated. Bad debts to the tune of about Rs. 4,000 and odd crores have already been waived. We thought several times about the rural people because they are not organised, they have no voice and we have to do something.

Yesterday in the Budget speech Shri P. Chidambaram has said that lending had been increased to Rs. 6,000 crore for the first time for the agricultural sector. Is that not an achievement? We wanted to go further. There is no question of any hesitation on that. We have provided the Infrastructural Development Fund which is in the third phase, and which is only for the rural areas. We have provided Rs. 3,300 crore for basic minimum services in the rural areas. My colleague Shri Yerrannaidu who is looking after this Employment Assurance Scheme, Indira Awas Yojana knows that for rural development itself we have provided this time Rs. 9,000 and odd crores. About Rs. 8,000 crore is under the Plan expenditure. We have increased it to Rs. 9,000 crore, Is it not enough for the sake of the poor people that we have done this? The programme that we have launched by the Address of Rashtrapati is not a mere programme. We have provided sufficient cushion, sufficient allocation even for the implementation of this programme.

In the name of Kasturba Gandhi we have launched a new scheme, *i.e.* Residential Schools for Girls. We have provided Rs. 250 crore for the Residential Schools for Girls.

When I went to the Mewar region, I found that not even two per cent of the people are educated. Eighty per cent of the people residing there are Muslims. When I went to Madhya Pradesh — some of our MPs who are here know it — the memorandum given by the Scheduled Tribes in a Tribal Conference showed that in the tribal area not even two per cent literacy was there. I mentioned to the Finance Minister that we could not allow it to continue like that. The entire responsibility of running the residential schools, including feeding, providing the shelter, clothing, books, everything should be borne by the Government. We have provided Rs. 200 crore. Each school may cost one crore and 250 schools are there. We are going to start 250 schools this year itself.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Calcutta South): Mr. Prime Minister, do you know that Forty-five girl child schools in West Bengal have already been de-recognised. 'De-recognised' means the Government acquisitioned the schools. The Government has already passed a resolution that they should be acquisitioned by the Government. That is how they were acquisitioned. This has already been announced.

MR SPEAKER: No, no.

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE: It is done by the Government by the resolution 45000 girl children are affected. They are not going to get educational facilities. What about that? Do something for them.

7. AN HON. MEMBER: Which are those States?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I do not want to cast aspersions on other States. I only appeal to all the States to firmly deal with the hoarders. Otherwise, the Centre cannot do anything. The Centre can only advise them. The Centre can insist upon them to see that they should take firm action so far as this area is concerned.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Prime Minister, you please carry on with your speech. You do not have to answer to everybody. Otherwise, there will be no end.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: What about poor people of poor States?

8. SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: What about Bihar?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I told you. You are not attentive. What can I do for that?

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: You write them off.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: We can write them off. That is very easy. Even regarding the coal supply, an amount of Rs. 6,000 crore and odd is due from various States to the Central Government, that is, the Railway Department and the Department of Coal.

Unless they cooperate with us it is very difficult to extend the same facilities. Now we have taken a decision to give it on 'cash and carry' basis. Otherwise, there is no question of allowing the States because they think that everything can be made available by the Centre. It is practically impossible for us and we have made it amply clear that from here afterwards it should be on 'cash and carry' basis. So, this is one of the decisions which we have taken. I need the cooperation of the House.

They have raided about the law and order problem and other issues of North-Eastern States and Jammu and Kashmir. I would like to refer to it.

AN HON. MEMBER: What about backward States?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Backward States also will get a major share under some of the new scheme which we have launched, not Karnataka or Andhra Pradesh. They will get the major share Major share will go to them.

9. SHRI ISWAR PRASANNA HAZARIKA (Tezpur): I want to know whether a part of the cost of counter-insurgency operations will be shared by the Centre because the States have no money?

SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK (Bolangir): The previous Government and the former Prime Minister had announced a package of about Rs. 5,500 crore for KBK. You also visited that particular backward area and announced Rs. 50 crore for natural calamity and drought. I want to know whether you are going to adjust all the funds against drought-prone areas or not.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): Every State is representing its problems. Now it has started district-wise. How long will the Prime Minister go on replying? After all, we should show much of courtesy when the

Prime Minister of the country is replying to a very important debate if any questions are there, they can put them later on. The hon. Members have followed the procedure in the past, I request them not to do this.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN (Mumbai-North East): They thought that the speech is over.

MOTION OF CONFIDENCE IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

11 April, 1997

Sir, I beg to move:

"That this House expresses its confidence in the Council of Ministers."

Sir, with your permission. I would like to move a Confidence Motion for the second time in the last ten months.

On the 12th of June 1996, in this very same House, a Confidence Motion was moved and it was carried by this very same House. Today again, I have come before this House to take a vote of confidence because of certain new developments which took place.

On that day, that is 12th June, 1996, when the Confidence Motion was carried though, 13 parties including the national and regional parties combined together formed the United Front and, at that time, the United Front had got only about 192 Members. The supporting party, the Congress (I), under the leadership of Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao on the 12th May, 1996, took a unanimous decision—the decision was spontaneously taken by the Congress that: 'If the third Front is prepared to form the Government, we are going to extend the support'. That was on the 12th May, 1996. After that, all the regional and national parties got combined, they elected a leader among themselves—and the new political force the third force, which we called the United Front was established—and on the 15th May, 1996, I was elected as the Leader of the United Front. Rashtrapatiiji called me after Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had tendered his resignation on 28th May, 1996. He called me to form the Government and he gave me a deadline that before 12th June, 1996. I should go before this House and obtain the mandate of the House.

Sir, I do not want to blame anybody or cast aspersions against any individual or any political party. But I would like to just narrate as to what has happened.

On the day when the discussions took place on the Confidence Motion, the then C.P.P. President and the Congress (I) leader. Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao had categorically mentioned the following in his speech.

I would just like to quote from his own speech:

"Anyone, any forces or combination of forces on the basis of secularism, on the basis of accepted principles, we are prepared to cooperate, we are prepared to support from outside."

Now it so happened that after 3-4 days of suspicion, Deve Gowda was chosen and was called by Rashtrapatiji to form a Government. Then he said:

"My understanding about Shri Deve Gowda is that this party will not allow this Government to fall under any circumstances. History will not say that it was because of the Congress Party that Gowda's Government had fallen."

