

FELICITATIONS TO SPEAKER

[Translation]

11.42½ hrs.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I feel extremely happy while felicitating you as the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. You have been elected unanimously. It is indicative of your popularity. But at the same time, it also signifies the fact that in spite of political differences, Indian democracy and this highest representative institution of the Indian democracy can unite on important matters and can take decisions unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you have the privilege of being born in independent India. You belong to that part of India which is known as North East. This region is an important part of India but somehow feels itself neglected. Sometimes, people living there feel that they are not only far from Delhi but are far from hearts also. There is no reason for nurturing such a feeling. I am sure that your election will help in lessening this feeling.

You have shouldered many responsibilities. We have seen you working in many capacities. Perhaps, there has been no such issue related to the Central Government which has not been solved with your skill. You have been popular as the Labour Minister and even your opponents have appreciated you. You have also been the Chief Minister of Meghalaya. Your election has enhanced the dignity of this august House. You are a devoted follower of the great religion, Christianity. Your sense of tolerance, feeling of fraternity and quality of taking all together are the assets which will now be available at national level. I am confident that under your leadership, the rights of this House as well as that of the Member will be protected. People of India have elected their representatives. Now, it is the turn of these representatives to prove their mettle. As I said, Lok Sabha is the highest representative body. We have to maintain the dignity of this House and keep the democracy intact. I have noticed that some of our old friends have been re-elected. Now, their charm to move towards the middle of the House, instead of sitting in their seats will certainly be less. There is a need to run the House with dignity. Wherever we deviate, you can guide us to the right path. You have to take all together. We wholeheartedly wish you success. We assure you of our best cooperation. I once again congratulate and felicitate you.

[English]

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO (Berhampur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I feel extremely happy that you have been unanimously elected as the Speaker of the

House. Unanimity is the essence of this election and I would very much welcome the spirit of unanimity which gives you a lot of manoeuvrability, a lot of power and a lot of scope to come to conclusions which otherwise would have been very difficult.

I have seen you in many capacities and perhaps more than anyone else I have had the opportunity of appreciating your work in whatever capacity you have been working. As the Chief Minister of Meghalaya, I remember the very difficult situation which you faced. As the Labour Minister of India, I very well know through what holes you were dragged some times. But you came out unscathed and you proved to be one of the most successful Labour Ministers of India because the time when you became the Labour Minister was so crucial, everything was touch and go - that the whole policy would have collapsed if we not had a Labour Minister of your calibre. So, I feel very happy that you are at the place where your talents will be required in great measure and I am sure they will be available in adequate measure.

I welcome you and I beseech the Members of the House to help you in maintaining the dignity of the House as, I am sure, you would like to maintain the dignity and conduct the business of the House in the best possible manner and in the best traditions of Parliamentary democracy.

I welcome you once again.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL (Latur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is indeed very heartening to know that the leaders of all parties and, in fact, all Members of the House have shown sagacity in choosing the Speaker unanimously and choosing you, Shri P.A. Sangma, as the Presiding Officer of the august House of the People of this country, which has the greatest democracy in the world. They all deserve appreciation of all the people who believe in the practice of parliamentary democracy.

You, Mr. Speaker, appear to be young, but you are a very experienced leader who had innings in responsible positions at the State-level and the national level and are very humane, intelligent, co-operative, balanced and pragmatic politician and you are bound to protect and enhance the dignity of this august House and to strengthen the democratic and parliamentary system in India. In this responsible and onerous task, you may need the co-operation of this House which, I am sure, would be given to you in ample measure.

The Speaker has to deal with legal, political, economic, social and psychological matters and has to respond to matters which arise suddenly and abruptly. An approach which is sympathetic, unbiased and correct can help in all these matters. The tradition of this House so far has been to adopt an approach of that kind and, I am sure, it would be adopted by it in future also.

I would like to pray for the successful tenure of yours as the Speaker of the 11th Lok Sabha and to give you my very sincere and very warm congratulations on your elevation to this prestigious and high position.

[Translation]

SHRI SHARAD YADAV (Madhepura) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a matter of pride for the entire nation that after the constitution of the eleventh Lok Sabha, this House, the highest institution of this country, has expressed its faith in you at such a crucial time when the country is facing a number of challenges.

I have been in this House for several years. You have been performing your duty with efficiency, skill and wisdom in this House and have been solving our ticklish problems easily. Though we were in the Opposition, we too used to be convinced with your logics on many occasions, though on coming out of the House, we used to feel that that was not the correct thing. The efficiency, skill and wisdom shown by you in the House has really been praiseworthy.

We are followers of Late Dr. Lohiya. He used to call North-East region as 'Sagarmatha' of India. In the region where you hail from, the Himalayas are called 'Sagarmatha'. Today, you are sitting on the 'Sagarmatha' (peak) of this House. Under your leadership, this nation will achieve great heights and in this Parliament, more powers will be bestowed to make this poor, hapless and helpless country a strong nation. You would guide this nation in resolving all the future problems. With your election as the Speaker, the poor of India has felt a sense of pride and it has strengthened the unity of the nation. Besides, the way, your name has been unanimously agreed upon is unprecedented in the history. On this occasion, I would also like to thank the former Speaker for his five years' successful tenure in this House. On several occasions, he handled the situation very tactfully and had shown great efficiency.

With these words, I, on behalf of my party and all the Members of this House, congratulate you on this historic occasion and hope that you would be able to give a new turn to the future history.

[English]

SHRI MURASOLI MARAN (Madras Central) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is an honour and privilege for us in the House to have you in the Chair as the Speaker of this House and the head of this great Parliament of India. The fact that you have been unanimously chosen speaks not only about the present day political equation inside the House but also your admirable qualities which made you acceptable to all of us.

