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Title: Hunger strike and bandh in Darjeeling Hill district and some adjacent areas of West Bengal.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH (DARJEELING): Madam Speaker, I am grateful that you have accepted my notice. This enabled me to raise the issue of *Bandh* and hunger strike in the Darjeeling district and adjoining areas. I have three appeals to make. The first is obviously to the Government. The second is to the larger collectivity of the House. And the third, of course, will be to the Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha. But, I will before that, make a very short preamble. My short preamble is: I agree with the distinguished and hon. Leader of the House, the Minister of Finance, that small States is not a matter of principle. It is administrative efficiency that is obtained by the separation of a larger entity into smaller entity. But the guiding principle is, of course, not just the smallness but the emotional oneness, the geographical unity, and separation that is inherent, if the emotional unity is not there. So far as Darjeeling district is concerned, even though I might be stating the obvious, to the hon. Leader of the House because to mention this to as experienced a Minister who has many years of service to the country, but the reality is that Darjeeling is the one district in the whole country that adjoins three international boundaries and is near contiguous to the fourth.

I do not have to list them. It sits cheek by jowl with Sikkim. It is close to Chumbi Valley. It is sitting atop the Chicken Neck. It is barely a few kilometres from Tin Bigha. It is the guardian, Madam. The people of the Hill District of Darjeeling have been our soldiers for many centuries. They are valiant nationalists. They have given up their lives for India. They are currently, emotionally separated from the rest of the State of West Bengal. Geographically they are distanced.

The appeal, therefore, that I am making to the Government is to please issue an appeal to the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha to withdraw their *bandh* and to give up the hunger strike; to continue with the talks which are due on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December. I commend and am grateful to the efficient and energetic the Home Minister who was good enough to give them time and met the delegation. This much to the Government, Madam.

My second appeal is to the larger collectivity of the middle of the House. Please recognise that what is needed is not passion. What is required is compassion and understanding. This is not a separation from the State of West Bengal. If the people are separated, do whatever is necessary to bring them together.

I also appeal to the distinguished Leader of the Opposition, my former colleague with whom I have had the pleasure and benefit of sitting for three decades; I appeal to my former colleagues with whom I used to sit. I do not have to cite to you the manifesto that was in the party's programme, what the manifesto says. Please at least join in the appeal the House were to make. Give up the *bandh*, give up the hunger strike, join the talks on the 21<sup>st</sup> purposefully, and do not do anything to stop Highway No.31A which leads into Sikkim.

I have no doubt in my mind that an appeal of this kind, if it went out from the House, will have signal effect and the agitational mode of the demand will be set aside. This is the appeal I make, Madam. The substance of it is: इंसान की आवाज़ सुनो, इंसान की आवाज़ सुनकर उस पर क़दम उठाओ। They are the guardians of our borders. उनको अलग मत करो, इमोशनली उनको अलग मत करो।

...(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition wants to say something. Please sit down.

श्री लाल कृष्ण आडवाणी (गांधीनगर): महोदया, मेरे साथी जसवंत सिंह जी ने मेरा उल्लेख किया है, इसलिए मैं उन्हें जानकारी देना चाहता हूँ कि हमारे घोषणा पत्र में जो कहा है, शाम को वहां से आया हुआ शिष्ट मण्डल मुझ से मिलने वाला है।

...(Interruptions)

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA (GHATAL): Madam, I am from the State. Please listen to me for a minute. ...(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: I do not have your notice. You should have given your notice.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : Madam, just one minute. I have no objection in making an appeal to the people there in Darjeeling to withdraw their agitation. I agree with that. ...(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: If you want to associate yourself, say yes.

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : I am not associating. ...(Interruptions)

MADAM SPEAKER: You have not given your notice. Please take your seat. You know whenever you give a notice I allow you to speak. But how do I allow you to speak, if you do not give a notice?

SHRI GURUDAS DASGUPTA : No indirect encouragement should be given for a separate State of Gorkhaland. I accept the appeal.

MADAM SPEAKER: All right.

*...(Interruptions)*

MADAM SPEAKER: Let the `Zero Hour' go on.

*...(Interruptions)*

MADAM SPEAKER: Nothing is going on record.

*(Interruptions) â€¡ \**

MADAM SPEAKER: Please take your seat.

*...(Interruptions)*

MADAM SPEAKER: Shri M.B. Rajesh.