I am quoting this just to draw the attention of this august House to the stand taken by the then Congress President and the CPP leader on that day and to the assurance given to the nation. I am only trying to refresh the memory of this august House about what had happened on that day. I do not want to narrate what had been said by other friends. Shri A.R. Antulay had said at the very same place that "the question of withdrawing the support from our side is ruled out. We will stand by him, stand by this Government till the end". I think I am correct. What Shri Sharad Pawar, while addressing this House on the Motion of Thanks on Rashtrapatiji's Address to both the Houses, had said in his speech, I do not want to narrate again. A copy of his speech is with me.

In the last ten months, the Government, with the support of thirteen parties, was asked to run this Government. Subsequently, the National Conference also joined. Mainly two supporting parties from outside, the Congress and the CPI(M), extended their cooperation in the last ten months. Otherwise, whatever achievements we have made in the last ten months, we would not have been able to make. Some of the achievements I am going to spell out, taking advantage of this Confidence Motion. This achievement is not by me, this achievement is not by my colleagues alone, this achievement in particular is because of the cooperation extended by the supporting parties and the parties which are in the Government sharing power, and in general, the House also has extended its full cooperation to achieve some of the objects to which we have committed ourselves in our Common Minimum Programme.

On the day when the supporting parties and the other national and regional parties came together, there was some sort of a natural suspicion in

the minds of the people in the country whether the national parties or the regional parties could go together, whether they could discharge the responsibilities, whether the regional parties had got the experience about the national issues or the national outlook, as they had no experience of running a Government at the national level and may try to confine to their own States.

This was the sort of suspicion in the minds of the people of this country and some of the intellectuals also expressed their feelings while we were asked to shoulder the responsibility. I am glad to say that in the last ten months all the steps that we have taken have clearly proved that the national parties as well as the regional parties, combined, had run the Government better than the previous regimes. I can say this without doubt. In the last ten months and on the day when I replied to the Confidence Motion—I repeat on the day when I replied to the Confidence Motion—I said:

"How long will I continue in office is not my concern— whether it is for five days or five months or five years I am not going to worry. But my concern is that as long as I am going to be here, I must work to the best of the ability with my experience to solve the problems of the nation."

You can also go through my speech. With this background I started my work with the cooperation of my colleagues.

Sir, I would like to just narrate to this august House all the steps that we have taken in the last ten months because it is very essential to know where I have gone wrong and betrayed the confidence of the people of this country or betrayed the confidence reposed by the supporting parties in this Government. I would like to bring this to the notice of this hon. House.

Sir, the first decision that we took was to revive some of the institutions which were very much essential for cooperation between the States and the Centre while running the administration. A meeting of the Inter-State Council was not held for six years. We tried to revive the Inter-State Council meetings and we had two sittings. In the two sittings the main issue that was discussed was the Sarkaria Commission's report. The recommendation of the Sarkaria Commission was to share not only political power but also economic power. Some of the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission were accepted in

the Inter-State Council meeting and where we were unable to come to a unanimous decision, in the Chief Ministers' Conference we have agreed to constitute a Standing Committee under the chairmanship of the Home Minister.

Why I am mentioning this is we tried to revive some of these bodies which were very essential for a proper understanding between the States and the Centre. With this background the first decision which we had taken was that we want the cooperation of the Chief Ministers of all the States, within the Common Minimum Programme.

There was a peculiar situation after the general elections to the Eleventh Lok Sabha. With the mandate given by the people of this country in this very same House there were about 32 political parties. If you take the smaller parties, regional parties and national parties, all put together, it may be that 32 or 33 political parties are there. With this background, it is rather difficult to face the House and it is not a simple task to run the country also.

When we accepted the challenge for a smooth functioning of the Government, we had adopted the Common Minimum Programme by all the parties including the C.P.I. (M) which is a supporting party and which is not participating in the Government, barring the Congress.

After adopting the Common Minimum Programme, we took a decision that to implement this, the cooperation of all the Chief Ministers was to be solicited. That is why, I called the Chief Ministers' Conference. The Chief Ministers' Conference was held for two days and a decision was taken unanimously about the areas where we could implement this Programme without any difference of opinion. The decision was taken unanimously by identifying about seven priority sectors. I am glad to say that almost all the Chief Ministers agreed for these seven priority areas, to be completed in a time-bound programme by 2000 A.D.

The other issue was that the National Development Council had also not met for several years. We called a meeting of the National Development Council. There also, we took a decision about the Ninth Plan. The Approach Paper for the Ninth Plan was also approved. Of course, it is not brought before this House because of the other formalities to be completed. For the first time, the Approach Paper for the Ninth Five Year Plan was finalised in a short span of four or five months. The document was placed before the Cabinet and the Cabinet had taken a decision about the Approach Paper for

the Ninth Plan. The NDC had also met and we adopted the Approach Paper for the Ninth Plan. Of course, this has to be discussed in the very same House to give it a final touch.

We have agreed in the Common Minimum Programme about the Lokpal Bill. The Lokpal Bill was also introduced. It is now before the Standing Committee, if I am correct. We were very much anxious to pass that Bill and I also requested you that this Bill should be passed in this Session, but anyway in the present political situation, it may not be possible for me to get the Bill passed unless the House agrees.

The issue of stability was one of the issues which was in the mind of everybody. In the last ten months, I have never felt that there is any instability in the Government. I must be fair. The Congress Party or the supporting parties have never interfered in our taking any decisions. Almost all the decisions which were taken in the Cabinet in the last ten months were unanimous. There may be some expression of difference of opinion by my colleagues or by the supporting parties. It is quite but natural. The supporting parties must have their own say because with different political ideologies and with different manifestos when they have come together under a special circumstance, they have got their own rights. Their manifestos are different and the ideologies differ from one party to the other.

When we had all come together with a specific purpose to strengthen the secular democracy in this country, then, naturally, we had agreed for a certain minimum programme where there should not be any difference of opinion. So, when we had accepted that Common Minimum Programme with regard to other issues, it is quite but natural for them to express their difference of opinion on a par with their party manifestos or ideologies. I do not find fault with that. I must say that in all the decisions which we had taken in the last ten months, there was no interference. That is why, I was able to achieve something in the last ten months.

The Cabinet had taken almost all the decisions unanimously which, in my opinion, was a progressive step. I am going to place the steps taken by us and the achievements of this Government in the last 10 months one by one before this House and, through this House, to the nation.