Sir, you have shouldered many responsibilities with great distinction. You had been a teacher, an

advocate and more that anything else, you belong to my tribe - you are a journalist. You had been a very good Chief Minister of Meghalaya, not only a Chief Minister but also you acted as the Leader of the Opposition for two years. Therefore, I think I need not remind you about the feelings of the Opposition. So, I am sure, you will be fair to the Opposition.

Sir, the House would congratulate and compliment the small little man of India who went into the small little polling booth and got the small little ballot paper and made a mark, a small little mark on it and elected all of us. All glory to that small little man, the common man, the great citizen of India who has allowed us to retain the reputation that we are the largest democracy in the world.

Sir, you have got very difficult task before you. The people, in their wisdom, have given no majority to any single Party. This makes you task all the more difficult because nobody wants that the country should plunge into another election. This presupposes that this House and you, Sir, should conduct the affairs in such a way that the burning problems are given attention and care. This I want to remind you.

Sir, when I promise cooperation, I cannot say that we will keep our mouth shut and we will keep the decibel level at the lowest possible level because if there is an uproar, it is not just one voice but the voice of the lakhs of people whom we represent. I would like to submit that if a voice is raised from any corner either from the front bench or from the back bench demanding your attention to their plight, I appeal to you, Sir, that you must listen to it. We are here to justify our election, to justify our presence. Therefore, I seek your help in this matter.

Sir, there is always a question whether the Speaker should belong to a Party or not. Sir, I am reminded about the speech of the first Speaker of the Lok Sabha Dr. Mavalankar.

12.00 hrs.

Sir, he had stated very clearly : "It is obviously not possible in the present conditions of our political and parliamentary life to remain as insular as English Speaker so far as political life goes. But the Indian Speaker acting as such will be absolutely a non-Party man meaning thereby that he keeps aloof from party deliberations and controversies. He does not cease to be a politician merely by the fact of his being a Speaker". Therefore, it is very clear, the Speaker may not be non-political but he should definitely be a non-party man. I do hope that nobody will bring him down to a party level. He is above party level.

Sir, the Speaker is here not to run the country. The Speaker is here to run the House efficiently. So, I hope you will rise to the occasion and do justice to all of us.

Sir, there are rules and regulations to guide us. But as the former Speaker has just explained, they are not enough because the composition of the House is so different that the rules may not help you. But I think, you should not be a skylark. Only conciliation and accommodation should solve the problem. Therefore, I want you to be firm and at the same time, I want you to be fair. It is not very difficult. I think it is Aristotle who said : 'Man is a political animal.' But we are not political beasts. We have been political adversaries at the best but most of us here have got the highest respect for each other as political beings and personalities and we want to have a proper, healthy discussions and debate.

Sir, we are at the threshold of major challenges; we are at the crossroads of history and I hope this House in its collective wisdom will work in a determined manner to face the challenges that the nation is confronting us.

Therefore, Sir, I offer you all our cooperation and I think we will make it a great success; the Eleventh Lok Sabha will be a great success.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is with greatest pleasure that I stand here today to convey my greetings and felicitations to you.

Your unanimous election to this august office is a clear recognition of the qualities of your head and heart and it is a fitting decision by all the parties here to agree to this unanimous election.

Sir, I have had occasions to watch your performance as also achievements as a Member of the House and also as a Minister. And what has always impressed us is apart from your amiability that you have had always an open mind to hear others and if necessary, to change your decision if good arguments were offered. I also remember with great pleasure - your active and competent participation in the deliberations of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation where you were a Member and I had a great honour to be the Chairman. And, I remember your hospitality when we went to Meghalaya. As a Member you could organise that and we had a very profitable time from more senses than one.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, today you are occupying a seat representing a part of our country which has been feeling a sense of alienation from the mainstreams for various reasons and coming from Eastern India also, I have great pleasure that today we have come into the reckoning and all over India there is a clear acceptance of the role you have been playing in projecting the problems and the issues of Eastern India as well apart from all India issues.

Sir, we know that composition of the present House is such that there may be problems and we

hope we shall be able to solve them under your guidance and under your leadership. We have great traditions to maintain and uphold.

This is a House where Members have to articulate the urges and the aspirations of the common people of this country. There are Members of the House who occupy the back benches, but they have also to perform their duties and functions as Members of the House, as the elected representatives of the people. Naturally, I am sure that under you, all sections of the House, particularly the back-benchers as they are called, will get full opportunity to project their points of view and to refer to the problems in their own areas.

We have seen here turbulent times. But that also reflects the problems that are faced by the people outside. Turbulence here does not necessarily mean disrespect to the Chair, but sometimes we have to adopt methods that may not seem to be quite appropriate in this House. I am very confident, knowing you as I do for so many years and having had the great privilege of working with you in Committees, that you will fully justify the faith that we have all shown in you and will be one of the outstanding Speakers of this House.

Sir, on behalf of my party and myself I pledge our full cooperation and I am sure that you will be able to conduct the deliberations of the House with all success and you will have a glorious tenure. Mr. Speaker Sir, you have our very best wishes.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM (Sivaganga) : Mr. Speaker Sir, I rise to offer my congratulations and good wishes on your election as Speaker. This perhaps was the most unusual election of a Speaker. The 500 odd Members gathered here have witnessed a very unusual election. I do not wish to comment on the election because we all know the circumstance under which you have been elected as Speaker.

In a sense this reflects the very complex mandate that the people have given in this election. Today and the days that will follow we will all speak on the mandate, the meaning of the mandate, the various interpretations that are possible. Yet, one thing is clear; no one, no party, no leader can arrogate to himself or itself the sole authority to decide the course of this nation. If political parties were slow to gather this message, the people were ahead of us and in a very resounding manner they have declared that all of us must work together. We may have fought elections against each other; but the mandate is to work together, to sit down and negotiate, talk to each other, find ways in which we can agree rather than we can disagree. That, however, will not make the 11th Lok Sabha any less stormy than the 10th or the 9th Lok Sabha. I cannot promise that we will not raise our voices. No one here can promise that we will not rush to the well of the House occasionally.

