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CONTENTS

	PAGE
EDITORIAL NOTE	141
ADDRESSES	
Address by the President of India to Parliament	143
Addresses at the Conferment of the Outstanding Parliamentarian Award, 1996 on Shri Somnath Chatterjee, MP	153
Addresses at the Inauguration of the Eighth Conference of the Chairmen of the Committees on Public Accounts of Parliament and State Legislatures	166
ARTICLES	
Subject Committee System in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly — Satyabrata Dutta	175
PARLIAMENTARY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES	
Conferences and Symposia	182
Birth Anniversaries of National Leaders	182
Parliamentary Delegations visiting India	183
Indian Parliamentary Delegations going abroad	184
Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training	184
PROCEDURAL MATTERS	186
PARLIAMENTARY AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS	187
SESSIONAL REVIEW	
Lok Sabha	191
Rajya Sabha	206
State Legislatures	211

BOOK REVIEW

**Ravindra Kumar, ed. *Selected Works, of Vithalbai J. Patel*
(eight volumes)**

— Rabi Ray

214

RECENT LITERATURE OF PARLIAMENTARY INTEREST

221

APPENDICES

- | | |
|--|-----|
| I. Statement showing the activities of the Legislatures of the States and Union territories during the period 1 January to 31 March 1997 | 226 |
| II. List of Bills passed by the Houses of Parliament and assented to by the President during the period 1 January to 31 March 1997 | 232 |
| III. List of Bills passed by the Legislatures of States and Union territories during the period 1 January to 31 March 1997 | 233 |
| IV. Ordinances promulgated by the Union and State Governments during the period 1 January to 31 March 1997 | 238 |
| V. Party position in the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha and the Legislatures of the States and the Union territories | 242 |

EDITORIAL NOTE

The Constitution of India provides for an Address by the President to either House of Parliament or both the Houses assembled together. The President may address both the Houses of Parliament assembled together or either House of Parliament separately as per provisions of articles 86(1) and 87(1) of the Constitution. Under art. 86(1), the President may address either House of Parliament or both the Houses assembled together, and for that purpose require the attendance of members. Art. 87(1) provides that at the commencement of the First Session after each General Election to the House of the People and at the commencement of the first Session of each year, the President shall address members of both the Houses of Parliament assembled together and inform Parliament of the causes of its summons.

On 20 February 1997, the President of India, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma addressed the members of the two Houses of Parliament assembled together in the Central Hall of Parliament House at the commencement of the first Session of Parliament in 1997. We reproduce in this issue of the *Journal* the text of the Address by the President.

It may be recalled that in 1995, the Indian Parliamentary Group (IPG) initiated an Award to be conferred on an Outstanding Parliamentarian in honour of his/her contributions to the strengthening of parliamentary democracy in the country. The first such Award was bestowed on the former Prime Minister of India, Shri Chandra Shekhar on 12 December 1995.

On 19 March 1997, at a function held in the Central Hall of Parliament House, the President of India, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma conferred the IPG's Outstanding Parliamentarian Award for the year 1996 on Shri Somnath Chatterjee, MP. On the occasion, the distinguished gathering in the Central Hall was addressed by the President, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma; the Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri K.R. Narayanan; the Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda; the Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P.A. Sangma; and Shri Somnath Chatterjee, MP. The texts of the Addresses delivered by the dignitaries at the function are included in this issue.

The Eighth Conference of the Chairmen of the Committees on Public Accounts of Parliament and State Legislatures was held in New Delhi on 15-16 March 1997. The Conference was inaugurated by the Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P.A. Sangma. The inaugural function was also addressed by the Chairman of the Committee on Public Accounts of Parliament and the Chairman of the Conference, Dr. Murl Manohar Joshi. We reproduce in this issue, the texts of the Addresses delivered by the dignitaries on the occasion.

One of the cardinal functions of the Legislature is to ensure Executive accountability to the legislative institution. Modern day Legislatures, over-

burdened as they are with multiple functions, have resorted to the Committee System to scrutinize the Budget and the earning and spending processes of public funds. In our country, the Kerala Legislative Assembly was the first to experiment with the Committee System, followed by the West Bengal Legislative Assembly. At the national level, in 1989, Parliament constituted three Subject-based Committees to begin with. The ambit of the Committee System was widened with the setting up of 17 Departmentally-related Standing Committees in 1993.

In his article titled "Subject Committee System in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly", Dr. Satyabrata Dutta traces the origin and growth of the Committee System in the State. The State Legislative Assembly, which started with three Subject Committees in 1989, has now ten such Committees covering major administrative Departments of the State Government. The author makes a detailed study of the Reports presented by some of the Committees. He also refers extensively to the valuable recommendations made in the Final Report of the *ad hoc* Committee on the Question of Subject Committee. Dr. Dutta observes that the success of the Committee System ultimately depends, among other things, on the quality of the legislators and how the members develop specialization and expertise on the subjects of their concern. An adequate legislative support system, backed by a competent research team and requisite secretarial assistance and library service, is indispensable for the efficient working of the Committees, he concludes.

This issue of the *Journal* also carries a Review by the former Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Shri Rabi Ray, of the title *Selected Works of Vithalbhai J. Patel* (eight volumes), edited by Shri Ravindra Kumar.

Besides, this issue also includes our other regular Features, viz. Parliamentary Events and Activities, Procedural Matters, Parliamentary and Constitutional Developments, Sessional Review and Recent Literature of Parliamentary Interest.

It has been our constant endeavour to make the *Journal* more useful and informative. We would greatly welcome practice and problem-oriented non-partisan articles in the field of parliamentary procedures and institutions from members of Parliament and State Legislatures, scholars and others interested in the practice of parliamentary democracy.

—S. Gopalan
Editor

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA TO PARLIAMENT

The Constitution of India provides for an Address by the President to either House of Parliament or both the Houses assembled together. The President may address both the Houses of Parliament assembled together or either House of Parliament separately as per provisions of articles 86(1) and 87(1) of the Constitution. Under art. 86(1), the President may address either House of Parliament or both the Houses assembled together, and for that purpose require the attendance of members. Art. 87(1) provides that at the commencement of the First Session after each General Election to the House of the People and at the commencement of the first Session of each year, the President shall address members of both the Houses of Parliament assembled together and inform Parliament of the causes of its summons.

On 20 February 1997, the President of India, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma addressed the members of the two Houses of Parliament assembled together in the Central Hall of Parliament House at the commencement of the First Session of Parliament in 1997. We reproduce below the text of the Address.

—Editor

Honourable Members,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the first Session of Parliament in 1997. I felicitate the new members and extend to you all my best wishes for the successful completion of the budgetary and legislative business that lies ahead.

This is my first Address to Parliament after the present Government assumed Office. The Common Minimum Programme of the United Front contains the basic agenda on crucial areas of national development, equity, social justice and secularism. It is a bridge for our society and people towards greater prosperity and well-being. It contains specific policies and guidelines for strengthening our federal structure, empowerment of disadvantaged sections, especially the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, the Other Backward Classes and the minorities, for providing basic minimum services and for eradicating poverty and ignorance. The Common Minimum Programme also lays emphasis upon evolving policies for rapid economic growth by attracting massive investments in industry and infrastructure.

This Programme thus strikes a fine balance between economic growth on the one hand, and concern for equity and distributive justice on the other. The Government is firmly committed to achieving these objectives.

Under our democratic federal polity, coalition Governments can be stable and promote durable socio-economic development. The Constitution has

excellent features defining the relations between the Union and the States. The Government will respect the constitutional provisions without any discrimination and endeavour to strengthen the arrangements for a cooperative approach to our national problems. We are sure that all States will extend their cooperation in preserving these institutions and in making their deliberations more useful for the Union and the States.

The Government has imparted a measure of dynamism to the Inter-State Council, the National Development Council, the Planning Commission and also held periodic Conferences of Chief Ministers. The Inter-State Council, at its meeting on 15 October 1996, accepted a majority of the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission for implementation by the Government. A Standing Committee, which shall be a permanent Committee of the Inter-State Council, has been set up to review the remaining recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission, especially those relating to devolution of financial powers to the States and changes required in art. 356 of the Constitution. The unanimity shown at the Conferences of Chief Ministers on Basic Minimum Services and on problems of the power sector have led to the formulation of time-bound programmes for improving the quality of life in rural areas and to the adoption of the National Common Minimum Action Plan for Power. The approach document for the Ninth Five Year Plan was prepared by the Planning Commission in record time, and was unanimously endorsed by the National Development Council at its meeting on 16 January 1997. This spirit of cooperation augurs well for the timely launch of the Ninth Five Year Plan.

Panchayati Raj institutions and Nagar Palikas provide an ideal framework for planning, formulating and executing programmes for economic development and social justice. The Government is keen to secure adequate devolution of powers and funds to these institutions. The passage of law by Parliament during its last Session extending Part IX of the Constitution to the Scheduled Areas is a historic event and amply demonstrates this commitment.

Integrity and impartiality in public life and in the conduct of all public servants are the foundations of democracy. To increase transparency and accountability in administration at all levels, the Government has initiated a national debate on Effective and Responsive Administration. The Government intends to consider various views on this subject and place an action plan before a Conference of Chief Ministers soon. The Government is concerned about corruption in public life and is determined to take effective steps to eradicate this evil. The Lok Pal Bill has been introduced in the Lok Sabha and a beginning has been made to reform the electoral process with the passage of the Representation of the People (Amendment) Act, 1996. Efforts are on to introduce a more comprehensive Bill in Parliament on this subject in consultation with all political parties.

The challenges to internal security of the nation cannot be

underestimated. These destabilising influences emanate both from within the country and from outside. The Government is fully conscious of these forces and have met these challenges with determination. The sustained operation against terrorists coupled with vigorous welfare and development efforts have brought about a qualitative improvement in the situation in Jammu & Kashmir.

The successful conduct of Assembly elections and the installation of a popular Government in Jammu & Kashmir have been major steps forward in the process of restoration of normalcy. The Prime Minister had announced a special economic package for the revival of the State's economy during the last Monsoon Session of Parliament. Action has already been taken to implement it.

The activities of militant groups in a few States in the North-East continue to cause concern. These groups are taking advantage of the difficult terrain along the long international borders. The Government has taken major diplomatic initiatives with our neighbours to tackle this problem. It is also taking effective steps to tackle the situation in this region through a multipronged strategy, including the economic uplift of the region. A comprehensive package aimed at accelerating the pace of development in the North-Eastern region was announced in October last. A High Level Commission on Infrastructure Development and Basic Services and a High Level Expert Committee on the creation of employment opportunities for the educated unemployed have been set up.

In Punjab, the successful conduct of elections of local government institutions and the State Assembly demonstrates the abiding faith of the people of the State in democracy and their commitment to peace and harmony.

The Indian economy is firmly set on a high-growth path and our objective of ensuring at least 7% growth during the Ninth Plan period is feasible. During the last three years, the economy has been growing at an average rate of about 7% per annum. While agricultural production has been growing at about 2.6%, industrial production has grown at an average rate of over 10%. The foreign currency reserves have grown steadily and are presently at about 19.5 billion US dollars.

The Government is committed to economic reforms aimed at faster economic growth. To create an environment conducive to private investment, laws and policies are being suitably adapted for each sector. Procedures have been simplified to provide for quicker clearance of proposals and to make the process transparent. Action has also been initiated to create the confidence that investors will get fair and equal treatment.

The Foreign Investment Promotion Board has been thoroughly revamped to ensure that decision making is quicker and more transparent. Foreign Investment Promotion Council has been set up to promote smooth in-flow

of foreign capital. The list of industries eligible for automatic approval has been further enlarged. Specific guidelines for foreign investment have been laid down for each sector. We are committed to achieving our goal of attracting at least \$10 billion a year as foreign direct investment.

Similarly, in the financial sector, the banking system is being geared up to conform to international norms. With the introduction of depositories and modernisation of stock exchanges, settlements are expected to be faster to attract institutional investment. We are taking steps to attract long-term pension and insurance funds from abroad.

However, to sustain this buoyancy in the economy, substantial augmentation of investment in crucial infrastructure areas such as power, transport and irrigation is essential. The formation of the new Infrastructure Development Finance Company will fill critical gaps in financing viable infrastructure projects. In the all important power sector counter guarantees have been extended to five fast track power projects in the private sector. The adoption of the Common Minimum National Action Plan for Power is an important initiative towards devolution of decision-making authority to the States, the restructuring of State Electricity Boards and the rationalization of tariff. Recently, the Government has decided to allow private investment in power transmission.

In the case of ports, a comprehensive policy has been announced for attracting private investment and providing for automatic approval for foreign equity upto 74%. Development of highways in India on modern lines will receive impetus through expansion of the capital base of the National Highways Authority of India. An Ordinance has also been promulgated amending the National Highways Act, 1955, and the National Highways Authority of India Act, 1988, paving the way for speedy acquisition of land and private investment in road building. The Government has also made a systematic effort to extend the Railway network in areas hitherto neglected, such as the North-East.

The process of opening up the mining sector to allow foreign and Indian private investment has taken a step further with the issue of guidelines for granting large areas for prospecting licences in October 1996. A fresh Ordinance for establishing a statutory telecom regulatory authority has been promulgated. The Government is set to make basic telecom services operational by resolving pending issues.

The oil and gas policy has to subserve the growth of the economy as a significant industrial power in the next decade. With increased growth in the demand for these products and the recent increases in the international prices of petroleum products, the deficit in the Oil Pool Account will reach about Rs. 15,500 crore by the end of the current year. Healthy development of the oil sector in the country demands that the Oil Pool Account is in balance. We have to make massive investment in the oil sector to step up exploration and production. We should generate enough resources not only to cover current costs but also to take care of fresh investments.

Vigorous growth in agriculture has to go hand in hand with fast industrial development. This is essential both for removing poverty and for meeting the increasing demand for agricultural products. Agricultural development in rain-fed, drought-prone and degraded land is a matter of high priority. The watershed development approach, combining modern land management and water conservation practices, is the most appropriate instrument to bring quick and sustained growth to the poor living in these areas. The Government is committed to bringing together all the sub-systems constituting watershedbased development under one umbrella to facilitate sharper focus, better integration and more efficient micro-level planning and programme implementation.

Research through Indian Council of Agricultural Research and State Agricultural Universities has to be stepped up to address specific problems of local areas and for taking fruits of the frontier areas of science to the farmer. Soil testing facilities have been extended to a large part of the country. Tissue culture research in our country has provided an impetus to the commercialisation and large-scale application of this technology for horticulture and afforestation of wastelands. Hybrid rice is one of the main avenues for enhancing productivity and production of rice. The Indian Agricultural Research Institute is releasing a Basmati hybrid rice variety which will boost production and export of quality rice. Five hybrid varieties of rice have-already been released for commercial cultivation. Thus India has emerged as the second largest hybrid rice growing country in the world. This year also witnessed the opening of the National Gene Bank in New Delhi which is one of the largest in the world. A High Level Committee has been set up to examine comprehensively the issues involved in the application of advancements in frontier sciences at the farm level.

Irrigation has always been a thrust area for agricultural development. However, targets for increasing the potential of irrigation have suffered a setback in the Eighth Plan. The Government initiated the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme in 1996-97. The Rural Infrastructure Development Fund of NABARD has been strengthened to achieve similar results in rural infrastructure, especially in irrigation and watershed development.

Provision of irrigation facilities for small and marginal farmers, especially those belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, has received impetus through a new programme called *Ganga Kalyan*. Under this programme, farmers will be supported to take up schemes for ground water and surface water utilisation through liberal subsidy, maintenance support and credit arrangements.

A National Commission has been set up to prepare an integrated water conservation and utilisation plan and recommend steps for the use of surplus water in an efficient manner to meet the requirements of water deficit areas. The Government is also working towards a National Policy for Irrigation

Management and for humane resettlement and rehabilitation of persons displaced by large irrigation projects.

The fundamental objective of our economic development is the removal of poverty. Programmes for generation of employment, creation of assets, improvement of skills and the raising of incomes of very poor people have all been strengthened. Outlays on these programmes for reduction of poverty will be doubled during the Ninth Five Year Plan.

The Employment Assurance Scheme and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme are being extended to the entire country by April 1997. Similarly, the Schemes for self-employment are being strengthened. These programmes are being reoriented and directed towards artisans and craftspersons, educated unemployed youth and other groups of the poor. At least one million educated unemployed youth will be supported every year to start viable enterprises and businesses through better subsidy, training and credit arrangements.

A major priority of the Government is to initiate and implement a set of concrete measures for providing basic minimum services to improve the quality of life of the poor. Expenditure on these Basic Minimum Services will not only provide much needed social amenities, but will also generate employment and play a major role in reviving the rural economy and society in the most backward regions of India. This is the only way to enable our workers, farmers and artisans to participate in the process of economic transformation. At the Conference of Chief Ministers held in July 1996 it was decided to implement a time-bound programme for achieving seven basic minimum services. These are :

- (i) Provision of Safe Drinking Water in every habitation;
- (ii) Provision of efficient Primary Health-Care for every group of 5000 persons;
- (iii) Universal and Compulsory primary education and measures to spread literacy;
- (iv) Provision of Public Housing Assistance to shelterless poor persons;
- (v) Connecting villages/habitations with link roads to the nearest market or the main road;
- (vi) Nutrition support to children belonging to poor families during pre-school and elementary education stages; and
- (vii) Streamlining the Public Distribution System with focus on the poor.

Special Central assistance of Rs. 2,216 crore was placed at the disposal of the States for implementing these programmes blending national commitment with local initiatives. A new and targeted Public Distribution System has been announced to benefit the population below the poverty line, with foodgrains at specially subsidised prices. As many as 32 crore people below poverty line will benefit under the new system, in addition



The President, Dr Shanker Dayal Sharma arriving in procession to address Member of Parliament on 20 February 1997

to those participating in rural wage employment schemes such as Employment Assurance Scheme and Jawahar Rozgar Yojana.

The real benefits of these development programmes would accrue only if the growth in population is curbed. The new orientation given to the Family Welfare Programme by doing away with the system of setting targets and replacing it by decentralised participatory planning at the primary health centre level is expected to bring about greater involvement of the service providers leading to improvement in quality of services and acceptance of the small family norm.

The Government is committed to bridging the gap in the levels of development of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, backward classes and minorities and to bring them on par with the rest of the society. The idea is to eliminate all forms of exploitation and enhance the flow of funds for their social and economic progress through sub-plans, special central assistance and the National Finance and Development Corporations. For better training and rehabilitation of Safai Karamcharis, the National Safai Karamchhari Finance and Development Corporation has been established. We are also keen to promote gender equality and removal of discrimination against women. As you know, the Government has already introduced a Bill for reservation of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies to ensure their better participation in policy making.

The Government is committed to protect the interests of all workers, especially those in the unorganised sector. Towards this end, two Bills were passed this year to promote the health, safety and welfare of 90 lakh construction workers. We have launched a concerted drive for effective enforcement of laws on minimum wages, child labour and bonded labour. A Central legislation for agricultural workers to guarantee them minimum wages and fair conditions of work is being introduced in Parliament soon.

The Government is committed to implementing the law relating to provision of equal opportunities, protection of rights and full participation of disabled persons. Rules under this important legislation have already been notified by the Centre and State Governments are being requested to take similar action at the earliest. A National Corporation for creating more job opportunities for the disabled persons has already been established.

The Government recognises that science and technology are important for economic progress. In the everchanging global scenario, our research and development, technology transfer and diffusion are the critical determinants of our competitiveness. There is now a need for a massive renewal of our science and technology infrastructure in both public and private sectors. The Government has recently approved a revised apex-level structure for coordinating science and technology activities.

Our nuclear science and technology have achieved noteworthy progress in harnessing nuclear energy for electricity generation with the reaching of

criticality of the *Kamini* reactor at Kalpakkam. India is in the forefront in the application of space technology for national development. The success of PSLV has made our country self-reliant in the launching of the IRS class of satellites and substantial progress has been made in the development of the Geo-Synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle. The resolution of imagery from Indian satellites with our own cameras is among the best in the world, and our space products are now being sold in the global markets. I must congratulate all scientists working on these projects.

Men and Officers of the Army and Para-Military Forces have continued to render valuable assistance to civil authorities, including in the peaceful conduct of Parliamentary and Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, despite sustained efforts from across our border to foment trouble. The contribution of our Armed Forces in difficult relief and rescue missions has been exemplary.

The Armed Forces remain in a state of constant preparedness to safeguard our territorial integrity. Strengthening the defence of the nation is among the foremost priorities of the Government on which there can be no compromise. The Government is conscious of the urgent need for modernising the Armed Forces, and is committed to provide all the inputs which may be needed for fulfilling this objective. Acquisition of technologically superior armament, along with the continued upgradation of our existing equipment, will help to considerably strengthen the defences of the nation.

The Ten Years' National Mission for enhancing self-reliance in Defence Systems is making excellent progress. The production of the versatile Main Battle Tank *Arjun* will start from this year. The country has attained the capability to design and field any type of missile systems needed by the Services. The modernisation of the Navy is a matter of urgency and a number of steps to upgrade and equip our Navy for its needs are being taken. The Light Combat Aircraft project is also making steady progress towards its flight trial during this year.

The positive results of our constructive and pragmatic foreign policy are becoming increasingly evident as far as relations with our immediate neighbours are concerned. We have consistently sought mutually beneficial relations with them, both on a bilateral basis as well as through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. The active role played by India as the current Chairman of SAARC in strengthening the Association, and enlarging its activities has been widely acknowledged.

During the visit of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to India in December 1996, the two countries signed a historic treaty on the long-term sharing of Ganga waters heralding a new era of friendship in India-Bangladesh relations.

Similarly, India-Nepal relations have gained a new dimension with the conclusion of the Mahakali Treaty, which envisages joint utilisation of water

resources and opens up tremendous possibilities for bilateral economic cooperation. With Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives, India continued to maintain warm and friendly relations.

The recent visit by the President of the People's Republic of China marked a new threshold of cooperation between the world's two most populous countries. The Agreement on Confidence Building Measures signed during the visit is of great significance and is expected to strengthen bilateral relations further.

With Pakistan, we are committed to ending confrontation and establishing a harmonious relationship and durable peace, as provided for in the Shimla Agreement. We believe that fostering people-to-people contacts and promoting trade and economic links will contribute to this process. We are ready for a dialogue with the new Government of Pakistan and hope for an early resumption of talks.

India is concerned at the continuing foreign interference and consequent instability in Afghanistan. There can be no resolution of the Afghan problem without cessation of foreign interference. Our traditional role as a friend and a well-wisher of Afghanistan is recognised and our humanitarian assistance for the suffering people of Afghanistan will continue.

Japan was the first Asian country to participate as Partner Country in the Indian Engineering Trade Fair earlier this month. This symbolises the growing economic cooperation between the two countries and we look forward to intensifying our relations with Japan.

Our mutually beneficial interaction with the Association of South East Asian Nations has been growing and reached a new level last year. We are confident that this process will continue and that we will play our due role in the affairs of the Asia-Pacific region.

Our relations with the Arab countries continue to be marked by traditional friendship, mutual understanding, and growing cooperation. India has supported the Middle East peace process and welcomed the progress made so far; we look forward to its expeditious conclusion. The recent visit of Israel's President to India has given an impetus to our steadily growing economic and technological cooperation with that country.

Relations with Russia continue to be of high priority and are characterised by continuity, trust and mutual understanding.

We look forward to the continued growth of Indo-US relations during the second-term of the Clinton Administration. As two mature and friendly democracies, both India and the US recognise the importance of developing an expanded base for mutually beneficial relations.

With West Europe we share ties of history and a common commitment to democracy, now being strengthened by close economic linkages. We welcome and reciprocate the intention of the European Union, which is our

largest trading partner to work towards an enhanced relationship with India, embracing political, economic and cultural relations.

Our commitment to the Non-Aligned Movement remains strong and India will continue to give the fullest support to its objectives and principles. India will host the next Ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned countries in New Delhi in April this year.

Coming to legislative business, thirty-three Bills are pending before you, including the Lokpal Bill, 1996, the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1995 and the Constitution (81st Amendment) Bill, 1996 providing for reservation of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies of the States. The Government intends to bring before Parliament in the current Session, the following important Bills : (i) The Broadcasting Bill, 1997; (ii) The Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Bill, 1997; (iii) The Consumer Protection (Amendment) Bill, 1997; (iv) The Electricity Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1997; (v) The Multi State Cooperative Societies Bill, 1997; (vi) The Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Bill, 1997; and (vii) The National Highways Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 1997.

In August this year, we will commence celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of our Independence. Our freedom struggle was unique in the history of the world, based as it was on non-violence. Today, India is a beacon for sustaining democratic values, Rule of Law, human rights and secularism. Our policies have produced a balanced achievement of freedom and economic betterment. We were fortunate to have in our midst, towering leaders of this century to guide us through the formidable challenges to our democracy and stability.