Sir, the 1997-98 Budget was appreciated by almost all the sections of the society. We have not taken care of any particular section only in this

Budget. But we have taken sufficient precautions not to neglect the industrial sector, not to neglect the agricultural sector and not to neglect the social welfare sector. At the same time, we also gave sufficient initiatives to give encouragement to the private investments. We have given sufficient scope for that in our Budget. The reason why I am saying this is, we need resources to successfully achieve some of the programmes which we have launched. The resources have to be mobilised by our own internal resource mobilisation programme and in addition to that, the private sector and the global investments should also be attracted on the basis of the new economic philosophy. The new economic philosophy has given a wide scope for attracting private and public investments. With this background, the Budget was presented this time before this House and, through this House, to the whole nation.

Sir, the Budget presented by the Finance Minister of the United Front Government reflects our commitment to the economic reforms, but ensures that the poor and the disadvantaged sections of the society are not by-passed in the process of development. The 1997-98 Budget, in many ways, represents a watershed. With this reference point for the reform process on which India has embarked and has shifted from 1991 to 1997, in a bold move the Budget has significantly reduced the corporate and personal income tax rates. Domestic company tax rates have been lowered from 43 per cent to a fairly competitive 35 per cent. Foreign companies will be taxed at the rate of 48 per cent which is less by five per cent than before. The individual tax payers will now pay 30 per cent tax at the margin which is a hefty reduction of 25 per cent.

Sir, coupled with the rationalisation of the direct tax rates, the Budget has also announced a 20 per cent reduction in customs duty across the board. The dual philosophy underpins this approach to increasingly allow the tax rates in India to be in line with those prevailing in other Asian countries and a conviction that lower tax rates will encourage increasingly greater level of compliances. The Budget has a number of measures aimed at stimulating the vital infrastructure sectors through a combination of fiscal and policy initiatives. The Government has sought to attract private investments in telecommunication, oil and gas, roads and tourism. These are some of the areas which we have tried to open up for the private sector.

Sir, the import duty on coal has been reduced. Some of the decisions that we have taken in our Budget proposals are from the point of view of

growth and I would again highlight them. The telecommunication service providers have been accorded the infrastructure status and granted a complete tax holiday for a period of five years with 30 per cent tax holiday for a further five years' period. The licence fee can now be amortized and licences can be assigned clearing the way for a number of projects to reach financial closure. The oil and gas sector has been subjected to a comprehensive review. An attempt has been made to further revive the capital market. Major amendments in the Companies Act are proposed and the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1973 is to be replaced. There ought to be statutory measures to deal with money laundering.

Similarly, the Budget reflects our concern for the poor and the disadvantaged section. There are enhancements in the provision for the basic minimum services. The outlays for the rural areas, employment and for social services have been made. The provision for the basic minimum service has been increased from Rs. 2,466 crore to Rs. 3,300 crore. This includes Rs. 330 crore for slum clearing. The provision for the accelerated irrigation for which we had provided Rs. 900 crore in the last year's Budget has been increased to Rs. 1,300 crore in 1997-98. Rupees two hundred crore has been provided for small irrigation projects and works like Ganga Kalyan to help the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, weaker sections of the society and the small farmers. We have provided Rs. 250 crore for Kasturba Gandhi Shiksha Yojana. We wanted to start 258 residential schools for the girls living in the tribal areas and where the literacy rate is below national average.

I am only mentioning some of these highlights and the achievements of this Government in the last ten months. We have been committed to the assurances that we had given to the nation through our Common Minimum Programme. We tried to take certain steps by making necessary provisions in the Budget for the year 1997-98. We have launched rural housing programme wherein about 50,000 houses are to be given in the rural areas.

This scheme has been launched for the first time. Hitherto there was no such scheme for the farmers. Funds will be provided at the rate of Rs. 2 lakh per house. This was one of the new schemes that has been launched for the rural housing programme. The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and Ambedkar Awas Yojana are meant for the weaker sections or the homeless people or

the siteless people. We have launched this scheme for the farming community also.

In addition to this, there are some of the other important issues like PDS and fertilizer subsidy. All these steps which we have taken in the last ten months are only from the point of view of helping the farming community and for helping the weaker sections of the society. In the PDS itself, only two-three States had all along been implementing the scheme of providing subsidised essential food articles. We took a decision that this scheme should be enlarged and the whole nation should be covered. For this scheme under PDS, we have provided about Rs. 7,500 crore. This scheme is going to cover a population of about 32 crore of this country.

The fertilizer subsidy has been increased. We had made an additional allocation of about Rs. 2,500 crore last year for the fertilizers to help the farming community. This year also it has been further increased. Even on the imported fertilizer, we have given a subsidy component of Rs. 1,700 crore.

The total worth of the PDS system and the subsidy on agricultural sector comes to about Rs. 17,500 crore. The very purpose of taking certain steps is to help the agricultural sector and also some of the poorer sections of the society, who are below the poverty line and who have no purchasing capacity. We have taken the decision to launch the new scheme nation-wide.

Sir, there are other issues, and I am going to deal with them after the views from all sides of the House are expressed.

In the end, I am going to cover all other points. Now, I would request the House to deliberate on this Motion, which I have just now moved with your kind permission. I would request the House to ponder over this issue—whether any skirmishes were born by our decisions in the last ten months, where this Government has gone wrong and how we have betrayed the assurance that has been given to the nation. I would like to request the hon. Members to come out with their views in this august House. If we have done anything wrong, we are prepared to set it right. I would like a free and frank expression, particularly on the omissions and commissions of this Government in the last ten months.

With these words, I request that the hon. Members may kindly express their views on this Motion of Confidence.

Hon. Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I would like to clear some of the doubts raised by the hon. members of this House.

First of all, I want to thank the hon. Members for having agreed to pass the Finance Bill on the 21st. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the entire House for having agreed to pass the Finance Bill, the Vote on Account and the Appropriation Bill, on the 21st of this month.

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, as a senior leader, has expressed that the supporting party should not be neglected in a manner in which the party which is running the administration with the support of the Congress (I) has neglected. It is a very good suggestion. Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev has intervened to say that when this issue was raised by the Leader of the Congress, both C.P.P. and the Party leader, nobody from the United Front met the Leader and tried to convince the Leader. That is one of the remarks which Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev has made.