No one here can promise that we will not question your ruling; no one here can promise good behaviour. But I can promise, Sir, knowing you as an old friend that you will enhance the reputation of the Chair that you sit on because by nature you are a conciliator, you are a negotiator. By nature, you are a man who makes peace with his worst enemies. So, you will bring a healing touch to the very stormy House that I envisage over the next five years.

Sir, my colleague reminded me of the tradition of the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition conducting the Speaker to the Chair. I believe, the tradition began when no one was willing to be the Speaker and therefore the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition had to drag the Speaker to the Speaker's Chair. That is the old British tradition which we have modified and we have a very civilized manner in which we take you to the Chair. The Speaker does not speak: he hears, he listens, he brings about an unspoken consensus, he urges the House to reach this consensus, he urges the House to reflect the wishes of the people.

Sir, I salute you for another reason. I believe, Sir, you will be the youngest person to have been elected to this Chair. You also represent a generation to which I belong. A young generation has to now take the reins of this country and your elevation to this Chair, I believe, will herald that change. And, perhaps, you are the first Speaker who may have been born just after the struggle for Independence, but on the eve of Independence. If you were born a year later, you would have qualified to be called "Midnight's Child". You were born just on the eve of Independence.

Coming from a State, which joined the mainstream many years later, a State which is peaceful, beautiful and has wonderful people. I think, Sir, you, more than anyone else, will articulate the views and the aspirations of the forgotten small India. There are millions of them all over the country, belonging to small religions, small communities, small States but each one of them adds to the greatness of this country. In your elevation in your election, Sir, I think, we salute that small India, people belonging to small States, people belonging to small tribes, people belonging to small communities, people who have very small voice, a very small note because of circumstances. In honouring something which is small, we really honour all that is great in India.

Once again, Sir, on behalf of my party, the Tamil Manila Congress, I offer you my congratulations, felicitations and our promise of the fullest cooperation.

SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH (Eluru) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wholeheartedly congratulate you on my own behalf as well as on behalf of my Telugu Desam Party, on your unanimous election to this

august post of Speaker of Lok Sabha. Earlier, you have been a Chief Minister of Meghalaya. Also, as Minister for Labour and Minister for Information and Broadcasting - all these being very difficult jobs - you were able to conduct yourself very well. I hope and I am confident that you will succeed in running this House, which is the highest legislative forum, in a most dignified manner, giving opportunities to all sections of the House to ventilate their views. I assure you, Sir, on my behalf and on behalf of my party that we will extend our cooperation to you in running the House.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (MIDNAPORE) : Sir, I consider it a matter of gratification and privilege that accidentally it happened that I was called upon to declare you elected to this high post, which you now occupy with the unanimous choice of this House.

There is a proverb, as you know, which says that a cat has nine lives. Perhaps, I am reaching now the end of my career.

And therefore it is doubly happy for me that at this stage you, Sir, have been chosen unanimously by this House and today I feel, of course, it is a matter of pleasure for the entire country, particularly the people of the north-eastern region, I am sure they are filled with happiness, joy and pride that the Parliament of India has made, I consider it to be a gesture towards the federal spirit of this country. That was very necessary and very important. Apart from the fact that you belong to a minority community, a tribal community, Christian community, all these matters are very very important. And today at a time when our country is facing a very difficult crisis of its identity, identity of a common nation, it was very necessary in my opinion that the House should make this gesture.

And I am therefore grateful to all sections of this House, including our friends on the other side that they have cooperated in this decision that we have taken. Sir, I do not wish to dwell in too much detail on your qualities of head and heart. I am a trade unionist in the better part of my life and I know that the working class also today in this country will be happy to find that the Labour Minister like you who showed himself to be a champion of the rights of the workmen has been elevated to this high Office. As somebody said just now, you had to play the role of a conciliator and mediator in so many disputes, in so many cases, where you proved yourself to be a very adapt, very accommodating, very affable, very friendly and friend of all the people who wanted you to help them to solve some difficulties. I hope you will play a similar type of role in this House. Lately, we have been, in this country, facing what is known as judicial activism. Some people like it and some people do not like it. This judicial activism has some into play recently, we should admit it partly at least because of the failure of the Legislature and of the Executive to play their

due parts. As a result of which the judiciary in many cases has stepped in and taken the initiative, sometimes with good results and sometimes maybe not with good results. But we are Members of this House. We are Members of Parliament and we do feel proud when our Parliament can play its due role, its sovereign role in this country's structure. I hope, Sir, that you will be able to guide us and help us so that we can be worthy of the responsibility which the electorate has given to us. I would like to point out that roughly speaking, I may not be quite exact in my calculation, roughly about half of the electorate has not voted. What this is due to is something which we should ponder over. We should discuss whether there is a feeling of apathy for various reasons gripping the minds of large numbers of people, maybe it is partly due to the loss, growing loss of credibility of this institution itself.

If that is so, then we have to do some introspection and find out how far we are to blame for it. There is time to correct oneself; there is time to restore this Parliament to its original glory and pride.

We hope that with you in the Chair as Speaker - we are going to offer you our fullest cooperation for this - you will be able to guide the Parliament along a path which is historically and constitutionally destined to travel.

We assure you of our cooperation and we wish you all success. On behalf of myself and on behalf of my party, you have our best wishes on your success.

[Translation]

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV (Mainpuri) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, we as well as the entire House is happy on your unanimous election. We congratulate you and extend our warm wishes to you on the occasion of your taking over the responsibility of the world's greatest democratic institution. I am sure you will certainly deliver the goods. The unanimous support of the whole House on your candidature clearly shows the ability and experience that you possess, to execute this great responsibility. Since I have been elected as a Member of Parliament for the first time, it is my maiden experience to witness a unanimous election of a candidate of opposition to this post. It shows your capability and worthiness.