The remaining four years of this century represent a crucial period for India's national development, in which it must build further on the past achievements and herald a new future. Today, India is on the threshold of unprecedented opportunity as it prepares itself for entering the 21st century with hope and confidence. Whether we move forward boldly and realistically or remain stuck in the traditional modes of thinking, is going to ultimately determine our place in the world. At the beginning of the next millennium, all of us should ponder over this and deal with the basic issues, so that our destiny as an emerging giant and as a developed nation early in the next century is fulfilled.

JAI HIND.

ADDRESSES AT THE CONFERMENT OF THE OUTSTANDING PARLIAMENTARIAN AWARD, 1996 ON SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE, MP

On 19 March 1997, at a function held in the Central Hall of Parliament House, the President of India, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma conferred the Indian Parliamentary Group's (IPG) Outstanding Parliamentarian Award for the year 1996 on Shri Somnath Chatterjee, MP. On the occasion, the distinguished gathering in the Central Hall was addressed by the President, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma; the Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri K.R. Narayanan; the Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda; the Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P.A. Sangma; and Shri Somnath Chatterjee, MP.

The texts of the Addresses delivered by the dignitaries at the function are reproduced here.

It may be recalled that the IPG's first Outstanding Parliamentarian Award, instituted in 1995, was conferred on the former Prime Minister of India, Shri Chandra Shekhar on 12 December 1995. Earlier, on 23 September 1992, Shri Indrajit Gupta was conferred the Bharat Ratna Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant Best Parliamentarian Award, instituted by the Govind Ballabh Pant Memorial Society. Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was conferred this Award on 17 August 1994.

—Editor

ADDRESS BY THE SPEAKER, LOK SABHA, SHRI P.A. SANGMA

Respected Rashtrapatiji, Respected Upa-Rashtrapatiji, Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri Somnath Chatterjee, Honourable Members of Parliament, and Distinguished Guests :

It is a matter of great honour and pride for me to be associated with this solemn function to confer on Shri Somnath Chatterjee, the "Outstanding Parliamentarian Award 1996" of the Indian Parliamentary Group (IPG).

Inwardly, I have always assigned to Shri Somnath Chatterjee the status of my *guru*. In 1977, I was member of the Parliamentary Committee on Subordinate Legislation headed by him. In this capacity, I also travelled around with him in the North East. He made me feel that just being with him was education and assimilating his ideas was intellectual elevation.

Public service as parliamentarian and legal practice as professional are matters of family tradition for Shri Somnath Chatterjee. His father late Shri N.C. Chatterjee had also served our nation as member of

Parliament and had practised law, in the apex Court of India as Shri Somnathji does now.

Though Shri Somnath Chatterjee has had an aristocratic lineage and Western education, including for being a Barrister, he embraced Communism for his political faith and has been a steadfast practising Communist for about three decades.

When Shri Somnath Chatterjee joined us in the Eleventh Lok Sabha, it was for the seventh time that he was returned to this House. This at once speaks volumes for his image amongst his electors, his standing in his party and his stature as a parliamentarian and a national leader.

Shri Somnath Chatterjee, throughout his parliamentary career, was also naturally sought after on account of his expertise to be Chairman and member of many Committees. He served with distinction as Chairman of the Committee on Subordinate Legislation as well as Committee of Privileges. He was also a member of several joint Committees and Select Committees, particularly ones requiring expertise in law. As a Barrister, and as a senior lawyer, he brought his legal acumen to bear, with considerable impact, on shaping legislation in a diversity of areas - areas of corporate, fiscal and commercial laws and constitutional and criminal laws. His enlightened advice was also available to the Ministries of Law, Finance and Home, in the Parliamentary Consultative Committees of which he has had occasions to serve. His earlier service as Chairman of the Departmentally-related Standing Committee on Railways and his service currently as Chairman of the Committee on Communication, has helped in balanced and constructive scrutiny of the performance of these Ministries.

The Government of West Bengal has also understandably secured, over the years, the benefit of his Chairmanship in several State Public Sector Corporations.

His debating skill will turn any legislator green with jealousy. His depth of subject knowledge, the diction and propriety of his vocabulary and elegant humour of his presentation, as I have often seen from the Presiding Officer's Chair, almost invariably makes his political opponents speechless and helpless.

When Shri Somnath Chatterjee is on his legs, he demonstrates an incredible awareness of national and international issues, simply by emoting from his experience. I was closely following his statement on the floor of the House, on the 25 February 1997, on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address. In the sweep of his statement, he effortlessly traversed a wide-ranging ground - the rationale of governance through coalition, separation of powers, federalism, secularism, liberalism, national integration, macro and micro-economics, employment situation, poverty alleviation

welfare administration, regional development and South Asian regional issues.

Trade unionism is natural to Bengalis. Combining in himself his Bengali moorings, Syndicalism which he should have imbibed during his youthful days as Barrister and Marxian dialectics, as a practising Communist, he has been an inevitable leader of the working class. He has been giving mature leadership to several major trade unions in West Bengal. I am also aware that he is now doing his best to harmonise working class aspirations with the dictates of a globalising and liberalising world.

Nor is Shri Somnath Chatterjee confined to the world of politics, Parliament, law and the working class. In the State of West Bengal and at the national level, he is associated - as President or Member - with a significant number of organisations rendering service in the areas of civil liberties, academics, arts and sports. This profile is that of a resplendant humanist.

Shri Somnath Chatterjee's performance in the Conferences of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has always had stunning impact on the international audience. Last year, I had the privilege of getting his support on human rights issues in the IPU Conference in Beijing. As the Rapporteur on the Committee on Human Rights, his contribution to harmonising a plethora of amendments from several countries for hammering out a Resolution on human rights was widely complimented.

In terms of the conformity to the rules of procedure and conduct of the business of the House, and of protecting the collective dignity of the House, and dignity of the individual parliamentarians, he is a copy-book model.

The towering personality which Shri Somnath Chatterjee is, literally and figuratively, by accepting the Outstanding Parliamentarian Award of the Indian Parliamentary Group for the year 1996, is indeed honouring every one of us in the Parliament, even as he is being honoured. He fulfills every parameter stipulated for nomination of parliamentarians for this Award. I heartily felicitate him. I wish him long years of public service to the people of his constituency, to West Bengal, to the Parliament and the people of India and to the international community of parliamentarians.

Thank you for your attention.

Jai Hind.

Subsequently, the Secretary-General, Lok Sabha, Shri S. Gopalan read out the Citation.

AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING PARLIAMENTARIAN 1996**PRESENTED****TO****SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE M.P.****BY****THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA****CITATION**

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE has been a leading luminary on the Indian political firmament for three long decades. He is an eminent lawyer, a renowned trade union leader, a scholarly political scientist, an articulate parliamentarian and a fine and endearing human being. These indeed are only a few facets of his personality.

The saga of SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE's life is a shining illustration that politics is not an end but a means to fulfil the legitimate expectations of the masses and to achieve the ideal of fuller growth of the Indian society. Throughout his career in politics, he has made an effort to combine idealism with pragmatism as a means to come to terms with ground realities. He has always been committed to the values of secularism and democracy. Endowed with social sensitivity, intellectual honesty and courage of conviction, SHRI CHATTERJEE has been working indefatigably for the cause of the weaker sections of society which is so dear to his heart.

SHRI CHATTERJEE has behind him a very long and uninterrupted membership of the Lok Sabha spanning over a quarter of a century which is reflection of the strength he draws from the grass-roots. His legal acumen, erudition and sound grasp of the rules and procedures of Parliament, his staunch support for the healthy traditions and conventions and his lucid expositions on a wide range of issues have enlivened and enriched the House proceedings. His parliamentary speeches exude depth of subject knowledge and sharp intellect and are laced with dignified humour. He is listened to with rapt attention and respect even by those holding contrary views.

Given his political stature, parliamentary experience and immense contributions to public life with probity and dedication, it is only appropriate that the Indian Parliamentary Group should bestow the 'Outstanding Parliamentarian Award, 1996' on SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE.

Indian Parliamentary Group.
Parliament House, New Delhi
March 19, 1997

The President, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma then conferred the Award on Shri Somnath Chatterjee.



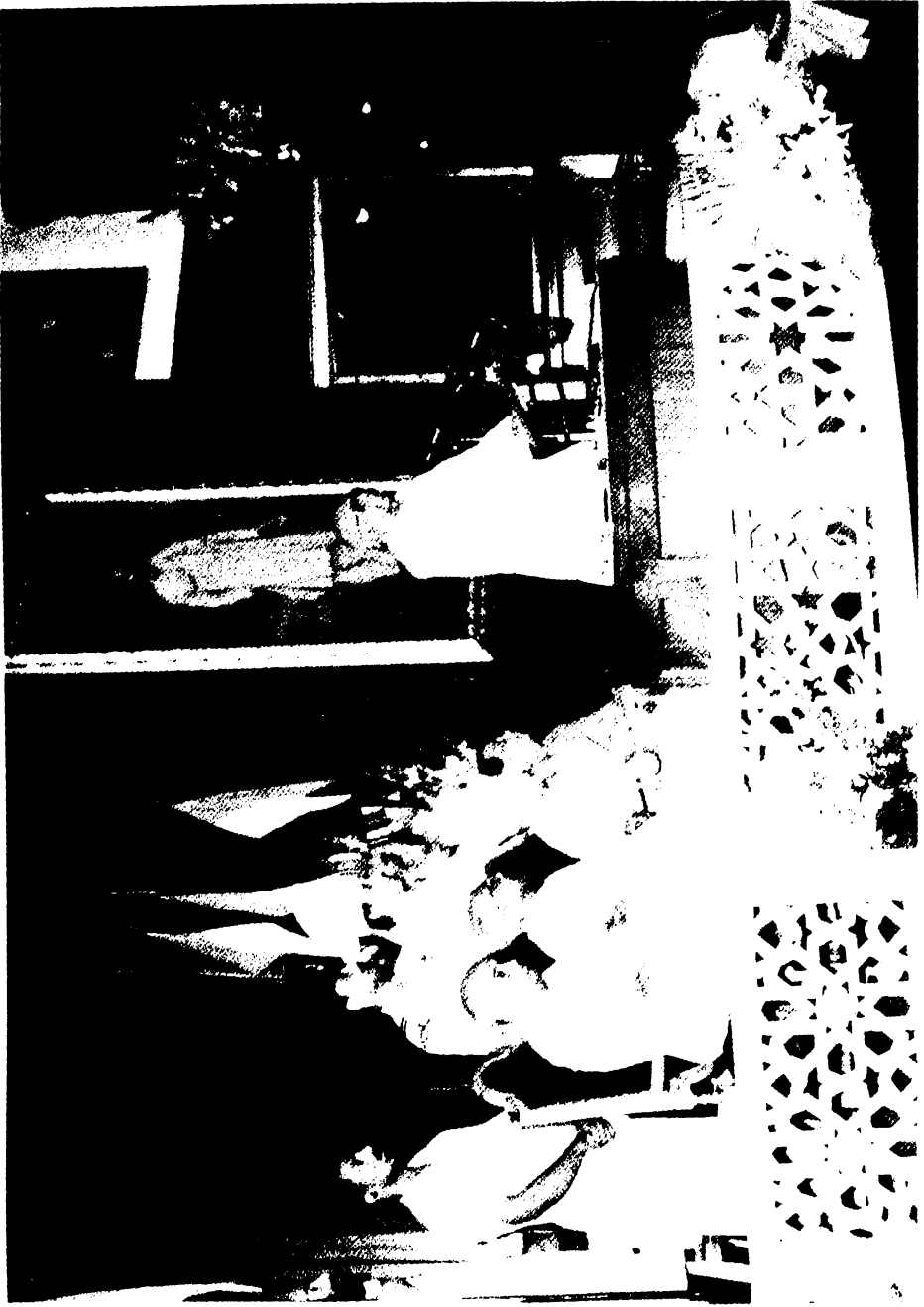
The Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P. A. Sangma addressing the gathering



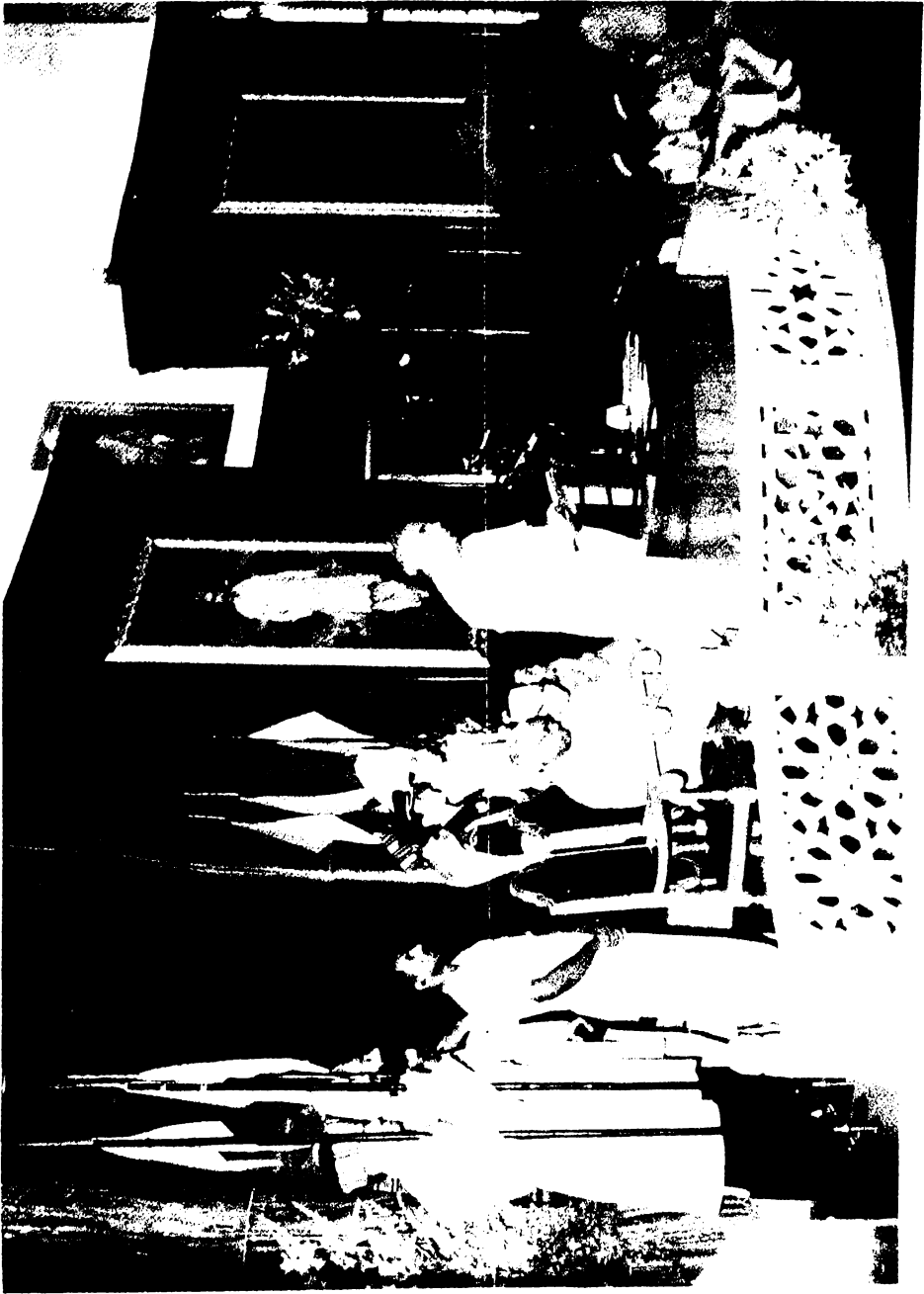
The Secretary-General, Lok Sabha, Shri S. Gopalan reading out the Citation



The President Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma conferring the Award on Shri. Somnath Chatterjee



Shri. Somnath Chatterjee addressing the gathering



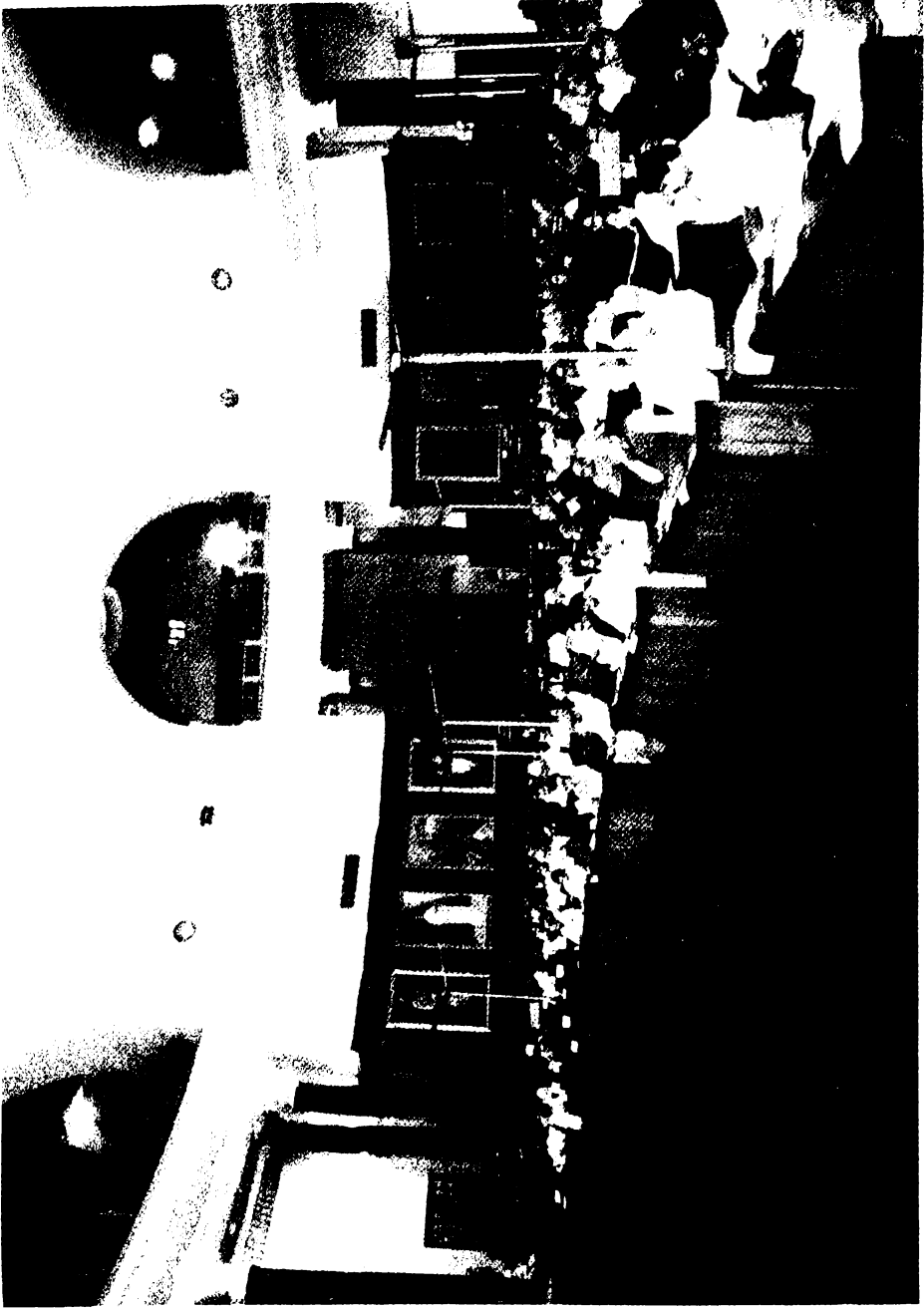
Address by the Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda



The Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri K.R. Narayanan addressing the gathering



Address by the President, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma



A view of the distinguished gathering in the Central Hall

ADDRESS BY SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE

Revered Rashtrapatiji, Respected Upa-Rashtrapatiji, Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Speaker, Fellow Members of Parliament, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen : I do not have words adequately to express my feeling of gratitude and my sincere thanks to the Indian Parliamentary Group for the great honour bestowed on me and accept the same with all humility and realisation of my shortcomings.

Honourable Mr. Speaker has been kind enough to organise this function for which I am indebted to him. I am particularly grateful to Revered Rashtrapatiji and Respected Upa-Rashtrapatiji and Honourable Prime Minister for having graced the occasion by their kind presence. If I may say so with all modesty, this is the greatest day in my life. I am overwhelmed that this rare honour has come to me considering the fact that the earlier recipients of this Award and the similar Awards have been great national leaders of outstanding merit and stature and I have not the slightest pretention of being one.

Today, I remember the day in March, 1971 when I first entered the great Chamber of the Lok Sabha where, from one of the back benches, I saw giants like A.K. Gopalan, Prof. Hiren Mukherjee, Madhu Limaye, Jyotirmoy Basu, H.V. Kamat, Indrajit Gupta, Y.B. Chavan, Jagjivan Ram, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Chandra Shekhar and Indira Gandhi, amongst others. It was an ennobling and exhilarating experience. I also recall listening from the Visitors' Gallery the speeches of Pandit Nehru, Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Shri Nath Pai, my father N.C. Chatterjee and other stalwarts, which left great imprint on my mind.

We are all aware that the Lok Sabha is the highest elected body in this country and, along with the Rajya Sabha, necessarily occupies the pivotal position in our political system. Our Founding Fathers, after considerable deliberations in this great Hall, decided to adopt the parliamentary system of governance with the Lok Sabha elected on adult franchise and a Council of Ministers responsible to the House of the People. Our Parliament has had its journey for now nearly half a century and this year we are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of our Independence. Many opinions are being expressed about the role of Indian Parliament, about its ability to find solutions for the peoples' problems and its capacity to espouse the urges and aspirations of the common people of the country, a very large number of whom still have to struggle hard for their very sustenance.

On a perceived notion that the Indian Parliament has not been able to play its due role, in some sections proposals have been made for having a presidential system of Government. There is a view, which I humbly share, that in the context of our country there can be no better alternative to the parliamentary system of governance and what is needed is an attempt to remove the deficiencies and shortcomings, if any, than to change the

system as a whole. Concentration of power in one hand has not helped us in the past. Our primary functions, no doubt, are legislation, debate, discussion and decision on issues of national importance and enforcement of the Executive's accountability to the people through their elected representatives in Parliament. I remember having had the privilege and the great opportunity of listening to debates and discussions of highest standard on national issues and nearly half of the time of the House was earlier devoted to work of legislation, while nearly 30 per cent of the time was utilised for discussion of financial business and the remaining time for enforcement of the Government's accountability.

Substantial changes have come about, not only in the composition, but in the matter of time utilisation. We are, now-a-days, being faced with criticism about our failure to maintain decorum and the Honourable Speaker rightly reminds us that the whole country is looking at us. It cannot be said that such criticism is totally devoid of substance. A substantial part of the proceedings of the House are now being telecast and the people are able to watch how their representatives are functioning inside the House, for the running of which a very substantial amount of money raised from the tax payers is spent. The Honourable Speaker often informs us mainly in anguish that he receives numerous letters from people all over the country and particularly from young boys and girls in which critical comments are made about the conduct of members inside the House. Obviously, it is for us, the members of Parliament, to take note of the feelings of the people so that we may endeavour to rectify the situation and the peoples' perceptions can change.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that we are able to devote lesser and lesser time to some of the most important responsibilities that we have to discharge, namely consideration of the financial business and enforcement of the Government's accountability. There have been years when we have not been able to discuss and scrutinise the Demands for Grants of more than three or four Ministers and as such, the Government's expenditure of crores and crores of rupees remained without any scrutiny. In this context, I must refer to the great contribution made by our former Honourable Speaker, Shri Shivraj V. Patil who took the leading role in the formation of the Departmentally-related Standing Committees which, I believe, have been able to discharge useful function. These Committees are still at a formative stage. But I am sure, with the passage of time and with greater realisation of constructive role played by them, there will be more and more acceptability on the part of the Executive. I hope in future the concerned Ministries and the Ministers will pay greater attention to the reports of the Committees which have, so far been, by and large, unanimous. Reference of legislative measures to these Committees have helped, I believe, in improving the content and form of the legislation.

Over the years we find lesser and lesser opportunity primarily because of non-availability of adequate time to discuss fully legislative measures and

also for debates and discussions on national issues. If I am not mistaken, more individual and more local issues are today consuming a large part of the time of the House. 'Zero Hour' does not find a mention in our rules but has become probably the most important business to many of us. There appears to be developing more and more attitude, unfortunately, of confrontation than cooperation, affecting the functioning of the House.

I most humbly feel that our functioning in the House has become matters of criticism and in some cases, even of ridicule, and we find that when even the Judiciary has chosen to make critical comments about our supposed failure to address the basic problems of the country, there is necessity for introspection and if any corrective is needed, it is we alone who can achieve that.