Sir, before going into the details, I would like to say something about the two letters which were forwarded to me, according to the statement made by the hon. Member, Shri P.R. Dasmunsi. I have not received any letter. The President of India, with a covering letter and with an enclosure, which was handed over by the Congress(I) President on 30th March, 1997, has sent that letter to me on 31st March, 1997. The letter of withdrawal presented to the Rashtrapati on 30th March, 1997 was forwarded to me by Rashtrapati on 31st March, 1997. Till then I have not received any communication from the Congress (I) President. On 30th March, 1997, I met the former Prime Minister, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao.

Before my Minister of Finance left Delhi for Calcutta on 29th March, he requested me that the Congress (I) has not submitted their party accounts to the investigating officer. 31st March is the last date. There is no other option except to take action to levy penalty. He said that he was going to Calcutta and then to Goa and coming back only on the 31st March; please try to sort out this problem. This is what the Minister of Finance told me. He also told me that he had tried his best to contact the Treasurer, Shri Ahmed Patel to get the necessary explanation. But he was not available. So, please see that this issue is sorted out. I went to Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao on 30th March because he was the President at that time responsible for 1993-94 accounts. I

did discuss with him. He suggested that he would send Shri Pranab Mukherjee to discuss about it. I came back and I gave a phone call to Shri Sita Ram Kesri, the President of the Party and the C.P.P. Leader. I told him that I want to meet him and want to discuss some of the important issues. Please let me know when it is convenient to him. He gave me the time to meet him at 2 o'clock on 31st March.

I have got some basic ethics in life. I have not come here in search of this office, with any aspiration, with any ambition. I did not aspire to become the Prime Minister of this country leaving the Chief Minister's office. There is no need for me to make any manipulative politics. The people of this country, who are politically very much awakened, are aware of that. 12.40 P.M. was the time chosen to hand over the withdrawal letter and he gave me the time to meet him at two o'clock. Was Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev not there when I met his President? I met him twelve times.

The allegation is that I am meeting only Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao. I am not a person to stab behind the back. Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao was the Prime Minister of the country. Yes, I was here on the day when the Vote of No-Confidence was moved and I voted against him. On that day he tried to save the Government with whatever methods and with whatever means he could. Today, those friends who want to teach sermons and morals in this country, those who want to attribute motives against Shri Narasimha Rao, were they not enjoying the office in his Government? Today, everybody wants to raise a finger against Shri Narasimha Rao saying that Deve Gowda is going to safeguard the interests of Shri Narasimha Rao. If he falls ill and is in the hospital and if Deve Gowda goes to see him, he is showing extra regard and respect to him! Just because he has lost the Presidentship, lost the CPP leadership, I am not a person to belittle him. He has done something for the nation. Whether he continued in office by using various political methods or not, I do not want to go into the details of that. He has bailed out this country from the economic crisis. I am not going to make sweeping remarks against everybody, but how some of you, friends, have belittled him, I know that. Even though it is not my concern, even though I know that I am going to lay down the office today, but friendship is not a marketable commodity in this country. Shri Narasimha Rao must be aware of these words. He is at the fag end of your life, so he should be aware of these words. These are the people who stabbed him. I am not going to stab him. On the day when he handed over the resignation letter to

the CPP leadership, he was alone. I went to his house to know why this had happened.

Yes, I respect Shri Chandra Shekhar. My friendship with Shri Chandra Shekhar is very old. I had come in contact with him twenty years back. He is the senior most leader and I respect him. Whether I was in office or not, I used to go to his house. Going to his house is a sin, going to Shri Narasimha Rao's house is a sin, meeting Shri Sharad Pawar is a sin, but meeting their President twelve times is not a sin! I have not neglected anybody in my life. Did I not go to Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee's house? Did I not go to Shri L.K. Advani's house? We should have some basic manners in public life. It is not a question of wooing anybody or pampering anybody to continue in office. You must try to give respect to your elders. The office which I am holding today for another one hour, is the highest office. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who was one of the tallest leaders in the world, sat here and performed his duties as Prime Minister.

The destiny dragged me here and made me to sit in this chair. When the former Speaker of this House, Shri Shivraj Patil, was speaking, I was hearing his speech. I appreciate some of the viewpoints he has expressed.

Sir, I would like to go in detail because this is my last speech in this House. I will go to the other House, I have got five years to stay there. I only request all the Members, senior leaders, to cooperate with me. I have not interrupted even when severe attacks were made by several Members in this House. I never do it.

Shri Dasmunsi has said about my going to Bangalore and coming back.

Shri Dasmunsi, you are a good friend of mine. You took me to Calcutta. Please touch your heart and tell me—what is the performance of this Prime Minister in the last ten months. Which Prime Minister has continuously visited for seven days the North-Eastern States? You are there from the days of the Youth Congress. You are a staunch Congressman. I do not want to question your loyalty to the Organisation. But you tell the truth. Do not suppress your conscience. There were people like Feroze Gandhi who exposed the corruption charges when his father-in-law was the Prime Minister. If you feel that the decision of your President to withdraw the support is going to held the so-called secular democracy, I welcome it. I have no regret. But I

would like to tell you very frankly. I have not done anything else in the last ten months but to discharge my duties... (Interruptions) I am coming to it. Please wait.

Sir, my secular character was questioned. It is said that the Congress Working Committee is constrained to note that the United Front has failed to provide the leadership necessary to consolidate the forces of secularism and confront the forces of communalism. Am I responsible for their defeat in Punjab? Am I responsible for their defeat in the Corporation elections or the local bodies' elections in Maharashtra? Am I responsible for the defeat of the Congress candidates in all the bye-elections except in the bye-election of the seat vacated by me in my home State where the B.J.P. lost the deposit and the Congress won? I do not want to say that the B.J.P. and the Congress have come together. The B.J.P. got 23,000 votes in the 1996 parliamentary election and 27,000 votes in the Assembly elections. They lost the deposit and they come together to fight against secularism.

Shri P.R. Dasmunsi, you might have come to that opinion because of the communication gap. I would like to ask about the spirit of this Working Committee resolution. Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav is also here. There were three bye-elections for the Rajya Sabha. The Congress got 30 votes, the BSP 66 and the Janata Dal eight. If he had not passed on these 104 votes, could it be possible for any of these three parties, including the Janata Dal, the Congress and the BSP, to defeat the three official candidates of the BJP? You tell me. Do not regret the withdrawal. Do not worry about the withdrawal. Do not try to make any patching up now. It is not possible. Let the country know this. I do not want to quote again in this House the appreciation by the media— in the editorial column or in 'letters to editor'. Later on, I am coming to the point of the word used by the Congress (I) President about the performance of the Government and about the efficiency of the Government.

