

## ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT—18 MARCH 1967

<b>Lok Sabha</b>	—	<b>Fourth Lok Sabha</b>
<b>Session</b>	—	<b>First Session after the 4th General Election</b>
<b>President of India</b>	—	<b>Dr. S. Radhakrishnan</b>
<b>Vice-President of India</b>	—	<b>Dr. Zakir Husain</b>
<b>Prime Minister of India</b>	—	<b>Smt. Indira Gandhi</b>
<b>Speaker, Lok Sabha</b>	—	<b>Dr. N. Sanjiva Reddy</b>

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this joint session of the two Houses of Parliament. I offer my congratulations to the newly elected and re-elected Members and my good wishes to those no longer with us.

Earlier, it was intended that the third Lok Sabha should have a final session this month mainly to pass a Vote on Account. Shortly after most of the election results were announced, many Honourable Members from different political parties approached us with the request that it should be the new Lok Sabha which should meet at this juncture to pass the Vote on Account and to transact other essential business. The Government agreed with this view and, on their advice, the third Lok Sabha was dissolved on the 3rd of March.

Our fourth General Elections have once again demonstrated the vigour and vitality of our democracy. There was a larger turn-out of voters than on any previous occasion, as well as a substantial increase in the number of women who cast their votes. Despite a few unfortunate incidents of violence and disturbance which have been universally condemned, the elections were orderly and peaceful. The Chief Election Commissioner and his staff deserve our congratulations. So do the people, for the enthusiasm, maturity and dignity with which they have re-affirmed their faith in democracy and representative institutions.

For the first time since Independence, Governments of political complexions different from that of the Government at the Centre have been formed in several States. In a federal democratic polity, this is to be expected. Our Constitution has provisions defining and regulating the

relationship between the Union and the States and their mutual obligations. Further, over the years, we have developed certain institutions for promoting co-operation, understanding and harmonious relations between the Union and the States and between one State and another. The National Development Council, the Zonal Councils and periodic conferences of Governors and Chief Ministers are the more conspicuous examples of this nature.

The Union Government will respect the constitutional provisions in letter and in spirit without any discrimination and endeavour to strengthen the arrangements for a co-operative approach to our national problems. We are sure that all States will extend their co-operation in preserving these institutions and in making their deliberations increasingly fruitful and beneficial both to the Union and to themselves. Strengthening the unity of the country, safeguarding its security, preserving democratic institutions, and promoting economic development and the well-being and happiness of all our people are the common objectives towards which the Union and the States must strive together.

Our Government have just taken office. While they will take a little time to place before you all the policies and programmes which they will pursue in accordance with the mandate of the electorate, they have already decided upon four major objectives in the economic sphere.

- (1) They have resolved to end our dependence on food assistance from abroad by the end of 1971.
- (2) They have resolved to do all that is possible to ensure that the rising trend in prices of the basic necessities of life is halted and conditions of stability achieved in the shortest possible time.
- (3) They have resolved to attain and sustain an adequate rate of economic growth so as to eliminate the need for external economic assistance by 1976.
- (4) And they have resolved to pursue the national programme of family planning with the objective of reducing the birth rate from forty per thousand to twenty-five per thousand as expeditiously as possible.

These tasks are of such magnitude that they can be accomplished only with the active support, participation and involvement of the people and the co-operation of all parties. To secure these will be one of Government's primary objectives.

The food situation will be dealt with on an emergency basis. The measures already set in motion to fight the drought will be strengthened. We have to ensure that the available foodgrains in the country, whether indigenous or imported, are distributed equitably. Government are already in touch with State Governments, seeking their views and their co-operation in regard to the further steps that have to be taken on the food front.

Simultaneously, Government intend, in collaboration with the States to make every effort to augment agricultural production. Our food import requirements must be reduced in each successive year. Towards this end, Government will pay special attention to the adequate availability of fertilizers and improved seeds and to the credit needs of the farmer. Greater emphasis will be placed on minor irrigation and energisation of wells. Efforts will be made to expedite the completion of major irrigation projects that are in an advanced stage of construction and to ensure the fullest utilization of the irrigation potential already created.

The upsurge in prices, particularly during the last two years, was primarily the result of the shortfall in agricultural production due to the failure of the monsoons. Industrial production too was affected by the failure of the monsoons and the shortage of foreign exchange to import necessary raw materials. Deficit financing at the Centre and overdrafts by the State Governments on the Reserve Bank further aggravated the inflationary pressures. To deal with the situation, everything possible must be done to increase production in both agriculture and industry. The considerable potential and capacity in various sectors of the economy built during the past years must be more fully utilized. Simultaneously, a stricter financial discipline must be maintained. Economy is not inconsistent with efficiency and we must seek genuine economy in every field and in every sector of public expenditure.

Our Five Year Plans have had the objective of making the economy self-reliant and capable of further development. To achieve this target by 1976, special attention will be paid in the Fourth Plan period to those industries which will contribute most to rapid development in the immediate future, particularly industries which will be helpful to our agriculture and exports. The greatest emphasis will have to be laid on higher efficiency in both the public and the private sectors. Substantial investments have been made in industry by the public sector in the first three Plans and it is important that these are now made to yield greater profits to sustain further development. The Draft Outline of the Fourth Plan was published some months ago. It is being reviewed in the light of adverse effects of the drought, the latest price trends, and the prospects of mobilising additional resources, internal and external, and it is proposed to take an early opportunity to discuss the Plan fully in the National Development Council and thereafter in Parliament.