Unfortunately, most of the basic problems of our people still remain unresolved. There is still acute poverty, unemployment, massive illiteracy, lack of social justice, lack of health care, lack of education and special problems of women and children. People look up to the Parliament for finding solutions for the same. We should constantly endeavour to see that principles of secularism, socialism, basic unity of the people, national integrity and probity in executive affairs and public life are preserved and strengthened. We must assure that never again in future should Parliament lose its assigned role under the Constitution by abuse of emergency provisions or otherwise. It is the duty of Parliament to keep a close watch on the Executive and to enforce its accountability. Can we not select some of the burning problems afflicting the nation to be considered and attempted to be solved in a spirit of cooperation than confrontation? Can we not have a national agenda for solution of some of these basic and urgent problems? There are and can be many issues of national importance which we can, within and outside Parliament, try to solve with a unified approach. I humbly feel that the time has come that, on some of the basic problems, we can have unity of purpose and unity of action also. Such an approach has become vitally necessary, specially as it appears that the days of one-party rule have ended and the days of coalition Governments have come.

The composition of the House is likely to change in a substantial manner and I hope that very soon we shall have women representatives in adequate number, namely, one-third, so that men and women of this country together can lead the nation forward. I hope that date will come sooner than later.

I have the great honour of belonging to the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and I can assure everyone - Rashtrapatiji, Upa-Rashtrapatiji, Honourable Prime Minister and everybody else - that when I entered the House in 1971, I did not receive any instruction or mandate from our Party to wreck the Constitution from within. We participate in Parliament being the highest public forum in the country with all sincerity and commitment. It provides us with an opportunity to articulate and raise the problems of the common people, the problems of the working class, the peasants and

the vulnerable sections of the community and achieve solutions. The people have waited too long for redressal of their grievances. For that purpose, let us all resolve to uphold the glory of this great institution to which we have the honour to belong.

Before I conclude, I wish to express my sincerest gratitude and thanks to all my colleagues in Parliament for their unstinted support, help, cooperation and affection that I have always received but for which I would not have been standing here today. I further wish to record most humbly my grateful thanks to the Honourable Presiding Officers of the House for all the courtesies and guidance given to me and other members over the years. I shall also be failing in my duty if I do not express my deepest appreciation of the work silently done by the Officers and the Staff of the Secretariats of Parliament whose standard, I believe, is equal to the most efficient anywhere else. We have worked as a family. Let us maintain this bond in the days ahead. I also wish to express my sincere thanks to the Media for the role they have played in upholding parliamentary traditions. I once again thank the Indian Parliamentary Group, the Honourable Speaker and you all from the bottom of my heart. I shall never forget this day in my life.

Thank you.

ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA

Respected Rashtrapatiji, Respected Upa-Rashtrapatiji, Honourable Speaker, Honourable Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha, Honourable Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Honourable Leaders of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, Honourable Members of Parliament, Colleagues, Distinguished Invitees, Ladies and Gentlemen :

I am very happy to be present here on the occasion of the conferment of the Outstanding Parliamentarian Award on respected Shri Somnath Chatterjee. The Indian Parliamentary Group has rendered a signal service in taking the initiative to institute this Award for our parliamentarians. Such an occasion gives us the opportunity to become more aware of the important role of our parliamentary institutions in shaping the destiny of our country. Great institutions do not stand apart from great individuals and our Parliament is no exception to this. The story of our Parliament is also the story of eminent men and women who have lent strength to the institution through their long and distinguished service as members.

A day in the life of a parliamentarian is a long one with all the attendant stresses and strains of being a public figure. A good parliamentarian has not only to voice the needs and hopes of the millions who have sent him to Parliament, but equally importantly, has also to keep the larger interests of society and humanity in mind. A great parliamentarian often touches upon the grand scheme of things and directs the force of the debate to that

direction. When one understands the complex and arduous tasks undertaken by a member of Parliament on a daily basis, one senses a feeling of awe at those who have performed a long and distinguished period of parliamentary service.

Shri Somnath Chatterjee is one of our most experienced and active members of Parliament. He was elected to the Lok Sabha for the first time in 1971. He has the distinction of being a member of every Lok Sabha since then. He made his mark as an outstanding debator right from his first stint in the Lok Sabha. Every member who aspires to make an effective contribution to the debate would profit greatly by going through the collection of speeches made by Shri Chatterjee during his term as a member of the Fifth and Sixth Lok Sabha.

A very active parliamentarian, he has served with distinction in many Committees of the House. A forceful speaker, his stentorian voice has risen above many a tumult to be recorded for posterity. No lightning from the right side of the Chair has escaped a thunderous response by Shri Chatterjee on the left. As in nature, the echoes of his thunder have reverberated long after the memory of the lightning that caused it had faded. No greater tribute can be paid to him than to say that a debate without his participation would be poorer for it. But whatever he did and whatever he said, Shri Chatterjee kept the wider interest of the nation in view. This kind of sense of responsibility is exemplary.

His notable services rendered in the fields of Law, trade, union movement and political and social work have embellished his performance as a parliamentarian.

I commend the Indian Parliamentary Group for its decision to confer the Outstanding Parliamentarian Award on Shri Somnath Chatterjee. On this occasion, I pray for his good health and long life so that he may serve the people and the Parliament for many more years to come.

Jai Hind.

**ADDRESS BY THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF INDIA AND CHAIRMAN,
RAJYA SABHA, SHRI K.R. NARAYANAN**

Respected Rashtrapatiji, Honourable Prime Minister, Honourable Speaker, Honourable Shri Somnath Chatterjee, Honourable Ministers, Members of Parliament and Friends :

This is a happy occasion when the Indian Parliamentary Group has formally and solemnly recognised what Shri Somnath Chatterjee has long been - an Outstanding Parliamentarian of our time. By winning this coveted Award he has joined such illustrious parliamentarians as Shri Indrajit Gupta, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Shri Chandra Shekhar who have been recipients of this honour earlier. And he is also carrying on the tradition of service to Indian parliamentary democracy set by his distinguished father, the late Shri N.C. Chatterjee.

A man of politics to his fingertips Shri Somnath Chatterjee has brought to bear upon his parliamentary career his deep interest and wide-ranging experiences in multiplicity of fields - law and jurisprudence, civil liberties and democratic rights, trade union movement, social welfare and social work, educational activities and scholarly and intellectual pursuits and uplift of the poor and downtrodden sections of our society. Encompassing all these is his passion for the transformation of our society into a more egalitarian system and our nation into a progressive modern State.

Shri Somnath Chatterjee has been sensitive to the winds of change blowing across the world, the winds of globalization, of technological change and of economic reforms. While he kept the doors and windows of his politics open to these winds, he has refused to be swept off his feet by their blasts. He realised that in spite of these sweeping global changes the conditions of living of the vast majority of people in India and elsewhere continued to remain basically unaffected, and for them life is still, as Gandhi had said, "an eternal vigil or an eternal trance". He was oppressed by the thought of our people living in abject poverty steeped in illiteracy, ignorance, ill-health and enforced idleness. He pleaded in Parliament for providing them gainful employment in the rural sector, in rural and small scale industries and he also advocated the involvement of people in some nation-building projects even if they are small projects like road-building. In emphasising these, Shri Somnath Chatterjee was not railing against the inevitable advance of globalisation and modern technology but pointing out the inescapable need in our society to meet the demands of social justice and basic human needs if our plans were to succeed and our system to remain stable and viable in the midst of these bewildering changes.

During the discussion on atrocities being committed on the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, he once said in Parliament :

It is a matter of great concern, if not a national shame, that the House is obliged to discuss this matter... almost during every Session... Not only... we find that the Scheduled Castes and Harijans still remain steeped in gnawing poverty, they are not even being treated as human beings in many places.

Shri Chatterjee is one of those parliamentarians who has focussed the nation's attention on the problems of the common man and made Parliament the voice of the people. The eloquence of his speeches reflected the mood of the nation and the needs of the people.

As I said earlier, Shri Somnath Chatterjee has been sensitive to the great changes taking place in the world as a whole. He has been sensitive to the need for India to develop rapidly to catch up technologically with other nations to be able to compete in the world market, to attract private and foreign capital to the priority sectors of our industrial and infrastructural development. In his capacity as the Chairman of the West Bengal Industrial

Development Corporation, he has played a role in the pragmatic policy of attracting capital and introducing a new momentum into the industrial advancement of the State showing thereby that liberalisation of the economy could be achieved together with social justice, which is the larger significance of the Indian experiment today.

Shri Somnath Chatterjee has become a consistent and firm believer in the efficacy of parliamentary democracy in India. For him it is an instrument of social and economic change as well as a playground for the freedom and initiative of the people. He said :

Freedom of dissent and freedom of debate are the hallmarks of parliamentary democracy... In a parliamentary democracy, the right to know is the inalienable right of the people... Accountability of our constitutional functionaries is one of the key-stones of our parliamentary set-up.

During his 25 years in Parliament, Shri Chatterjee played an important role through the momentous events and grave crises that faced the nation. On such occasions he made an impact on Parliament by his powerful reasoning, his great debating skill and eloquence and his wit and repartees which all made his speeches forceful as well as delightful. His interventions were all the more effective because of the parliamentary decorum and courtesies and the rules and procedures which he invariably observed even while hitting hard at his opponents. His belief in the parliamentary system is profound and genuine. He believed as he once said, "the prestige and dignity of Parliament is neither negotiable nor justiciable" and that cooperation "has been the tradition, the glory of parliamentary functioning".

May I congratulate Shri Somnath Chatterjee for the glory of his winning the Outstanding Parliamentarian Award of the largest and the greatest democracy in the world.

Thank you.

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
DR. SHANKER DAYAL SHARMA**

It gives me great pleasure to associate myself with this function. I have known Shri Somnath Chatterjee over several decades. It is, therefore, a personal pleasure for me to see him receive this important Award and join the select group of eminent parliamentarians, Shri Indrajit Gupta, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Shri Chandra Shekhar who have received it in earlier years.

This Award has a certain special significance as it is for the most Outstanding Parliamentarian of the year as adjudged by fellow parliamentarians. Indeed, it is an honour to be selected in this way. On behalf of all of us, I extend to Shri Chatterjee our sincere felicitations.

I would also like to congratulate members of the Jury on the appropriateness of their choice.

Shri Somnath Chatterjee has a long and distinguished career in public affairs and as a member of Parliament. He was elected for the first time to the Lok Sabha in 1971. Since then his presence has been a constant feature in all subsequent Lok Sabhas. This remarkable achievement reflects the strong faith of the people in Shri Chatterjee both as a parliamentarian and, if I may say so, as an individual. He has represented the people with commitment, dedication and sincerity. Through his informed, expert and active participation in the proceedings in Parliament, he has upheld, safeguarded and advanced the public interest. He has also contributed to, and on several occasions, guided the formation of public opinion on key national issues. For some years past, Somnathji has been counted upon as among the strongest and tallest pillars of our Parliament.

Shri Chatterjee has always brought to bear a national perspective on a wide range of issues raised in Parliament. Unfailingly, he has articulated a national vision unencumbered by regional, sectional or group interests. He has exemplified the approach advocated by an outstanding parliamentarian, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Speaking in the Lok Sabha on 21 December, 1955, Panditji had said :

Each member is not only a member for this or that area of India, but a member for India as a whole. He represents India and at no time can he afford to forget the basic fact that India is more than the little corner of India that he represents.

I believe, Shri Chatterjee has followed the footsteps of his senior from Cambridge.

Deeply grounded in legal training and education and with a vast experience in public affairs, an immense capacity for hard work, a passion for objectivity and rational thinking and a razor sharp intellect, Shri Chatterjee has enhanced the content and level of debates in the House on numerous issues. His debating skills, lucid articulation, command over parliamentary practice and procedure, willingness to hear and give due weight to the other side, power of repartee, and his courteousness, sense of justice and of fair play, comprise the gifts of a parliamentarian of the first quality.

The parliamentary form of governance involves the approach of cooperative democratic functioning. Following this approach will safeguard and enhance the people's faith in our polity. We have to comprehend that the real strength, the vital force and the inner sustenance of democracy is not the institutions set up under the Constitution, but the people's faith in the system and in its organs. Whatever can be done to deepen, strengthen and heighten public faith in our democratic processes is a valuable service to national interest. This is particularly important at a time when the scope

of our parliamentary democracy is being extended to India's villages through devolution of powers to Panchayati Raj institutions. As Shri Chatterjee has himself said :

In the ultimate analysis, it is the faith of the people in the system of Government under the constitutional set-up which sustains the system and the set-up. With people's faith lost, credibility of not only the Constitution but of the parliamentary system of Government itself is shaken.

During the five decades of freedom, India has matured and become resilient as a democracy. We have dealt effectively with various challenges facing our nation in the political, economic and social fields. We have achieved great success in many areas; in others, the pace of growth has to be increased. But we can be proud of our vibrant democracy and the deep roots it has taken. We can attribute our achievements to the democratic method nurtured by us. Given our size and population, our achievements are more durable and meaningful. I believe strongly that the many problems we face as a nation can be resolved effectively by further strengthening our democratic institutions. This is the message of our ethos. This is the path illumined by our great leaders and eminent parliamentarians. It is the duty of every parliamentarian to ensure the enlargement and the empowerment of the democratic process.

Friends, I believe this Award is important because it highlights those qualities of excellence, essential to our parliamentary system. The example and the high standards set by the distinguished awardee will serve as a hallmark and a source of inspiration.

I once again felicitate Shri Somnath Chatterjee on the distinction so richly deserved by him. As to his eminence, a verse from the *Dhammapada* comes to mind :

दुरे संतो पकासंती
हिमवंतो च पञ्चतो

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(Like the Himalayas, the good are visible even from afar.)

I wish Shri Somnath Chatterjee many more years of service to our people.

Jai Hind.

ADDRESSES AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE EIGHTH CONFERENCE OF THE CHAIRMEN OF THE COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF PARLIAMENT AND STATE LEGISLATURES

The Eighth Conference of the Chairmen of the Committees on Public Accounts of Parliament and State Legislatures was held in New Delhi on 15-16 March 1997. The Conference was inaugurated by the Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P.A. Sangma. The inaugural function was also addressed by the Chairman of the Committee on Public Accounts of Parliament and the Chairman of the Conference, Dr. Murlī Manohar Joshi. The texts of the Addresses delivered by the dignitaries on the occasion are reproduced below.

—*Editor*

ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS OF PARLIAMENT AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CONFERENCE, DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI

Mr. Speaker and Friends :

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to this Eighth Conference of the Chairmen of Public Accounts Committees (PACs). I am indeed very happy that my fellow Chairmen of State Public Accounts Committees have responded to our invitation with enthusiasm and made it convenient to attend this Conference. I am also beholden to our Speaker, Shri P.A. Sangma, for kindly agreeing to hold and inaugurate this Conference.

The system of holding Conferences of Chairmen of PACs in the country was started during the tenure of the First Lok Sabha itself when such a Conference was held in 1955. Subsequently, similar Conferences were generally held during the term of each Lok Sabha. The last Conference of the Chairmen of Public Accounts Committees was held way back in September 1986. The present Conference is, therefore, a significant event as it is being held after a gap of over a decade and coincides not only with the fiftieth year of our Independence but also with the successful completion of seventy-five years of the working of the Public Accounts Committee at the Centre. Undoubtedly, many developments have taken place since the last Conference in 1986. One such important development related to the changes in the structure of Panchayats through the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992. The pattern of release and utilisation of massive Central assistance being rendered to the State Governments and the local bodies under different schemes has since undergone changes. Further, the Shakti Committee appointed by the Comptroller and Auditor-General (C&AG) "to review the response of the State Governments to the audit

reports" had, in its report submitted in March 1993, made several recommendations for scrutiny of accounts and audit reports by the State PACs. Unfortunately, there was no occasion for the Chairmen of the PACs of the State Legislatures to discuss these matters in a single forum. On going through the points sent by various State PACs for inclusion in the Agenda, I understand that a number of States have been experiencing different types of difficulties in the smooth and effective functioning of their PACs. I am sure that the present Conference would provide us with the opportunity to take stock of our performance and our shortcomings and to deliberate on the steps to be taken to make our Committees more effective and purposive in the light of the changing requirements of the times.

The accountability of the Executive to the Legislature and that of the Legislature to the people is accepted as axiomatic in any democratic system. Abraham Lincoln once described democracy as a form of Government of the people, for the people and by the people which shall not perish from the earth. I am of the strong belief that democratic Government is not merely a political arrangement, it is a moral concept underlying the need for accountability of the Government to the people. Distinguished friends, this enforcement of accountability of the Executive towards the people assumes special significance in the present-day scenario when there is a phenomenal growth in the multifarious activities of the Government resulting in a tremendous spurt in public expenditure. Since the device of raising Questions in Parliament or Legislatures has a limited scope and cannot be made to play the regulatory role, it is here that our tasks in the Public Accounts Committees become more onerous in checking any tendency towards slackness, negligence, extravagance or arbitrariness on the part of the Executive while incurring expenditure from the public fund or in the matters of levy and collection of taxes authorised by the Legislatures.

In the light of the given terms of reference of scrutinising the accounts of Government and satisfying ourselves about the maintenance of the reasonable standard of efficiency and financial propriety in the running of the administration, I am of the firm opinion that the Public Accounts Committees will have to exercise constant vigil and play a dispassionate role in finalising their examination of accounts and audit reports in time if they wish to achieve the greater aim of enforcing public accountability. In fact, timely completion of examination of accounts is a pre-requisite for ensuring accountability as any inordinate delay in the matter of financial impropriety could render the PAC ineffective as some of the recent developments seem to hint at. With this end in view, we, at the Centre, have adopted a highly qualitative and selective approach in selecting fewer audit paragraphs for detailed examination. The paragraphs so selected by us are those which either affect the larger segments of society or indicative of financial mis-management or involve appraisal of systems and procedures.

Recognising this need, the present Committee took up for scrutiny the mounting arrears on the direct taxes side. The C&AG had highlighted that the cumulative arrears of corporation tax and income tax increased from Rs. 10,780 crore in 1993-94 to Rs. 22,699 crore on 31 March 1995. Another system study being undertaken by the present Committee relates to the delay in the finalisation of provisional assessment cases of central excise duty. The C&AG had reported that the amount of duty locked up in 25 Commissionerates due to the delay in the finalisation of provisional assessment cases has gone up from Rs. 2,002 crore in 1992-93 to Rs. 4,057 crore in 1994-95. The Committee are also examining the implementation of the advance licensing scheme from 1992 onwards on the basis of the C&AG's review which, among others, revealed: non-fulfilment/shortfall of export obligations, non-realisation of foreign exchange, non-enforcement of bonds, failure in monitoring export obligations, etc.

In the recent past, the Committee at the Centre have also attached significant importance to the implementation of developmental/poverty alleviation programmes. As part of this, the present Committee are examining the C&AG's review on Jawahar Rozgar Yojana which reveals widespread irregularities in the implementation of the scheme by the different States. Vocationalisation of Secondary Education is another centrally sponsored scheme which is being presently examined by us. I am of the firm view that there is a need for effective coordination between the PACs at the Centre and the State in the examination of Centrally-sponsored programmes where there is a considerable outflow of funds from the Consolidated Fund of India. The present Committee are also examining subjects like gauge conversion project on Indian Railways, development and manufacture of trainer aircraft for defence purposes, matters relating to autonomous bodies like the Tea Board, Delhi Development Authority, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, etc.

Our system of selective examination does not mean that the remaining paragraphs are left outside the purview of the PAC. For those paragraphs, we have prescribed an elaborate procedure for obtaining notes showing the remedial and corrective action taken by the Ministries concerned within a prescribed time-frame. I sincerely hope that our friends at the State levels would adopt a similar procedure. That would certainly help them in making their vigilant and perceptible presence felt. Of course, great care would have to be taken in selecting audit paragraphs with perspicuity with the sole aim of toning up administration without prejudice or misplaced sympathy.

To this end in view, our Committee at the Centre took the initiative by undertaking a comprehensive and sectoral examination of the Appropriation Accounts of the Union Government for the year 1994-95 and reviewed certain key sectors of the economy, including core infrastructural areas as well as the development schemes implemented for the benefit of public at large. I would like to emphasise here that the new orientation

given to sector-wise examination of accounts of the Union Government added a new dimension to scrutiny of expenditure with reference to the implementation of the policies laid down by Parliament in a broad overall context. The results were, of course, encouraging and the Executive, sensing the mood of the Committee during their examination, took certain remedial measures even before the Committee presented their relevant reports to Parliament.

Then, there is the question of inordinate delays which the Departments are reportedly causing in giving replies to the queries of the State PACs and also in giving effect to their recommendations. In this context, I would like to inform my fellow Chairmen in the State PACs that we have adequate rules, directions by successive Speakers and conventions at the Centre to call for any person or papers in connection with examination of a subject. I must say that the active co-operation of the Executive has always been extended to our Committee thus making our task easier. We have never found them wanting in responding to our requirements and in taking urgent action wherever needed.

As regards the important aspect of the follow-up process of recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee, I am in no doubt that the effectiveness of the reports of this Committee can be judged only by the extent to which its recommendations are accepted and implemented by Government. It gives me immense satisfaction that generally, over 70 per cent of our recommendations are accepted by Government in the first instance itself. Some of the outstanding recommendations are also accepted subsequent to reiteration of earlier recommendations of the Committee in their Action Taken Report which is also presented to Parliament. I am in no doubt that requisite improvements in the functioning of the Executive as well as the transparency and prudence in financial transactions of Government would not come about unless a clear indication is given to the Executive that the Committees are earnest in their endeavour.

A fear has been expressed that the complexity of governmental activities has heavily weighed the balance of powers in favour of the Executive and made genuine public accountability much more difficult to achieve. This feeling is not entirely without basis. I would like in this context to refer to some aspect of our financial set-up.

Control over provision of finance for Government is central to the parliamentary system. In terms of art. 265 of our Constitution, no tax shall be levied or collected except by the authority of law. However, borrowing which has become a major source of financing is not controlled by Parliament. Although the Public Accounts Committee at the Centre has stressed many a time that a statutory limit should be fixed to the borrowing powers of the Government under art. 292 of the Constitution, no such limit has been fixed so far. There is, therefore, greater need for the Public Accounts Committee to go into the details of borrowing and repayment of loans. This issue has

to be examined in all its seriousness, particularly in the context of the finding of the C&AG that out of the total receipts of Rs. 3,16,391 crore in 1994-95 in the Consolidated Fund of India, Rs. 1,57,606 crore, i.e. about half of the total receipts was constituted by borrowed funds.

Then, there is the question of expenditure of Government charged upon the Consolidated Fund which is not votable by the Legislature. The Union Government Appropriation Accounts (Civil) for the year 1994-95 showed that about 71 per cent of the total expenditure of Rs. 3,04,012 crore constituted charged expenditure and only the remaining portion had been voted by Parliament. This is disturbing and it is, therefore, necessary to examine systematically the charged items and expenditure to ensure that at least the classification is satisfactory.

A debate is currently on regarding the desirability of opening the proceedings of the Committee to the public. Apart from the direct control over the Executive on the floor of the House and through Parliamentary Committees, there is an indirect influence exercised by the Press also. The Press establishes a two-way traffic of informing the Legislatures about what is happening outside and informing the outside public of what is happening in the Legislatures. Presently, the proceedings of the Committee are not thrown open to the Press and the public. I am of the view that there is a need for evolving more transparency in the matter.

The tradition of an Opposition member heading the Public Accounts Committee at the Centre has given the Committee a greater legitimacy and wider acceptability. I am of the view that this convention might be followed by those States which have not followed this practice so far.

I have always received unstinted cooperation from the members of our Committee. The members have evinced keen interest in our work and have effectively participated. I would like to compliment them for their sincere cooperation.

The effectiveness of the Public Accounts Committee largely depends on the support that they receive from the distinguished Comptroller & Auditor General and his officers. The C&AG links the PAC at the Centre and the States. I would like to place on record my deep appreciation of the quality of the Audit Reports and the unfailing personal support and assistance made available to us by Shri V.K. Shunglu, the present Comptroller & Auditor General of India.

I am also thankful for the excellent assistance rendered by the Secretariat in the functioning of the Committee. I would also like to place on record my appreciation for the teamwork exhibited by the already overworked officers and staff of the PAC Section.

I wish to thank and compliment the Conference Branch of the Lok Sabha Secretariat for efficiently organising this Conference. I also wish to thank

all others who have helped us for the Conference, including the Editorial and Translation Services of the Secretariat.

We shall be discussing in the Conference a variety of subjects touching upon the important facets of our work. I can assure the Honourable Speaker and other colleagues that our deliberations will prove to be valuable in the context of strengthening the institution of the Public Accounts Committee as an instrument of ensuring financial accountability.