So far as your experience and ability is concerned, you have had the opportunity of working with several Prime Ministers. Besides holding the portfolio of Ministry of Labour, you have adorned several other posts too. Therefore, you have a vast experience of labourers' problems. I hope that we will get your cooperation in solving these problems through this House. I, on my own behalf as well as on behalf of my party, promise to extend full

cooperation. I am sure that while executing this great responsibility, you will also safeguard the rights of the Members of this House.

Several such occasions will come when you will feel that the House is not functioning according to your wishes or a Member is adamant on expressing his views. On such occasions, I hope, you will never link it to any sort of distrust in you or the post held by you. To give vent to the feelings and aspirations of the people, we represent, becomes the greatest responsibility of the hon. Members. Their duty is not to put forth the problems of the people but also to fight for them. I hope you will never lose your patience on such occasions.

The crisis, the country is facing today is not a political crisis, it is, infact, a process through which a strong force will emerge before the country. We have not lost hope. It hardly matters whether a single party has got the majority or not, all the parties should work together. I know, during this process, a strong force will emerge in the country, which will solve the problems of the country and fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the poor, which they have been cherishing since independence. Such a force will provide opportunity to the downtrodden and the people belonging to minorities. I am happy that you hail from Meghalaya, the North-East region, which once considered itself neglected. Now the area will feel that it also has importance in India and it also has the responsibilities and rights. Yours is a dignified key post where one works without fear and favour. I assure you, Sir, we will extend our full cooperation in execution of your responsibility. With this promise, we again congratulate you and extend our good wishes.

[English]

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat) : Sir, I rise to join the Prime Minister and other distinguished Members of this House to offer my hearty felicitations to you on the occasion of your elevation to the office of the Speaker of this great democratic institution.

Sir, we have seen you in various capacities in the States and also at the national level. We, as trade unionists and workers who have been working in the factories, mines and otherwise, cannot forget the role you did play when you had been the Labour Minister of our country. It has been rightly pointed out that your role has always been the role of a conciliator. Your role has always been the role of uniting the people, the working class and not dividing them. Here, in this House, the complexion is very varied. There are big national parties; there are small parties; there are also other small parties and tiny tiny groups. There are conflicts of interests; there are conflicts of class interests; there are various conflicts which are always reflected on the floor of this House. This floor is the mirror of different

segments of the society and we cannot ignore this mirror. If we ignore this mirror, we ignore the nation as a whole. The working class of today is faced with great crisis and I expect that, in the coming days, the working class will have to work upon a massive struggle and those struggles are to be reflected here. With your experience in the past, I hope, believe and I am also confident that those movements and agitations of the working class and trade unions outside, in defence of their rights - economic, political and others - would also get sufficient attention of this House, particularly Sir, of your goodself.

Sir, I think you may be quite well aware of the millions of our tribals working in different parts of India; they are toiling they are sweating and living hard lives. Sir, on your election to this exalted position, those teeming millions belonging to the tribals and minorities will feel greatly encouraged and enthused to build up their struggle and reach their right to live with honour and dignity of which they are deprived of.

Sir, you also represent an important religious minority. Minorities Sir, cannot be hushed up. Minorities have also their rights. A great democracy, the character of a democracy depends upon the degree of the guarantee to the minorities. I hope my friends sitting on this side would realise the importance of the minorities in our society. Ours is a society which is composite in nature and has got no unitary role to play. Society is multiple in nature and multifarious aspects are also there to be looked into.

Sir, I would say that North-East is really the most important strategic area of our nation. We feel today that the people of North-Eastern region are getting increasingly alienated. Your elevation to this position would also bring them to realise that India needs them and they also need India.

India also takes into account the hopes and aspirations of the millions of people in the north-eastern region. I hope and I believe that with your being in this exalted Office, this process of alienation of the north-eastern region would stop.

Sir, I represent a very small group in this House and naturally we are sometimes aggrieved. Aggrieved because we do not find adequate time to give expression to our feelings; to give expression to our views. Views are views. It is not regional; it is not partial; it is not small; it is not big. Views are views and views are to be expressed freely and fairly.

Sir, I hope and I believe and I am confident that with your nature, smiling all the while, we would also have smile on our face when we feel rejected, disappointed and suppressed. I hope that we would build up the traditions of this House and help us to maintain the decorum in this House. Once again on behalf of my Party I convey my felicitations to you.

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA (Mangaldoi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am extremely happy today to whole-heartedly congratulate you on my behalf and on behalf of my Party, the Asom Gana Parishad. For the first time in the political history of India, the hon. Speaker of Lok Sabha has been elected from the north-eastern region.

Sir, today is the most significant day for the north-eastern region. The post of the Speaker is a neutral one. So, I am cent percent confident that each and every Member of this august House would get an equal treatment from the hon. Speaker. We belong to the north-eastern region of our country. Our region is an extremely backward region and so I would like to request you to give special attention towards the solutions of the various problems of the north-eastern region.

[Translation]

SHRI NARAYAN DUTT TIWARI (Nainital) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I congratulate you from the core of my heart on your unanimous election to this highest post. After the constitution of 11th Lok Sabha, you have been elected as the sentinel of democracy. I would like to congratulate the hon'ble Prime Minister, hon'ble Leader of Opposition, the leaders and the Members of other parties for this political unanimity that has evolved in the beginning of 11th Lok Sabha itself, inspite of the large scale political differences. Today, we have demonstrated to the world our ability to solve the issues, which was speculative about our finding a solution to the national problems in the present political, social and economical scenario. This august House, through you, has tried to give a befitting reply by taking unanimous decision in the beginning itself and for all this, the hon'ble Members of the House deserve congratulations.

