

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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Third Session
(Thirteenth Lok Sabha)



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Singh, Kunwar Sarv Raj (Aonla)	Sinha, Shri Yashwant (Hazaribagh)
Singh, Rajkumari Ratna (Pratapgarh)	Sivakumar, Shri V.S. (Thiruvananthapuram)
Singh, Sardar Buta (Jalore)	Solanki, Shri Bhupendra Singh (Godhra)
Singh, Shri Ajit (Baghpat)	Somaiya, Shri Kirit (Mumbai North East)
Singh, Shri Bahadur (Bayana)	Sorake, Shri Vinay Kumar (Udupi)
Singh, Shri Balbir (Jalandhar)	Sreenivasan, Shri C. (Dindigul)
Singh, Shri Brij Bhushan Sharan (Gonda)	Srikantappa, Shri D.C. (Chickmangalore)
Singh, Shri C.N. (Machhlisshahar)	Srinivasulu, Shri Kalava (Anantapur)
Singh, Shri Chandra Bhushan (Farrukhabad)	Subba, Shri M.K. (Tezpur)
Singh, Shri Chandra Pratap (Sidhi)	Sudarsana Natchiappan E.M. ; Shri (Sivaganga)
Singh, Shri Chandra Vijay (Moradabad)	Sudheeran, Shri V.M. (Alleppey)
Singh, Shri Charanjit (Hoshiarpur)	Suman, Shri Ramji Lal (Firozabad)
Singh, Shri Chattrapal (Bulandshahar)	Sunil Dutt, Shri (Mumbai North West)
Singh, Shri Digvijay (Banka)	Suresh, Shri Kodikunnil (Adoor)
	Swain, Shri Kharabela (Balasore)

Swami, Shri Chinmayanand (Jaunpur)

Swami, Shri I.D. (Karnal)

T

Thakkar, Shrimati Jayaben B. (Vadodara)

Thakur, Dr. C.P. (Patna)

Thakur, Shri Chunni Lal Bhai (Bhandara)

Thakur, Shri Ramsheth (Kulaba)

Thirunavukarasu, Shri (Pudukkottai)

Thomas, Shri P.C. (Muvattupuzha)

Tiwari, Shri Lal Bihari (East Delhi)

Tiwari, Shri Narayan Datt (Nainital)

Tiwari, Shri Sunder Lal (Rewa)

Tomar, Dr. Ramesh Chand (Hapur)

Topdar, Shri Tarit Baran (Bareckpore)

Tripathi, Shri Ram Naresh (Seoni)

Tripathi, Shri Prakash Mani (Deoria)

Tripathy, Shri Braja Kishore (Puri)

Tur, Shri Tarlochan Singh (Tarantaran)

U

Uma Bharati, Kumari (Bhopal)

V

Vaghela, Shri Shankersinh (Kapadvanj)

Vaiko, Shri (Sivakasi)

Vajpayee, Shri Atal Bihari (Lucknow)

Varma, Shri Ratilal Kalidas (Dhandhuka)

Vasava, Shri Mansukhbhai D. (Bharuch)

Veerappa, Shri Ramchandra (Bidar)

Venkataswamy, Dr. N. (Tirupati)

Venkateswarlu, Shri B. (Warangal)

Venkateswarlu, Prof. Ummareddy (Tenali)

Venugopal, Dr. S. (Adilabad)

Venugopal, Shri D. (Tiruppattur)

Verma, Prof. Rita (Dhanbad)

Verma, Shri Beni Prasad (Kaisarganj)

Verma, Shri Rajesh (Sitapur)

Verma, Shri Ravi Prakash (Kheri)

Vetriselvan, Shri V. (Krishnagiri)

Vijaya Kumari, Shrimati D.M. (Bhadrachalam)

Vijayan, Shri A.K.S. (Nagapattinam)

Virendra Kumar, Shri (Sagar)

Vukkala, Dr. Rajeswaramma (Nellore)

Vyas, Dr. Girija (Udaipur)

W

Wadiyar, Shri S.D.N.R. (Mysore)

Wanaga, Shri Chintaman (Dahanu)

Wangcha, Shri Raj Kumar (Aumachal East)

Y

Yadav, Dr. (Shrimati) Sudha (Mahendragarh)

Yadav, Dr. Jaswant Singh (Alwar)

Yadav, Shri Balram Singh (Mainpuri)

Yadav, Shri Bhal Chandra (Khalilabad)

Yadav, Shri Devendra Prasad (Jhanjharpur)

Yadav, Shri Devendra Singh (Etah)

Yadav, Shri Dinesh Chandra (Saharsa)

Yadav, Shri Hukumdeo Narayan (Madhubani)

Yadav, Shri Jagdambi Prasad (Godda)

Yadav, Shri Mulayam Singh (Sambhal)

Yadav, Shri Ramakant (Azamgarh)

Yadav, Shri Sharad (Madhepura)

Yerrannaidu, Shri K. (Srikakulam)

Z

Zahedi, Shri Mahboob (Katwa)

Zawma, Shri Vanlal (Mizoram)

OFFICERS OF THE LOK SABHA

THE SPEAKER

Shri G. M.C. Balayogi

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Shri P.M. Sayeed

PANEL OF CHAIRMEN

Shri Basu Deb Acharia

Shrimati Margaret Alva

Dr. Laxminarayan Pandeya

Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh

Shri Beni Prasad Verma

Shri. K. Yerrannaidu

SECRETARY GENERAL

Shri G. C. Malhotra

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COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee	The Prime Minister and also incharge of the Ministries/Departments not specifically allocated to the charge of any Minister viz: (1) Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (2) Planning (3) Statistics and Programme Implementation (4) Atomic Energy (5) Space
Shri L.K. Advani	The Minister of Home Affairs
Shri Ananth Kumar	The Minister of Tourism and Minister of Culture
Shri T.R. Baalu	The Minister of Environment and Forests
Kumari Mamata Banerjee	The Minister of Railways
Shri Sukh Dev Singh Dhindsa	The Minister of Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation and Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports
Shri George Fernandes	The Minister of Defence
Shri Jag Mohan	The Minister of Urban Development
Dr. Satyanarayan Jatiya	The Minister of Labour.
Shri Ram Jethmalani	The Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs
Shri Manohar Joshi	The Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises
Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi	The Minister of Human Resource Development,

Minister of Science and Technology and Minister of Ocean Development

Shri P.R. Kumaramangalam	The Minister of Power
Shri Pramod Mahajan	The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minister of Information Technology
Shri Murasoli Maran	The Minister of Commerce and Industry
Shri Ram Naik	The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas
Shri Nitish Kumar	The Minister of Agriculture
Shri Jual Oram	The Minister of Tribal Affairs
Shri Ram Vilas Paswan	The Minister of Communications
Shri Naveen Patnaik	The Minister of Mines and Minerals
Shri Sundar Lal Patwa	The Minister of Rural Development
Shri Suresh Prabhu	The Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers
Shri Kashiram Rana	The Minister of Textiles
Shri Shanta Kumar	The Minister of Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution
Shri Jaswant Singh	The Minister of External Affairs
Shri Rajnath Singh	The Minister of Surface Transport
Shri Yashwant Sinha	The Minister of Finance
Dr. C.P. Thakur	The Minister of Water Resources
Shri Sharad Yadav	The Minister of Civil Aviation

