

ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT—13 MAY 1957

Lok Sabha	—	Second Lok Sabha
Session	—	First Session after the 2nd General Election
President of India	—	Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Vice-President of India	—	Dr. S. Radhakrishnan
Prime Minister of India	—	Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru
Speaker, Lok Sabha	—	Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,

You and the members of the legislatures of the States, chosen by an electorate of nearly two hundred million voters of our country, in accord with our Constitutional procedures, have called me once again to the high office of the President of the Republic. I am deeply conscious of the honour and I am grateful for the confidence which you have reposed in me. It shall be my endeavour to continue to deserve the trust and the affection of which I have been so long the happy recipient.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you, as Members of the second Parliament in the history of our Republic. Some of you have been members of one or other of the Houses of Parliament, or come to Parliament with rich experience in your State legislatures. There are others among you who have been elected to Parliament for the first time. All of you will find, in your life and duties as Members of Parliament, both in the legislature and your constituencies, immense and varied opportunities and fields of constructive work in the service of our country and people. I wish you all good fortune and a very successful tenure of Parliamentary life.

We are in the second year of our Second Five Year Plan. There has been some inevitable slowing down in the first year of the Plan, resulting partly from the reorganisation of the States. This imposes a greater strain and calls for added effort both by the Government and the people during the remaining period of that Plan. My Government are fully conscious of this.

The economic situation, more particularly in relation to the Plan, confronts us with factors which, while they do not warrant grave apprehensions, are matters of serious concern and they are engaging the

attention of my Ministers. The deficit in the Central and State budgets and the strain on our foreign exchange resources occasioned by the requirements of the plan and of industrial development generally, as well as by external factors, call for determined and planned efforts. They call for both conservation and expansion of our resources by effecting real economies, by planned restrictions of certain imports, by expansion of export trade and by increasing national self sufficiency both in the fields of industry and agriculture. They will call for savings to be utilised for production and the abandonment of unproductive and anti-social habits of hoarding and speculation. These can only be effectively achieved by efforts and vigilance not only on the part of Government but also by the people as well.

It would be the easier, but not the gainful or constructive way, to bridge the gaps to which I have referred, by halting development. This will, however, provide no real or long term remedy. Our endeavour has to be to mobilise and conserve resources for greater productivity and for maintaining and improving development. My Government are fully aware of the problem and of the effort required. They are equally concerned that our temporary difficulties should not lead us in the direction of retarding progress and development, but that the difficulties should be overcome, where necessary, by reconsideration and revision of methods and by planned mobilisation of resources, and not by either the abandonment or slowing down of the progress towards our objectives.

Public opinion plays a large and well-nigh conclusive part in the success of such endeavours. The determination and fervour of our people, their readiness to accept discipline, to respond to the call for efforts and their resolve not to be led into anti-social behaviour, such as by hoarding or wasteful spending along will help the country to pass successfully through the present crucial period of our Second Five Year Plan.

Members of Parliament, the country looks to you a great deal for the sustained and special effort in support of the policies and endeavours which my Government will initiate in this behalf, which will help us surmount difficulties and achieve success.

While food production has increased, and the increases have been maintained, except for the results of natural calamities, more especially in certain parts of Bihar and the eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh, we have a considerable way to go before our country becomes fully self-sufficient in food. There are signs of slight abatement in the rising trend of food prices and my Government have taken several measures to bring about this trend. Intensive efforts have increased food production and improved crop prospects. Except in the case of some of the coarse grains adversely affected by climatic conditions, the crop yields and estimates not only do not indicate a shortfall but have also recorded appreciable increases.

My Government have also entered into arrangements for necessary imports of foodgrains and for building up reserves which will prevent price increases and bridge the gaps that still remain. A large storage construction programme has been undertaken. The behaviour of the public is a large and often determining factor in preventing rise in food prices which is caused by the apprehension of shortages resulting in the resort to hoarding as well as to the tendency to panic. The food situation, thanks to the increased production and the steps taken by my Government, does not warrant any lack of public confidence in regard to supplies. My Government propose to keep Parliament informed of the position in regard to food and the estimates of supply and requirements. It may be hoped that a knowledge of the true facts will help allay needless apprehensions and prevent artificial shortages and higher prices.