Sir, today different political hues are clearly visible in the House but we should have a belief that even in such a situation, the House will be able to take unanimous decisions on the burning issues. This belief is generated by your election. Sir, I have been fortunate enough to watch ups and downs of your life and see you transformed from a worker to an M.P. and then rising high on the political scene. Since you hail from Meghalaya - the abode of clouds -, I know you are blessed with the quality of patience with humility, treating all equally and you can deliver the goods amid all odds. I am sure you will be impartial in giving your rulings, irrespective of different ideologies the Members may believe in.

Sir, this House has its own experience, traditions and conventions. There are rules, rulings concepts and traditions which have been laid down by different hon'ble Speakers like Shri Mavalankar, Shri Ayyangar, and even by Shri Vitthalbhai Patel before the freedom of the country, which will help you in fulfilling your responsibility in the present Lok Sabha.

I am sure that by dint of your experience, you will follow the Parliamentary traditions even in odd circumstances. There are Members who have been serving the House for decades and have grasped full knowledge of the conventions of other Parliaments too. They have been extending their fullest cooperation in smooth functioning of the House. Such intellectuals are there in every party. I am hopeful that you will get cooperation of younger generation of M.Ps also, who too are expert in Parliamentary practices and conventions.

Sir, many new Members have vast experience of Legislative Assemblies and many of them have been the Chief Ministers and Ministers in their States. They have contributed a lot to Assemblies, Committees, Municipal Corporations, Zila Parishads and Village Panchayats and in this way though new, they too have the knowledge of rules and possess experience of Parliamentary practices. I am sure you will get cooperation from all of them. Sir, I am also sure that 11th Lok Sabha will live its full life under your Speakership and present before the country and the world new Parliamentary democratic norms and conventions and thus reach new heights and horizons.

With these words, once again, I congratulate you from the core of my heart.

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha) : Sir, I congratulate you on your unanimous election as the Speaker of this august assembly. Sir, with your long experience in the fields of politics, administration and Parliament and Legislative Assembly, I am sure you will become one among the best Speakers we have had. I am sure you will be able to get the support of each and every Member of this House. We find a very good quality in you - as has been expressed by most of the Members here — that is, you are a good mediator and a negotiator. Above all, I feel you are a very good gentleman. Cardinal Newman once defined the word 'gentleman' and according to him 'a gentleman is one who does not inflict pain on others'. I do not think you can be that gentle to fit in that definition. If you are so gentle, Members of this House will have to be more gentle so as to cooperate with you in a manner to make this House a big success. I am sure, with your long vision and wide experience, you will be able to take into confidence all the Members of this House.

Views expressed by every section of this House are important whether they come from large parties, small parties, Opposition or Treasury Benches. As has already been mentioned by Shri Chitta Basu and others, views of the Members belonging to small parties may also be considered because they also represent one constituency. I am sure there are more

small parties like mine. As a Member of the smallest one-Member party, Kerala Congress (M), I pray and beseech you to give an honouring look to the Members of small parties.

Sir, as has been expressed, there are many problems faced in the North-East and there are many problems faced in the other areas also. I come from the southernmost part of this country. We also have many problems. I am sure you will give us the opportunity to depict the problems of farmers, the problems of workers, the problems of the poor faced in that area.

Sir, I would like to congratulate you once again. Sir, from a distance the Chair may look like a chair of roses but I am sure it is not. It is a chair of thorns and to sit on it is not an easy task. However, with your special nature, you will be able to blunt the sharp point of the thorns, not only blunt them but also smoothen them into flowers like, not lotuses but roses (Interruptions)....

Sir, I would like to once again congratulate you. Lastly, I have a word to say, not to you alone but to the House as a whole. It is my wish and the wish of all of us sitting here that you should have a long life of five years as the Speaker. I am sure that in saying this I represent the mind of each Member of this august House.

SHRI SURJEET SINGH BARNALA (Sangrur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on my behalf and on behalf of my Party, I congratulate you on your unanimous election to the post of Speaker of the Eleventh Lok Sabha.

We have all come to this House with problems, problems of our constituencies, problems of our States, problems of our regions and national problems, of course. They will all be discussed here from time to time and important decisions will have to be taken by you. This time the elections have thrown a very complex pattern in this House. No Party is in absolute majority. No Party is even in a comfortable majority as compared to the other Parties. It is a very difficult situation which you will have to face and that is why everyone who felicitated you has stated that your duties in the House will be quite difficult. But I am sure you will be able to surmount all those difficulties because of your long experience in political life - in your life before you entered politics and thereafter as the Chief Minister of your State, as a Minister in the Government of India and also in the Opposition for some years. You have all the experience needed to take appropriate decisions in the House.

It was very nice of all the political Parties to have taken a unanimous decision in electing you in a situation that has arisen in the country, nobody is sure of what is going to happen tomorrow. Nobody is clear about it on this side as well as on that side ... (Interruptions)...

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dum Dum) : We are very clear about it. ... (Interruptions)...

SHRI SURJEET SINGH BARNALA : Nobody is clear ... (Interruptions)...My suggestion, Sir, will be that all the eminent leaders of the nation from various Political parties who have been elected should sit together and unanimously form a Government which could run for five years. A unanimous view on the formation of a Government on the pattern of a national Government, or something like that, should be thought of.

That is necessary. Otherwise your position here will become very difficult all the time. We are hopeful that decision taken by you will be independent, unbiased and in consonance with the wishes of the House. We again congratulate you heartily.

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR (Barh) : Mr Speaker, Sir, I, on behalf of my party and myself would like to congratulate and greet you on being elected unanimously.