I once again thank the Honourable Speaker for sparing some time with us this morning and request him to give his inaugural address.

Thank you.

ADDRESS BY THE SPEAKER, LOK SABHA, SHRI P.A. SANGMA

Dr. Murlī Manohar Joshi Saheb, Honourable Chairmen of Public Accounts Committees, Shri Shunglu, Comptroller & Auditor-General of India, Distinguished Guests:

I have great pleasure in participating in this Conference of the Chairmen of Public Accounts Committees.

I should compliment Dr. Joshi for having taken the initiative in organising this Conference. In fact, he wanted a Conference of Chairmen of PACs in SAARC countries to follow this Conference. As some of the important SAARC countries had problems in participating in such a Conference around this time, it has not been possible to organise the same. In any case, we are in touch with the SAARC country Parliament Secretariats in our effort to organising this Conference sometime in April 1997.

Having been a Union Minister holding different portfolios over the years, I have had the opportunity of knowing many senior civil servants in the Government of India who keep meeting me often. Some of them have had opportunities to appear as witnesses before the Public Accounts Committee currently headed by Dr. Joshi.

The impression I have received from these civil servants is that Dr. Joshi is both a feared and admired person. Feared, on account of his absolute thoroughness; admired, for his absolute fairness. It is this combination of thoroughness of issues and fairness in assessment of governmental actions which should be the hallmark of the Chairmen and members of Public Accounts Committees.

The Public Accounts Committee is perhaps the most crucial institutional mechanism for securing parliamentary control over the Executive. At the Central level, the institution of the Public Accounts Committee has completed 75 years.

The special feature of the Public Accounts Committee is that it has the support of the highly professionalised services of the Comptroller and

Auditor-General (C&AG) and his establishment. The staff of the C&AG at various levels go through some of the toughest in-house tests for securing elevations at the various levels of their hierarchy. Their audit is based on documents maintained by the Government establishments in the ordinary course of business. The audit paras are prepared in a participative manner. Before the paras are finalised, the Departmental Heads are invariably asked to give their comments. In fact, it is in this respect that the PACs are also different from many other Committees of Legislative Bodies. Committees other than the PACs do not have this kind of a specialised professional support in guiding their scrutiny of Executive actions.

In terms of mandate, the Public Accounts Committees examine—

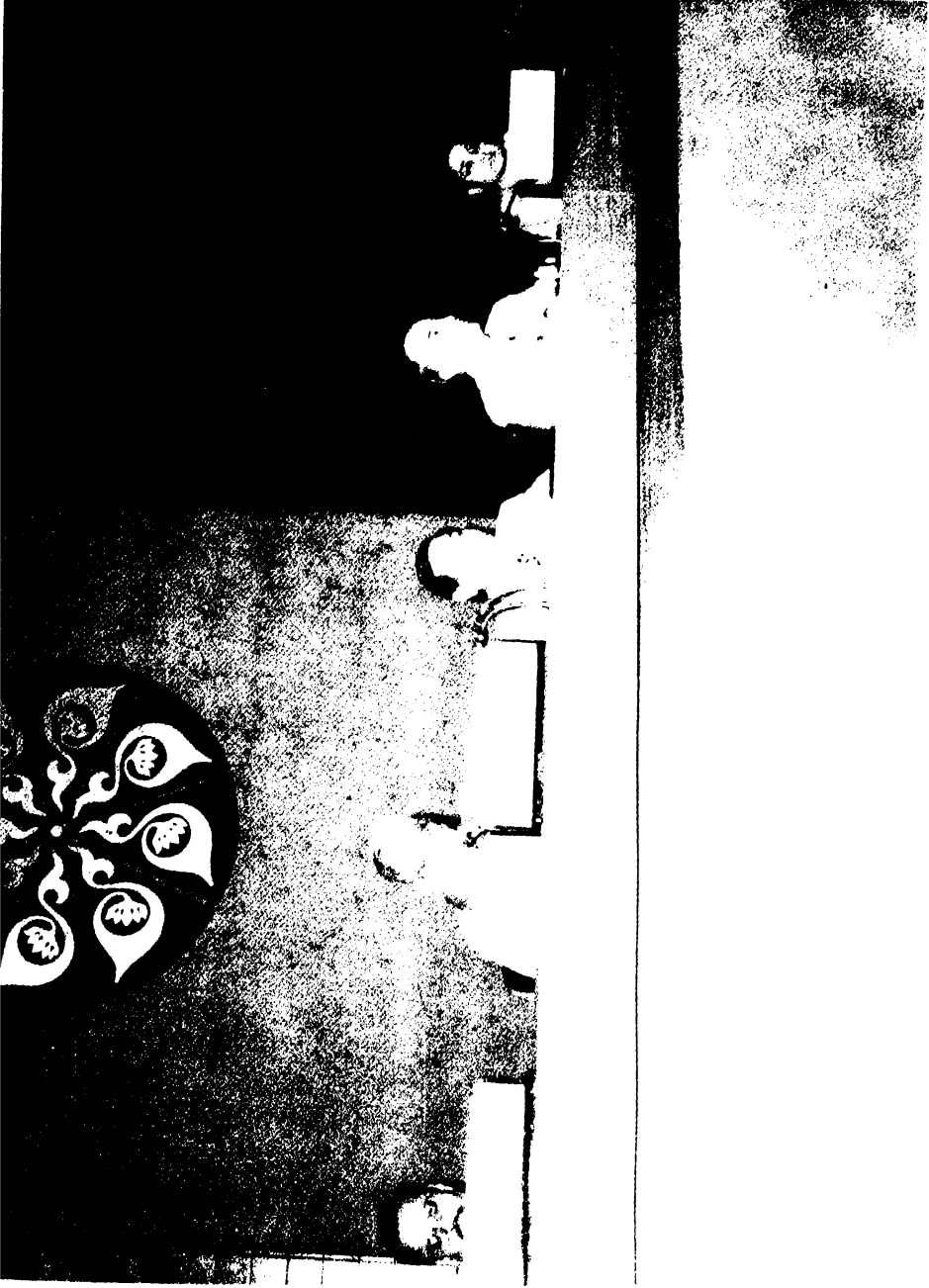
- * whether funds exhibited in the Finance Accounts as having been spent were legally available for expenditure;
- * whether the expenditure was duly authorised by competent authority and conforms to the authorisation;
- * whether reappropriations are consistent with the relevant provisions made by the competent authority.

Over the years, administration has undergone a sea-change. The Welfare State model having been adopted by our system of governance, developmental administration which is highly complex has come to be the principal role of the Government. A wide range of subjects have consequently become matters of immediate interest to the PACs - subjects relating to State Corporations, trading and manufacturing schemes, developmental projects, etc.

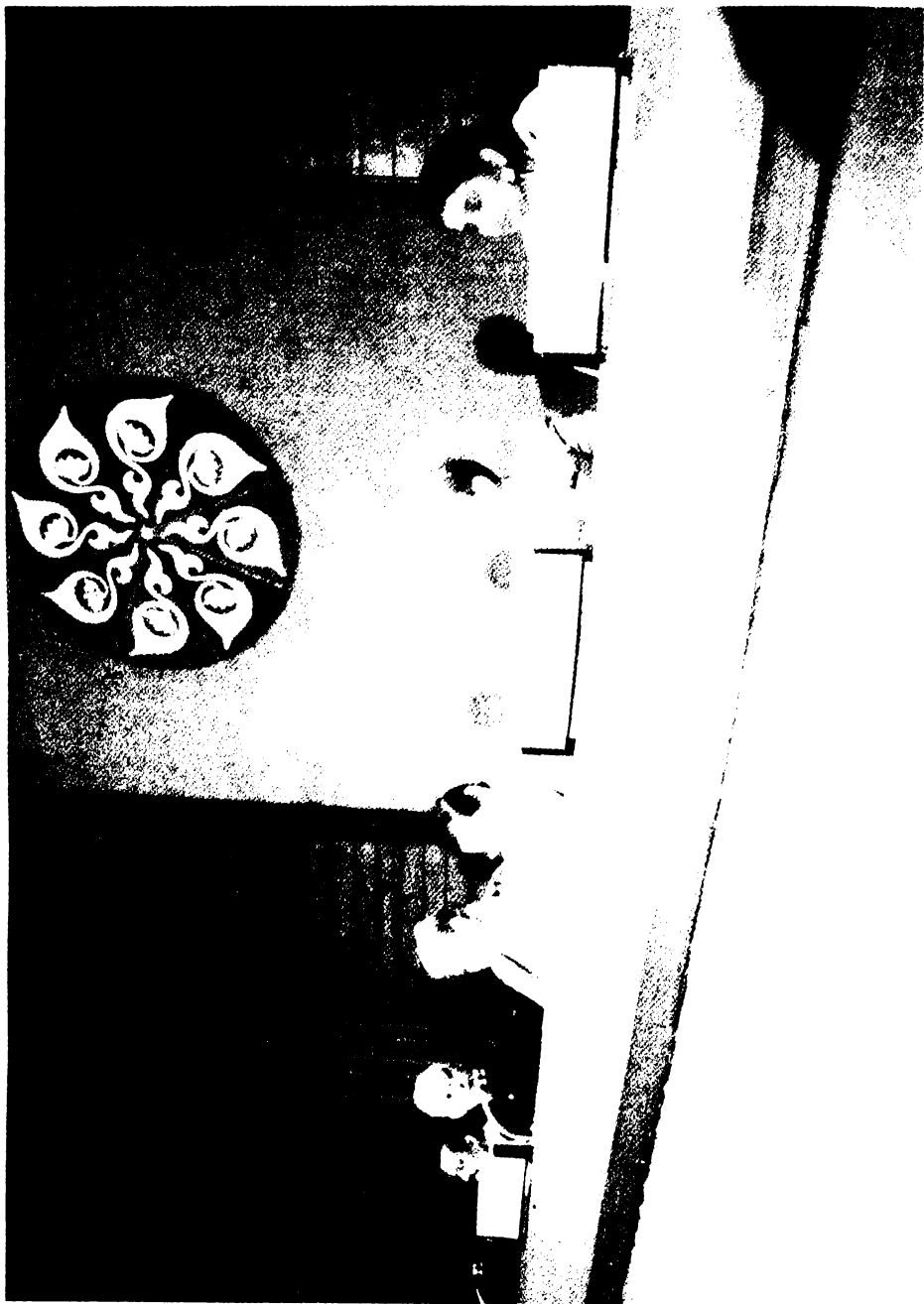
At the Central and State levels, a large number of autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies of a specialised nature fully or predominantly funded by the Government have also come to be established so that such bodies are able to implement programmes without being hamstrung by governmental routine. Wherever such bodies come under the audit of the C&AG, their accounts also come under the purview of the Public Accounts Committees.

I understand that since the year 1950, the Public Accounts Committee of the Parliament has presented more than 1,000 reports. It is our experience that these Reports have significantly contributed to ever-increasing demand for propriety in Government's financial transactions. Very many improprieties have also come to be projected before the Parliament and the public. The special role of the Public Accounts Committees has also ultimately impacted on public perceptions about successive Governments, creating an overall environment of desirable public vigil. Today's public demand for transparency in governmental actions and probity in public life are, to my mind, in no small measure due to vibrant and active Public Accounts Committees.

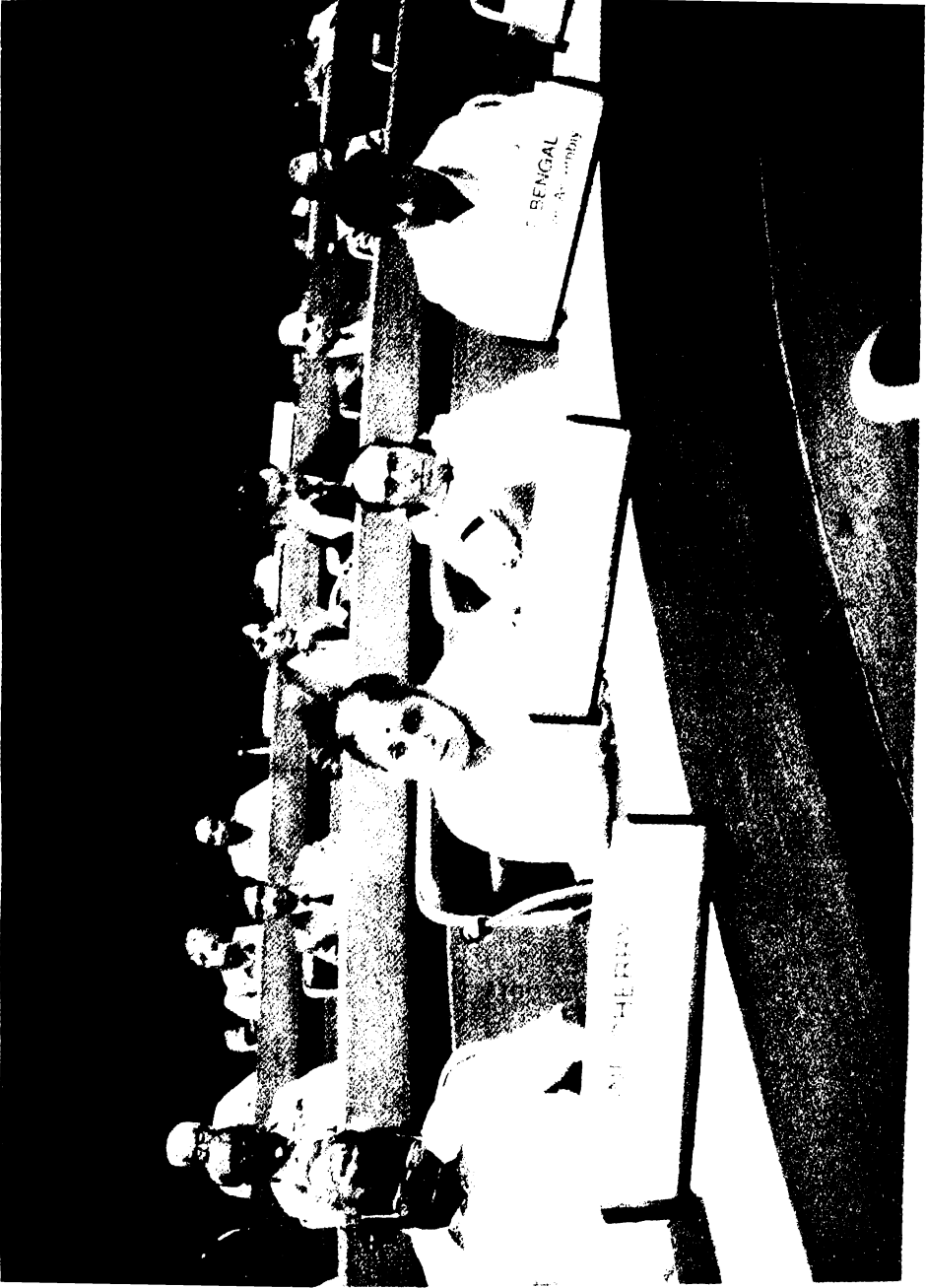
Having been exposed to the preparation of audit reports by the establishment of the C&AG and subsequent scrutiny by the Public Accounts



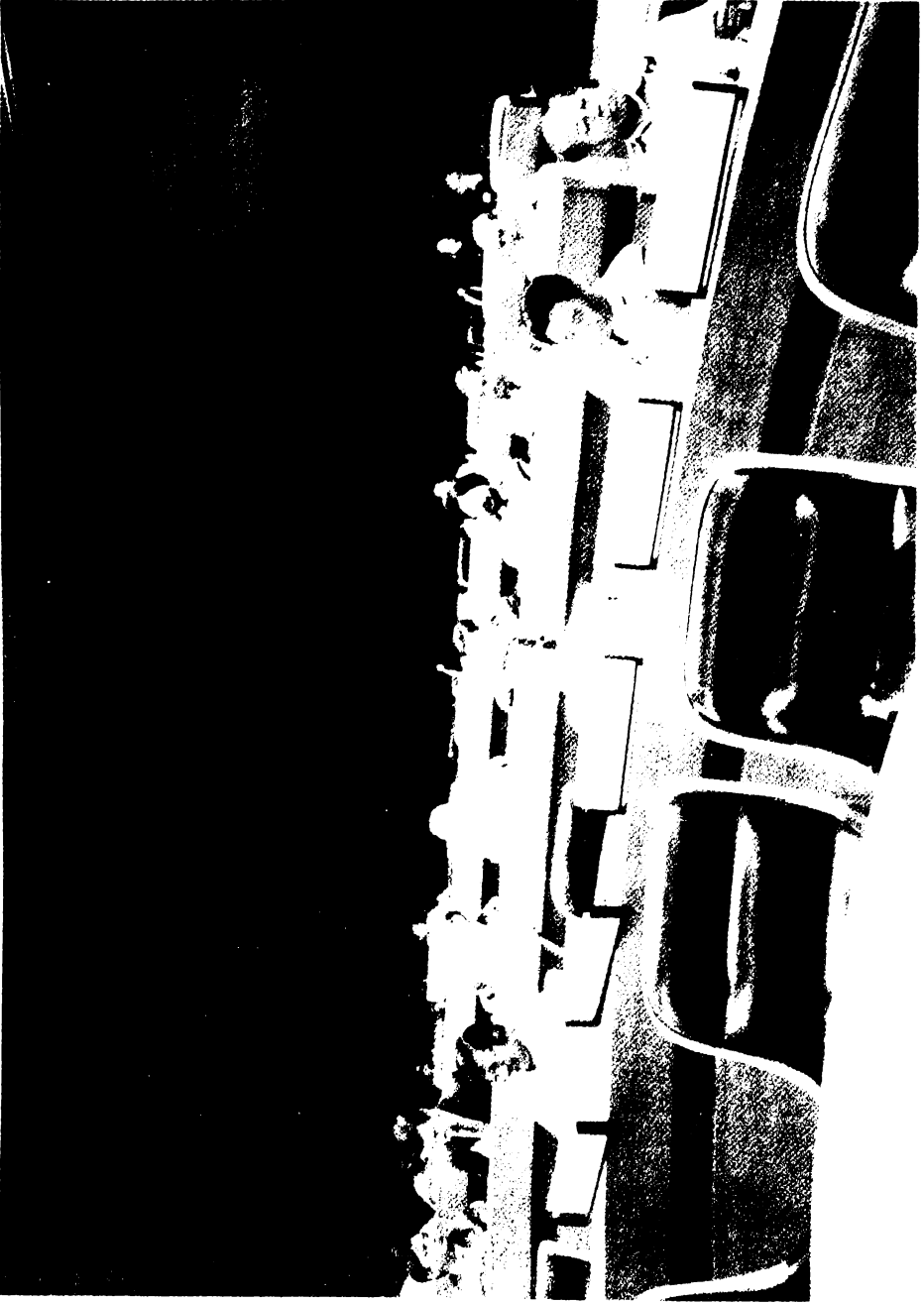
Address by the Chairman of the Committee on Public Accounts of Parliament and the Chairman of the Conference, Dr. Murlī Manohar Joshi



The Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P. A. Sangma inaugurating the Conference



The Conference in progress



Another view of the Conference Sessions in progress

Committee, while being within Ministries, I have the perspective of the Executive as well which, I think, I should share with you now. Government functionaries do have to conform to a fairly rigid regime of rules and regulations. Decision-making is a multi-point process. Expenditure proposals go through different hands up the hierarchy. The problems of procedures, processes and personalities cause, very often, inordinate delays. Funds voted are not spent. Serious shortfalls in expenditure occur. Because of delays, there are also inevitable cost over-runs. In certain inevitable circumstances, expenditure incurred is also in excess of authorisation. Those who are in-charge of audit, whose reports go before the Public Accounts Committees, should have an empathetic understanding of the disabilities of the decision-makers behind the hard core of the regime of rules and regulations. If this understanding is missing, we may not be fair to the Executive. It is my experience that decision-makers who are just inactive and who are sticklers to the mere letter of the rules and regulations, are faulted less often. Those who are innovative and dynamic and try to achieve and show results, taking decisions in good faith, are faulted more often. I shall give an example :-

In implementing a distress relief programme for fisherwomen in a particular State, a decision was taken to allow expenditure on purchase of a bus to be given to a fisheries co-operative. Audit took objection on the ground that this expenditure would provide relief in terms of employment only to three or four persons - the driver and cleaners. The decision-maker had to present almost a battle in defence of the decision explaining that the fisherwomen could go to their market places for sale of their goods more often and faster and in larger numbers so that they could get real value for their fishery items on sale. Decisions taken in the Executive, in the ordinary course of business, should not be too technically viewed. It is desirable that bona fide and rational decisions taken by meaningful and constructive interpretation of rules and regulations are not questioned in audit.

The Public Accounts Committee, by the very nature of their functioning, scrutinise expenditure after they are incurred. Therefore, they always have the benefit of hindsight. And, foresight of the decision-makers can never be as accurate as hindsight. This realisation should also inform the Public Accounts Committees.

Members of the establishment of the C&AG, in essence, are professionals like doctors and lawyers. Even as clients of doctors and lawyers take them in trust and expose themselves fully, the Executive exposes itself to the trust of the C&AG's establishment during Audit. Because of this, it is desirable that every care is taken to see that Audit reports do not get to be known to the public until they are laid before the Legislative Bodies and come under the scrutiny of the Public Accounts Committees. This will help in preventing avoidable politicisation of Audit Reports.

Reports of action taken by the Government on the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committees are as important as the original recommendations of the Committees. Such Action Taken Reports are the only means of monitoring implementation of recommendations without which the accountability of the Executive to the Legislature cannot be secured in the real and lasting sense.

I am sure that under the enlightened guidance of Dr. Murlī Manohar Joshi and of Shri Shunglu, whom I have personally known as an outstanding civilian, this Conference would facilitate very fruitful exchange of experiences across the country and shall also pave the way for the success of the forthcoming Conference of SAARC Public Accounts Committees.

With these words, I am immensely pleased to inaugurate this Conference.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.

SUBJECT COMMITTEE SYSTEM IN WEST BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

SATYABRATA DUTTA

The Subject Committee System in the West Bengal State Legislative Assembly, which has been quite active in recent years, has added a new dimension in further ensuring accountability of the Executive to the Legislature. The Executive, in its turn, is getting meaningful legislative support because of its exposure to, and interaction with, the Subject Committees. Disorderliness and distressing displays on the floor of the House, which unfortunately has been witnessed at times in the legislative bodies, could be contained if the Subject Committees are made to work efficiently and perceptibly.

In the present Indian context, the Subject Committee System has assumed added importance because, as a multifunctional institution, the modern Legislature is required to perform a variety of functions. It scrutinizes the Budget and concerns itself with the earning and the spending processes of public funds. The political wing of the Executive remains in Office so long as it is able to carry the confidence of the Legislature. A popular Chamber also deals with an ever-widening spectrum of public policy issues. It has also to involve itself in the resolution of conflicts and in the diffusion of tensions in the society. But, there is a perception that because of time constraints, political bickering on trivialities, declining quality of leadership and falling standards of debates, the intervention of Legislature in the political process is now minimal or at best secondary. Proponents of this point of view feel that the vast expanse of governmental activities has tilted the balance of power in favour of the Executive at the cost of the Legislature.

To restore its pivotal role, Legislatures the world over are tending to move towards a pattern of specialized Committee System. Today, the Committees are looked upon as the arms of the Legislature and real work is done more in the Committees than on the floor of the House. As former American President Woodrow Wilson once observed (in the American context), "Congress in Session is Congress on public exhibition, while Congress in its Committee rooms is Congress at work". At the micro-level, the 'Committee power' is a universal phenomenon, be it of parliamentary or presidential variety.

The Indian system of Subject Committees owes much to the Westminster model. Introduced in 1979, the Departmentally-related Select Committees of the British House of Commons predicated a new relationship of close interaction and mutual responsiveness between the Executive and Parliament.

The Kerala Legislative Assembly was the first in India to experiment with the Subject Committees, followed by the West Bengal Legislative Assembly. At the national level, in 1989, Parliament constituted three Subject-based Committees to begin with. With the setting up of 17 Departmentally-related Standing Committees in 1993, the Indian Parliament widened the ambit of the Committee System.

However, the composition and scope of the Subject Committees in India vary widely. For instance, a Minister cannot be a member of the Subject Committees in the Indian Parliament. In Kerala, Ministers are Chairmen of the Subject Committees. As for West Bengal, Ministers are *ex officio* members of the Committee. The inclusion of a Minister in the Committee was justified on the ground that as political leader of the bureaucracy, he would be in an advantageous position to get things done by the Executive.