MINISTERS OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)

Shrimati Maneka Gandhi	The Minister of State of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
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Shri Arun Jaitley	The Minister of State of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Minister of State of the Department of Disinvestment	Shri Jaysingrao Gaikwad Patil	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Human Resource Development
		Prof. Chaman Lal Gupta	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Civil Aviation
Shri M. Kannappan	The Minister of State of the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources	Shri Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain	The Minister of State in the Department of Food Processing Industries of the Ministry of Agriculture
Shri Dilip Ray	The Minister of State of the Ministry of Steel	Dr. Vallabhbhai Kathiria	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises
Shrimati Vasundhara Raje	The Minister of State of the Ministry of Small Scale Industries and Agro and Rural Industries, Minister of State in the Department of Personnel and Training, Department of Pensions and Pensioners Welfare of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and Minister of State in the Departments of Atomic Energy and Space	Shri Fagga Singh Kulaste	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Tribal Affairs
		Shri V. Dhananjaya Kumar	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance
		Shri Bangaru Laxman	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways
		Shrimati Sumitra Bahajan	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Human Resource Development
Shri N.T. Shanmugam	The Minister of State of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	Shri Subhash Maharia	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Rural Development

MINISTERS OF STATE

Shri Ramesh Bais	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers	Shri Babu Lal Marandi	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Environment and Forests
Shrimati Bijoya Chakravarty	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Water Resources	Shrimati Jayawanti Mehta	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Power
Shri Shriram Chauhan	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution	Shri Muni Lall	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Labour
Shri Bandaru Dattatreya	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Urban Development	Shri Omar Abdullah	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs	Shri Ajit Kumar Panja	The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs
		Shri Harin Pathak	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence
		Dr. Debendra Pradhan	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Surface Transport

Shri E. Ponnuswamy	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas		and Public Grievances of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
Shri A. Raja	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Rural Development	Shri Bachi Singh Rawat 'Bachda'	The Minister of State in the Department of Science and Technology of the Ministry of Science and Technology
Shri O. Rajagopal	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Law, Justice and Company Affairs and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs	Shri Tapan Sikdar	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Communications
		Shri Digvijay Singh	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways
Dr. Raman	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry	Shri Th. Chaoba Singh	The Minister of State in the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports
Shri Gingee N. Ramachandran	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Textiles	Shri V. Sreenivasa Prasad	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution
Shri Ch. Vidyasagar Rao	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs		
Shri S.B.P.B.K. Satyanarayana Rao	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture	Shri I.D. Swami	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
Shri Arun Shourie	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Planning, Minister of State in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and Minister of State in the Department of Administrative Reforms	Prof. Rita Verma	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Mines and Minerals
		Shri Balasaheb Vikhe Patil	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance
		Shri Hukumdeo Narayan Yadav	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture.

LOK SABHA DEBATES

Vol. IV

First Day of the Third Session of Thirteenth Lok Sabha

No. 1

LOK SABHA

Wednesday, February 23, 2000/Phalgun 4, 1921 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Thirteen of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

NATIONAL ANTHEM

The National Anthem was played

13.01 hrs.

MEMBER SWORN

Shri Rajesh Ranjan (Purnea)

13.02 hrs.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS*

[English]

SECRETARY - GENERAL : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the President's Address ** to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 23rd February, 2000.

President's Address

Honourable Members,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the first session of Parliament in the year 2000. I felicitate the Members and extend to all of you my best wishes for the successful completion of the budgetary and legislative business that lies ahead.

Last month India completed fifty years as a Republic. It was a proud moment in the history of this ancient civilization, which re-emerged as a free and democratic nation in the modern era. For all of us, the last fifty years have been a period of triumph and tribulations, of achievement and shortfalls. The Golden Jubilee of our Republic is, hence, an occasion for both celebration and reflection.

If the global march of democracy was the hallmark of the 20th Century, India has won worthy laurels for not only being the largest democracy in the world, but also

zealously preserving it against all odds. The entire world looks to India with hope and expectation. Our founding fathers did their duty by giving us a great Republican Constitution. It is now our responsibility to transform our democracy into an effective instrument for the economic, social and cultural development of every Indian. As the Father of the Nation always exhorted us during our struggle for freedom, we must ensure that the first claim on the fruits of development belongs to the poor and the weak.

The Constitution, which India adopted fifty years ago, has served a well. It has been a reliable guarantor of parliamentary democracy, secularism and fundamental rights, which all of us cherish. It has also inspired the spread of democratic consciousness in our society, empowering dalits, adivasis, backward classes and women and making our system of governance more participative and progressive. While keeping the basic structure and salient features of the Constitution inviolate, it has, however, become necessary to examine the experience of the past fifty years to better achieve the ideals enshrined in the Constitution. The Government has, therefore, set up a broad-based Constitution Review Commission. The recommendations of this Commission will be presented before Parliament, which is the supreme decision-making body in Indian democracy.

India has undoubtedly had many spectacular achievements in the past five decades. There is no other experiment in human history where a billion people, belonging to so many different traditions, are living and striving together for a better life without being denied their rights and freedoms. We cannot, however, be satisfied with this alone. As the experience of the many newly-independent and developing nations has shown, fifty years is a long time to achieve all-round progress for all. If the first half-century of our Republic makes any demand on us, it is simply this: we must lose no more time to eradicate mass poverty, remove illiteracy and assure basic minimum services to all our fellow citizens. While accomplishing this historic task, we must simultaneously strengthen social justice, promote gender justice, remove regional imbalances and bridge the rural-urban divide.

India cannot achieve the strength and prosperity that we all desire, and that our country is capable of, if vast areas and large sections of our population remain deprived and poor. Faster economic growth is a pre-condition for removing social and regional imbalances in development. The economic reforms started in the beginning of the last decade, with the express intention of accelerating economic growth, were a historical necessity. The shortcomings that have crept into our development process over the decades, needed to be removed. It is a matter of pride and satisfaction that our

* The President delivered the Address in English.

** Also placed in Library. See No. LT-1289/2000.

country has implemented these reforms without social unrest and with a high degree of political consensus. These reforms are now yielding desired results in several areas. The sustainable rate of growth of our economy has increased. Our industry and financial system have become stronger and more competitive.

The Government is committed to accelerating the pace of economic reforms and to broadening their scope. At the same time, we shall make conscious and concerted efforts to bring the fruits of economic reforms to those regions and communities that have so far not benefited from them. The approach to India's economic development may have changed in the past ten years, but the goals of equity and social justice have not. We shall redouble our efforts to ensure that the poor and the deprived have an even greater stake in economic reforms than at present. We realize that this is essential for mobilizing people's enthusiastic participation in the development process.

The "Agenda for a Proud, Prosperous India", which is the common policy document of the Government of the National Democratic Alliance, provides the framework for faster development with equity and employment. The Government's record of speeding up the work of taking decisions on policy issues and the passage of pending legislation shows its determination to fulfil the promises made in this Agenda. The Government will continue to vigorously pursue a coherent plan of economic reforms. These reforms will cover agriculture, industry, public enterprises, fiscal consolidation and devolution, tax reform, financial sector reform and foreign investment policies. Most importantly, they will also cover policies for improving the performance of key infrastructure sectors—namely, power, roads, railways, ports, civil aviation, telecommunications and petroleum.