Nothing more can be said in your praise that what has been said in this House. Therefore, none can attract your attention by just praising you. I have seen you working as a Minister and have always found you in happy mood. You are a cheerful person and I hope that you will maintain your sense of humour while sitting in this Chair and will never deprive the hon. Members of the opportunities to express their views. The present composition of the House is such that on many occasions you may have to face the heated exchanges in the House and sometimes you may face even adverse situations but you will have to handle all these situations tactfully. Therefore, we hope that you will handle these situations without losing your sense of humour. We also hope that the back benchers like me would also be given opportunities. It should not happen that in your cheerful mood, we may lose the opportunity. However, we hope that you will remain in a mirthful mood even when you do not give a chance to the hon. Members and also, we are confident that you will scold them less. It is expected that the person occupying the Chair of the hon. Speaker will make all efforts to ensure that this House continues for a maximum period of time but the way they are speaking, no one can tell whether the House will complete its full tenure. If they really want that the House should complete its tenure, then there should be unanimity on allowing Vajpayeeji to continue for the next 5 years on the pattern of the unanimous election of the Speaker. If such an opportunity is not given, then I am sure that this House is not going to last even for few days. Though, we have full hope, yet no one can say so surely. We hope that with your able guidance and competence, you will make all efforts to prolong the duration of

the House to the maximum extent and like the former hon'ble Speaker, Shri Shivraj Patil, you will also complete full 5 years' term as Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with these words, I assure you of my full co-operation and hope that you will uphold the dignity of the House. With these words, I once again felicitate you on this occasion.

[English]

SHRI MADHUKAR SARPOTDAR (Mumbai-North West) : Respected Speaker, I, on behalf of my party, Shiv Sena, and myself congratulate you for occupying this highest office in the parliamentary system. This House has unanimously passed this one motion. It directly indicates that this democracy has got a very bright future.

I am sure you have got sufficient experience. You worked as the Chief Minister of Meghalaya State. As you know, the name itself indicates that Meghalaya means clouds. When there was an accumulation of clouds, being the Chief Minister of that State at that time, you found out certain methods and eventually that State functioned very smoothly. Sir, the present situation in this country and in this particular House is like that. Clouds are all around and amidst these clouds, now, you have been elevated to this position. I have heard so many people here praising you. Eventually everyone was expecting that he should get justice, he should get an opportunity to express his viewpoints and the House should function peacefully. And on top of that, this entire House should function for the next five years.

Sir, I remember that the Speaker of the First Lok Sabha was Shri P.G. Mavalankar and the Speaker of the Tenth Lok Sabha was Shri Shivraj V. Patil who is present here in this House. The traditions which have been maintained in this House should continue to be maintained and the dignity of this House should not be allowed to be lowered. That is our expectation. I am sure you will not allow that situation to change.

Sir, you worked as a trade union leader. You were the Labour Minister of this country and I being one of the trade union leaders of this nation know that there are multiple problems being faced by the working class. Some of the veteran trade union leaders have mentioned in their speeches that difficult days are not far off for the working class and when those days come, at that time, it will be a real test for the Speaker to handle the situation. It is very necessary that you should treat all the new-comers impartially. I have a very little experience of the Chair when I was in the Panel of Chairmen in our State. I have an experience how this House Functions. In view of this position, we expect from you the best performance and that too with a smiling face.

I know that some of the Members said that the things are not clear. According to me, the things are

very clear in everybody's mind and the result is likely to come. But everyone is having a desire that this House should survive for the next five years. That is a very important thing. Although difficult days are ahead yet, you will be in a position to tackle that situation and each and every Member in this House, even the newly elected or one who is having a tremendous amount of experience also will get same treatment from you so that this House runs very smoothly.

On behalf of my Party, Shiva Sena and also on behalf of all the Members of my party, I congratulate you heartily and wish you a grand success in the next five years of your tenure.

[Translation]

SHRI KANSHI RAM Hoshiyapur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to congratulate you on behalf of my party and myself on your unanimous election. A lot has already been said in your appreciation and on present day atmosphere. I would not like to speak anything more. I, on behalf of my party and myself would like to assure you of our fullest co-operation.

[English]

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA (Pondnan) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of my Party, the Muslim League, I extend to you my heartiest felicitations on your unanimous election as the Speaker of this august House. Sir, you have assumed the mantle of the Speaker at a very critical and crucial time or turn in the history of Parliamentary democracy in our country.

Your unanimous election as Speaker is a shining and a unique response to this critical nature of the history of Parliamentary democracy in our country; not only our country but I must say that your election as Speaker represents a glorious response for the world democracies in the world also to follow.

Mr. Speaker Sir, today the entire House rejoices. Some of us turned also into poetic language while felicitating you on your unanimous election to this exalted position. You are today elected as the custodian of democracy in our country and I am sure, you will uphold the highest traditions of parliamentary democracy in which Insha-Allah you will have all our cooperation.

Mr. Speaker Sir, as I said, the entire House rejoices, the country rejoices because your election as the Speaker reflects the unity and integrity of our country in its varied form. The House rejoices, the country rejoices, the minorities also rejoice today especially at a time when they were feeling apprehensive in various respects. I therefore, rise on behalf of my party to extend to you our heartiest

felicitations and to assure you of our fullest cooperation. We also know very well that from you, every section of the House will have due justice. Wish you all the best, Mr. Speaker.

SHRI MADHAV RAO SCINDIA (Gwalior) : Mr. Speaker Sir, let me congratulate you on your unanimous election to the august office of Speaker of the Lok Sabha. I think, the United Front, the Congress Party, the Bhartiya Janata Party, all other parties and other Members of Parliament involved in this exercise also deserve congratulations for this unanimity that was evolved and I am sure this augurs well for the future of this House.