My Government are happy to state that their decision to lay stress on food production and agriculture generally in the Community Project plans has yielded handsome results. The Community Development and the National Extension Service programmes have made great strides in achievement. Higher targets in agriculture, health and sanitation have been achieved. The National Sample Survey shows that, at the end of the First Five Year Plan, the crop yields in the Community Development project and National Extension Service Blocks areas were approximately 25 per cent higher than for the country as a whole. The Community Projects and National Extension Blocks now cover 222 thousand villages.

State undertakings continue to make notable progress and new targets have been reached in almost every enterprise. There has also been expansion in the private sector. Khadi and Village industries will receive a further impetus with the setting up of 'The Khadi and Village Industries Commission' as a statutory body. Among the major new projects that will soon be inaugurated is the Nayveli Lignite Project where the first mine-cut will be made this month. My Government attach importance to the building up of a plant for the manufacture of heavy machinery and steps are being taken to this end.

To reduce the pressure on our resources of foreign exchange, my Government are making efforts to obtain deferred payment arrangements for major projects. Long term credits for certain projects are being negotiated.

Consequent on the reorganisation of the States, Advisory Committees have been set up for the Union Territories and Territorial Councils have been established in Himachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura. A Corporation for Delhi will be soon established. A new Union Territory of the Laccadives, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands has come into existence and the Five-Year Plan for the Andaman Islands at a total cost of Rs. 592.50 lakh will include the development of communication between the islands and the mainland.

Shipyard construction and the building of ships of modern design have made great progress at Visakhapatnam and plans for a second shipyard are now in hand.

My Government have initiated measures to relieve housing shortages and promote housing standards, slum clearances and Plantation Housing Schemes and housing for low-income groups and subsidised industrial housing. An urgent requirement of Delhi and the other great cities of India is the clearance of slum areas, and this problem is receiving the consideration of the Central and State Governments and the Corporations concerned.

Two Ordinances have been promulgated since the last session of Parliament. Bills dealing with these Ordinances will be placed before Parliament. These are:—

- (i) The Life Insurance Corporation (Amendment) Ordinance, 1957.
- (ii) The Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Ordinance, 1957.

My Government will also submit to Parliament a number of other Bills during the current session.

An interim statement of revenue and expenditure for 1957-58 was presented to Parliament during its last session and votes on account authorising expenditure for a part of the year were passed. That statement of revenue and expenditure will be presented again to Parliament in this session with such changes as are considered necessary, and Parliament will be asked to approve funds for the whole year.

Our relations with foreign countries continue to be friendly. Since I addressed Parliament last, we have had the pleasure of receiving as the guests of the Republic, Mr. Jozef Cyrankie Wiesz, Prime Minister of Poland, Dr. Heinrich Von Broutano, Foreign Minister of the Federal German Republic, and Mr. Osvaldo Sainte Marie, Foreign Minister of Chile.

My Prime Minister will attend the meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London at the end of June. During his absence abroad, he will take the opportunity of visiting Syria, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Egypt and Sudan.

While the situation in the Middle East continues to be unsatisfactory and charged with tension, it is a matter of gratification that the Suez Canal has been re-opened for navigation. My Government welcome the Declaration made by the Government of Egypt, prior to the opening of the Canal, which re-affirms the Convention of 1888 and the determination of Egypt to continue to abide by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of International Law. The Declaration provides for the reference of disputes arising from interpretations of the Convention and its application as well as certain other matters to the World Court and also to abide by its

decisions. The main provisions in the Declaration are, in the view of my Government, reasonable and adequate to safeguard the legitimate interests of the world community if they are worked in a spirit of co-operation and mutual understanding by all concerned. A notable feature of the Declaration is that, while it is made by the Government of Egypt, that Government has declared that it has the status of an International Instrument and this has been registered with the United Nations. My Government feel that this Declaration and its status as an International Instrument is a notable contribution to the lowering of tensions in that area and will provide a solution of the difficulties that followed the nationalisation of the Suez Canal.