We are primarily a rural nation and most of our people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Therefore, development of agriculture, particularly in the rainfed and drought-prone areas where poverty is extreme, shall be accorded high priority. This would call for substantial capital formation in agriculture and investment in the areas where productivity has been relatively low. As the agriculture sector still employs about two-thirds of our total workforce, greater investment in agriculture, including agribusinesses, would be mobilized to enhance employment opportunities and create a greater prosperity in rural areas. The Government will shortly finalize the National Agriculture Policy to address these issues.

At present, the programmes relating to conservation, development and management of land resources are scattered in different Ministries and Departments in the Central Government. There is an imperative need to put

in place an integrated mechanism capable of responding effectively to the challenges of managing our scarce land resources—especially those arising from globalization, liberalization and privatization. The Government will therefore, bring all the programmes and schemes as well as the institutional infrastructure relating to land in rural areas, under the control of the newly created Department of Land Resources in the Ministry of Rural Development.

Special programmes for the generation of productive wage employment in the rural areas, especially for creating permanent infrastructure assets, and self-employment opportunities for the unemployed youth will be given greater thrust. The Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, the Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana and the restructured Employment Assurance Scheme will be vigorously implemented and closely monitored.

The Process of urbanization has led to a rapid rise in the proportion of Indians living in cities and towns. Sadly, the rate of growth of urban infrastructure and civic amenities has not matched the explosion of our urban population. The Government realizes that urban renewal is critical to the emergence of a new and resurgent India. This calls for a better coordination among the Centre, States and municipal authorities to effectively implement the policies and programmes on urban employment, housing construction, transportation and other utilities. The Government will facilitate increased public and private investment in the development of physical and social infrastructure, with an emphasis on improving the living conditions of the urban poor. It will also step up efforts to promote good municipal governance.

Our nation's future lies with our children and youth. The Government will soon set up a National Commission on Children to promote and channel all the efforts in the government and non-government sectors to achieve their all-round development and to unleash their creative energies both now and when they grow up. All existing programmes for sports and youth affairs will be reviewed and re-activated to give effect to our resolve to encourage physical, social and cultural development of our young men and women.

A decision has been taken to launch Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to ensure that every child in the age group of six to fourteen goes to a school, or an Education Guarantee Centre, or a "Back to School Camp" by 2003. We shall intensify efforts to involve the non-governmental sector in higher and technical education. The Government proposes to come out with a policy that would fully incorporate non-governmental efforts within the national endeavour to provide Education For All.

Women constitute half of the Indian population but their status in our society is poor. They are largely excluded from decision-making in public life. No nation can

progress unless its women enjoy good health, are literate and are equal partners with men in the socio-economic and political processes. Our Constitution guarantees quality and non-discrimination between men and women and we are committed to achieving this objective. The Constitution (85th Amendment) Bill, 1999, seeking to provide reservation of not less than one third of the seats for women in the Lok Sabha and in Legislative Assemblies of States, was introduced in the Lok Sabha during the last session. The Department of Women and Child Development will also soon finalize a National Policy for Empowerment of Women, which aims to mainstream gender into laws, policies, programmes and budgetary allocations of the Government. The Indira Mahila Yojana will be made more effective and expanded to 450 more blocks.

India has one of the largest population of older people in the world. In recent times, there has been a withering away of the joint family system, which has exposed elderly people to emotional neglect and a lack of physical support. The Government has formulated a National Policy on Older Persons and has established an National Council for Older Persons to focus on problems faced by our senior citizens. An Expert Committee has recently submitted a report on a proposed pension scheme for old age security, which is being examined by the Government. A decision will be taken on this scheme shortly.

When I last addressed both Houses of Parliament on October 25, 1999, I had taken the opportunity to lay before you the medium-term economic agenda of the Government. Since, then, the economic data suggests a distinct upturn in the economy. Economic growth in 1999-2000 is expected to be around six percent. Inflation has also remained well under control during the current fiscal 1999-2000. Our foreign currency reserves at over US \$ 32 billion are also comfortable. There has been a general upward trend in stock indices, primarily due to the revival in the industrial sector. To build on these clear economic strengths, we must seize the opportunity to deepen and accelerate the reform process.

I am happy to say that the Government has begun to implement the medium-term economic agenda outlined by me in my last address to Parliament. I will briefly dwell on some of these issues:

- (a) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Ordinance, 2000 was promulgated to strengthen the TRAI. This will remove many hurdles in the path of speedy development of telecom services, increase investor confidence and create a level playing field between public and private operators. The corresponding Bill will be brought before Parliament in its current session.

- (b) A Group of Experts has been constituted to recommend a new legislation reflecting the phenomenon of the Convergence of IT, Telecom and TV in place of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.
- (c) The Government has already initiated a major programme of road construction to be called the National Highway Development Project consisting of the Golden Quadrilateral and the East-West, North-South Corridors costing Rs. 54,000 crore. We will ensure the speedy implementation of this vitally needed highway network.
- (d) The Government is carrying forward the restructuring and reform process in the power sector. Emphasis has been given on development of hydel power, particularly in the North-Eastern parts of the country. The national power grid will be strengthened to facilitate efficient inter-regional power flows.
- (e) In the petroleum sector, under the New Exploration Licensing Policy, 25 blocks have been awarded in a record time, thereby accelerating domestic exploration efforts. The Group on India Hydrocarbon Vision -2025 has also finalized its recommendations and the Government will initiate early action to implement them.
- (f) A Bill to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalization) Act, 1973 will be introduced in the current session of Parliament to allow Indian companies in the private sector to undertake coal mining.
- (g) It has been decided to enable private participation in the airport sector through long-terms leasing of airports. The existing airports of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Calcutta will be given out on long-term lease basis while a new international airport at Bangalore will be developed as a greenfield venture with private sector participation. This will go a long way in improving the airport infrastructure and the functioning of our airports to world class levels.
- (h) The Government has also decided to take innovative steps to bring about a major improvement in the working of our ports and to develop other efficient and modern port facilities with greater private sector participation.
- (i) The Information Technology Bill, 1999 to promote E-Commerce was introduced in the Lok Sabha in its last session.

- (j) A National Venture Capital Fund of Rs. 100 crore for promoting new Information Technology businesses by promising entrepreneurs has been launched. Guidelines to allow acquisition of foreign companies abroad by Indian IT companies have been liberalized. To accelerate the growth of high-speed Internet services in the country, a liberal Policy for setting up international gateways and use of foreign satellites for greater bandwidth has been put in place. Further measures will soon be taken to promote the spread of the Internet and telecom services, especially in rural and backward areas.
- (k) The Ministry of Information Technology is taking further initiatives to promote the development of the IT industry in the country. These include the proposal to establish the "India IT and Software Brand Equity Fund", facilitate greater usage of IT for increasing productivity in small and medium enterprises, developing Indian initiatives in E-Commerce and setting up IT-enabled services and distance education programmes.
- (l) The Insurance Regulation and Development Authority Act was passed by Parliament in its last session. This will enable participation by private Indian companies in the insurance sector leading to better service to customers, as well as mobilization of larger long-term investment for faster economic development.
- (m) The Government has reviewed and recast the Foreign Direct Investment regime, ensuring an automatic route for FDI clearances except in a small list of carefully chosen areas. This will bring in greater transparency, cut delays and create an enabling framework to ensure FDI inflow of at least \$ 10 billion a year.
- (n) The Debt Recovery Tribunal Act has been amended by an Ordinance. It is one of the curcial measures underpinning financial sector reforms. The corresponding Bill for replacement of the Ordinance by an Act will be introduced in Parliament in the current session.
- (o) The Second Labour Commission has been constituted to suggest changes in various labour laws in order to achieve the goals of labour welfare, generation of additional employment, higher investment and accelerated industrial growth.
- (p) A major milestone in tax reforms was achieved with the introduction of a uniform rate of sales

tax throughout the country from January 1, 2000. This was made possible by close co-operation between the Centre and the States. As a progressive step towards further tax rationalisation, the States have also decided to move over to a Value-Added Tax (VAT) regime with effect from April 1, 2001.