Our population has crossed the five hundred million mark, this is a danger signal which we can ignore only at our peril. Family Planning Programmes will be strengthened at all levels with the co-operation of the States.

Although economic difficulties are at the root of much of the prevailing discontent, other factors too have contributed to a sense of frustration,

---

particularly among the young. The new generation which has grown up since Independence has new aspirations and new ideas. We must respond to them. The educational system needs re-shaping in the light of the recommendations of the Education Commission, on which we are awaiting the comments of the State Governments. A new scheme of national service at the University level is under active consideration.

The success of all our Plans and projects depends upon the efficiency and integrity of the administration. To ensure efficiency in performance, changes will be made in the administrative set up. The Planning Commission will be re-organized. The working of controls will also be reviewed; those found unnecessary will be withdrawn and others re-adjusted as may be required to make them more purposeful and efficient. The Administrative Reforms Commission is expected to submit its recommendations on the re-organization of the Central Government fairly soon.

Integrity and impartiality in public life, and in the conduct of the public servants, are the foundations of true democracy. The Administrative Reforms Commission has made an interim report bearing on this subject. Government agree, in principle, with the Commission's approach on the need for adequate and satisfactory institutional arrangements to deal with problems of corruption in high public office, whether political or administrative. They expect to finalize their proposals and place them before Parliament at an early date. They have already referred to the State Governments the recommendations of the Commission which concern them.

A National Commission on Labour has been set up under the chairmanship of Shri Gajendragadkar. The Commission will review and make appropriate recommendations on the whole field of the working and living conditions of labour of all categories, including rural labour, since Independence. Legislation to give statutory recognition to the assurances given in regard to the official language of the Union will be shortly introduced in Parliament. A high-level committee will be set up to examine the question of a ban on cow slaughter in terms of the announcement already made. A committee will also be set up, as announced, to examine further the proposal for the re-organisation of the State of Assam in the light of the discussions held with the leaders of Assam. The question of changing the financial year will be considered in consultation with the State Governments.

In a shrinking world, no country can remain isolated. India has a role to play in the counsels of the world. Our membership of the Security Council casts on us an onerous responsibility which we shall do our best to discharge.

The foreign policy of India has stood the test of time. The concept of peaceful co-existence, which India had done so much to sponsor, is now accepted by the leaders of the two groups. With both the United States and

the Soviet Union we have the friendliest of relations. Our policy of non-alignment stands vindicated. Government will do everything possible to strengthen non-alignment and pursue the positive aspects of this policy with vigour and determination.

There are two dangers which confront humanity today. One is the widening gulf between the poor nations and the rich nations. The other is the rejection of the principle of peaceful co-existence by some countries.

Government's foreign policy will serve the twin objectives of furthering our national interests—economic, political and strategic—and of promoting international co-operation. Towards this end, we have succeeded in building up and maintaining the friendliest of relations with most countries of the world. It will be Government's special endeavour to strengthen India's relations with our Asian neighbours.

It is a matter of deep gratification that our Government have been able to sign an Agreement with the Government of Burma\* about the formal delineation and demarcation of our traditional boundary with that friendly country.

Government adhere to their policy regarding Vietnam which has been enunciated on several occasions.

Government most sincerely desire the friendship and co-operation of the Government and people of Pakistan. Nothing has distressed us more than the bitterness and conflict which have sometimes divided our two countries which have many common interests. Government will make every effort to achieve a relationship of the fullest understanding, goodwill and amity with Pakistan.

With China too we would like to live in peace. But the aggressive acts and postures of the People's Republic of China, coupled with their rejection of the concept of peaceful co-existence, continue to be the major obstacles to an improvement of our relations with China.

We are grateful to friendly nations of the world, as well as to international institutions and agencies, who have given us valuable assistance in our development programmes as well as in meeting our food crisis.

Developing countries can also strengthen their economies through mutual co-operation. The Tripartite Meeting between the leaders of three non-aligned countries, President Tito of Yugoslavia, President Nasser of the United Arab Republic and our Prime Minister, has laid the foundations of such an approach.

Another Head of State whom we had the pleasure of welcoming amidst us recently was His Majesty the King of Afghanistan, with whom we have had very friendly and cordial talks.

---

\* Now known as Myanmar.

---

Members of Parliament, I have briefly touched upon some of the issues that confront us today. You will have an opportunity to get a fuller picture of the Government's policies and programmes in these and other matters in due course. Your present session will be a short one, confined to the transaction of certain essential financial and budgetary business. You will be meeting again shortly to consider further business.

Bills will be introduced in the current session to replace:

- (1) The Mineral Products (Additional Duties of Excise and Customs) Amendment Ordinance, 1966;
- (2) The Essential Commodities (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 1966;
- (3) The Land Acquisition (Amendment and Validation) Ordinance, 1967; and
- (4) The Representation of the People (Amendment) Ordinance, 1967.

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Continuance Bill will also be introduced.

A statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the Government of India for the financial year 1967-68 will be laid before you.

It is a matter of distress to us that President's rule had to be introduced in Rajasthan. It is our earnest hope that it will not be necessary to continue this arrangement for long and that it will be found possible early to restore responsible government.

A statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the Government of India for the financial year 1967-68 will also be laid before you.

I wish you success in your endeavours.