First of all, I would like to clarify some of these issues because in the morning, I did not want to make a political speech. Some people were under the impression that I was in a depressed mood. No. I got the training from Shri Chandra Shekhar. I will never bother about the office. I have tendered resignation thrice even against his advice. Today, I would like to make it clear that the day I received this communication of withdrawal of support from the President's office, I would have tendered my resignation. But immediately, on the next day, the leaders of all the parties of the United Front assembled here

and said, "No, you should not resign. You should go before the House. We must test and we must find out who is who". Because of that decision taken by the United Front, I bowed my head. It is because of their support that I was elected as the Leader and it is with the support of the Congress, I am running the Government. I have at least this much of background.

In the last eleven months, I have never used any occasion to belittle the Congress in any public platform. I might have addressed 66 meetings in Uttar Pradesh where the BJP, in the Lok Sabha elections, had got a clear majority in 236 Assembly segments. In the Assembly elections, they have got about 176 Assembly segments for their party. Is it not an achievement, Shri P.R. Dasmuni?

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When Shri N.D. Tiwari and Shri Arjun Singh came to me saying that they were going back to the Congress Party since Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao was removed from the Presidentship of the Congress Party, I said: "Go, you are most welcome to do that and I have no objection." Had I ever tried to split the Congress Party? Let anybody say this.

Sir, another allegation made is that Deve Gowda wants to marginalise the Congress Party. When Shri Sharad Pawar had asked me to attend some of the programmes in his constituency, did I ever say 'no'? Even to the constituency of Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev, to the former Speaker's constituency, wherever I have been called, I have gone. I have not even gone to my Party workers' meetings because I did not want to create friction between the Congress Party and my Party workers. I never attended any party meetings when I had gone to the Congress ruled States to attend the official programmes fixed by the local MPs. How have I marginalised the Congress Party? I do not know what sin I had committed.

Sir, in the morning the hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Shri Jaswant Singh, in a very dignified manner, tried to mention the language which was used by the Congress (I) President against the Prime Minister. When the Press people asked me about it, I said: "Just ignore it." Today, I would like to tell the nation, through this House, what the language used by the hon. President of the Congress (I) who is aspiring to become the Leader was. I have no objection. If the House wants, if all my friends, including that of the Congress Party want, I have no objection.

Sir, I am unable to understand the meaning of the Hindi word, 'nikamma'.

He said:

You are foolish, coward and powerless. Just come into open and let us see who is powerful.

He has quoted in Hindi:

[Translation]

Yeh Vykati Nikamma aur Kamunal Hai

[English]

This man is not only incompetent but he is also communal.

An incompetent Prime Minister, what he has done in ten last ten months, I must apprise this House and through this House to the nation. I would just like to draw the attention of the hon. President of the Congress to an editorial which appeared in 'The Hindu' newspaper. You all have seen that. It says:

Mr. Deve Gowda administration saw—as never before in the last few decades— the return of considerable autonomy to the Ministries. The role of the Prime Minister's Office has been substantially reduced. In various areas of decision making such as foreign investment which rightly has been returned to the Ministry of Industry.

I delegated the powers of the PMO because I am incompetent, inefficient and a foolish Prime Minister... (Interruptions). He is not a Congress worker. He is an All India Congress (I) President. He occupies the chair where great people like Shri Motilal Nehru, Pt. Jawahar Lai Nehru and Shrimati Indira Gandhi sat... (Interruptions)

Sir, the Washington Post says:

India has just made a demonstration of the new sort of leadership that the South Asian subcontinent badly needs. But now by an initiative of Prime Minister, Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda, India, the issue is being treated and removed about the Bangladesh and India on sharing of river

Ganga water. If the Ganges Agreement is an example of the leadership Mr. Deve Gowda can provide, let us see more of it.

This is what the Washington Post said. I am not going to read the full editorial column.

Sir, a foolish and an incompetent Prime Minister, at least, tried to do something for the nation. I have not kept quiet for ten months. I would like to recall what I have said on the day when I replied to the Confidence Motion in this very same House. I know what is going to happen. Whether I remain for five days or five months or five years, it is not my concern. Every minute I am going to use to serve the nation. That is the pledge I have taken. Yes I did work for 18 to 19 hours a day. I am proud of it. There is no regret in vacating this office. There is no regret. I have not wasted a single minute. Whenever I used to get an opportunity, I did my best.

There is no need of any certificate from the present President of the Congress (I). I do not need any certificate. I have fought ten elections in my life. Has he fought any direct elections in his life? Why I have chosen to come to Rajya Sabha, I would like to make it clear. I anticipated when the Congress would ditch me because Shri Chandra Shekhar was the victim and Shri V.P. Singh was the victim. I know about all these things and what has happened in the past. Shri Narasimha Rao was the victim. I am going to tell everything—how Shri Morarji Desai had been handled by the Congress, and how Shri Raj Narain, who was holding the Health portfolio and who fought against Madam Gandhi, was used to split the Janata Party. You know about it, I know about it and everybody knows about it. I know the game plan.

As long as Shri Narasimha Rao was the President, there was no problem. On the day when Shri Sitaram Kesri became the President of the Congress party called him for lunch. I have not neglected your President. We had two hours discussions in my House. He promised me and he also advised me as an elderly statesman. But on the fourth day, when one of my Chief Ministers, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, whose colleague, Prof. Saifuddin Soz, is representing in my Cabinet, went to see Shri Sitaram Kesri and he was told not to join the United Front Government because he was going to withdraw the support. This happened within four days.

I have taken the oath in the name of God, when I came to this House Narasimha Rao ji, you may swallow so many wounds because you are a cultured

person. I would now clarify, at least, some of the doubts raised by some hon. Members of the supporting party. The charge levelled against me was that I had neglected Shri Sitaram Kesri after he became the President. It is not based on truth, but based on something else. There is a headline which correctly says, 'India's old man in a hurry: Now or Never.' This was not written by any of the Indian papers. It had appeared in the London Times.