- (q) A large number of outdated or inessential laws and regulations have been removed from the statute book. This is a part of the Government's continuing effort to speed up much-needed legal reforms.

However, the growing fiscal deficit continues to be an area of considerable concern. This is undoubtedly the most challenging macro-economic management problem faced by us. The deficit reduces public investment, crowds out private investment, raises interest rates and generates inflationary pressure. The burden of interest payments continues to be large at above 4 per cent of GDP, accounting for about two thirds of tax revenue of the Central Government net of States' share. As the interests burden on Government borrowing increases, it limits the ability of the Government to expand health and education services and anti-poverty programmes. Subsidies on non-merit goods which are currently very high, have to be brought down and phased out.

For India to sustain accelerated growth with high employment coupled with modest inflation, the growing fiscal deficit needs to be contained. We have to adopt measures to curb the rising trend of Non-Plan Expenditure. These require difficult decisions relating to the quality of Government expenditure, downsizing the government, recovery of economic cost for goods and services and greater austerity in Government spending. The programme of disinvestment and restructuring of Public Sector Undertakings also needs to be accelerated. Our tax system must be modernized for improving the Tax-to-GDP ratio. If we achieve fiscal consolidation, then given our stable macro framework, India can truly hope to achieve growth rates of well over seven percent in the coming years. If sacrifices have to be made for achieving this challenging goal, they are well-worth making because the long-term rewards of restructuring will benefit all Indians and will far outweigh the temporary costs.

The financial condition of the States is also very worrisome. State Government finances have shown signs of rapid deterioration in the nineties. The year 1998-99 witnessed a very high gross fiscal deficit of States amounting to more than Rs. 75,000 crores, touching a level of 4.3 per cent of GDP. This is, indeed, an unsustainable situation. The deteriorating trend in the fiscal position of State Governments needs to be urgently reversed. The Central Government has, therefore,

initiated necessary measures in consultation with the States, to seek policy reforms aimed at fiscal correction and consolidation to bring about long term sustainability of the fiscal position of the States.

The Government is committed to the speedy economic development of the North-Eastern States. The North-Eastern Council is being expanded to include Sikkim and we shall strive to make it an effective agency for accelerated development of these States. In a meeting last month at Shillong, the Prime Minister, accompanied by the Home Minister, Defence Minister, Finance Minister and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, reviewed development and security issues with the Governors and Chief Ministers of the North-Eastern States and Sikkim. All assistance is being provided to those North-Eastern States that are affected by terrorism and anti-social activities.

The Government has announced an ambitious programme of over Rs. 10,200 crores for the socio-economic development of the North-Eastern States and Sikkim. This programme includes new initiatives in industry, health, education and security. It will also give major impetus to infrastructure development in the region, especially power, roads, railways, airports and telecommunications. An important objective of this initiative is to create large-scale local employment. Trade with neighbouring countries is also going to be a thrust area for development of this region.

The super-cyclone that struck Orissa in end October caused the death of thousands of people and devastated the social and economic life of a large section of the State's population. The entire country participated generously in supplementing the Government's efforts to mobilize relief and rehabilitation for the affected people. We express our appreciation for the excellent work done by the armed and paramilitary forces, the meteorological department, the Railways, port authorities, other government departments and agencies like the Food Corporation of India, the relief teams sent by State Governments as well as non-governmental and charitable organizations. To minimize the effects of natural calamities, the Government has set up a high-powered committee to prepare a Natural Disaster Management Plan. This will review existing arrangements for preparedness for natural disasters and their mitigation. It will recommend measures for strengthening of organizational structures and formulate a comprehensive model plan for natural disaster management at the national, State and district levels.

In the global context we shall continue to work for the establishment of a rule based, non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, which is fair and equitable to all nations. As a founder member of the GATT and the WTO, India has been an active participant in all the

previous international trade negotiations and in all the three WTO ministerial meetings. India has always pursued its mission for greater equity and symmetry in trade relations and for avoidance of linkage of trade with extraneous issues. Economic integration cannot advance if the interests of the poor are ignored. As a developing country, India is sensitizing other member nations to this reality. We would continue to persevere for equitable implementation of the provisions of the Uruguay Round negotiations.

In the months following the military coup in Pakistan, there has been a marked increase in Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism targeted especially at our security forces. There has also been an increase in Pakistani firing across the border. These developments underline the need for constant vigil by our defence forces. However, the threat of terrorist attacks is one that affects all Indian citizens. We must, as a people, become more security-conscious in the face of the unremitting terror campaign against our country. For its part, the Government is fully alert to all threats to India's external and internal security. We are prepared to meet any challenge to our territorial integrity and to our open, democratic way of life.

I salute the brave jawans and officers of the Indian Army who are standing guard along the LoC in the Kargil and other sectors, far from their families and loved ones. It is a tribute to the courage, determination and dedication of our forces that they have withstood freezing temperatures of minus 40 degrees celsius and below and the hardship of patrolling snow-bound heights. It is due to the valour and skill of our soldiers that our frontiers are secure from enemy forces.

The Subrahmanyam Committee, appointed by the Government to inquire into the events and circumstances that formed the backdrop to Pakistan's armed incursion into Kargil and other parts of the LoC, has submitted its report. This will be tabled in Parliament during this session. The Government is committed to take all necessary follow-up measures after a thorough scrutiny of the committee's recommendations.

Backing up our soldiers are our defence scientists and defence production units. I am happy to inform the Honourable Members that, since I last addressed both Houses of Parliament, our defence scientists have added two major successes to their list of achievements. The short-range, quick-reaction-time surface-to-air missile, Trishul, has been successfully tested. The remote-controlled Nishant has been successfully flight tested. Our defence production units have proved their capability to produce sophisticated defence equipment. Production in ordnance factories in the first nine months has been higher by 33 percent, compared to the corresponding period last year.

The overall law and order situation in the country has remained satisfactory except in certain areas affected by Pakistan-sponsored terrorist and separatist activities. Terrorist violence has been most pronounced in Jammu and Kashmir, especially after Pakistan's defeat in Kargil and the military coup in Islamabad. Government, both at the Centre and in the States, has met the challenge posed by Pakistan-backed terrorists and foreign mercenaries with determination. We are continuing with our four-pronged strategy to counter terrorist and separatist violence in Jammu and Kashmir by deepening of the democratic process, accelerating economic development, isolating foreign mercenaries and terrorists and playing a pro-active role to neutralize them. Apart from strengthening and modernizing the Jammu and Kashmir police, Government has been reimbursing the State's security related expenditure and providing financial support over and above the normal Plan assistance. I acknowledge the invaluable contribution of our armed forces, paramilitary forces and police personnel in combating terrorism and extremism in Jammu and Kashmir and some other parts of the country.