The West Bengal Legislative Assembly, which started with three Subject Committees on Health, Education and Panchayat in 1989, has now 10 such Committees covering major administrative Departments of the State Government. Each Committee consists of 15 members nominated by the Speaker and includes Minister(s) as *ex officio* member(s). The members are nominated for a one-year term. The functions of the Committees include the scrutiny of the Budget at the pre-voting stage and advising the Government in the matter of formulating policies underlying the Budget estimates. The Committees are required to present Reports to the House on the result of such scrutiny within four weeks before the Budget is voted upon. It also devolves on the Committees to review the implementation of Plans and programmes (both Central and State) and examine the quarterly progress of work of the respective Departments and suggest measures for improvement in administration. The Action Taken Report (ATR) from the Government too is referred to the Legislative Assembly for discussion. The Committees are also authorized to examine such other matter or matters as deemed relevant or referred to them by the Speaker or the House.

During the tenure of the Eleventh Legislative Assembly in West Bengal (1991-96), a number of Subject Committees submitted their Reports to the House (see Annexure). The Reports, apart from Budget scrutiny, revealed internal workings of the Government Departments which otherwise would not have been available to the public. Strenuous work was done in some Committees, particularly in the Subject Committee on Health and Family Welfare. Apart from proposals for re-appropriation of funds, the Committee, in its Reports, provided substantial information about the policies and practices of the Health Department. For instance, in the 1994-95 Report, the Committee was emphatic in pointing out that budgetary allocation was sure to be meaningless if performance of various wings and units of the Health Department were not properly assessed. In the 1995-96 Report, the Committee regretted that the Government was yet to submit the performance report to the Committee. It further pointed out that its insistence to be associated with the

preparation stage of the Budget was also not heeded. If that was done, it would have helped "objective assessment of the Department and the perceptual assessment of the Subject Committee" to formulate well balanced budgetary demands. The Committee wondered why the Department was reluctant to undertake that experimental exercise and felt that the credibility of the Health Department was sure to suffer as a consequence. The Committee was also quite critical of the 'unhealthy nexus' between commercial diagnostic institutes and medical and para medical personnel in different categories of Government hospitals. It pointed out that health care planning exemplified a lack of priority on preventive and promotive health. The Committee felt that the assistance of the Union Government could be better utilized. It asserted that because of erroneous planning, facilities remained under-utilized in hospitals and different wings of the Health Department. The Committee was quite critical of the commercial blood banks and observed perceptively that "transfusion of blood obtained from professional donors means purchasing disease to tide over a crisis". The Annexure on the Committee's Questions and Departmental replies and the recommendations of the Committee disclosed a remarkable body of knowledge about the working of the Department.

In reply to the Committee's Questionnaire (1993-1994), the Health Department informed the Subject Committee that "prompt actions on the recommendation of the Committee have been taken in disciplinary matters as well as in matters of shortage of drugs and appliances, manpower, etc. which have brought about good results". It further admitted that the "visits of the members of the Committee to different health units have made officers and members of staff more alert than ever before. Health Department functionaries at all levels have, as a result of the visits, become aware of the deficiencies. Exposure to the interactions with the members of the high powered Committee has brought about welcome changes in their attitude, leading to detection of gaps in administration of the units and suggestions to bridge them as far as practicable."

The working of the Subject Committees in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly was evaluated in the *Final Report of the Ad hoc Committee on the Questions of Subject Committee* (West Bengal Legislative Assembly Secretariat, 1995). The *Ad hoc* Committee has offered valuable recommendations such as :

- (i) All political parties and groups in the House should be accommodated in each Subject Committee.
- (ii) The Opposition should be offered Chairmanship of a certain number of Committees. The Speaker should, in consultation with the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition, determine how many and which of the chairs should be offered to the members of the Opposition parties.
- (iii) Every member of the Legislature should be member of at least one Subject Committee.

- (iv) The number of Subject Committees should be increased to thirteen.
- (v) The tenure of the Subject Committees should be raised from the existing one year to 2 or 3 years.
- (vi) Regarding the ATRs, it was specifically stated that the Department should report on the action taken on the recommendations and observations of the Subject Committee within six months.
- (vii) All Departments should bring out an Annual Performance Report in relation to the Budget sanctioned by the House.
- (viii) Subject Committees should examine all Bills, excluding Appropriation Bills. The functioning of the Select Committee in respect of a Bill would not, however, be affected by the existence of a Subject Committee.
- (ix) The scope of the Subject Committee should be widened and the status of the Chairman of the Subject Committee should be raised to a rank not below that of a Minister of State.

The success of the Subject Committee System ultimately depends among other things, on the quality of legislators and how the members develop specialization and expertise on the subjects of their concern. An adequate legislative support system, backed by a competent research team and requisite secretarial assistance and library service, is indispensable for the efficient working of the Subject Committees.

The effectiveness of the Subject Committees also depends on the support and rapport between the Treasury and Opposition members. In the Indian system, as is practised today, an attitude of "all or nothing" exists between members of the Treasury Benches and the Opposition in assessing the performance of the Government. The ruling party members are keen to ensure that debates in the House or a Report are not loaded against the Government while the Opposition members are always eager to oppose and expose. The ruling party and Opposition members may be at loggerheads on the floor but at the micro-level, in the Committees, they must cooperate and play a constructive role. That would ensure the success of the Committees.

The inclusion of a Minister as Chairman, as in Kerala, or even as a member of the Subject Committee, as in West Bengal, has been a subject of criticism and quite rightly so. The Committee should examine the Minister as witness and call for persons, papers and records. It is on record that in the first three years, the Subject Committees in the United Kingdom were able to register 150 Ministerial appearances before the Committees. It is fairly certain that if the Subject Committee System functions effectively, it would further strengthen India's legislative bodies.

ANNEXURE
Performance of the Committees, West Bengal Legislative Assembly

Sl. No.	Name of the Subject Committee	No. of meetings held during 11th Assembly up to April 1995	Average attendance of members in such meetings	No. of meetings attended by Ministers	No. of evidence taken by Committee during the 11th Assembly	No. of study tours within the State during 11th Assembly	No. of study tours outside the State during 11th Assembly	Total No. of Reports submitted by the Committee since its inception	Main topics the Reports discussed
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
1.	Subject Committee on Agriculture	114	11	3	91	14	2	7	Pre-Budget Scrutiny.
2.	Subject Committee on Education and Information and Cultural Affairs	69	11	24	38	8	2	10	(a) Pre-Budget Scrutiny; (b) Technical Education & Training; (c) Growing Trend of Cost Burden on the Authorities, Institutions and Student Families; (d) Technical Education System in the State of Rajasthan.
3.	Subject Committee on Environment	48	9	8	21	8	2	3	Pre-Budget Scrutiny
4.	Subject Committee on Health and Family Welfare	88	12	10	50	14	2	10	(a) Pre-Budget Scrutiny; (b) Medical Education; (c) Situation of Drugs and Therapeutic Appliances;

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
									(d) Minimum Needs Programme; (e) Situation prevailing in the Dist., Sub-divisional, State General and Rural Hospitals; (f) The incident of children's death due to immunisation at Debagram, Nadia.
5.	Subject Committee on Irrigation & Waterways	118	11	56	80	11	1	10	(a) Pre-Budget Scrutiny; (b) Teesta Project; (c) Progress of Major, Medium, Irrigation of the State; (d) Flood Control and anti-erosion Projects.
6.	Subject Committee on Panchayat	65	10	8	20	4	1	11	(a) Pre-Budget Scrutiny; (b) Panchayat activities; (c) Recommendations and action taken on Panchayat Deptt.; (d) Recommendations and Review on the activities of L & LR Deptt. and Rural Development Deptt.
7.	Subject Committee on Power & Commerce and Industries	65	8	6	53	28	2	10	(a) Pre-Budget Scrutiny (b) Santaldih Thermal Power Station; (c) Nicco Parks and Resorts Ltd; (d) Greater Calcutta Gas Supply Corporation Ltd; (e) Berdel Thermal Power Station;

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
8.	Subject Committee on Public Works	99	10	10	76	22	3	8	(f) West Bengal Tea Development Corporation Ltd; (g) The West Bengal Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation. (a) Pre-Budget Scrutiny; (b) Existing Roadways; (c) Construction Work of Roadways during Five Year Plans; (d) National Highway.
9.	Subject Committee on Transport	80	10	1	28	9	1	5	(a) Pre-Budget Scrutiny; (b) Inland Water Transport Corporation and Civil Aviation.
10.	Subject Committee on Welfare, Tourism and Sports & Youth Service	72	11	5	22	12	3	8	(a) Pre-Budget Scrutiny; (b) I.C.D.S. Project of Social Welfare; (c) General Report on Social Welfare, Tourism and Youth Services Deptt.

(Source : Final Report of Ad hoc Committee on the Questions of Subject Committees, 1995)

PARLIAMENTARY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Conference of Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers : The meeting of the Standing Committee of the Conference of Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers was held in Somerset West (near Cape Town), South Africa from 3 to 8 January 1997. The Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Dr. (Smt.) Najma Heptulla attended the meeting as a member of the Standing Committee. The Secretary-General, Rajya Sabha, Smt. V.S. Rama Devi also attended the meeting.

Inter-Parliamentary Specialized Conference on "Towards Partnership between Men and Women in Politics" : * The Inter-Parliamentary Specialized Conference on 'Towards Partnership between Men and Women in Politics' was held in New Delhi from 14 to 18 February 1997 under the joint auspices of the Indian Parliamentary Group (IPG) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

CPA/ Wilton Park/ International Alert Conference : The CPA/ Wilton Park/ International Alert Conference on "Conflict Prevention and Violence in the 21st Century : Building Durable Solutions" was held in Wiston House, Wilton Park Conference Centre, Sussex, UK from 24 to 28 February 1997. Shri R.L. Bhatia, MP attended the Conference as a delegate from the Parliament of India.

46th Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar : The 46th Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar was held in London from 4 to 15 March 1997. The Speaker, Pondicherry Legislative Assembly, Shri V.M.C. Shiva Kumar; the Deputy Speaker, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, Shri Sharad Motiram Tasare; and member, Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha, Shri Rajdhari attended the Seminar from India.

BIRTH ANNIVERSARIES OF NATIONAL LEADERS

On the birth anniversaries of those national leaders whose portraits adorn the Central Hall of Parliament House, functions are organized under the auspices of the Indian Parliamentary Group (IPG) to pay tributes to the leaders. Booklets containing profiles of these leaders, prepared by the Library and Reference, Research, Documentation and Information Service

* For details, see article " Inter-Parliamentary Specialized Conference on "Towards Partnership between Men and Women in Politics -An Overview" in *The Journal of Parliamentary Information*, Vol. XLIII, No. 1, March 1997, pp. 16-47.

(LARRD18) of the Lok Sabha Secretariat, are also brought out on the occasion.

The birth anniversaries of the following leaders were celebrated during the period 1 January to 31 March 1997.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose : On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, a function was held on 23 January 1997 in the Central Hall. The Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P.A. Sangma; the Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Dr. (Smt.) Najma Heptulla; members of Parliament; and former members of Parliament and others paid floral tributes to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Lala Lajpat Rai : On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai, a function was held on 28 January 1997 in the Central Hall. The Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Dr. (Smt.) Najma Heptulla; the Minister of Welfare, Shri B.S. Ramoowalia; members of Parliament; and former members of Parliament and others paid floral tributes to Lala Lajpat Rai.

Smt. Sarojini Naidu : On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Smt. Sarojini Naidu, a function was held on 13 February 1997 in the Central Hall. The Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P.A. Sangma; the Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Dr. (Smt.) Najma Heptulla; the Ministers of Welfare, Shri B.S. Ramoowalia; members of Parliament; and former members of Parliament and others paid floral tributes to Smt. Sarojini Naidu.

Shri Morari Desai : On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Shri Morari Desai, a function was held on 28 February 1997 in the Central Hall. The Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P.A. Sangma; the Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Dr. (Smt.) Najma Heptulla; the Minister of Welfare, Shri B.S. Ramoowalia; members of Parliament; and former members of Parliament and others paid floral tributes to Shri Morari Desai.

Dr. Rammanohar Lohia : On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, a function was held on 23 March 1997 in the Central Hall. The Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Dr. (Smt.) Najma Heptulla; members of Parliament; and former members of Parliament and others paid floral tributes to Dr. Rammanohar Lohia.

EXCHANGE OF PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS VISITING INDIA

Egypt : On our invitation, a 14-member Egyptian Parliamentary Delegation, led by the Speaker of the People's Assembly of Egypt, Mr. Ahmad Fathi Sorour visited India from 13 to 18 February 1997. They called on the Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri K.R. Narayanan and the Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P.A. Sangma on 13 February 1997. The Speaker, Lok Sabha hosted a banquet in their honour the same day. The Delegation called on the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok

Sabha, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Tourism, Shri Srikanta Kumar Jena on 14 February 1997. They called on the President, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma; the Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda; and the Minister of External Affairs, Shri I.K. Gujral on 17 February 1997.

Besides, Delhi, they visited Jaipur.

Saudi Arabia : On our invitation, an 18-member Saudi Arabian Parliamentary Delegation, led by the Chairman of the *Majlis Al Shoura*, Mr. Sheikh Mohammed bin Ibrahim bin Jubair visited India from 16 to 21 March 1997. They called on the President, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma; the Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P.A. Sangma; and the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Srikanta Kumar Jena on 17 March 1997. The Speaker, hosted a banquet in their honour the same day. They called on the Prime Minister, Shri. H.D. Deve Gowda and the Minister of External Affairs, Shri I.K. Gujral on 18 March 1997. A meeting between the visiting Delegation and members of our Parliament was also held the same day.

Besides Delhi, they visited Agra and Mumbai.

Ireland : On our invitation, a 7 - member Irish Parliamentary Delegation, led by the Speaker of the Irish Parliament, Mr. Sean Treacy visited India from 29 March to 5 April 1997. The Delegation called on the Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P.A. Sangma and had a luncheon meeting with the Chairman and members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs on 31 March 1997. The Speaker, Lok Sabha hosted a banquet in their honour the same day. The Delegation called on the Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri K.R. Narayanan and the Minister of External Affairs, Shri I.K. Gujral on 1 April 1997.

Besides Delhi, the Delegation visited Agra, Calcutta, Mumbai and Patna.

INDIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION GOING ABROAD

United Kingdom : On the invitation of the Speaker of the House of Commons, United Kingdom, the Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P.A. Sangma visited United Kingdom from 8 to 12 February 1997. The Speaker, Lok Sabha, was accompanied by Shri S.N. Mishra, Additional Secretary and Shri S.K. Kain, Joint Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat.

BUREAU OF PARLIAMENTARY STUDIES AND TRAINING

During the period 1 January to 31 March 1997, the Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training (BPST) organised the following Courses/ Programmes :

Twelfth International Training Programme in Legislative Drafting : The Twelfth International Training Programme in Legislative Drafting was organised from 20 November 1996 to 31 January 1997. Participants in the Programme included parliamentary officials from Indonesia, Nepal, South

Africa and Thailand, besides two Officers from the Lok Sabha Secretariat and one each from the Kamataka and Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly Secretariats. The Programme was designed to equip the parliamentary officials with the basic concepts, skills and techniques required for drafting legislation so that they could assist members of Parliament whenever required.

Appreciation Courses : The following Appreciation Courses were organised for the probationers of: (i) Indian Audit and Accounts Service and Indian Information Service (20-24 January 1997); (ii) Indian Administrative Service (24-28 February 1997); and (iii) Indian Revenue Service (3-7 March 1997).

Attachment Programmes : The following Attachment Programmes were organised: (i) for Officers of Kamataka Legislature Secretariat (6-9 January 1997); (ii) for Shri S.G. Senanayake, Senior Superintendent of Police, Parliament of Sri Lanka (6-9 January 1997); (iii) for Officers of the Kamataka Legislature Secretariat (3-6 February 1997); and (iv) for Fellows of the Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, New Delhi (17-21 May 1997).

Training Programme : A Training Course for Watch and Ward officials of Parliament and State Legislature Secretariats was organised from 13 to 17 January 1997. Forty participants from various State Legislature Secretariats attended the Course.

Study Visits : Seventeen Study Visits were organised for participants from leading training/educational institutions.

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

LOK SABHA

Instance when a member other than either of the Presiding Officers and member of Panel of Chairmen presided : On 21 February 1997, during the discussion on a Private Member's Bill regarding the Government of the Union territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands Bill, Col. Rao Ram Singh, who was in the Chair, suggested that as he had to attend some urgent work and no member from the Panel of Chairmen was available, Shri A.C. Jos, a member, might preside over for the rest of the sitting. The House agreed to the suggestion and accordingly, Shri A.C. Jos presided till the House adjourned to meet the next day.

Instance when duration of Private Members' Business was reduced by half-an-hour for presentation of General Budget : On 28 February 1997, the General Budget for 1997-98 was to be presented at 5.00 P.M. In the Revised List of Business (Issued on 27 February 1997), items regarding General Government Business (Part-I), Private Members' Business (Part-II) and the Budget (General) (Part-III) were put down from 11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M., 2.00 P.M. to 4 P.M. and at 5 P.M., respectively. On 28 February 1997, immediately after the Question Hour, the Speaker announced that, as was customary, the House would adjourn for an hour at 4 P.M. and re-assemble at 5.00 P.M. for presentation of the General Budget and that the Private Members' Business (Resolutions) would be taken up at 2.00 P.M. and conclude at 4.00 P.M. Accordingly, the Private Members' Business was taken up. (As per Rule 26 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, the last two and a half hours of a sitting on Friday shall be allotted for the transaction of Private Members' Business).

Instance when members were not permitted to ask clarifications : On 20 March 1997, on the Statement made by the Minister of External Affairs, Shri I.K. Gujral regarding improved people-to-people contact with Pakistan, some members sought permission to ask clarifications, but the Deputy Speaker, who was in the Chair, did not allow the same.

PARLIAMENTARY AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

(1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 1997)

Events covered in this Feature are based on reports appearing in the daily newspapers and, as such, the Lok Sabha Secretariat does not accept any responsibility for their accuracy, authenticity or veracity.

—Editor

INDIA

DEVELOPMENTS AT THE UNION

Expansion of the Union Cabinet : On 20 February 1997, the Prime Minister, Shri H. D. Deve Gowda expanded the Union Council of Ministers by inducting one Cabinet Minister and one Minister of State. They are :

Cabinet Minister : Prof. Saifuddin Soz : *Forest and Environment.*

Minister of State : Shri M.P. Veerendra Kumar : *Finance.*

Budget Session of Parliament : The Budget Session of Parliament commenced with the customary Address by the President to the members of the two Houses assembled together in the Central Hall on 20 February 1997. Both the Houses were adjourned *sine die* on 21 March 1997 to facilitate the Committees to scrutinize the Demands for Grants.

Resignation of member : Shri Baikunth Lal Sharma, a BJP member representing the East Delhi constituency, resigned from the Lok Sabha on 3 March 1997.

By-elections to the Lok Sabha : The following were declared elected to the Lok Sabha in the by-elections held on 6 February 1997 : *Baghpat* : Shri Ajit Singh (BKKP); *Chhindwara* : Shri Sunder Lal Patwa (BJP); *Nagaur* : Shri Bhanu Prakash Mirdha (BJP); and *Ropar* : Smt. Satwinder Kaur Dhaliwal (Akañ Dal) (B).

AROUND THE STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

By-election results : The Telugu Desam Party won all the three seats in the State Legislative Assembly for which by-elections were held on 7 February 1997.

Change of party affiliation : Smt. Ratna Kumari MLA, belonging to the Congress (I), joined the Telugu Desam Party on 22 February 1997.

Death of Minister : The Civil Supplies Minister, Shri G. Hanumantha Rao passed away on 22 March 1997.

GOA

Resignation of MLA : Shri Arcio D'Souza, MLA, belonging to the United Goans Democratic Party resigned from the Party on 13 January 1997.

GUJARAT

Resignation of MLA : Shri Lavinji Mulji Solanki, an independent MLA representing the Radhanpur constituency, resigned from the State Legislative Assembly on 4 February 1997.

By-election result : Shri Amit Shah of the BJP was declared elected to the State Legislative Assembly from the Sarkhej constituency in a by-election held on 7 February 1997.

HARYANA

Expansion of Cabinet : On 14 January 1997, the Chief Minister, Shri Bansi Lal inducted nine Ministers of Cabinet rank and eight Ministers of State. They are :

Cabinet Ministers : Sarvashri Brij Mohan Singla, Dharamvir Yadav, Harminder Singh, Kanwal Singh, Jaswant Singh Namaul, Ishan Pal Gujjar, Shashipal Mehta, Om Prakash Mahajan and Charan Dass.

Minister of State : Sarvashri Ramesh Chander Kaushik, Krishna Gehlawat, Attar Singh Saini, Jagdish Yadav, Subhash Chand Chaudhary, Jaswant Singh, Ramswaroop Rama and Vinod.

KERALA

New Governor : Shri S.S. Kang was sworn in as the Governor of Kerala on 23 January 1997.

MADHYA PRADESH

By-election result : Shri Jagdish Patel of the Congress (I) was declared elected to the State Legislative Assembly from the Depalpur constituency in a by-election held on 7 February 1997.

Resignation of MLA : The Congress (I) member of the State Legislative Assembly, Shri Pyarelal Bela Chandan resigned from the membership of the House on 21 March 1997.

MAHARASHTRA

By-election result : Smt. Mandakini Raosahib Kadam of the Shiv Sena was declared elected to the State Legislative Assembly from the Niphad constituency in a by-election held on 7 February 1997.

Expansion of Cabinet : The Chief Minister, Shri Manohar Joshi expanded the State Cabinet on 16 March 1997. The new Ministers are :

Cabinet Minister : Shri Radhakrishna Eknath Vikhe Patil.

Ministers of State : Sarvashri Arjun Khatkar, Vinod Gughe Patil, Babasaheb Dhabekar and Vijay Kumar Gavit.

ORISSA

New Governor : The Governor of West Bengal, Shri K.V. Raghunatha Reddy was given the additional charge of the Office of the Governor of Orissa on 31 January 1997.

PUNJAB

Election results : The elections to the 117-member State Legislative Assembly took place on 7 February 1997. The Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal)-BJP alliance gained a clear majority by winning 93 seats. The party position was as under: Akali Dal: 75; BJP:18; Congress (I):14; BSP-1; CPI-2; Akali Dal (Mann):1; and Independents:6.

Following the elections, Shri Prakash Singh Badal was sworn in as the Chief Minister on 12 February 1997 along with ten Ministers. They are: Sarvashri Ranjit Singh Brahmputra, Prakash Singh Majithia, Gurudev Singh Badal, Kanwaljit Singh, Sarup Singh, Balramji Dass Tandon, Madan Mohan Mittal, Nirmaljit Singh Kahlon and Smt. Upinder Jit Kaur.

TAMIL NADU

New Governor : Kumari M. Fatima Beevi was sworn in as the Governor of Tamil Nadu on 23 January 1997.

TRIPURA

Re-allocation of portfolios : On 12 March 1997, in a re-allocation of some portfolios, the Minister for Power and Labour, Shri Keshab Majumdar was given the charge of Education and Higher Education, Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism Department while the Minister of Fisheries, Shri Sukumar Barman was given the charge of the Scheduled Castes Welfare Department.

UTTAR PRADESH

By-election results : In the by-elections to four seats in the State Legislative Assembly held on 7 February 1997, the BJP won two seats, the Samajwadi Party one seat and the Bahujan Samaj Party one seat.

Formation of Government : On 21 March 1997, Kumari Mayawati of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) was sworn in as the Chief Minister with the support of the BJP. The other Ministers sworn in on the same day are : Sarvashri R.K. Chaudhary, Sukhdeo Rajbhar, Kalraj Mishra and Lalji Tandon.

On 27 March 1997, the Chief Minister expanded the Cabinet. The new Ministers are :

Cabinet Ministers : Sarvashri Barkhu Ram Varma, Om Prakash Singh, Hari Kishan Srivastava, Narendra Kumar Singh Gaur, Sriram Pal, Ramapati Shastri, Kazi Mohiuddin, Nepal Singh, Markandey Chandra, Nasimuddin Siddiqui, Aizaz Rizvi, Radhey Shyam Gupta, Ramvir Upadhyay, Virendra Singh Sirohi, Swami Prasad Maurya and Smt. Prabha Dwivedi.

Ministers of State : Sarvashri Babu Lal Kushwaha, Baleswar Tyagi, Sunder Singh Baghel, Bhola Shankar Maurya, Ravindra Shukla, Bhagwati Prasad Sagar, Gaurav Prasad Nishad, Buniad Ansari, Ashok Yadav, Ram Prasad Chaudhry, Devendra Singh Bholey, Vibhute Prasad Nishad, Banshidhar Bhagat, Shiv Charan Prajapat, Jaipal Singh, Ram Achal Rajbhar, Mahendra Nath Pandey, Lal Mani Prasad, Dharam Pal Singh, Ganga Prasad Pushkar, Natwar Singh Kandari, Radhey Shyam, Raj Rai Singh and Ram Shankar Pal.