Dr. Gunnar Jarring, a former President of the Security Council, visited Pakistan and India in pursuance of a Resolution passed by the Security Council on the 21st of February this year at the end of the debate on Kashmir. Dr. Jarring visited India twice and conferred with my Prime Minister. He has submitted a report to the Security Council.

The sub-committee of the Disarmament Commission has been sitting in London for some time, but no agreement appears to have been reached on any aspect of Disarmament, including the suspension of explosions of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons. The proposals of my Government in regard to Disarmament were once again referred by the General Assembly of the United Nations at the last session, along with all other proposals, to the Disarmament Commission.

Meanwhile, the United States, the Soviet Union, and now, the United Kingdom continue their experiments to explode these weapons of mass destruction. World opinion is increasingly concerned about the harmful effects of radiation which has been increasingly and more frequently felt in various parts of the world. The demand for the suspension of these explosions is widespread and continues to be impressed upon the nuclear powers, but hitherto without success.

My Government do not consider that the compromise proposals suggested from diverse quarters for the so-called limitation of these explosions or for their registration will ever rid the world of their harmful effects, or open the way to the abandonment of these weapons of mass destruction. On the otherhand, such regularisation of these tests tends to make thermonuclear war legitimate and as having the sanction of the world community. Reports of experiments with more and more deadly weapons of war continue to be received. It is however a matter of some gratification that the volume of world opinion against the continuance of experiments has reached a higher level than ever before. My Prime Minister in a Statement before the Lok Sabha in April 1954 put forward for consideration the proposal for a 'Standstill Agreement' to suspend these explosions. These proposals have since gained much support and the movement of world opinion in favour

of it has gathered momentum. My Government will continue to exert their influence with other nations and in the counsels of the world to bring about the abandonment of these test explosions and the prohibition of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons.

We meet here today one hundred years after the great rising which began in Meerut and spread over considerable parts of India. That was the first major challenge to foreign rule and it threw up notable figures, famous in India's history. The uprising was cruelly suppressed, but the spirit of freedom and the desire to be free from foreign domination continued and found expression on many subsequent occasions. Ultimately it led to a great national movement which followed peaceful methods and succeeded in achieving the independence of India and the establishment of this Republic of ours. We pay tribute now to all those who gave their lives or otherwise suffered so that India may be free.

India has been independent for nearly ten years now and during this period Parliament has laboured for the well-being and advancement of this country and her people and for peace and co-operation in the world. These labours have produced substantial results which we see all round us in the country. The progress we have made during these years in our own land has produced in our people hope and self-reliance. This is a substantial foundation on which we can build for the future.

Abroad, my Government have striven strenuously to help lower existing tensions of the world and to serve the cause of peace. The country has also accepted heavy responsibilities in the pursuit of this policy, in regard to maintaining the independence of its approach as well as in making contributions to the maintenance of peace, as in Korea, Indo-China and now in the Middle East.

The tasks that confront us both at home and abroad are not only considerable but at times also appear overwhelming. But these tasks have to be faced, difficulties surmounted and objectives achieved if the fruits of independence are to be ensured to our people and if we are to help the world being spared the continual stress and horror of impending catastrophe.

My Government will continue their strenuous endeavours in all these directions, to the best of their capacity conscious of the confidence reposed in them by the country and fortified by the conviction that despite clouds of war and even despair, the desire for survival and progress is inherent in humanity. Our capacities and resources are limited and our voice in the world may be but small. But neither our national interests nor our history and traditions, nor our convictions chart any other course for us. Happily for us, this is the common aim and the firm desire of all our people.

Members of Parliament, I wish you success in your labours.