It has been stated that we are hungry of status. But it is a question of respect. We are not hungry of power. The post of the President of the Congress (I) is a high office. The Congress (I) is one of the historic political parties having a background of 105 years... (Interruptions) All right, it has a background of 111 or 113 years... (Interruptions), This is a place where Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru used to sit and I am sitting here today. I will call it the Congress, not the Congress (I). The Congress Party is a Party which has served the nation in achieving freedom. It has served the nation in running the country, to see that the country's development takes place. From all angles, it has done its service. But becoming the President is not a status. It is a question of respect. The Office of the President of the Indian National Congress has no respect, has no status. Only if he comes and sits here, then only the respect and status will come. That is why it is said that that old man is in a hurry...

I only say one thing. The letter that has been received from the President of India contains so many allegations against me and against the United Front Government. I should answer them. It is not a question of attacking an individual. It is my responsibility to clarify the position about the allegations made against my Government. The letter is with me and I am answering on those points. Nothing beyond that. If I wanted to show disrespect, there is no need for me to go over it twelve times. I have got the highest regard for you, Kurienji. But what is this *Nikamma* or *Akamma*?

The hon. Minister of Home Affairs wanted some clarification from the supporting Party; he wanted that hon. Members from that Party should clarify. He was telling that for one and a half hours he discussed with their Leader but the only argument advanced by the Congress President to him was, 'Your leader must quit'. Unless I vacate this place, how can he come and sit? I think, the hon. Minister of Home Affairs can understand that much. So, where was the need for any explanation by the supporting Party?

They have not done anything. I would like to tell very frankly that no member from the Congress Party has criticised in the last ten months— I am grateful to them— whether in this House or outside. The only ambition is that somebody else should occupy this chair and I should vacate it. That is all the secrecy behind that. When he tried to persuade the hon. Minister of Home Affairs saying, 'Your Leader should vacate the Office of the Prime Minister', there was nothing wrong. I do not find any fault with the hon. President of the Indian National Congress when he tried to persuade the hon. Minister of Home Affairs. At least, he has not brought this matter to my notice; he has brought it to the notice of the House.

The hon. Minister of External Affairs has made a brief speech about our foreign affairs, the policy of the Ministry of External Affairs and what we have done. He has narrated some of the achievements made by our Government. When I was in Russia, I got the message from one of my colleagues, Shri Srikant Jena, the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs that there was all the likelihood that the Congress might withdraw the support. I told him, 'I am coming back. If they withdraw the support, why do you worry? There is nothing to bother. After all, as long as I am in this Office, I must do my duty for the sake of my country, whether I lose my office or I am going to continue.

I believe in destiny. The late Sanjiva Reddy was thrown out in 1969. He came back in 1978 and he himself administered the Oath of Office to Madam Indira Gandhi in 1980. Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee told us about the clock.

I am not going to run away from Indian politics. I might not have passed in this House. I have been branded as an inefficient Prime Minister by the Congress President, but the final judgement is before the nation and 950 million people are watching us today. An ineffective Prime Minister would accept this challenge. I would go before the people and I am not going to run away.

There are three groups. The BJP also is not a monolithic party. I have got the highest regard for Shri Vajpayee. He is the seniormost leader. When I met him, I only requested him to help us pass the Budget.

It is because I am more concerned. We have launched several new programmes. An incompetent Prime Minister for the first time has launched

several programmes. For the slum clearance, we have provided Rs. 330 crore. Last year they have spent Rs. 250 crore for this programme. I am also in public life. I am not a new man. In the Central Budget when the money was allocated for the slums, we have launched several programmes. The Minister of Welfare is present here. The President of Congress (I) was also the Minister of Welfare. I am very much anxious and eager to ensure that even if I vacate the office, let the people get the benefit.

We have launched a Subsidised Food Programme. This PDS, I think, is in existence only in three or four States like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. We have launched a national programme for which we have provided Rs. 7,500 crore this year in the Budget. Is it not a poverty alleviation programme? All the senior leaders who have spoken today have asked why they have chosen 30th March, before the Budget is passed. They could have decided to withdraw the support in the month of May on 9th or 10th after passing the Budget, after passing the Women's Reservation Bill on which my sister was attacking me and after passing the Lokpal Bill. What can I do? Heavens would not have fallen if they had withdrawn the support on 10th of May. What is that you have achieved? What is the sin that I have committed?

Sir, when I was sitting in the very same House, the former Minister of Finance, Dr. Manmohan Singh, in this very same place argued that we cannot give subsidy to the farmers. He said that subsidy would be removed through a phased programme in three years. He said that in the very same House. I argued from that place. Shri Shivraj Patil was presiding over the House at that time when I argued from that place. He said, 'In the next three years, in a phased programme we are going to remove subsidy because I must take care of the fiscal deficit. IMF is dictating'. What he has said about the fertilizer subsidy on the floor of the House is on record. Within fifteen days, before I came to Parliament I took a decision to provide Rs. 2,500 crore to my farming community. Do you mean to say that we are going to betray? You are under a dream. I may tell you today, knowing fully well about the problem of my fellow farmers, that they are an exploited class in the society. I know it because I come from that community and it is not a caste. It is a class. This year we went a step further, we tried to provide about Rs. 17,500 crore, including food subsidy and fertilizer subsidy for this section.

Sir, 32 crores of population is going to be covered under the PDS. Is this the sin that I have committed? The charge is that this Prime Minister has

not taken care of poverty alleviation programme. Touch your heart and then you vote against the Confidence Motion. Touch your heart and then take a decision.

If I have betrayed the nation, then they can hang me and I would have no objection. You have got every right.

Sir, about the minorities— they have used them as a vote bank— I requested the hon. Finance Minister to provide at least Rs. 100 crore this year. It is not so simple to bring them up and we are not going to leave them as it is at this stage.

Shri Antulay has made a solemn pledge in this House that he is not going to withdraw and he is going to stand by me. He can go according to the whip of the party; I am not going to find fault with him. He has expressed his sincere and genuine feelings.

We have, for the first time, taken care of those people who had been totally neglected in the tribal areas. The rate of literacy is below two or 2.5 per cent there. Shri Bhuria is sitting somewhere here; he represents them and he took me to Tribals' Conference. They say that I have marginalised the Congress. I told the hon. Finance Minister to at least start 250 residential schools. Is that the sin that I have committed for which they want to punish me?