Election of Speaker : Shri Kesri Nath Tripathy was unanimously elected the Speaker of the State Legislative Assembly on 27 March 1997.

DEVELOPMENTS ABROAD

ALBANIA

New Prime Minister : On 2 March 1997, the Prime Minister, Mr. Alexander Meksi resigned from Office. Mr. Bashkine Fino was appointed the new Prime Minister on 12 March 1997.

JORDAN

Resignation of Prime Minister : The Prime Minister Mr. Abdel Karim Kabarite resigned from Office on 19 March 1997.

NEPAL

Expansion of Cabinet : On 9 January 1997, the Prime Minister, Shri Sher Bahadur Deuba inducted five Ministers of Cabinet rank. They are : Mr. Kamal Thapa, Mr. Ram Krishna Acharya, Mr. Prem Bahadur Bhandari, Mr. Rajib Prayuli and Mr. Anis Ansari.

Political developments : On 6 March 1997, the coalition Government headed by the Prime Minister, Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba was voted out in a vote of confidence in the 205-member *Pratinidhi Sabha*. On 12 March 1997, Mr. Lokendra Bahadur Chand supported by a multi-party coalition was sworn in as the new Prime Minister. He won a vote of confidence in the *Pratinidhi Sabha* on 19 March 1997.

SINGAPORE

Election results : On 2 January 1997, elections were held for the 83-member Parliament. The People's Action Party (PAP) won 34 of the 36 contested seats and all 47 of the uncontested seats.

SOUTH KOREA

New Prime Minister : Mr. Koh Kun was appointed the new Prime Minister on 4 March 1997.

USA

Speaker re-elected : Mr. Newt Gingrich was re-elected the Speaker of the House of Representatives on 9 January 1997.

SESSIONAL REVIEW

ELEVENTH LOK SABHA

FOURTH SESSION

The Fourth Session of the Eleventh Lok Sabha, which commenced on 20 February 1997, was adjourned on 21 March 1997 till 21 April 1997 to enable the Departmentally-related Standing Committees of Parliament to examine the Demands for Grants of the Ministries/Departments assigned to them and report back to the House. However, following certain developments in the political scenario, the House met on 11 April 1997 for a day to consider the motion moved by the Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda, expressing confidence in the Council of Ministers. The Lok Sabha was adjourned *sine die* after it negatived the confidence motion. The House reconvened on 22 April 1997 for a day and among other things, considered and adopted the motion moved by the newly appointed Prime Minister, Shri I.K. Gujral expressing confidence in the Council of Ministers. The Lok Sabha, which reassembled on 30 April 1997, was adjourned *sine die* on 16 May 1997.

A brief resume of some of the important discussions held and other business transacted during the period from 20 February 1997 to 21 March 1997* is given below:

A. DISCUSSIONS/STATEMENTS

*Motion of Thanks to the President for his Address to members of parliament***: Moving the motion on 24 February 1997, Shri Sharad Yadav said that the Address by the President broadly presented before the nation the economic and political direction of the Government in the day to come. During the last fifty years, the country had made strides in the field of science, education, etc. However, much more remained to be done. Despite the fact that labour was the producer of capital, the labour force had no work to do, the underfed constituted 32 per cent of our population. Approximately 23 crore people did not even get safe drinking water. The United Front (UF) Government was committed to change that distressing scenario. The rural population which constituted 75 per cent of the total population was the largest buyer in the market. If they were strengthened,

*The Sessional Review covering the remaining period of the Fourth Session will be carried in the September 1997 issue of the *Journal of Parliamentary Information* (Vol. XLIII, No. 10). Complete details regarding the Question Hour and Obituary References will also be included in that issue.

**For the text of the Address, see pp. 143-52

it would strengthen the market which would lead to the setting up of more and more industries which, in turn, would create more and more jobs. The areas which were most affected from the point of view of lack of infrastructure had been given special attention by the Government. It had worked for providing basic necessities such as railway networks, roads and electricity in the backward areas. In the field of foreign policy, India was keen to improve relations with its neighbours, including Pakistan.

Seconding the motion, Shri N.S.V Chitthan said that the Indian economy was now firmly set on a high growth path. The UF Government had succeeded in giving a stable Government at the Centre. It had instilled confidence in the minds of the weaker sections and the minorities. The successful conduct of elections in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab was another feather in the cap of the UF Government.

Taking part in the discussion* on 25 February 1997, Shri Somnath Chatterjee said that India had problems of unbalanced development, lack of employment and lack of infrastructure and inherent weakness of its economy. The Common Minimum Programme (CMP) of the UF Government was nothing but a testament of the hopes, urges and aspiration of the people and a charter of the comprehensive development of the country. The Government had to ensure that the duties towards the common people and the poor people were discharged.

Supporting the motion, Shri Sharad Pawar said that when we looked back at our performance during the last 50 years, we would find that the country had made progress in many fields. But the problem of unemployment was staring at the younger generation. The Government would have to take firm steps to root out corruption. Another problem which needed attention was regional imbalances.

Participating in the discussion on 26 February 1997, Shri Madhukar Sarpotdar observed that the Address by the President failed to reflect the factual position regarding the state of the economy. Since the insurance industry was a nationalized industry, it would not be proper to allow foreigners to intervene in that sector.

Shri Surjit Singh Barnala regretted that the Address by the President had no mention of population explosion and how the Government proposed

* Others who participated in the discussion were: Sarvasbri Rajesh Pilot, Manoranjan Bhakta, Krishan Lal Sharma, Nitish Kumar, Virendra Kumar Singh, K.P. Singh Deo, Dileepbhai Sanghani, Sukh Lal Kushwaha, Ram Sagar, M. Ramanathan, Pramothas Mukherjee, Chaman Lal Gupta, Manabendra Shah, P. Namgyal, E. Ahmed, N. Dennis, Syed Masudal Hossain, Anant Kumar, Ram Kripal Yadav, Harbhajan Lakha, Rameshwar Patidar, Dileep Singh Bhuria, Qamarul Islam, Sunderlal Patwa, Ramaswray Prasad Singh, I.P. Hazarika, Viney Katiyar, Ilyas Azami, P. Kodandaramaiah, C. Narayana Swamy, Amar Pal Singh, Shivanand Hemappa Koujalgi, Naldi Singh, Punnu Lal Mohle, Dr. Prabin Chandra Sarma, Dr. Arvind Sharma, Dr. Shafiqur Rahman Barq, Prof. Prem Singh Chandumajra, Prof. Rita Verma and Smt. Geeta Mukherjee.

to deal with the problem. The increasing levels of environmental pollution was another critical area which had been overlooked.

Taking part in the discussion on 27 February 1997, Dr. M. Jagannath wanted that the vacancies existing in the armed forces at the Officers' level should be filled up to increase their strength. Unless population explosion was checked and family planning implemented, the country could not develop.

On 28 February 1997, Shri Chitta Basu pointed out that the U.F. Government had imparted dynamism to the Inter-State Council, the National Development Council and the Planning Commission. The Centre had taken a great step forward towards decentralization of administration and the financial governance of the country.

Participating in the discussion 3 March 1997, Shri P.C. Thomas observed that the farmers were not getting a proper price for their produce. A mechanism should be developed by which we could link the cost of production and the cost of living.

Replying to the discussion on 4 March 1997, the Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda said that the Government was committed to the welfare of the rural masses and the poorer sections of the society, especially from the agricultural sector. Steps had been taken to decentralize power with the sole objective of accelerating economic reforms. Special allocation had been made for the developmental works in the North Eastern States and Jammu and Kashmir. Additional allocations had also been made for the power sector and the irrigation sector. The object of the Government was to see to it that infrastructure was provided for agricultural growth by inviting sufficient private funds or private investments, either domestic or foreign.

The motion was adopted.

Statutory Resolution re : approval of continuance in force of Proclamation by the President in respect of the State of Uttar Pradesh : On 13 March 1997, before the Minister of Home Affairs, Shri Indrajit Gupta could move the Statutory Resolution, Justice Guman Mal Lodha, a member, raised the question of the constitutional validity of the extension of President's rule in Uttar Pradesh by adopting a Statutory Resolution instead of by amending the Constitution. Subsequently, Sarvashri Somnath Chatterjee, Jaswant Singh, Satya Pal Jain, Pramotes Mukherjee, Sunderlal Patwa, Ram Sagar, Ram Naik and P.C. Thomas, all members, also made submissions in that regard.

After hearing the members and the Minister of State of the Department of Legal Affairs, Legislative Department and Department of Justice, Shri Ramakant D. Khalap, the Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri P.A. Sangma overruled the objection of Justice Guman Mal Lodha, member, and held that the Statutory Resolution sought to be moved by the Home Minister was in order.

Accordingly, the Resolution seeking to extend the President's rule in Uttar Pradesh for a further period of six months was moved. It was adopted by the House on 14 March 1997.

The Budget (Railways), 1997-98 : On 26 February 1997, presenting the Railway Budget for 1997-98 in the House, the Minister of Railways, Shri Ravi Vilas Paswan said that the Government wanted the Railways to function not only as a commercial institution but also as an efficient public welfare organization for the development of the backward regions. It would not be possible to develop rail infrastructure in these backward regions as long as financial viability of a railway line was the norm. Keeping these in view, more than Rs. 300 crore had been allotted for the development and expansion of rail infrastructure in the North Eastern States. More than Rs. 100 crore had been provided for the expansion of railway lines in Jammu and Kashmir. Similarly, the Budget had provided increased outlays as far as possible for the backward regions of different States. A provision of Rs. 4,100 crore had been made to be spent on rolling stock as against Rs. 2,900 crore during 1995-96. Necessary funds had been provided for the procurement of 26,000 wagons, more than 2,000 passenger coaches and more than 300 locos during the year 1997-98.

The India Railways had achieved a loading of 390 million tonnes during 1995-96 and for the year 1996-97, the target of 410 million tonnes of revenue earning freight traffic was fixed. The Railways were fully poised to achieve this target during the current year despite shortfalls. The financial performance of the Railways in the current year had been satisfactory. The 'excess' of Rs. 1,916 crore as projected in the Budget Estimates (BE) had been revised upward to Rs. 2,241 crore. The Annual Plan which was initially fixed at Rs. 8,130 crore, was modified to Rs. 8,300 crore on grant of additional budgetary support of Rs. 70 crore from the General Exchequer. A target of 430 million tonnes of revenue earning freight traffic had been fixed for 1997-98.

There had been commendable increase in passenger traffic during 1996-97 and the Railways hoped to achieve the target of 3 per cent increase during 1997-98. Computerization facility had already been provided at 271 locations by the end of 1995-96. By March 1997, this would be available at more than 300 locations. Satellite-based telephone service facility had been successfully introduced on the Mumbai-Delhi Rajdhani Express. This facility would be provided on all the Rajdhani Express trains by the end of the next year. Monitoring cells had been set up at the Zonal Headquarters and also at the Ministry level for ensuring passenger amenities, cleanliness, catering and punctuality. For redressal of grievances, public grievances cells were functioning at the Zonal level and at the Ministry level. Timely and remedial action was being taken in all cases of complaint. In order to further improve the catering services, staff were being suitably trained and professionally qualified personnel were also being recruited.

The Plan outlay for 1997-98 had been fixed at Rs. 8,300 crore. The budgetary support was Rs. 1,831 crore which was approximately Rs. 400 crore higher than 1996-97 the budgetary support. An amount of Rs. 3,419 crore would be internally generated by the Railways to finance the Plan outlay. The remaining amount was proposed to be raised through the issue of bonds by the Indian Railway Finance Corporation and private investment under the 'Build Operate, Lease, Transfer' (BOLT) and the 'Own Your Wagon' (OYW) schemes.

The 'Project Unigauge' had been making excellent progress and gauge conversion continued to be a priority area in the Railways' development plan. The work on the gauge conversion projects on hand was also making good progress. Efforts were on to complete the target of electrification of 634 route kms. in 1996-97. With this, the Railways would have a total of 13,509 route kms. of track fully electrified.

The contractual system of maintaining cleanliness in the Railways had been abolished and the work would now be done by the Railways themselves. Over 16,000 casual labour had been regularized since the last Budget and the number was likely to reach the figure of 30,000 by the end of March 1997. It was also proposed to regularize all the 56,000 casual labour by the end of the next financial year.

On the basis of the traffic projections of 430 million tonnes and passenger growth of 3 per cent over 1996-97, the Gross Traffic Receipts at the current fare and freight rates were estimated at Rs. 26,055 crore. The Ordinary Working Expenses in 1997-98 were estimated at Rs. 20,935 crore. The appropriation to the Depreciation Reserve Fund was proposed at Rs. 2,000 crore in 1997-98, as against Rs. 2,115 crore provided in the Revised Estimates (RE) of 1996-97. The contribution from revenue to the Pension Fund was proposed to be kept at Rs. 2,200 crore and Rs. 300 crore was to be drawn from the Pension Fund during 1997-98. The dividend liability for 1997-98 worked out to Rs. 1,630 crore. The Total Working Expenses, comprising Ordinary Working Expenses, the contribution to the Depreciation Reserve Fund and the Pension Fund worked out to Rs. 25,135 crore and the Gross Traffic Receipts were estimated at Rs. 26,055 crore.

On 6 March 1997, the House took up for combined discussion the Budget (Railways), 1997-98; the Demands for Grants on Account (Railways), 1997-98; the Demands for Excess Grants (Railways), 1994-95; and the Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways), 1996-97.

Initiating the discussion, Shri Pramod Mahajan said that there was no determination in the Railway Budget to convert the challenges before the Indian Railways into opportunities. The major challenges were to strike a balance between a commercial organization and a public welfare organization; what should be the place of the Railways in the National Transport Policy; the obligation of the Railways towards national

development; and what should be the ratio among the three fuels, electricity, diesel and coal, being used by the Railways. The maximum use of the potential of sixteen lakh employees was another major challenge. The criteria for the expansion of the Railway network in itself was a challenge. While striking a balance in the development of the Railways, it should be ensured that the Railways became a commercial organization but at the same time continuing to play its role of a public welfare organization. Three things were vital to the Railways, punctuality, security and services, and there was an urgent need to pay attention to all these aspects, the member added.

Taking part in the discussion* on 11 March 1997, Shri Jai Prakash felt that the Railway Budget was anti-farmer since the freight charges had been increased. That measure would increase the prices of essential commodities and add to inflation. The member also pleaded for attending to the requirements of the State of Haryana.

On 12 March 1997, supporting the Railway Budget. Shri N.S.V. Chitthan described it as pro-poor and pro-development. The hike in freight tariff was inevitable because of the increased cost of running the Railways. Besides, it was needed to meet the increased expenditures of new projects, increase in wages because of the implementation of the Fifth Pay Commission Report (whenever accepted) and various welfare measures.

Shri P. C. Thomas called upon the Railway authorities to make an earnest attempt to bring more and more people into the Railway network. The Railways should also give utmost importance to goods traffic, at the same time keeping in mind that it would be unfortunate to think that freight charges should be increased to make more profit.

*Other who took part in the discussion were Sarvashri Sriballav Panigrahi, Nawal Kishore Rai, Basudeb Acharya, Anant Gangaram Geete, S.K. Karvendhan, Suresh Prabhu, Nitish Kumar, Ilyas Azmi, Pramothas Mukerjee, D.P. Yadav, T. Nagaratnam, Harivansh Sahai, N.N. Krishnadas, Girdhari Lal Bhargava, Amar Roy Pradhan, V.V. Raghavan, Bkakta Charan Das, Paban Singh Ghatowar, Chandresh Patel, G.A. Charan Reddy, Ram Naik, Anand Rao Vithoba Adsul, Anadi Charan Sahu, Virendra Kumar Singh, Kalp Nath Rai, Pradeep Bhattacharya, L. Ramana, Hardhan Roy, Mahavir Vishwakarma, P.C. Chacko, Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav, E. Ahmed, Ajay Chakraborty, Nihal Chand Chauhan, Hindurao Naik Nimbalkar, Parasram Meghwal, Surendra Yadav, Brahma Nand Mandal, S.S. Palanimanickam, V. Dhananjaya Kumar, Rameesh Chernithala, M. Selvarasu, N.K. Premchandran, Dwarka Nath Das, Mangat Ram Sharma, Dinesh Chandra Yadav, A. Sampath, Manoj Kumar Sinha, K.H. Muniyappa, C. Narasimhan, Faggan Singh Kulaste, Tarachand Bhagora, K. Parasuraman, Sunil Khan, P. Kodandaramaiah, Vidyasagar Sonker, P.V. Rajendran, Joachim Baxla, Ashok Argal, P.N. Siva, C. Narayana Swamy, Sudhir Giri, Subhash Baheria, K. Subbarayudu, Shivanand Hemappa Koujalgi, Sohanvir Singh, D.S.A. Sivaprakasam, Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma, V. Kandasamy, Punnu Lal Mohle, Md. Ali Ashraf Fatmi, Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Y.N. Rudresha Gowda, Dr. B.N. Reddy, Dr. Ramakrishna Kusmaria, Dr. Prabin Chandra Sarma, Dr. Arvind Sharma, Dr. Shafiqur Rahman Barq, Dr. Arun Kumar Sharma, Dr. M.P. Jaiswal, Dr. Mahadeepak Singh Shakya, Dr. Ramlakhan Singh, Prof. Jitendra Nath Das, Prof. Prem Singh Chandumajra, Smt. Sandhya Bauri, Smt. Rajani Patel, Smt. Usha Meena, Smt. Bhavanaben Chikhaliya, Kum. Uma Bharati, Kum. Mamata Banerjee, Kum. Sushila Tiriya and Kum. Frida Topno.

Replying to the discussion on 13 March 1997, the Minister of Railways, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan said that resource mobilization was done through internal resources, market borrowing, private participation, budgetary support and through increase in fare and freight charges. All suggestions given by the members would be looked into, the Minister added.

All the Demands for Grants on Account (Railways) for 1997-98 were voted in full. All the demands for Excess Grants (Railways) for 1994-95 were voted in full. All the Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for 1996-97 were voted in full.

The Budget (General), 1997-98 : On 28 February 1997, presenting the Budget (General), 1997-98, the Minister of Finance, Shri P. Chidambaram said that there was strong continuity between the first Budget of the UF Government and the present one, the foundation for both being the CMP.

The positive features of our economic performance in 1996-97 included: continued high economic growth at 6.8 per cent; a strong recovery of growth in agriculture and allied sectors to 3.7 per cent after a disappointing minus 0.1 per cent in 1995-96; rebound in foodgrains production to 191 million tonnes; manufacturing sector growth at 10.6 per cent and a sizeable build-up in the foreign currency reserves from US \$ 17 billion to US \$ 19.5 billion as on 21 February 1997.

The Minister said that two areas of great concern were the sharp drop in domestic crude oil production and the sluggish performance of the power sector. Other matters of concern include a deceleration in the growth of exports, a rise in the rate of inflation and volatile capital market. The Government had addressed these concerns through some far-reaching initiatives in the last three months.

Macro economic management involved, inevitably, striking a balance between various objectives and considerations. In 1995-96, the growth in money supply was reduced sharply to 13.2 per cent. Although this helped to contain inflation, it also led to high real interest rates, widespread perception of liquidity crunch and slackening of investment proposals. Since June 1996, corrective action had been taken which had brought down the interest rates. The long-delayed increase in the prices of petroleum products and supply-side problems, arising mainly out of lower production and lower procurement of wheat in the last season, exerted pressure on the price level.

The Government had taken a number of steps to maintain price stability. The fight against poverty was not a game in populism. It was a battle at the grassroots level. Our programmes, therefore, revolved around the concerns of the poor. For example, the Basic Minimum Services Plan had been provided Rs. 3,300 crore which included Rs. 330 crore for slum development. The provision for the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme was being enhanced from Rs. 200 crore to Rs. 1,300 crore in 1997-98. The Ganga Kalyan Yojana

was intended to support farmers to take up schemes for ground water and surface water utilisation through a mixture of subsidy, maintenance support and credit arrangements. On 15 August, the Prime Minister will inaugurate the Kasturba Gandhi Shiksha Yojana, a programme to establish special schools for girl children in the districts which have a particularly low female literacy rate, for which Rs. 250 crore had been allocated.

All current self-employment schemes, addressed to different target groups, would be re-oriented to provide skill-based training, entrepreneurship development and subsidy-linked bank credit to one million youth to empower them to start viable small business. The Planning Commission was now engaged in a comprehensive exercise and the revised poverty alleviation Programmes would be implemented with effect from 1 April 1997. Agriculture was the lifeblood of our economy. The CMP called for a doubling of the flow of credit to agriculture and agro-industries within five years. The Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) had proved to be popular and successful. The policy of recapitalizing the Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) would continue next year too. The National bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) was also being strengthened.

The Government had recently enhanced the investment ceiling for plant and machinery of small scale industries (SSIs) to Rs. 3 crore and of tiny units to Rs. 25 lakh. In order to ensure that credit was available to all segments of the now enlarged SSI sector, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was issuing instructions that out of the funds normally available to the SSI sector, 40 per cent would be reserved for units with investment in plant and machinery up Rs. 5 lakh, 20 per cent for units with investment between Rs. 5 lakh and Rs. 25 lakh and the remaining 40 per cent for other SSI units.

As regards the Budget Estimates (BE) for 1997-98, the Minister said that the total expenditure was estimated at Rs. 2,32,481 crore of which Rs. 62,852 crore had been provided as budgetary support for Central, State and Union territory Plans and the balance Rs. 1,69,629 crore was non-Plan expenditure. The increase in Budget support for the Plan would be Rs. 7,958 crore over the Revised Estimates (RE) of 1996-97, which was the largest increase ever.

The budgetary support to the Central Plan was concentrated on rural development, employment and poverty alleviation programmes and in the human resource development sectors. For 1997-98, the outlay for the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment was being increased to Rs. 9,096 crore, and increase of Rs. 1,271 crore over the RE for 1996-97. The Outlay for the Social Services sector was being substantially enhanced from Rs. 11,785 crore in RE 1996-97 to Rs. 15,707 crore in BE 1997-98. The Science and Technology sector was being provided Rs. 1,870 crore as against Rs. 1,584 crore in RE 1996-97. The total non-Plan expenditure in 1997-98 was estimated to be Rs. 1,69,629 crore. The interest payments were estimated to be Rs. 68,000 crore. The fertilizer subsidy on indigenous fertilizers was being enhanced to Rs. 5,240 crore in 1997-98 from Rs. 4,743 crore in RE 1996-97. In addition, the subsidy

on imported fertilizers was increased to Rs. 1,950 crore in 1997-98, as against Rs. 1,350 crore in RE 1996-97. The subsidy on the sale of decontrolled fertilizers was being enhanced to Rs. 2,000 crore in 1997-98 from Rs. 1,674 crore in RE 1996-97. An amount of Rs. 7,500 crore was being earmarked for foodgrains and sugar subsidies in 1997-98 representing an increase of Rs. 1,434 crore over RE 1996-97. The outlay for Defence was Rs. 35,620 crore, which included Rs. 3,620 crore for implementing the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission.

The net revenue receipts for the Centre, including non-tax receipts, were to increase from Rs. 1,30,783 crore in RE 1996-97 to Rs. 1,52,843 crore in 1997-98. In the area of capital receipts, the market borrowings were placed at Rs. 34,425 crore. The net external assistance would be Rs. 2,435 crore. The total receipts at the existing rates of taxation were estimated at Rs. 2,31,876 crore. The revenue deficit in 1997-98 was placed at Rs. 30,286 crore or 2.1 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The fiscal deficit came to Rs. 65,454 crore which was 5 per cent of the GDP.

On 14 March 1997, initiating the General Discussion on the Budget (General) for 1997-98, (along with the Demands for Grants on Account (General), 1997-98, the Supplementary Demands for Grants (General), 1996-97, and the Demands for Excess Grants (General), 1994-95), the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee said that the Budget had completely failed to address the serious questions raised in the Economic Survey for the year 1996-97. No effort had been made to check the rising prices and inflation and almost doubled in six months. The increase in Railway fares and freights and in the rates of post and telegraph articles would have an adverse effect on the common man. The Government had been unable to come out with ways and means to make up the oil pool deficit. The projections for development in the Budget were exaggerated and unrealistic. The Budget had further widened the gap between the rich and the poor. The Government had totally failed to control deficit financing. The facilities given to the agricultural workers and rural poor were only cosmetic. The voluntary disclosure scheme to unearth black money would not help in any way and was an immoral step. Transparency should be maintained in the process of Budget formulation. If the Budget was used as a mechanism for vote catching, it would not help the development process, Shri Vajpayee added.