Mr. Speaker Sir, you bring to this Chair a most affable, tactful and charming personality. I have always considered you as one of the bright stars on the Indian political scene and you have a reputation for impartiality which I am sure will hold you in good stead in exercising the duties of your office. What is astonishing is that the Information and Broadcasting Ministry which has been the island, which has been the shipwreck of many a reputation for impartiality, yet you very dexterously steered your ship through the tempestuous and shark-infested waters that surround the Information and Broadcasting Ministry and brought it safely to the shore. I am sure this was the result of your efficiency and your dexterity and may be you are fortunate that your tenure in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry was also a very short one.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I have had the privilege of working with you as a colleague. I have always respected the quiet efficient and the low-profile manner in which you have handled your various portfolios.

13.00 hrs.

I am absolutely confident that the dignity of the office of the Speaker will certainly be upheld by you. I am especially happy that you are a brother citizen from the North-East. Our country is a mosaic. As the late Shrimati Indira Gandhi had always said, it represents unity in diversity. If anyone tries to stifle that diversity, that will weaken the unity. The only way to strengthen the unity is to recognise that diversity. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you represent that stream of thought, that spirit and I am sure that your tenure as the Speaker will greatly strengthen the unity of this very great country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, a very onerous duty has devolved on you. Sir, you have been in several Lok Sabhas. I am sure that you understand what a simple, straightforward and easy set of people, all of us whom you are to handle. I am sure that you will not be daunted by that task. I would just like to assure you of my unstinted cooperation and that of my party and wish you well in bringing new laurels to this very august office.

[Translation]

SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAIISI (Hyderabad) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I congratulate you on behalf of my party, Majlis-e-Ittehadul-Musalmeen and myself and hope that your tenure will prove to be a revolutionary one. The poet will play hide and seek and swing from one side to another but I am sure that your tenure will be a historical one, in which the poet will comment :-

Aye Bui Woh, Gaye Bhi Woh,
Khatam Fasana Ho Gaya.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, at present I would like to submit that the Muslims who are the largest minority group in our country have several problems and have been plundered continuously even after independence.

I hope that their problems will be solved through you in this House and the language in which I am congratulating you will get its due right.

Lastly, I would not fail to mention the name of our former Speaker, Shri Shivraj Patil who worked very patiently. Really, whatever he has done is praiseworthy. I used to observe silently that he never got annoyed and worked very patiently. Therefore, I think that he deserves to be applauded for it. I hope that you will also provide us opportunities and will execute your responsibility with the same fortitude.

[English]

DR JAYANTA RONGPI (Autonomous District) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, your journey from the job of a teacher to a separate Hill State movement, then to the chair of the Chief Minister, then to the responsibility of the Union Minister and now to the Chair of the Speaker is a remarkable one and a fantastic individual achievement. On my own and on behalf of my Party, Autonomous State Demand Committee, and also on behalf of each and every individual of the North-East, I congratulate you on your elevation to Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the unanimity of your election — in spite of the background the political compulsion prevailing upon the major political formations — I am sure, will make each and every individual of the North-East proud.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the nation has given a fragmented opinion and I am sure that you will ensure that each and every set of opinion gets the fullest of expression in this august House. North-East, having a large number of problems, sent a small number of representatives leading to a peculiar problem which you are well aware of and I have no doubt in my mind that you are seized of the matter and you will take necessary steps to address this issue.

You are the first tribal Cabinet Minister of this country for which the tribal people of this country had to wait more than four decades. And now today

with a double crown you have become the first tribal Speaker of this nation. So I congratulate you again and extend my fullest cooperation. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, I am afraid we may have to stop here. I will accept congratulations from everyone of you. Thank you very much.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : Sir, one of the lady Member has to speak.

MR. SPEAKER : I think we will give an opportunity to one lady Member to speak.

KUMARI MAMTA BANERJEE (Calcutta South) : I consider myself ... (Interruptions)...

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL (Joynagar) : Sir, RSP is not given a chance.

MR. SPEAKER : Which Party ?

SOME HON MEMBERS : RSP.

KUMARI MAMTA BANERJEE : Allow me, Sir, to speak.

KUMARI MAMTA BANERJEE : Respected Speaker, Sir, today is your day and you deserve congratulations from all the sides. Sir, I only want to add one thing that the need of the hour today is to restore value based politics. This is the highest forum of democracy and I think from the Chair, you can direct for the value based politics. The message should go to the people of this country that the day by day deteriorating political situation should be stopped. And to restore the value based politics, this House should work unanimously and conscientiously for some value based issues at least. With these words I want to tell you one thing. Ours is a very vast country. Different languages are spoken. So I want to say that.

[Translation]

'Tyag Ka Naam Hindu Hai, Iman Ka Naam Musalman,

Pyar Ka Naam Isai, Sikh Ka Nam Balidan,
Yeh Hai Hindustan'.

[English]

We have to restore this unity and integrity of our country.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL (Joynagar) : Sir, on behalf of my Party, RSP and on my own behalf, I take the opportunity of congratulating you, the Speaker of the Eleventh Lok Sabha, I assure you of all necessary cooperation in running the business of the House and I request you to do just to the small Party Members in the highest forum of democracy of the country. I also appeal to you to act impartially and judiciously in the extraordinary political scenario

that is prevailing in the House presently, in order to hold high the democratic values and essence of the Constitution.

[Translation]

SHRI JAI PRAKASH (Hissar) : On my behalf and on behalf of Haryana Vikas Party, I welcome you and all the Hon'ble Members of Parliament. No party has got the majority in the House. In spite of all this, the hon. Members and leaders of the different parties have elected you unanimously. Therefore, I am very grateful to all my colleagues and the House.