The Government is fully committed to preserving and further strengthening the secular ethos of our country. Communal harmony in the country has improved remarkable in the past few years. The last two years have been largely free of communal violence. In 1999, this trend gathered speed with the number of communal incidents declining by 10 percent, the number of people killed by 32 percent and the number of injured by 11 percent.

The Government stands by its promise to create the States of Uttaranchal, Vananchal, and Chhattisgarh. Bills for this purpose are being referred to the concerned State legislatures for their views.

The Inter-State Council has been reconstituted. Based on the experience of its working in the past, the Government will make it an effective platform for further harmonizing the relations between the Centre and the States and among the States themselves.

Our space programme continues to forge ahead in establishing systems that are crucial for telecommunications, broadcasting, meteorology, disaster warning and management of natural resources. India has established indigenous capability to launch Indian remote sensing satellites into the required polar sun-synchronous orbit. We are now well on our way to develop the geo-synchronous satellite launch vehicle. The INSAT system is one of the largest domestic satellite systems in the world and the next satellite in this system, INSAT-3B, is awaiting launch. It is scheduled to be commissioned in March-April 2000.

The Government continues to pursue its policy of harnessing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes for the welfare of the people. All nuclear plants have been operating smoothly and their average capacity factor has increased from 75 percent to 78 percent. India's eleventh nuclear power reactor at Kaiga in Karnataka achieved first criticality on September 21, 1999 and has been connected to the grid. The twelfth nuclear power reactor at Rawatbhatta in Rajasthan achieved first criticality on December 24, 1999.

The Government is fully committed to support science and technology in the interests of national security. However, a serious concern that needs addressing is that not enough young men and women are taking up careers in research and development. The Government is committed to reversing this trend by guaranteeing our highly talented young persons an attractive career profile, so that they can produce world-class scientific research and technological development while living and working in India.

The Government is committed to rapidly moving towards electronic governance, which will ensure better citizen-Government interface and greater transparency. In order to increase accessibility to, and application of, computers, the Government has intensified efforts in developing and promoting software for popular applications in Indian languages. I am happy that many State Governments have also taken major steps to complement the Centre's thrust to make India a front-runner in the IT revolution.

India's foreign policy of Non-Alignment and peaceful co-existence is relevant to the multi-polar world of today. This is based on the principle of protecting our vital interests and promoting our national ideals. The Government continues to pursue the policy of continuously expanding and deepening its friendly, close, wide-ranging, and constructive relations with our neighbouring countries - Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Maldives and Bhutan. Regular interaction with these countries has contributed to further strengthening of ties and mutual appreciation of each other's interests, sensitivities and concerns.

However, Pakistan has shown no inclination to end its policy of aiding and abetting cross-border terrorism and its hostile anti-India propaganda. Pakistan's role in acts of terror has been recently underscored by the hijacking of the Indian Airlines flight from Kathmandu. Irrefutable evidence has been provided by the Government about the Pakistani origins of the hijackers as well as the role of Pakistani officials posted in Kathmandu. We sincerely hope that Pakistan will reverse this policy of hostility towards India so that normal relations could be restored.

The return of peace and tranquillity in Afghanistan is important for the stability of our region. It is also necessary for curbing narco-terrorism. Above all, it is needed for the people of Afghanistan with whom we have age-old ties. It is only through the setting up of a broad-based Government in Kabul, truly representative of all ethnic groups, and the cessation of Pakistan's interference, that peace can be restored in Afghanistan.

We shall continue to deepen and broaden our relations with our extended neighbourhood of Central Asia, West Asia, the Gulf and the Asia-Pacific Region. We value our relations with our Asian neighbour China and we will commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with China. In this context, I am looking forward to my State visit to China in May this year. We hope that the Middle East peace process would reach a satisfactory conclusion. Our relations with Israel will continue to grow. India values her close and friendly relations with the European Union, as well as with countries of East Europe, with whom our ties of traditional friendship have seen a new dynamism in recent years. We will further strengthen our friendship with African, Latin American and Caribbean countries.

India looks forward to the consolidation of her time-tested, comprehensive relations with the Russian Federation into a strategic partnership. We await a visit to India by the President of the Russian Federation and the signing of the Declaration on Strategic Partnership between our two countries.

Relations with the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan and France have shown a gratifying consolidation in recent times. As a result of high-level decisions, we have launched a strategic dialogue with France that has produced encouraging results. The Indo-French Forum has also imparted a new dynamism to our engagement with France in the fields of culture, science and technology, and business. I am looking forward to my State visit to France scheduled for April this year.

The Government has continued to engage the United States in a serious dialogue on security, non-proliferation and disarmament issues predicated on India maintaining a credible minimum nuclear deterrent. A significant outcome of this dialogue is the decision to set up a Joint Working Group to deal with cross-border terrorism, which is a menace to the whole world. We expect that President Clinton's visit to India next month will pave the way for a broad-based and multi-dimensional expansion of our bilateral relations.

India reaffirms her commitment to global nuclear disarmament in a time-bound manner on a comprehensive and non-discriminatory basis. While addressing multilateral disarmament initiatives and treaties, the

Government will continue to abide by the imperative of preserving India's strategic autonomy.

The growing challenge posed by non-conventional threats, in particular by terrorism to global security, calls for urgent international co-operation and action so that these can be dealt with effectively. We call for the early adoption and implementation of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. India shall participate in any global effort to battle this crime against humanity.

Our vision of achieving a higher growth rate is not aimed at benefiting only the rich or the middle-class. On the contrary, the poor are at the centre of all our developmental efforts. We must recognize that we cannot improve the lot of the common man without achieving high rates of growth in the economy. Only an expanding economy can ensure growing employment and rising incomes for all. Unless India's GDP grows at a brisk rate of seven to eight percent a year, there is no way we can banish poverty and underdevelopment. Higher growth alone will ensure that we can mobilize larger and larger resources for the social sector—for education, health, drinking water, sanitation and roads - particularly for those living in the villages and in urban slums. Towards this end, the Government stands committed to implement the social and economic agenda outlined in my last address to both Houses of Parliament.

Honourable Members, we begin the Budget session today, after transacting record legislative business in the last Winter Session of Parliament. Apart from financial business arising out of the General and Railway Budgets, and the statutory requirement of replacing two Ordinances by Bills, we have a large agenda of legislative business relating to the all-round development of our economy and society. The Government is keen to complete this agenda in this very session.

I convey my best wishes to all of you.

JAI HIND.

13.03 hrs.

OBITUARY REFERENCES

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, as we meet today after an interval of about two months, I have to inform the House with profound sorrow of the sad demise of our former esteemed President, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma and six former colleagues, namely, Chaudhary Hari Ram Makkasar Godara, Shri Hari Charan Soy, Shrimati Uma

Roy, Sarvashri Jagannath Choudhary, Umed Singh Rathia an Santoshrao Gode.

An illustrious son of India, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma was one of the veterans of India's struggle for freedom from the foreign yoke and a leading light in the country's social-political life for about seven decades. He suffered incarceration during freedom movement.

Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma was actively associated with the political affairs of his home State, Madhya Pradesh. He was a member of erstwhile Bhopal Legislative Assembly during 1952-56 and served the State as Chief Minister from 1952 to 1956. He was also a member of Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly from 1956 to 1971 and served as a Cabinet Minister in Madhya Pradesh Government during 1956-67. Besides, he served with distinction his home state in various capacities in several social and cultural organisations.

A conscientious parliamentarian of high standing, Dr. Sharma was a Member of Fifth and Seventh Lok Sabha representing Bhopal parliamentary constituency of Madhya Pradesh from 1971 to 1977 and 1980 to 1984. He proved his political mettle and administrative skill as a Minister for Communications in the Union Council of Ministers from 1974 to 1977. He also held gubernatorial posts in three States.

He was elected to the high office of Vice-President of India and Ex-officio Chairman, Rajya Sabha in 1987. His long and illustrious public career reached its zenith on his assumption of the highest office, i.e. Presidentship in 1992. Through his culture, erudition and unfailing courtesy, he added dignity to his office. He was gifted with the quality of maintaining equipoise in the moments of stress and crisis.

His amiable disposition won him accolades as also affection everywhere, be it as the Head of the State or as a common man.

A multifaceted personality, Dr. Sharma during his numerous sojourns to various foreign countries, while he was President and Vice-President of India, brought to fore on the international arena the rich cultural heritage of India.

His name will ever remain inscribed in the annals of India's political history.

Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma passed away on 26 December, 1999 in New Delhi at the age of 81. In his death, the nation has been deprived of a statesman of a rare quality, a veteran freedom fighter, true democrat, able parliamentarian, an astute administrator and an erudite scholar and above all a genial personality. Though Dr.

Sharma is no longer in our midst, his memories will be with us for many years to come.

Chaudhary Hari Ram Makkasar Godara was a Member of Sixth Lok Sabha from 1977 to 1979 representing Bikaner Parliamentary Constituency of Rajasthan.

An able parliamentarian, Shri Godara was a Member of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation during 1977-78.

An agriculturist by profession, Shri Godara worked relentlessly for the welfare and upliftment of weaker sections of the society. He was actively involved in agricultural movement for providing land to landless farmers.

An active social and political worker, Shri Godara was associated in running of several schools in various villages. He provided succour to people during famine in Rajasthan.

Chaudhary Hari Ram Makkasar Godara passed away on 11 September, 1999 at his home village Makkasar Tehsil, District Hanumangarh at the age of 90.

Shri Hari Charan Soy was a Member of Third Lok Sabha from 1962 to 1967 representing Singbhum Parliamentary Constituency of Bihar.

Earlier, Shri Soy was a Member of Bihar Vidhan Sabha from 1957 to 1962 and 1969 to 1972.

An agriculturist by profession, Shri Soy took keen interest in the proceedings of the House. He was a Member of the Committee on Estimates during 1963-64 and Committee on Petitions from 1963 to 1965.

An active social and political worker, Shri Soy worked relentlessly for the welfare and upliftment of weaker sections of the society.

Shri Hari Charan Soy passed away on 7 October, 1999 at Gopidih Village, West Singbhum District, Bihar at the age of 77.

Shrimati Uma Roy was a Member of Fourth Lok Sabha representing Malda Parliamentary Constituency of West Bengal from 1967 to 1970.

Earlier, Shrimati Roy was elected as a Member of West Bengal Legislative Council from Malda on 5 June, 1966.

An active social and political worker, Shrimati Roy worked relentlessly for the welfare and upliftment of women. She was actively associated with a number of educational and social organizations.

She also served as Member of the West Bengal Social Welfare Board, Khadi & Village Industries Board and National Savings Organization of West Bengal.

Shrimati Uma Roy passed away on 19 December, 1999 at Mokdumpur, West Bengal, at the age of 80.

Shri Jagannath Choudhary was a Member of Eighth Lok Sabha representing Ballia Parliamentary Constituency of Uttar Pradesh from 1984 to 1989.

Earlier, Shri Choudhary was a Member of Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly from 1957 to 1977 and Legislative Council from April, 1984 to December, 1984.

An agriculturist as well as an active social and political worker, Shri Choudhary ably served his home state while holding various ministerial portfolios in the State Government of Uttar Pradesh. He also served as the Chairman of Question and Reference Committee in the State Legislature.

Shri Jagannath Choudhary passed away on 31 December, 1999 at Ballia, Uttar Pradesh at the age of 75.

Shri Umed Singh Rathia was a Member of Fifth Lok Sabha representing Raigarh Parliamentary Constituency of Madhya Pradesh from 1971 to 1977.

Earlier, Shri Rathia was a Member of Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly from 1957 to 1962 and 1967 to 1971.

An agriculturist by profession, Shri Rathia worked relentlessly for the welfare and upliftment of weaker sections of the society.

An active social and political worker, Shri Rathia served as the President of Khadi Gram Udyog Gur Khandsari Society and Director of Land Mortgage Bank.

Shri Umed Singh Rathia passed away on 25 January, 2000 at his native place at the age of 77.

Shri Santoshrao Gode was a Member of Sixth Lok Sabha representing Wardha Parliamentary Constituency of Maharashtra from 1977 to 1979.

During his active public life, Shri Gode served his state in various capacities. He served on various local developmental bodies. He evinced special interest in village development and planning.

An able Parliamentarian, Shri Gode took keen interest in the proceedings of the House.

Shri Santoshrao Gode passed away on 6 February, 2000 at Bordharan, District Wardha Maharashtra at the age of 74.

We deeply mourn the loss of these friends and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved families.

Now, the hon. Prime Minister.

[Translation]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I associate my self with the deep sorrow expressed by your goodself on the sad demise of former President, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma and other hon'ble members of the House. Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma was at the pinnacle of Indian politics. He left an indelible impression on our public life by virtue of his erudition, hard labour and merit and carved a niche for himself in the history. He belonged to Bhopal. Bhopal was his birth place but he had his education in Lucknow. Dr. Sahib played a leading role in the movement for setting up a responsible government in Bhopal and was arrested. Later on he became the Chief Minister of Bhopal. He had an inalienable affinity with Lucknow. He started his career as a lawyer in Lucknow. He was a student and later he become a teacher also in Lucknow university. It was a unique feat. He was immensely popular as a student and participated in various activities of the student's movement, took a leading part in sports and related activities and at the same time used to stand first in the examination. Besides taking part in the freedom movement, he had keen interest in literature, culture and spiritualism. He made valuable contributions to this field also as a blessed son of 'Saraswati' the goddess of learning. Perhaps Dr. Sharma had a multifaceted personality.

He was a member of the Legislative Assembly, then a member of Lok Sabha and after that a member of Rajya Sabha. He assumed the office of Chief Minister, served as a union Minister and later as the Governor and added to the dignity of the offices of the Vice-President and President. He occupied several posts to the top but he always maintained the dignity and decorum of each post. He took crucial and farsighted decisions which will also be quoted in future. He is no more amidst us today but his life and deeds will always be a source of inspiration for us. Please convey the feelings of the entire House to Shrimati Vimla Sharma and her family and also to the bereaved families of other hon. members.

[English]

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI (Amethi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the Congress Party and on my own behalf, I join the Prime Minister in paying homage to a distinguished and respected son of India. Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma's long life was a life of service and dedication to the people and to the nation. He participated in the freedom struggle. He was, therefore, associated with the Congress from the very beginning.