I have told Shri Narasimha Rao that whenever he feels that his party is comfortable, he could tell me and I would hand over the resignation. I did not want to pick up quarrels. He is also sitting in this very same House now. I told Shri Kesri also not to mention frequently about the withdrawal of support; whenever he feels that his party is comfortable to come to power, he could tell me and I could hand over the resignation. But why do they make this sort of an allegation against me? He could have told me, "Shri Gowda, we have decided to withdraw the support." If he had said it very gentlemanly, I could have told my Members not to pursue this matter and that we would close this chapter.

Firstly, did I ask for their support? They only took a decision on the 12th— the Congress (I) Working Committee took a decision spontaneously when no one approached them and without any one's request— to support us. On that day, they told the nation that they would not allow a communal party to come to power. But today what did they do? What is the outcome of their decision?

Now, they are searching for a new leader! Do you want to divide the United Front? When they are telling me not to divide the Congress, what moral right have they got to divide my United Front? They can tell straightway that because of such and such circumstances, they were doing like that. Yes, Shri Vajpayee had said that we would go for polls. Who is responsible for this? If they have got the moral courage, they should tell that in this House. They should not play dirty politics. Do they want to approach everybody individually? He says that now the united Front is over and that he would try to collect it individually; he would attract it, as if he is a magnetic force and the United Front is ready to be attracted by that magnetic force.

Let us accept— if he has got the moral courage— to go before the people. They can tell them what they have done. They can tell them that Deve Gowda's Government is not a secular Government, it is an incompetent Government. They can go to the people. Why do they want to search for a new leader? They search today, as if a new quality was found in the Defence Minister.

Have you found some new qualities in my Defence Minister? You want to split us. That is not possible. We have understood your strategy. It is a political strategy. We have understood that.

Let us accept with all sincerity that you have committed a mistake. If I have done a mistake, let the people punish me. I am prepared to go for the ultimate—political judgement of the people of this country. Yes, I can understand the financial burden of conducting elections so frequently. I can understand as to what would be the financial liability for this. But the issue has been forced. You have forced the issue to go for elections. We were not going for elections. Now, you want to hang my head calling me an incompetent Prime Minister and a Prime Minister who is not secular. Yes, all right. But you want to search for somebody else.

I have met Shri Balasaheb Thackery. You said that I was going to work as an ambassador to him— Shri Antulay. Shri Vajpayee, I can make a political speech also. You want to tell as to how to function in a coalition. I can say what happened to the Mayawati Government in Uttar Pradesh one year back. Do not talk about political morality. Every political party in this country is more interested in how best they could come to power.

Yes, I fought in Karnataka to become the Chief Minister. I am not a political *sanyasi*, Bui I have never, never aspired and made any ambition to come to this office. Never, I am not going to hide the facts. If all of you are sincere, then try it.

We are one political force. Which one of our Parties is not a national Party? Is Janata Dal not a national party? Is the CPI not a national party? Is the CPI(M) not a national party? The BJP is a national party and has got influence in four to five States. Without the Badal group what is the BJP in Punjab? Shri Chandra Shekhar, please tell what the reality is? You want to save your sincere friends. But there is no need. When we are appealing to all sections, you do not worry because you have got that much of an attachment. There is nothing to bother. If the destiny is there for me to rise again from the dust in the Indian politics, I would come back with the same force. That is what I want to prove.

I am never afraid of anybody who wants to play a bullying politics. I may be a soft man outwardly but if I start fighting then I have already shown In Karnataka as to what I am. Now, I am going to show what Deve Gowda is with the support of my United Front. Somebody wants to crack it. It is because if it cracks then only they can push through as they are the only alternative party. But we would not allow that crack. You also unite and fight. Shri Rajesh Pilot, as a sincere Party worker if you try to defend then I have no objection. Somebody was asking you as to what was the letter that you had written. I know that you have got that courage and you have said that but I do not want those details.

Now, under what circumstances did I become the Prime Minister? On the one side there was the CBI enquiry...

On the one side, CBI inquiry ... *(Interruptions)*

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When the matter is in the court, I do not want to give details. I will stop at the stage... *(Interruptions)* As the matter is before the Court I do not want to give any particulars or details about this Court issue. Before that, Government will go. What that I can do? Under what circumstances, have I been asked to shoulder the responsibility of the office of Prime Minister?

When I went to see Shri Narasimha Rao, he said 'you have accepted a very stupendous task. It is very difficult'. With his experience he has said that. He has given that advice. I agree. I totally agree. There is problem with my friendly parties. Yes, there is cohesiveness. I too agree. That is one of the allegation. There is no cohesiveness among the Ministers, in last five years, was there any cohesiveness, Mr. Rajesh Pilot?

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Shri George Fernandes is sitting there. He is my old friend. Today I expected that you would speak but you gave an opportunity to Shri Nitish Kumar. You do not want to attack your old friend. At least you have shown that much of courtesy.

On the one side, Sir, there is the Enforcement Directorate. Sir, today, the judiciary has given the verdict that the investigative agency should directly report to the courts. If somebody suspects me, what can I do? Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev must advise me. On the one side, the media says that Deve Gowda has visited the house of Narasimha Rao for 28 times; Deve Gowda has visited the former Chief Justice's house at mid night, 2 o'clock. In the last ten months, I enjoyed all these things.

There are no tears for our withdrawal. After the test is over, let us assemble here, in the Central hall for an exchange of our views. Let all the three teams go for the test.

Sir, all have agreed for passing the Vote on Account and the Finance Bill on the 21st. Do not make any Political gimmicks again in these ten days. Do not try at. I will also honestly give a word that there is no need for them. Enough is enough.

A Prime Minister of this country, whoever it may be, when once the honour and dignity of that Office goes, should not continue as a Prime Minister under the mercy of anybody. What is that we have to discuss again? With that courage do you want to go outside, Shri Gujral? Somebody wants to name you. You are the senior most leader. I accept it but not under this circumstance.

A Prime Minister of this country who represents 950 million people must have at least certain dignity and certain honour to represent the nation

as a Prime Minister when he goes outside, not with this type of, what is called, lease of life. I do not want that. There is no need. I appeal to all my colleagues that I have not betrayed you. I have never betrayed the nation. I have never given an occasion for a single corruption charge to be levelled against my Government in the last ten months. Go before the people with all the courage and conviction. Money is not the criteria. I have not begged any industrialist to allow any scam during these ten months.