* Others who took part in the discussion were Sarvaswari I.D. Swami, Datta Meghe, L. Balaraman, P.R. Das Munshi, P. Shanmugam, Kashi Ram Rana, Ramendra Kumar, Neil Aloysius O' Brien, N.K. Premchandran, Brij Bhushan Tiwari, Iliyas Azmi, K.D. Sultanpuri, L. Raman, C. Narayana Swamy, Devendra Bahadur Roy, Amar Roy Pradhan, R.L.P. Verma, V. Pradeep Dev, P. Theertharaman, I.P. Hazarika, Samy V. Alagiri, Satya Pal Jain, A.C. Jos, P. Kodandaramaiah, A. Sampath, V. Ganesan, S.P. Jaiswal, Sarat Pattanayak, Anant Gangaram Geete, M. Selvarasu, A.G.S. Ram Babu, V.P. Shanmuga Sundaram, R. Gangagurusamy, A. Raja, Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Prakash Mani Tripathy, Dr. Laxmi Narayan Pandey, Dr. Debi Prasad Pal, Dr. K.P. Ramalingam, Dr. Arun Kumar Sama, Dr. Grijya Vyas, Smt. Meira Kumar and Smt. Jayawanti Navinchandra Mehta.

Taking part in the discussion *, Shri Sharad Yadav pointed out that the increased allocation to the States for irrigation and welfare of the common masses would further strengthen the economy. The Budget was pro-poor, reasonable, justified, practicable and bold at the same time. If all sections of opinion cooperated, the Budget would take the country on the path of progress.

Participating in the discussion on 18 March 1997, Shri Surjit Singh Barnala highlighted the problems faced by Punjab in power generation and food production and called upon the Government to do the needful in that regard.

On 19 March 1997, Shri George Fernandes observed that the announcements made in the Budget were going to benefit only ten per cent of the people. By reducing the customs and excise duties, the Government had helped the foreign multinational companies to establish their business in India.

Shri Jai Prakash was of the view that the budgetary allocation for the agricultural sector was very low. Hydro-power generation should be accorded high priority to tackle the shortage of power.

Shri Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi felt that nothing had been provided in the Budget for the poor and the minorities. There was also no mention as to how we were going to repay our loans.

Shri Ram Bahadur Singh pointed out that the Budget was not in favour of the poor people. The prices of foodgrains and life saving drugs continued to remain high even after the Budget was presented.

Replying to the discussion on 20 March 1997, the Minister of Finance, Shri P. Chidambaram said that the expansion of reserve money leading to expansion of broad money was the single most important reason for high inflation. The control of fiscal deficit thus became a crucial aspect. Poverty could be abolished from the country only if there was growth and if the poor people were given productive jobs or the instruments of production or the tools of production. Abject poverty could be abolished only if there was a growth of eight to nine per cent. We must become pragmatic, development-oriented and do all that was possible to attain high growth.

All the Demands for Grants on Account (General) for 1997-98 were voted in full. All the Supplementary Demands for Grants (General) for 1996-97 were voted in full. All the Demands for Excess Grants (General) for 1994-95 were voted in full.

Targeted Public Distribution System : Making a Statement in the House on 24 February 1997, the Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda said that a well targeted and properly functioning Public Distribution System (PDS) was an important constituent of the strategy for poverty eradication. However, the PDS, as it existed, had been widely criticized for its failure to serve

the population below the poverty line, its urban bias, and lack of transparent and accountable arrangements for delivery. Realizing this, the Government proposed to streamline the PDS targeting it on the poor by issuing special cards to families below the poverty line and selling essential articles under the PDS to them at specially subsidized prices, with better monitoring of the delivery system.

To start with, it was proposed to issue 10 kg. of foodgrains per family, per month, at half the issue prices for all families below the poverty line as per the estimates for 1993-94 arrived at by the Planning Commission. Further, as recommended by the conference of Chief Ministers, the 'average lifting' of foodgrains for the last 10 years by the state was proposed to be continued for the benefit of the population above the poverty line at present getting the benefit of the PDS. The quantity of foodgrains out of this 'average lifting' which was in excess of the requirement for the population below the poverty line was proposed to be allocated to the States as transitory allocation at the Central issue prices. The Government also proposed to extend the issue of specially subsidized foodgrains to the beneficiaries under the Employment Assurance Scheme and the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana.

The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) was primarily focused on the poor and would benefit 32 crore people below the poverty line. The food subsidy under the TPDS would be about Rs. 8,000 crore. Any State which wanted to cover a large number of persons or increase the scale of issue or reduce the price, was free to do so provided it could meet the additional requirement of foodgrains and funds from its own resources. In implementing the scheme, the State Governments must identify the beneficiaries under TPDS, issue special cards to them and ensure delivery of foodgrains to these intended beneficiaries. Detailed guidelines had been issued in this regard. The Prime Minister expressed the hope that the State Government would follow these guidelines scrupulously and see to it that the poorest sections of the society got their entitled quantum of foodgrains without fail.

The Agreement on International Transit of Goods between the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan : On 26 February 1997, making a Statement, the Ministers of External Affairs, Shri I.K. Gujral informed the House that on 22 February 1997, India, Iran and Turkmenistan signed, at the level of Foreign Ministers, an agreement in Teheran on the International transit of goods between the signatories. This had brought to fruition the process begun in April 1995 when the three countries signed a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on this subject. The cardinal objective of the agreement was to provide a suitable juridical and legal framework for the multi-modal movement of goods from India to Iran and Turkmenistan and other countries that would join the arrangement in the future, and vice versa. The agreement facilitated, simplified and accelerated customs and other formalities, including minimizing documentation and inspection requirements for the transit of goods. It provided that

the goods transiting under the agreement would not be subject to examination through the customs jurisdiction en route except when irregularities were suspected. It provided for the exemption of import and export duties or other taxes for goods in transit. Only charges for specific services could be levied as stipulated by internal legislation and as applicable to all other countries. The signatories agreed to examine the possibility of setting up simplified visa regime for personnel engaged in the transit of cargo under the agreement. There would be a regular joint mechanism for supervising the implementation of the agreement, for recommending changes to it and to consider any other related matter. The Minister added that the agreement meets the need for developing an efficient, reliable, dependable and cost-effective route for trade and other forms of economic interaction among India, Iran and Turkmenistan and our other economic partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Improved people-to-people contacts with Pakistan : Making a Statement in the House on 20 March 1997, the Minister of External Affairs, Shri I.K. Gujral said that Indo-Pakistan official level talks at the Foreign Secretary level were due to be held from 28 to 31 March 1997 in New Delhi. Talks at a higher level were also expected thereafter. India approached these talks in a positive and constructive spirit. Pakistan had announced its decision to release 39 Indian children who had been under detention there since 1994. We appreciated this gesture. These children were travelling on Indian fishing vessels which were apprehended by Pakistani authorities.

The Minister said that travel by Pakistani national to India under a reciprocal arrangement with Pakistan was permitted only on the basis of visitors' visa, meant essentially for visits to meet close relations. This was obviously very restrictive. In keeping with our policy to promote people-to-people relations, India had decided to permit Pakistani tourists to visit our country in groups which was a major new unilateral step in the right direction. In addition, we had also decided to ease travel by Pakistani businessmen to India. They would now be eligible to one year multi-entry visa and, if travelling by air, they can exit and enter either through Mumbai or Delhi. The other measures we would implement are: the young and the elderly Pakistani visitors would be exempt from police reporting; visa fees for senior Pakistani citizens would be waived; the number of religious shrines in India which could be visited by the Pakistani pilgrims would be increased; expansion of cultural contacts between the two countries would be encouraged through exchanges of cultural groups, artists, poets and writers; visits by students and journalists would also be encouraged (all these categories would be exempt from visa fees); and import of books and periodicals would be permitted.

The Minister said that these measures were designed to add to the goodwill between the people of the two countries. They were an emblem of our earnest desire to establish and maintain relations of friendship and cooperation with Pakistan.

B. LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS

Statutory resolution re : Disapproval of the Depositories Related Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997 and the Depositories Related Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1997 :* Moving the Statutory Resolution on 5 March 1997, Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava took objection to the practice of issuing Ordinance and suggested that the Bill be forwarded to the Departmentally-related Standing Committee on Finance.

Moving the motion to consider the Bill** the Minister of Finance, Shri P. Chidambaram said that the Depositories Bill, 1996 was passed by the House on 16 July 1996. The National Securities Depository Ltd. came into being on 8 November 1996. The proposed Bill sought to remove some of the operational difficulties which had since come to notice. As a result of some of the amendments made to the Companies Act and the Depositories Act, the shares were now freely transferable. Therefore, it was necessary to provide a remedy to the investor against a company which refused to pass an order on transfer when an application in that regard was made.

After the discussion *** in the House, the Minister of Finance, Shri P. Chidambaram replied to the debate. The Statutory Resolution was, by leave, withdrawn. The Bill was passed.

*Statutory Resolution re : the Disapproval of the National Environment Appellate Authority Ordinance, 1997 and the National Environment Appellate Authority Bill, 1997 : ***** Moving the Statutory Resolution on 17 March 1997, Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava criticized the practice of issuing Ordinances time and again. He suggested that noise pollution should also be brought within the purview of the proposed Bill. The control of environmental pollution was a matter which everyone, cutting across party lines, had to sit together and decide, he added.

Moving the motion to consider the Bill***** the Minister of Environment and Forests, Prof. Saifuddin Soz said that the Bill sought to fulfil an urgently felt need for some mechanism for effective and expeditious disposal of appeals against the directions of competent authorities under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 giving environmental clearances to developmental projects. The proposed Authority shall comprise a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and other members not exceeding three, having adequate knowledge and experience in the administrative, legal, managerial or technical aspects of problems relating to the environment. The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and other members shall hold office for

*Discussed together

**The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 24 February 1997.

***Others who took part as the discussion were Sarvashri Nimal Kanti Chatterjee, Balai Ray, Prof. Rana Singh Rawat and Kum. Mamta Banerjee.

****Discussed together

*****The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 4 March 1997.

a term of three years, but shall be eligible for re-appointment for another three years.

The class of persons who would have the right to appeal to the Appellate Authority were any person who was likely to be affected by the grant of environmental clearance; any person who owned or had control over the project with respect to which an application had been submitted for environmental clearance; any association of persons (whether incorporated or not) likely to be affected by such order and functioning in the field of environment; the Central Government, where the environmental clearance was granted by the State Government, and the State Government, where the environmental clearance was granted by the Central Government; and the concerned local authorities. The Authority shall not be bound by the procedure laid down in the Code of Civil Procedure, but shall be guided by the principles of natural justice and enjoy the powers vested in a Civil Courts.

The Minister said that the National Environment Appellate Authority Bill was a very important initiative in our quest for sustainable development and the preservation of our ecology and natural resources. The legislation provided a greater voice to our citizens in the adjudication of matters pertaining to the environment. It would provide further opportunities to our citizens for enhancing their well-being.

After the discussion*, the Minister of Environment and Forests, Prof. Saifuddin Soz replied to the debate. The Resolution was, by leave, withdrawn and the Bill was passed.

*Statutory Resolution re : Disapproval of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Ordinance, 1997 and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Bill, 1997***: Moving the Statutory Resolution on 18 March 1997, Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava deprecated the tendency of the Government to issue Ordinances by passing the Parliament.

The Minister of Communications, Shri Beni Prasad Varma moved the motion to consider the Bill ***. The National Telecom Policy, 1994 stresses, amongst other things, the achieving of universal services. In the multi-operator situation, arising out of the opening of basic as well as value added services in which private operators will be competing with the Government operators, there was a pressing need for an independent telecom regulatory body for regulation of telecom services and the orderly

*Others who took part in the discussion were Sarvashri Ram Naik, Sriballav Panigrahi, K.V. Surendra Nath, Nitish Kumar, Suresh Prabhu, Bhagwan Shankar Rawat, P.R. Dasmunshi, Harbhajan Lakha, Haradhan Roy, N.K.Premachandran, Manabendra Shah, Ramesh Chennithala, Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Dau Dayal Joshi, Anant Gangaram Geete, Anadi Charan Sahu, Ramashray prasad Singh and Prof. Jitendra Nath Das

** Discussed together

*** The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 15 March 1997.

and healthy growth of the telecommunications infrastructure, besides the protection of the interests of the consumers.

The salient features of the proposed Bill are: (i) the Authority shall consist of a Chairperson and a minimum of two and a maximum of six Members; (ii) a person who is or has been a Judge of the Supreme court or who is or has been the Chief Justice of a High Court shall be eligible to be appointed as the Chairperson of the Authority; (iii) the Members shall be persons of ability with varied experience in public utility services who have special knowledge of and professional experience in the field of telecommunications, industry, finance, accountancy, law, management and consumer affairs. No appointment of a person possessing qualifications, as specified above, shall be made as a Member from amongst employees of the Government unless such person has held the post of Secretary or Additional Secretary or any equivalent post in the Central or State Governments for a period of not less than three years; (iv) the Chairperson shall hold office for a term of five years from the date on which he enters upon his office; and (v) a Member shall hold office for a term of five years from the date on which he enters upon his office or until he attains the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.

The powers and functions of the Authority, *inter alia*, shall be to: (i) recommend the need and timing for introduction of new service provider; (ii) recommend the terms and conditions of licence to a service provider; (iii) ensure technical compatibility and effective inter-connection between different service providers; (iv) regulate arrangement amongst service providers of sharing their revenue derived from providing telecommunication services; (v) ensure compliance of terms and conditions of licence; (vi) recommend revocation of licence for non-compliance of terms and conditions of licence; (vii) lay down and ensure the time period for providing local and long distance circuits of telecommunication between different service providers; (viii) facilitate competition and promote efficiency in the operation of telecommunication services so as to facilitate growth in such services; (ix) protect the interest of the consumers of telecommunication service; (x) monitor the quality of service and conduct periodic survey of such service provided by the service providers; (xi) inspect the equipment used in the network and recommend the type of equipment to be used by the service providers; (xii) maintain register of interconnect agreements and of all such other matters as may be provided in the regulations; (xiii) keep the register open for inspection to any member of the public on payment of such fee and compliance of such other requirements as may be provided in the regulations; (xiv) settle disputes between service providers; (xv) render advice to the Central Government on matters relating to the development of telecommunication technology and any other matter related to telecommunication industry in general; (xvi) levy fees and other charges at such rates and in respect of such services as may be determined by regulations; (xvii) ensure effective compliance of universal service obligations; and (xviii)

perform such other functions, including such administrative and financial functions as may be entrusted to it by the Central Government or as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of the Act.

The powers and functions would enable the Authority to perform a role of watchdog for the telecom sector in an effective manner. The Authority shall have an in-built dispute settlement mechanism, including procedure to be followed in that regard as well as a scheme of punishment in the event of non-compliance of its orders. It will have to maintain transparency while exercising its powers and functions, the Minister added.

Participating in the discussion*, Shri George Fernandes said that the Government had stated that there would be transparency in the implementation of the Bill. The member wanted to know as to what concrete suggestions were there to ensure such transparency on the part of the authorities.

Replying to the discussion, the Minister of Communications, Shri Beni Prasad Varma said that as regards transparency, the Government was yet to frame the rules and regulations.

The Statutory Resolution was withdrawn by leave of the House. The Bill was passed.

RAJYA SABHA

HUNDRED AND EIGHTIETH SESSION**

The Rajya Sabha met for its Hundred and Eightieth Session on 20 February 1997 and was adjourned on 21 March 1997. It was reconvened on 21 April and adjourned on 22 April to be convened again on 30 April. The House was adjourned *sine die* on 16 May 1997. A resume of some of the important discussion held and other business transacted during the period 20 February 1997 to 21 March 1997 is given below :***

DISCUSSION

Motion of Thanks on the Address by the President : The discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the Address by the President to members of Parliament took place on 24, 25, 26 and 27 February and 3, 4 and 6 March 1997.

Initiating the discussion on 24 February 1997, Smt. Kamla Sinha said

*Others who took part in the discussion were Sarvashri Anadi Charan Sahu, V.V. Raghvan, Rupchand Pal, Ram Sagar, Suresh Prabhu, K.P. Singh Deo, Rajiv Pratap Rudy, P. Namgyal, Dr. Laxminarain Pandey, Prof. Rana Singh Rawat, Col. Rao Ram Singh and Smt. Rajani Patil.

**Contributed by the Research and Library Section, Rajya Sabha Secretariat

***Sessional Review covering the remaining period and legislative business, details of Question Hour and obituary references for the entire Session will be included with September 1997 issue of the Journal of Parliamentary Information.

that the Government was committed to implementing the anti-poverty programmes. The Panchayati Raj Act had been amended and implemented, benefiting ten lakh women at the grassroot level. The *Ganga Kalyan Yojna* was being implemented for the uplift of the weaker sections of the society while the Employment Assurance Scheme had been extended to almost all the block in the country. In the infrastructure sector, the Government would extend its railway network in rural and backward areas, the North-Eastern sector and Jammu and Kashmir. In the unorganized sector, welfare and rehabilitation measures were being taken for *beedi* workers and child labour. The member congratulated the Government for providing irrigation facilities to small farmers and for announcing that the prices of petrol, cooking gas, etc. would not be increased. However, she said that the agricultural policy of the Government and the Lok Pal Bill needed to be brought out soon. In Matters of foreign policy, while stating the need for strengthening the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), She pointed out that India had made the right decision not to join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Replying to the debate*, the Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda said that the Address by the President was the policy document of the United Front Government. The Government wanted an overall development of the country and had taken care of the industrial, infrastructural, agricultural, social and rural development sectors. All the programmes of the Government like the Public Distribution System (PDS), free water supply, land for the Scheduled Castes, Minority Development Corporation, etc. had been allotted money. As regards foreign policy, the Prime Minister said that the main motto of the Government was peace. He asserted that the Indo-Bangladesh Water Treaty, the Mahakali agreement between India and Nepal, and the trilateral agreement among India, Iran and Turkmenistan were major achievements.

The Motion was adopted

Deteriorating law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh : Initiating a short duration discussion on the subject on 6 March 1997, Shri Sikander Bakht said that the law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh had completely gone out of control and the very survival of its democratic polity was at stake.

Replying to the discussion** on 10 March 1997, the Minister of Home Affairs, Shri Indrajit Gupta said that the Centre had intervened in the State

*Others who took part in the discussions were Sarvashri Pranab Mukherjee, G. Swaminathan, E. Balanandan, Vishnu Kant Shastri, Mohammad Azam Khan, Narendra Mohan, Sanjay Nirupam, K. Rahman Khan, Brahmakumar Bhatt, Nagendra Nath Ojha, Naresh Yadav, Surinder Kumar Singla, V.P. Duraisamy, Jogdambi Mandal, Joy Nadukkara, Dr. M. Aram, Dr. B.B. Dutta, Dr. Ramendra Kumar Yadav Ravi, Smt. Margaret Alva and Smt. Malti Sharma.

**Others who participated in the discussions were Sarvashri Syed Sibtey Razi, Raj Nath Singh, Jitendra Prasad, R. Margabandu, John F. Fernandes, Ram Gopal yadav, Gurudas Das Gupta, Pranab Mukherjee, Mohd. Masud Khan, Khan Gufran Zahidi, R.N. Arya, Sanatan Bisi, Dr. Biplab Das Gupta, Dr. Y. Lakshmi Prasad, Prof. Ram Baksh Singh Varma and Smt. Kamla Sinha

so far as the question of the law enforcing agencies was concerned by working out an action plan. It was also prepared to help with financial aid. The whole process of degeneration in the State had started in 1992, when the biggest single act of vandalism was perpetrated at Ayodhya. It was an undisputed fact that there was social chaos in the State and many crimes which had been committed were essentially caste-based. It was essential for the political parties to decide the issue of the political deadlock in Uttar Pradesh, so that its normal governance could be resumed. Unless the deteriorating situation was checked, the State would be moving towards destruction of its economy and its democratic set-up, the Minister added.

The Budget (Railways), 1997-98 : The discussion in this regard took place on 14, 15 and 17 March 1997. Initiating the discussion on 14 March 1997, Prof. Ram Kapse said that the Railways had to generate their own resources to remove financial constraints. The member expressed concern over the hike in freight charges and high wage bills. While acknowledging the success of the Own Your Wagon scheme (OYW), he criticized the efficacy of the Build, Operate, Lease, Transfer (BOLT) scheme.

Replying to the discussion* on 17 March 1997, the Minister of Railways, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan said that the increase in fares and freights was not a tax, but a charge on the services which the Railways offered to the public. The Railway Ministry had its own planning mechanism for monitoring progress of work and reviewing strategies periodically. Despite limited resources, all-out efforts would be made to expedite production of coaches for the *Rajdhani Express*, conversion of metre-gauge into broad-gauge, providing of rail links to the needy areas, and strengthening of the Railways' Research and Development Wing. As regards sanitation, the Ministry had created a cell and was making more efforts to look into the matter. The contract system for sanitation workers had been abolished and cooperatives of Class IV employees were being made to look after the toilets, etc. in the Railway yards. The Centre was sharing 50 per cent of the expense of the Railway Police of concerned States deputed on trains; 30,000 casual labourers would be regularized and free rail pass would be granted to a railway porters once in a year. A new dress would also be provided to them from 15 August 1997. The demand for providing 50 per cent concession on rail travel to senior citizens could not be implemented due to the resource crunch. The Government would discuss the issue of compensation due to injury or death during rail travel with the insurance companies. Concluding

*Others who participated in the discussions were Sarvashri Ramji Lal, Ram Deo Bhandari, Ajit P.K. Jogi, Nilotpal Basu, S.B. Chavan, O. Rajagopal, S.S. Ahluwalia, Maulana Obaidullah Khan Azmi, T.M. Venkatachalam, K. Rahman Khan, V. Narayansamy, Jalaluddin Ansari, Tara Charan Majumdar, Gyan Ranjan, Virendra Kataria, Parag Chaliha, Moninder Singh Kalyan, Sanatan Bisi, S. Niraikulathan, Onward L. Nongtdu, V.P. Duraisamy, Khan Gufran Zahidi, Govindram Miri, R. Margabandu, Dr. Y. Lakshmi Prasad, Dr. Alladi P. Rajkumar, Dr. B.B. Dutta, Prof. Ram Baksh Singh Varma, Prof. (Smt.) Bharati Ray and Smt. Anandiben Jethabhai Patel.

the discussion, the Minister said that no new Railway Zone had been created since 1966 and the increasing workload justified the creation of 16 new Railway Zones.

Budget (General), 1997-98 : The discussion on the General Budget, 1997-98 took place on 17, 18 and 19 March 1997. Initiating the discussion on 17 March 1997, Shri Triloki Nath Chaturvedi said that the Budget was addressed more to the articulate classes and opinion makers than to the poor. There was no concern about the growing unemployment, corruption and regional imbalances in the Budget. The voluntary disclosure scheme in matters of tax would not only fail to unearth black money but would also have deleterious effects on the level of compliance among the tax payers and the morale of the administration. Inflation was an important question as prices had already gone up by eight per cent. The increase in issue prices of PDS and in fares and freights would push the price level further.

As regards poverty alleviation programmes, the member said that there was hardly any thrust in the Budget to provide additional employment or to alleviate poverty. The member also said that the Disinvestment Commission had to be made a statutory body. The agricultural sector had been neglected and the production of foodgrains had become stagnant. Regarding the allocation for the defence sector, the member expressed his concern about the absence of a long-term plan for dealing with the question of maintenance of operational capability and also of modernization. He added that financial control had to be exercised over the defence expenditure for optimum use.

Replying to the discussion* on 19 March 1997, the Minister of Finance, Shri P. Chidambaram said that the Budget had been by and large accepted by the people of the country. The seven per cent economic growth in 1994-95 and 1995-96 provided a solid basis to the new Government on which to build policies. The Minister was optimistic about achieving the revised estimates of the financial year 1996-97. If that target was achieved, there could not be any doubt that we would achieve the revenue projected for 1997-98. He expressed his intention to widen the tax net which would enable the Government to achieve its revenue projections. The Government would target gross fiscal deficit to check inflation. The maintenance of price stability was high on the Government agenda. One-half of the budgetary support for the current year's Plan had been given to the social sector, rural development and anti-poverty programmes. The allocation for social services had increased to an all time high of 7.4 per cent of the total budgetary

* Others who took part in the discussions were Sarvashri N.K.P. Salve, Ashok Mitra, O.P. Kohli, R.K. Kumar, Krishna Kumar Birla, Jagannath Mishra, Som Pal, Pranab Mukherjee, S. Muthu Mani, Moolchand Meena, Sanjay Dalmia, N. Giri Prasad, Vayalar Ravi, P. Abdussamad Samadani, Sanatan Bisi, Yerra Narayanaswamy, John F. Fernandes, Parag Chaliha, Dr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma, Dr. Gopalrao Vitthalrao Patil, Dr. Biplob Das Gupta, Smt. Jayanti Patnaik, Smt. Renuka Chowdhury and Smt. Urmilaben Chimanbhai Patel.

expenditure. On the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme, he said that the Government had raised the allocation from Rs. 900 crore to Rs. 1,300 crore. The Budget allocation for the National Highways was also being raised by Rs. 500 crore as building roads was the only way to open up India's economy to the world.