He also presided over the Congress Party at a critical time and he did so with great elan. As a Member of Parliament, as a Union Minister, as a Chief Minister, as a Governor, as the Vice-President and finally as the President, he made invaluable contributions to our national life and he raised the level of our political and legislative dialogue. His scholarship, his erudition and his deeply ingrained secularism was an inspiration to us all. He was truly a representative of the composite culture of India and he distinguished himself in every activity and every sphere of his interest. He endowed with an engaging personality, a gracious courtesy and infectious sense of humour and, above all, he had a deep knowledge of our history, of world history and of our heritage. He was, I believe, not only a great citizen of our country, but was also a great citizen of the world.

I take this opportunity to convey to Shrimati Vimala Sharma and to her family my deep felt condolences. I also take this opportunity to convey on behalf of the Congress Party and on my own behalf, my deep felt condolences to the bereaved families of the hon. Members of the House who passed away during the last Session.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of my Party and on my own behalf, I associate with what has been said about the friends whom we have lost during the Inter-Session period and I pay my homage to their memory.

We have had the great privilege of having Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma here, as a colleague; and then, we have had the occasion of knowing him in various capacities. A man of great erudition, true learning and a man of catholic approach, he was a true statesman. Whoever came near him felt the compassion that he had for the vulnerable sections of the community in our country. A man committed to true fundamentals of our Constitution and our constituent setup, a secularist to the core, he dedicated his life for the all-round development of our people. He occupied the highest office of this country with great lustre and added new dimensions to some of them.

He had the highest affection for the hon. Members of Parliament. We remember the occasions that we have had of responding to his invitations for breakfast. This is symbolic but what he wanted to have was an interaction with the Members of Parliament. We used to look up to him for good advice and guidance. In his passing away, we have really lost a great Indian, a great pillar of India's culture and a true statesman. I sincerely mourn his loss.

The infectious smile and the affection that he exuded towards others are very difficult to forget. A man who reached the heart of anybody who went to him easily, everybody who met him would have genuine respect and regard for a great person, great Indian and a great human being. It is very difficult to think of us without his benign presence and without his guidance but we have to carry on. Unfortunately, leaders of that calibre are becoming fewer and fewer in our country and that is a matter of concern. It was never that he had any narrowness; never did he display any attitude which would affect our polity, the greatness of our country and that was what was inspiring for all of us.

I convey my deepest sense of sympathy to Shrimati Sharma and the members of his family. I also associate with what you have said about the other former Members who passed away and I convey my sincere condolences to the members of the respective families.

SHRI K. YERRANNAIDU (Srikulam) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on my behalf and on behalf of the Telugu Desam Party, I share the sentiments expressed by the hon. Prime Minister and other Leaders about the sacrifices rendered by Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, former President of India.

Dr. Sharma led a very exemplary political life and stood as a model for all of us. As you are aware, he was the Governor of Andhra Pradesh. I was a Member of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly at that time. He had given life to democracy by reinstalling the N. T. Rama Rao Government at that time.

He used to love the people of Andhra Pradesh. He was the ardent follower of Lord Venkateswara of Tirupati. He used to visit the temple very frequently. He was the Governor of Andhra Pradesh. Once again, on my own behalf and on behalf of my party, I would like to convey my deep condolences to the bereaved family of Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma.

[Translation]

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV (Sambhal) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I associate myself and the members of my party with the views expressed by the hon. Prime Minister and other leaders over the sad demise of hon. former President late Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma. Whatever has been said about the Late Shri Sharma is too small to

express his gamut of activities. Unfortunately, there has been a degeneration of political values and a great leader like hon. Dr. Sharma who is an ideal for us, always cherished the political values. The generation which was a follower of Gandhian values is gradually vanishing. We have full faith in Dr. Sharma and his ideals. It is my good fortune that once he expressed his opinion about me which become a source of inspiration for me. The people like me and several others belong to such a society. He had a great concern for the deprived people of the country. He used to get overwhelmed while speaking about the present political scenario. Even while holding the office of the President inspite of restraints he expressed his opinion, without any fear or favour. He was an eminent educationist and used to share his concern over the problems being faced by the country and the world too. There have been a few leaders in our country who match his intelligence and knowledge. We used to say even before him that he was a great scholar and intellectual and was a large hearted. He was a true patriot in real sense whether it may be the issue of Rastrabhasa or otherwise. Hon. Members might recall that once when he was the Vice-President, I and Dr. Sharma went to Agra to participate in a programme. We knew that his speech was a prepared text but even then he openly expressed his views about the problems of the country and the 'Rashtrabhasa'. He also expressed his concern over the fact that even after such a long period of Independence, we have not been able to evolve our National language.

We had got a chance to work closely with him. Sometimes, we also expressed our unhappiness towards him but he never kept these things in his mind. These was a tradition that on the eve of the commencement of each session the hon. President used to call the Members of Parliament for tea etc. and have a open discussion with them. Now such traditions are being ignored. Sometimes he used to force us to eat more. This reflected his intimacy, simplicity and the practical attitude towards life. He would be a source of inspiration for the future generations. Despite serving on various important posts he maintained his identity. Today such a great leader, educationist, social reformer and a man well versed in every field of knowledge is no longer with us but his deeds would be source of inspiration for the coming generations. On my own behalf, and on behalf of the Samajwadi Party I, once again convey my deep condolences to the wife, the bereaved family and near and dear ones of Shri Sharma.

KUMARI MAYAWATI (Akbarpur) : Hon. Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of my party, I express my condolences on the sad demise of Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma. While associating myself with the views of leaders of various political parties highlighting his life and works, I would like to say that in 1995 I had got a chance to meet him and had a dialogue with him for about one hour. After speaking to him, I felt that he was an excellent man, of

polite nature and considerate and accommodating. His sad demise has left a big void in our country. On behalf of my party, I would like to say that the Government should continue to cooperate with his family and to those who are known to him. I express my condolences over his sad demise and pray to Almighty that his family may get solace and may not face any problem and pains in their life.

[English]

SHRI P. H. PANDIYAN (Tirunelveli) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of myself and on behalf of the AIADMK Party, I associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and also the leaders of the other political parties.

Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma was a great statesman. He sacrificed his whole life for the country. He was a scholar. He had adorned all the constitutional offices. While he was the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha in 1987, I was the Presiding Officers of the Tamil Nadu Assembly. I had an occasion to meet him. He exercised his sturdy independence in protecting the sovereignty of Parliament. At one stage, when he was presiding over the Rajya Sabha, a Minister tried to advise him. He turned it down saying that he was in the House for so many years and he had the rich experience. In that way, he conducted well both inside the House and outside the House.

As Shri Yerrannaidu has said a little while ago, while he was the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, he had installed Shri N.T. Rama Rao again in the saddle. That showed his courage and conviction in democracy. It is a rare quality of a Governor while discharging his constitutional obligations.

We are not able to come across such a personality in these times. The younger generation should evolve the courage, conviction, character, scholarship and erudition from the late Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma.

I express my sentiments on behalf of my party and myself to the bereaved family.

SHRI PURNO A. SANGMA (Tura) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and all other friends who spoke before me.