Sir, I have got the belief; I am a believer in destiny.

Lastly, I would like to quote Gitanjali. This is the first time I am quoting. Shri Chidambaram has always used to quote *Thirukkural* in Tamil.

This is from *Gitanjali*.

“Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads!

Whom dost thou worship in this lonely dark corner of a temple with doors all shut?

Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee!”

God will not accept this.

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“He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and in shower, and his garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle and even like him come down on the dusty soil?”

These are the people who have been taken care of by this Government by launching several schemes. I cannot see God. I have not attained that spiritual power. I am an ordinary human being. I can see God through my people who are the worst sufferers in this country. *‘Janatho Janardharn’* is my philosophy. I am going to work for this. What kind of people are they?

“Come out of thy meditations and leave aside thy flowers and incense! What harm is there if thy clothes become tattered and stained? Meet him and stand by him in toil and in sweat of thy brow.”

This is my conviction. I do not want to tempt others. The ambition in the whole of my life has been to serve those people who have been neglected for the last 50 years. Shri Chandra Shekhar had made a *padayatra*. He was not allowed to place his Budget on the Table of the House. He was not allowed to launch new schemes. He had walked 3,500 kilometres. But I did not lose my opportunity. I know the hanging sword. I wanted to prove what I am. That has been proved with the cooperation of my colleague, the Minister of Finance and I have done like this. The implementation part is left to the House. If everybody cooperates, as they have agreed to pass the Finance Bill, I am grateful.

I once again thank all of you and the country. Inevitably, when the issue was forced by a hasty decision, we had no option. The country was speaking. I agree that we have not solved all the problems. We tried to do something in ten months' time. The country at least started to feel a seeming stability. The country was about to take off but unfortunately, this has happened.

Again, to restore this Government's confidence in the investors, on the 30th December last year, we invited all the industrialists. We invited the financial experts. I went to Mumbai. I met the investors. Their own Party Chief Minister was there. I did not show any discrimination during my administration of this Government of ten months. I cleared all the projects irrespective of any State, irrespective of any political party in the country. Nearly 500 projects were cleared in the last ten months which are touched about seven billion dollars.

Is that the sin I have committed? We have given licences to 118 new sugar mills in ten months. I can quote any number of decisions which I have taken only with the sole object that this country may now come out of the wrecks and that the country's progress would be speeded up. With this background, we have taken the decision.

Sir, I would like to once again express my thanks to all the Members including the Congress (I) who have supported me to allow me to do something in these ten months.

I was not such a tallest man. But destiny has brought me here. I am satisfied. I have not betrayed my people, my nation or even my friendly partners in these last ten months. Today, Sir, with your cooperation and with

the cooperation of the entire House what little humble service I could do I have done in these last ten months.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to the media persons. After the withdrawal of support to the United Front Government by the Congress (I), all the newspapers including the regional newspapers have tried at least to give the correct version of the achievement of this Government. So, I want to sincerely express my gratitude and thanks to the media persons. I also want to thank you, Sir, the Deputy-Speaker and to everybody for having given me full cooperation in these last ten months.

Lastly, it is up to the House to take a decision according to the conscience about the Confidence Motion.

BACK NOTE

XX. Motion of Confidence in the Council of Ministers, 11 April, 1997.

1. SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI: Mr. Prime Minister, you did not try to unite the secular forces at that point of time.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: You do not know. That is why, you are saying this.... [Interruptions]. I do not want to reveal everything that has happened because it will be unethical on my part, if I say what I had done at various stages. I do not want to do it... [Interruptions]

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI: I did not accuse you entirely.... [Interruptions]

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Shri Patwa, please do not disturb me.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I never interrupted when the others were speaking. Now, they should please allow me to express my views in 'his august House as the Prime Minister, out-going Prime Minister. All right!

Sir, somebody told me, I think, my Home Minister, that the allegation was that the Prime Minister was trying to split the Congress Party. When Shri Madhavrao Scindia wanted to join the Congress Party, he came to me because he was in the United Front at that time. Did I not tell him to go and join and strengthen the Congress Party? Let him say that...[Interruptions] Please allow me.

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: You are a very nice man. But since you have taken my name, I would like to clarify that I have a very good equation with you, but I came to you out of courtesy to inform you that I may be joining the Congress Party. I did not ask your permission.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: There is no need to get my permission. But when you came and said that, at least you had maintained certain dignity and certain political ethics. You were in the United Front at that time and you came and informed me. What did I say? I said: "Please go and join and strengthen the Congress Party; I have no objection." Did I not say that?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA: I agree. You are absolutely right. When I informed you, you said: "yes, certainly."

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Thank you very much.

2. COL. RAO RAM SINGH (Mahendergarh): What is the inquiry? ...
(Interruptions)

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: There are several cases. I do not want to go into details. I have all the details...*(Interruptions)* I have not ordered a single case for the CBI inquiry. I have not ordered a single case against any political leader in the last ten months. All these cases were the previous issues...
(Interruptions)

COL. RAO RAM SINGH: What is that Shri Rajesh Pilot's letter, Mr. Prime Minister?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: I do not want to go in detail about each case. I want to tell this august House and through this august House to the nation that I have not passed orders about anybody or to hold an inquiry or to conduct an inquiry by the CBI in the last ten months. But, I have not interfered- I can say this much that I have not interfered. That is what has been expected by the House. I have not interfered in any case, including that of my own Chief Minister. My own Party's prestige is involved here. Whether the things are moving in the right direction or not, I do not want to comment on that. I must be fair. Nobody from Congress made any influence on me about the CBI inquiry. I am not going to say that.

30th, 30th and 30th. What is that 30th? And some papers write 4th, 4th and 30th, 4th and 30th *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What is 4th?

3. SHRI RAJESH PILOT: I did not point out that.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: You were the Minister of State for Internal Security in the Ministry of Home. I do not want to go into details. Just I will leave it at stage...*(Interruptions)*

Hon. Speaker has also made that remark. I accept it. Sitting in that high office, if he says that, we have to bow our heads. He advised me. With one party when you witnessed such type of things, I have to manage 13 parties. You must give some grace marks... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please order now.

4. MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Gadhvi, you do not have to demonstrate your knowledge.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA: Hon. Members I am only speaking for myself (Interruptions) Please wait. Do not be in such a hurry... (Interruptions)