Our colleague, Shir Nitish Kumarji was saying that this convention should continue. Today, a debate is going on in the national and international media on the life of the Eleventh Lok Sabha. I request you to ensure the dignity of the House and conduct its proceedings in the same manner as has been adopted by all the hon. Members of Parliament in electing you unanimously. The people of the country have placed immense responsibility on your shoulders. All the hon'ble Members sitting here represent 900 million people. Therefore, I would like to request all the hon'ble Members to let the House complete its five years' term, respecting the mandate of the people. Otherwise, the people of this country would say that these Members were sent to run the Parliament for five years but they have laid in their task and have come back to them because of mutual differences. The entire nation is today looking at you. There are people who would try not to let the Lok Sabha complete its term. The new Members and those who have been re-elected as well as all others want that the Lok Sabha should complete its full terms of five years.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, ours is a very small party and I hope you will give us equal time as is given to the major parties.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Thank you. I know that many hon. Members would like to participate in this, but we are already crossing the Lunch Hour. I thank everyone of you and I thank everyone who has already congratulated me.

Honourable Members, the people of our great country, who represent about twenty per cent of the humanity, have returned this Eleventh Lok Sabha through peaceful elections. The honourable Members of the House have done me a unique honour by electing me as their Presiding Officer in an unprecedented gesture of unanimity cutting across the entire political spectrum; regional and cultural differences and even power equations. I offer my salutations to all of you.

I am overwhelmed too by the generous sentiments expressed from all sections of the House.

Even as we are at the close of the present millennium, many countries of the world are still in the process of transition to democracy, often facing painful social and political convulsions. As we have assembled here, we have reaffirmed our commitment to democratic roots.

As I take this Chair, I pay my tributes to the great leaders of our nation, veterans like Vithalbhai Patel and Dada Saheb Mavalankar, who shaped the traditions of this House. And, no doubt, I shall be drawing my inspirations from them.

The Lok Sabha is a hallowed hall of democracy, the ideal for all of us, therefore, should be to give it the sanctity of a place of worship. In the House there should be debate and dissent with dignity, compromise with courtesy and respect without rancour.

The mandate as well as the basic term of reference for us in this House is legislation. It is through legislation that we reflect the will of the people, lay down the policies and establish the rule of law. Time, being the constraining factor, we should deploy the same to produce optimum results in terms of good governance.

We are people from the grass-roots, represented in all sections of the House. We have a feel for the pulse of the people. I am sure that we will enrich the proceedings of the House by bringing our collective wisdom and experience to bear the dignity and quality of our debates.

The verdict of the people as reflected in the composition of this House has given rise to aspirations as well as apprehensions amongst them. I am sure that all of us will collectively discharge our responsibility so as to fulfil their aspirations and allay their apprehensions.

I shall assure you in this context that while conducting the proceedings of this House, I shall endeavour my utmost to be guided by transparency and impartiality in my actions and provide equal opportunity to all in giving expression to their views.

Parliament business is serious but need not be tense. Tension would need to be tempered by a sense of wit and humour. We would have to draw inspiration from eminent parliamentarians of yesteryears with a sense of humour, like Pandit Nehru, Piloo Modi, Balraj Madhok, Mahabir Tvagi, Jagjivan Ram, etc. Humour spawns camaraderie and camaraderie enhances understanding.

The Secretariat of the Lok Sabha does play a crucial role, though behind the screen, in facilitating the smooth and orderly conduct of the proceedings of the House. I shall be drawing upon the experience and cooperation of the Secretariat too in the effective discharge of my duties.

The media is the interface between the House and the people. I would seek their cooperation in objective presentation of the proceedings of the House to the people.

Hon. Members, all of you have chosen to give the care of this House to my trust. On my part, I would assure you that I shall endeavour my best to rise up to this trust and meet your expectations.

13.18 hrs.

[English]

MEMBERS SWORN - Contd.

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, in the meantime, we have three more hon. Members and I shall request the Secretary-General that they may be called to take oath.

Shri Nihal Chand (Ganganagar)

Shri Mahender Singh Bhati (Bikaner)

Shri K.C. Kondaiah (Bellary)

13.20 hrs.

[English]

INTRODUCTION OF MINISTERS

MR. SPEAKER : Now I request the Prime Minister to introduce his Council of Ministers to the House.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to introduce to you and, through you, to the House my colleagues.

Shri Sikander Bakht	Minister of External Affairs
	and Minister of Urban Affairs and Employment
Shri Suraj Bhan	Minister of Agriculture
Shri Ram Jethmalani	Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs.
Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi	Minister of Home Affairs.
Shri V. Dhananjaya Kumar	Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism.
Shri Pramod Mahajan	Minister of Defence and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

Shri Karia Munda	Minister of Welfare
Shri Suresh Prabhu	Minister of Industry
Shri Sartaj Singh	Minister of Health and Family Welfare
Shri Jaswant Singh	Minister of Finance
Shrimati Sushma and Swaraj	Minister of Information and Broadcasting

[Translation]

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN (Hajipur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am on a point of information. President's Address reflects the Government's policy. We have received a proposal on 20th from your Secretariat regarding the Confidence Motion in this House. But there is no date mentioned in it. It is not a Motion but a loose motion... (Interruptions) Mr. Speaker, Sir, I withdraw this word ... (Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER : This loose motion is for them. They have an upset stomach ... (Interruptions)

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN : I have moved a No-Confidence Motion under rule 198. If the Government takes up the No-Confidence Motion first, today or day after tomorrow, then we have nothing to say. The President's Address reflects the policy of the Government. Since this Government is in minority, it is not a Government at present. Therefore we would request you to take up No-Confidence Motion first. I want to know your ruling on this ... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seats. Please listen.

The Constitution is very clear that the actual commencement of the Session only starts with the Address of the President. Article 87 is very clear on this point. Yesterday and today, what we have done is that, we have completed the process of the constitution of the House. The commencement of the Session will start with the Address of the President tomorrow and therefore, today we cannot conduct any other business.

Now, the House stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow after half-an-hour of the President's Address.

13.25 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Half-an-Hour after the Address by the President on Friday, May 24, 1996/Jyaistha 3, 1918 (Saka).