It is very difficult to describe a personality like the Late Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma. He was, no doubt, one of the most scholarly politicians that India had produced. Being such a scholarly person, what was amazing was his ability to communicate with the most common people of this country.

I had the opportunity of meeting him first in 1974 when I was a Youth Congress activist. Dr. Sharma was

the President of the AICC. We met him. He was so good to us. We were inspired so much by him, we were encouraged so much by him that we, a few young people in the North-Eastern Region, in the midst of the regional parties ruling in those areas, could fight and we could organise our party.

Another aspect of Dr. Sharma's quality which I admired so much was his humility. In 1980, when I was just a Deputy-Minister for Industries, Dr. Sharma happened to be Chairman of the 20-Point Implementation Committee of the AICC.

I had occasions to travel with Dr. Sharma in many parts of the country, particularly in the North-Eastern area. I was amazed with the humility that he executed. Having been the AICC President, having been the Union Minister he would never go forward, he would always stay backward and that he was really a source of inspiration to young people like us in those days. Of course, he was one of the most hospitable politicians that we have had. In fact, I used to tell: Why are you so aggressive in your hospitality? To have lost leader of that stature, it is a big loss for all of us, for the country. I pray to the Almighty God that his soul may rest in peace. On behalf of my party, the NCP, I express my heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Sharma and other members of the bereaved family and I also extend my condolences to the members of the bereaved families of those members whom we have lost during the inter-Session.

SHRIMATI KRISHNA BOSE (Jadavpur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I, on behalf of our leader, Kumari Mamata Banerjee, and all my colleagues from Trinamool Congress would like to associate ourselves with the sentiments expressed by all the hon. Members. We pay our homage to the memory of the departed souls, distinguished persons whom we lost in the inter-Session period.

My special homage goes to Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma. Yes, as some of my colleagues said, we remember with great affection all the break-fast meetings that we used to have with him. Break-fast meetings once upon a time were a very special things for our first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. After him, I found Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma was the person who kept on calling us on various break-fast meetings where we exchanged views on national and international situation. But above all, he was a man of humour and I remember all the witty things that he used to say during those meetings.

I had a special privilege. Whenever I went to him in connection with any work that we did for Netaji Subash Chandra Bose, he always responded immediately. One such meeting I remember was during the Centenary of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose when we asked him to

release the special volume we had brought about - "Essential Writings of Subash Chandra Bose", he very gladly arranged for a function and released it at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

We remember him with great affection. He was a scholarly person, apart from being a politician and a statesman. I offer our heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Sharma, the Member of the family and also to the members of the families of all those who had lost their dear ones in the recent past.

[Translation]

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE (Ratnagiri) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I associate myself with the views and sentiments expressed by the hon. Prime Minister, leader of the opposition party and other leaders over the sad demise of the former President Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma. Dr. Sharma had a great attachment to Maharashtra. Whenever he visited Maharashtra, he visited Saibaba at Shirdi and also Pandharpur. I am a member of this House since the Eleventh Lok Sabha and I had many occasions to visit Rashtrapati Bhavan during the period of the Eleventh Lok Sabha.

He used to call Members over tea statewide and used to discuss with them prevailing political condition of the country and also the problems relating to the States. He had a knowledge of many languages. He possessed a sound knowledge of Marathi and was also good at speaking it. He was a great patriot. He had the fortune of holding the highest post of the country and he added to the dignity of every post he held. When the new MPs like us went to visit him, he used to talk with us very affectionately and try to resolve our problems.

Today, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma is no more. The ideals set by him whether they are in the political sphere or social sphere, will always prove to be the role model for the activists like us who are working in these spheres. I associate myself and my party in conveying our condolences to the bereaved family.

[English]

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura) : Hon. Speaker, Sir, I associate myself with all that has been said by way of condolence by the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the leaders of all other parties.

Dr. Sharma was a great son of India. He was a man of erudition and he was also successful as an administrator. He was very much concerned for those who were deprived in their life. I do remember that we went to him very often with women's demands and he

was always greatly sympathetic towards us. Likewise, he was also sympathetic towards other deprived sections of the society. So, as many of us said, during the breakfast meetings he was really one of the most affectionate persons that I have ever seen in such a great post.

Sir, on behalf of my party, the Communist Party of India, and on my own behalf, I offer my heartfelt condolence and sympathy to Shrimati Sharma. I also offer my condolence for the other friends who passed away during the Inter-Session period and extend my sympathy to their families.

[Translation]

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of Muslim League I associate myself with the sentiments of sorrow and grief expressed in the House, over the sad demise of the Hon. former President, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma and six other hon. Members of Parliament. As regards the former late President Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, he was a personality of memorable events and it is very difficult to decide as to which event be chosen for a mention. But I find it necessary to mention about an event. Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma was the President of our country when Babri Mosque was demolished. We went to him with our broken hearts, and were in a state of despondency and grief. He gave a healing touch to our wounded heart, pacified our emotions and asked us to have faith in the democratic traditions of India.

Definitely, our country has lost a great son of the soil. A poet has rightly remarked about such great personalities.

"Mat Sahal Hame jano, Firta Falak Barson,

Tab Khak ke parde se Insaan Nikalta Hai."

We pay our tributes to that great personality.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: The House may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the deceased.

13.50½ hrs.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while

13.51 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR) : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following Ordinances (Hindi and English Versions) under article 123 (2) (a) of the Constitution:

- (1) The Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions (Amendment) Ordinance, 2000 (No. 1 of 2000), promulgated by the President on the 17th January, 2000 .

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1290/2000]

- (2) The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Ordinance, 2000 (No. 2 of 2000), promulgated by the President on the 24th January, 2000.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 1291/2000]

13.51½ hrs.

BILL AS PASSED BY RAJYA SABHA - Laid

[English]

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I lay on the Table the Mizoram University Bill, 1999, as passed by Rajya Sabha.

MR. SPEAKER : The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow, the 24th February, 2000 at 11 A.M.

13.52 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, February 24, 2000/Phalgun 5, 1921 (Saka).

**Corrigenda to Lok Sabha Debates
(English Version)**

Wednesday, February 23, 2000/Phalguna 4, 1921 (Saka)

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<u>Col./line</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Read</u>
Page iii	Add Basavanagoud, Shri Kolar (Bellary) after Barwala, Shri Surendra Singh (Hissa)	
Page iv	Add ,U.P. after Chandra Shekhar Shri (Ballia)	
Page v	Jagathrakshakan S. Dr.(Arakkonam)	Jagathrakshakan Dr.S (Arakkonam)
Page vii	Delete Mukherjee Shrimati Geeta (Panskura) after Moorthy, Shri A.K.(Chengalpattu)	
Page viii	Patil, Shri Basangounda R. (Yatnal)(Bijapur)	Patil, Shri Basangouda R. (Yatnal)(Bijapur)
Page viii	Add Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav, Shri (Purnea) after Rajendran, Shri P.(Quilon)	
Page ix	Scindia, Shri Madhavrao	Shri Madhavrao Scindia,
Page x	Sharma, Shri Vishnu Datt	Sharma, Vaidya Vishnu Datt
Page x	Shervani Shri Saleem Iqbal	Shervani Shri Saleem I.
Page xi	Add Yadav, Shri Akhilesh (Kannauj) after Yadav, Dr. Jaswant Singh (Alwar)	
Page xvi	Shrimati Sumitra Bahajan	Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan

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