The Minister said that a principle had to be established for revenues of the Government of India to be shared between the Centre and the States. As a measure of injecting fiscal discipline into the administration of the Government, *ad hoc* treasury bills had been abolished with effect from 1 April 1997. No decision had been taken on capital account convertibility, he added.

Fire in Baripada, Orissa : Making a Statement on 25 February 1997, the Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda informed the members about his visit to Baripada where a fire had broken out in religious gathering at Madhuban in Mayurbhanj District on 21 February 1997. While 149 persons died on the spot, 175 persons were injured, out of which 28 succumbed to their injuries.

The Prime Minister stated that the Central Government would release Rs. 50,000 to the families of the deceased and to the persons disabled permanently and Rs. 25,000 to the injured. The Chief Minister of Orissa had been requested to make efforts for the identification of the deceased so that assistance could reach the right persons. The State Government had instituted an enquiry into the accident to be conducted by the Divisional Commissioner of the Central Revenue Division, Cuttack.

Replying to the points raised by the members, the Prime Minister stressed that the Government would try to persuade the State Governments to take precautions in future whenever such religious or other functions took place.

Successful launching of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Corporation (IOR-ARC) : Making a Statement on 11 March 1997, the Minister of External Affairs, Shri Inder Kumar Gujral said that the IOR-ARC had taken two years in the making. It focused on facilitation and promotion of economic cooperation among member countries based on a consensual, evolutionary and non-intrusive approach. The Indian Ocean Rim as linked to India's destiny by name, by the Indian diaspora and by the opportunities that the Rim countries held for expanding and globalizing the Indian economy. The IOR-ARC already accounted for over US \$ 700 billion in global trade and US \$ 100 billion in intra-trade. It was yet another dimension of South-South cooperation. The IOR-ARC, which included a community of Afro-Asian nations among the littoral States of the Indian Ocean Rim, including Australia, was a cherished Nehruvian ideal and a matter of particular relevance, the Minister added.

STATE LEGISLATURES

ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY *

The Tenth Assam Legislative Assembly, which commenced its Second Session (Budget Session) on 11 December 1996, was adjourned *sine die* on 23 December 1996. The House had 10 sittings in all.

Legislative business : During the Session, five Bills were introduced in the House and subsequently considered and passed. They are : (i) The Bengal, Agra, and Assam Civil Courts (Assam Amendment) Bill, 1996; (ii) The Bengal, Agra and Assam Civil courts (Second Assam Amendment) Bill, 1996; (iii) The Assam Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 1996; (iv) The Assam Secondary Education (Provincialisation) Amendment Bill, 1996; and (v) The Bharat Hydro-Power Corporation Limited (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertaking), Bill, 1996.

Financial business : The Chief Minister, Shri Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, who also holds the Finance Portfolio, presented the Annual Financial Statement for the year 1996-97 on 13 December 1996. The general discussion on the Budget was held for two days and the Budget for the year 1996-97 was passed on 20 December 1996. The Assam Appropriation (No. II) Bill, 1996 was introduced in the House and later passed after discussions.

Obituary references : On 11 December 1996, obituary references were made to the passing away of twenty leading personalities. The House also expressed its profound grief on the loss of lives in the natural calamities in Andhra Pradesh during October 1996.

KARNATAKA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL **

The Eighty-fourth Session of the Karnataka Legislative Council, which commenced on 11 February 1997, was adjourned *sine die* on 27 February 1997. The Session was reconvened on 17 March 1997 and was adjourned *sine die* on 27 March 1997. The House sat for 22 days in all.

Address by the Governor : The Governor of Karnataka addressed the members of the two Houses assembled together on 11 February 1997. The Motion of Thanks was discussed for nine days and then adopted.

Legislative business : During the Session, the following Bills, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, were considered and passed by the House : (i) The Karnataka Appropriation Bill, 1997; (ii) the Karnataka Contract Carriages (Acquisition) (Amendment) Bill, 1997; (iii) The Karnataka Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Bill, 1997; (iv) The Karnataka Legislature Salaries, Pensions and Allowances (Amendment) Bill, 1997; (v) The Karnataka Silkworm Seed, Cocoon and Silk Yam (Regulation of Production, Supply, Distribution and Sale), (Amendment) Bill, 1997; (vi) The Karnataka Industrial Areas

*Material contributed by the Assam Legislative Assembly Secretariat

**Material contributed by the Karnataka Legislature Secretariat

Development (Amendment) Bill, 1997; (vii) The Karnataka Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 1997; (viii) The Karnataka Appropriation (No. 2) Bill, 1997; (ix) the Karnataka Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1997; (x) The Karnataka Stamp (Amendment) Bill, 1997; and (xi) The Karnataka Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 1997.

Financial business : On 18 March 1997, the Deputy Chief Minister, who also holds the Finance portfolio, presented the Budget for the year 1997-98. The general discussion on the Budget took place for four days. The Supplementary Estimates- second and final installments for the year 1996-97 were presented to the House on 18 February 1997 and 27 March 1997, respectively.

Obituary references : During the Session, obituary references were made to the passing away of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Dr. M. Channa Reddy and the former Chief Minister of Karnataka, Shri Veerendra Patil. Obituary references were also made to the demise of sitting and former members and important personalities.

MANIPUR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY *

The Fifth Session of the Manipur Legislative Assembly, which commenced on 9 September 1996, was adjourned *sine die* on 28 September 1996. There were 16 sittings in all.

Legislative business : Four Bills, which received the assent of the Governor during the Session, are: (i) The Manipur Higher Secondary Education (Amendment) Bill, 1995; (ii) The Manipur Appropriation (No. 1) Bill, 1996; (iii) The Manipur Appropriation (No. 2) Bill, 1996; and (iv) The Manipur State Finance Commission Bill, 1996.

Financial business : During the Session, the Chief Minister, Shri Rishang Keishing, who also holds the Finance portfolio, presented the Budget for the year 1996-97. The general discussion on the Budget estimates was taken up. The discussion and voting on the Demands commenced on 10 September 1996. All the 46 Demands were discussed and passed by 24 September 1996.

Obituary references : During the Session, obituary references were made on the passing away of the former President of India, Dr. Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy; a former Minister, Shri Kh. Chaoba; the first Speaker of the Manipur Legislative Assembly, Shri T.C. Tiangkham; a former member of the State Legislative Assembly, Shri Thanggomang Sittlou; and a former Secretary of the State Legislative Assembly, Shri Th. Kalachand Singh.

ORISSA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY **

The Eleventh Orissa Legislative Assembly, which commenced its Eighth Session on 27 December 1996, was adjourned *sine die* on 30 December 1996. The House was then prorogued by the Governor on 16 January 1997.

*Material contributed by the Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretariat

**Material contributed by the Orissa Legislative Assembly Secretariat

Legislative business : During the Session, two Bills, which were passed during the Tenth Orissa Legislative Assembly and returned by the Governor for reconsideration, were withdrawn on two separate motions moved and adopted in the Assembly. They are: (i) The Indian Penal Code (Orissa Amendment) Bill, 1994; and (ii) The Orissa Limitation of Expenditure on Marriages Bill, 1993.

RAJASTHAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY *

The Tenth Rajasthan Legislative Assembly, which commenced its Eighth Session on 20 January 1997, was adjourned *sine die* on 20 March 1997. The House was prorogued on 25 April 1997. It had 13 sittings in all.

Address by the Governor : The Governor of Rajasthan, Shri Bali Ram Bhagat addressed the House on 20 January 1997. The Motion of Thanks to the Governor for his Address, which was moved by Shri Ghanshyam Tiwari, was discussed for two days and adopted on 22 January 1997.

Legislative business : During the Session, the following Bills were passed by the House: (i) The Rajasthan Appropriation (No. 1) Bill; (ii) The Rajasthan Land Revenue (Amendment) Bill, 1997; (iii) The Rajasthan Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1997; (iv) The Rajasthan Agricultural Produce Markets (Amendment) Bill, 1997; (v) The Jaipur Metals and Electrical Ltd. (Acquisition of Shares) (Amendment) Bill, 1997; (vi) The Rajasthan Laws Repealing Bill, 1997; (vii) The Rajasthan Imposition of Ceiling on Agricultural Holdings (Amendment) Bill, 1997; (viii) The Rajasthan Finance Bill, 1997; (ix) The Rajasthan Appropriation (No. 2) Bill, 1997; and (x) The Rajasthan Appropriation (No.3) Bill, 1997.

Financial business : During the Session, the Finance Minister, Shri Hari Shankar Bhabhra presented the list of supplementary Demands for Grants for the year 1996-97, which was passed by the House on 14 March 1997. On 12 March 1997, the Finance Minister presented the Budget for the year 1997-98. A Motion for Vote on Account for the next four months was moved and passed on 14 March 1997. The Budget for the year 1997-98 was discussed and passed by the House on 20 March 1997.

Obituary references : During the Session, obituary references were made to the passing away of seventeen leading personalities. Obituary references were also made to the tragic death of more than 200 persons in a fire incident which occurred in Baripada, Orissa, on 23 February 1997.

*Material contributed by the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly Secretariat

BOOK REVIEW

Ravindra Kumar ed. Selected Works of Vithalbhai J. Patel (eight volumes) (New Delhi : Mittal Publications), 1995 (Price : Rs. 2500/-)

It is indeed fascinating to read eight volumes of the Selected Works of Vithalbhai Patel and to understand in detail his many splendoured personality and his manifold contributions to our national life. The Editor has done a useful work in compiling the works of one of the remarkable figures of modern India who fought for India's freedom, championed the cause of social and economic justice and reform and laid firm foundations of parliamentary democracy especially the foundations of the office of the Presiding Officer of the Legislatures.

From the volumes, one comes to know lesser known facts about Shri Patel's eventful life. Right from the early stages of his public life he evinced keen interest to free India from political, social and economic subjugation. Hailing from a poor peasant family and facing the vicissitudes of life, he rose to occupy exalted positions in public life and provided enduring traditions for governance and reconstruction of our nation. He was a member of the Bombay Legislative Council, the President of the Bombay Municipal Corporation and a member of the Central Legislative Assembly; he was also the first Indian to have been elected to the Office of the President of the Central Legislative Assembly. Shri Patel was not only widely acclaimed for occupying high positions but was held in high esteem for his role in defending values and principles in public life and fighting for the freedom of the country. As a freedom fighter, he participated in the Non - Cooperation Movement, Khilafat Movement, Bordoli Satyagraha, Salt Satyagraha, etc. and was imprisoned for several years.

As a member of the Bombay Legislative Council, he brought in the Compulsory Primary Education Bill which at that time was and even now, considered a revolutionary measure. He also introduced a Resolution to recognise indigenous system of medicines at par with the allopathic system. From this step it is clear that Shri Patel, as a parliamentarian, was very far-sighted. In the 1990s, one finds that doctors in the Western countries are now recommending to their patients to avail of treatments from the indigenous systems of medicine. *The Economist* (London) has reported that there is now an upsurge of interest in alternative systems of medicine and that 60 percent of the American doctors have at one time or the other recommended to their patients to use medicines from these systems.

Patel's activism as a parliamentarian was breathtaking. The bureaucracy and the Government were scared of his assertive attitude. Every step was

taken by the British Government to scuttle his moves. This was clear when he, as a member of the Finance Committee, moved 50 Resolutions for reducing expenditure and the Government disallowed them on very specious grounds. He was even denied the opportunity to see the minutes of the Committee on the frivolous plea that those might reach the wrong hands, though the British Government itself admitted that the stifling atmosphere within which Shri Patel worked as a parliamentarian made him very restive. As the President of the Municipal Corporation of Bombay, he did not fall in line with the wishes of the Corporation to receive the Viceroy Lord Reading, in 1924 and subsequently resigned from the post.

From these volumes, we find that as an outstanding parliamentarian, Patel not only effectively articulated the interest of the people on the floor of the Legislature but remained actively engaged with their struggles outside. Indeed, the hallmark of a parliamentarian is to link the struggles of the people with one's activism on the floor of the House. This has been amply demonstrated in this volume. For instance, he was the President of the First Local Self-Government Conference held in Poona in 1916 which demanded more power to the people. It was further exemplified by his historic decision to undertake an economic survey of the condition of the peasants in the Kaira district which provided him with vital inputs to checkmate the Government stand in the Bombay Legislative Council and later even helped Mahatma Gandhi to launch a Satyagraha movement for safeguarding the interests of agriculturists. The above approach of Shri Patel to link the people's struggles with parliamentary activities actuated his lifelong effort for India's cause.

When he entered the Central Legislative Assembly with the mandate of the Swaraj Party to wreck the British administration from within, Patel emerged as a formidable parliamentarian ever vigilant to expose the Government of the floor of the House. His pointed questions and critical speeches brought to light the gnominous functioning of the British Government. It has been acknowledged by Malcom Hailey who, when appointed as the Governor of the United Provinces, said with a sigh of relief that "he was going to a place where Patels do cease to trouble....."

Another interesting and striking fact which one comes to know is that Vithalbai Patel consistently pleaded in the Central Legislative Assembly for the Indianisation of the Army as a major step towards the establishment of responsible Government in India. It is all the more interesting and rather amazing to know that during the 1920s Shri Patel had also called for an Indian Army and Navy "sufficiently powerful to prevent all apprehension of aggression from outside India". It is indeed enlightening that our national leaders, despite their training in non-violence, were acutely aware of the strategic necessity of strong defence forces of which Shri Vithalbai Patel was one of the strong advocates. This was exemplified by his opposition

in the Central Legislative Assembly to the Government's move to go back on the Resolution of the House adopted earlier to set up military colleges in India. (Vol. 4, p. 579). Arguing that "..... if we had the power to do as we liked", he said, "the first thing that we would do would be to establish half a dozen military colleges and secure trained and capable experts from Germany, from America, from Belgium and from other countries to teach our young men". In the birth Centenary year of Netaji Subhas Bose, it is meaningful to note the observation of Shri Patel which says, "If India has got a national army ready to defend herself against foreign aggression, her claim to self-Government would be unassailable". (Vol. 4, p. 583). Therefore, he wanted that the Army should be subjected to the control of civilian authorities or the representatives of the Indian people. Participating in the discussion on the Indian Finance Bill, 1925, he made it very clear that "so long as the control over the Army Department and the Army expenditure is not transferred to the representative of the people of India, is absolutely impossible for the people of this country to be ready for self-defence". Therefore he, demanded, "..... if India is ever to be prepared for defence, then the military should be among the first subjects that should come under the scrutiny of this House".

By incorporating in these volumes Shri Patel's above ideas, the Editor has enabled the general reader to understand the rudimentary evolution of strategic thinking in India in the 1920s. In fact, these ideas could be used to counter the arguments of the Rand Corporation of the USA that Indians hardly applied their minds to strategic issues.

The most remarkable aspect of Vithalbai Patel's career was the assumption of the Office of the President of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1925. In fact he was the first elected President of the Assembly and in that capacity he took epoch-making decisions that laid down the very basis of the Office of the Presiding Officer. It is indeed astounding that in pre-independence India, he fought against the governmental authorities, the most powerful bureaucracy and some sections of the Assembly to protect the dignity of the Office and the supreme authority of the House on matters relating to the Legislature. In an enslaved nation, he displayed rare courage and fierce determination to protect and enlarge the privileges of the House and the members of the Assembly. He set the tradition of impartiality and independence of the President of the Assembly. On being elected to that Office, he said :

From this moment, I cease to be a party man. I belong to no party. I belong to all parties. I belong to all of you and I hope and trust, my honourable friend, the Leader of the Swaraj Party, will take immediate steps to absolve me from all the obligations of a Swarajist member of this House.

Again, on his re-election to the Office in 1926, he underlined the need for impartiality on the part of the elected President and firmly said :

.....I should lay aside, so long as I occupied this Chair, all that was personal, all that was of party, all that favoured of political predilection, and to subordinate everything to the great interests of the House as a whole.

Patel was the first person to have established this tradition of keeping the Presiding Officer above party politics. By doing so, he served the House and protected its dignity and privilege. This was exemplified by his decisions and rulings which sent shock waves through the spine of the British Government. He disallowed the Public Safety Bill to be moved on the ground that it may entail discussion on matters involving the Meerut conspiracy case which was *sub judice*. He categorically told the Government that either it could defer the Bill or withdraw the Meerut conspiracy case. This ruling of Vithalbhai Patel enraged the top functionaries of the Government and the bureaucracy. Even Viceroy Lord Irwin criticised the ruling when he addressed the Joint Sitting of Parliament. The intrepid Patel did not take this encroachment on his authority lying down. He thundered :

In no other manner and by no other authority could the ruling of the Chair be subjected to any criticism or censure within the Assembly Chamber of which I am the President.

This uncompromising stand of Shri Patel was vindicated when Lord Irwin regretted his action and concurred with the idea of the dignity and the independence of the House and the authority of the Chair.

On another occasion, Shri Patel created history when he warned the Home Member not to post police personnel in the precincts of the Assembly without his explicit permission. The matter arose from the incident of bomb throwing in the Assembly from the Visitors' Gallery. The next day, Shri Patel noticed uniformed police men in the Visitors' Gallery. He was furious and asked the Home Member as to how the police entered the inner precincts of the Assembly without the prior permission of the President. The Home Member asserted that the jurisdiction of the police extended to the House to protect the members of the Legislature. Patel disagreed with this and gave a legal argument in this regard. He also appointed a Committee to look into the matter. When the Government remained adamant to post police personnel in the Visitors' Galleries, he ordered them to be closed. After a few months, the Government modified its stand and agreed to post a senior police officer on deputation to the Assembly who would be responsible to the President of the House.

Shri Patel also ordered that the inner precincts of the Assembly would be manned by the Watch and Ward Staff who would be part of the Assembly staff. This revolutionary decision of Patel made him the father of the Watch and Ward Service in Parliament.

President Patel remained so Steadfastly adhered to the principles of the supremacy of the House that he once did not allow the Commander-

in-Chief of the British Army to attend the House because the latter had refrained from attending it at a time when a debate was going on in the House on his speech. Subsequently the Commander had to apologise to the President to get permission to attend the House.

Undoubtedly, Shri Patel was the architect of the independent Secretariat of the Legislature. He made a statement in the Central Legislative Assembly in this regard and drove home the point that the impartiality and independence of the Office of the President could not be maintained as long as the Secretary of the Assembly and other subordinate staff remained subservient to outside authorities. In fact, it was due to Patel's initiatives that the Viceroy "discontinued the practice of nominating the Secretary as a member of the Assembly".

Patel, as the President of the Assembly, was also instrumental in discontinuing the practice whereby the Viceroy used to enter the House with pomp and show and occupy the President's Chair. He prevailed upon the authorities to keep a separate Chair for the Viceroy next to the President's Chair and thereby safeguarded the dignity, prestige and authority of the President of the Assembly.

So fiercely did he maintain his dignity, impartiality and authority that he antagonized the bureaucracy and put in them the fear of God. The Viceroy of British India was also finding himself helpless to undo the stand taken by Shri Patel which was based on well known principles of reason and jurisprudence. It had been said that "to the ordinary white man, not only at the Headquarters of the Government of India but throughout the country, the occupant of the Assembly Chair became an eye sore". The *Times of India* editorially commented that "his independence and discomfiture of his opponents led to what in a great part of India was called the Patel Raj in Delhi and Simla". One commentator observed in 1933 that Shri Vithalbai Patel ".... filled that position both with regard to dignity and knowledge in a manner unsurpassed by any other man who ever held similar position anywhere in the world. In that sense and in his person, Mr. Patel was a tribute to any future Indian Parliament". The observation of Satyendra chandra Mitra, a member of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1927, is very appropriate to understand the important role played by Shri Patel in upholding the privileges of the House. This observation of Shri Mitra was made when he was kept in jail and refused permission to participate in the Assembly. Shri Mitra wrote a letter to Shri Patel wherein he remarked :

With the lapse of time and the vicissitudes of the future, persons and events will be relegated to oblivion, but India's history will for ever enshrine the memory of one under whose wise and able guidance the Legislative Assembly of India, in the crisis of 1927, will rise to the height of the occasion and successfully vindicate the cause of constitutional liberty.

Truly, Shri Patel throughout his occupancy of the Office of the President of the Central Legislative Assembly, defended other of constitutional liberty and established healthy traditions for the evolution of parliamentary democracy in our country.

As the President of the Assembly, even though keeping himself away from party politics, Patel remained deeply committed to India's freedom. He gave away Rs. 1625 from his salary every month to Mahatma Gandhi so that the amount could be spent for national cause. In fact, he assumed Office to become a link between the people and the British Government and to represent "to the head of the Administration in India and the authorities in England the people's point of view, fairly, squarely, without mincing words". And again, he declared, "the moment I find that the holding of this Office under altered conditions is inconsistent with the maintenance of that absolute independence and impartiality - the two essential attributes upon which at once the influence of the President and confidence reposed in him are founded - that moment you will not find me in this Chair". Therefore, when he felt that "one's duty to the country is greater than all other considerations put together, "and could not resist Mahatma Gandhi's call for participation in the nationalist movement for independence, he resigned as the President of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1930. In Britain, the Speaker of the House of Commons is given a place in the House of Lords after he relinquishes his Office. But Pate moved from the Council Chamber to the jails of the British Government for his commitment to India's freedom. He was released from prison on health grounds and went to America where he mobilised public opinion for the freedom struggle. He thus acted as the non-official ambassador of India to the USA. The Editor of these eight volumes claims that Patel delivered 85 lectures in America. But I find that except one speech, no other speech of Shri Patel in USA has been included in any of the volumes. I wish all the lectures found a place in these Selected Works.

Vithalbai Patel died in Europe of illness. Only Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose who nursed him for months was at his bed side at that time. Vithalbai was in such communion with the struggle for freedom that he bequeathed all his property to Netaji Subhas Bose so that the latter could use them for national Welfare. No wonder therefore that "this high priest in the cause of India's freedom", as Netaji called him' said before his death, "before I die, I pray for the early attainment of India's freedom".

These Selected Works constitute a great treasure of information, knowledge and path-breaking decisions which have a bearing in our historic stride for the maturation of parliamentary democracy. Vithalbai Patel's resounding success at a time when the Indian Parliament was in chains was indeed a saga of courage, strength and enlightened judgement. Now, in independent India, where the Constitution guarantees a rightful place to the Parliament, we often hear of the constant refrain of "decline of Parliament". Let us take heart in the words of Mahatma Gandhi who said in 1917 :

What then would our Parliament do if we had one? When we have it, we would have a right to commit blunders and to correct them. In the early stages we are bound to make blunders. But, we, being children of the soil, won't lose time in setting ourselves right The history of the Commons is a history of blunders The freedom to err and the power to correct errors is one definition of Swaraj. Having a Parliament means such Swaraj.

With the traditions created by Vithalbhai Patel, I am sure we can certainly have ample scope to take our parliamentary democracy to greater heights. These eight Volumes will indeed contribute to sensitise our political leaders and general readers in this regard.

While I commend these volumes I have to point out the glaring mistakes in many of the pages. There are innumerable spelling mistakes which breaks the flow of reading in umpteen number of pages. Besides, in almost every page, inverted commas have been used indiscriminately. In one paragraph, one finds the beginning of the inverted comma but it becomes difficult to locate the place where it has ended. I think this is the result of editing without proper application of mind. In volume 5, page 939, under the caption Vithalbhai's Response, one finds a few initial paragraphs in first person. However, in page 940, in the 2nd para, the response of Shri Patel has been given in third person. This shows that the Editor has not adequately taken care to provide the missing links. Probably a footnote could have explained the discrepancy.

Another serious discrepancy relates to the issue of the Compulsory Primary Education Bill which Shri Vithalbhai Patel introduced in the Bombay Legislative Council. In the Introduction, Vol. 1 (XII), it is mentioned that Shri Patel "was instrumental in the passage of the Compulsory Primary Education Bill" In the Chapter on "Life and Works of Vithalbhai J. Patel", Vol.1 (p.5), it is mentioned that "he was the first who successfully introduced and piloted the Free and Compulsory Education Bill in the Bombay Legislative Council". This sentence does not talk about the passage of the Bill which is mentioned so clearly in the Introduction. Again, in the Chapter on the "Life and Works of Vithalbhai J. Patel", (Vol. 1, p. 7), in the quotation of Montague it has been stated, "He brought in a bill to allow for optional adoption of compulsory education. It was disallowed" From the above paragraphs of the book, the reader does not get a clear picture. I feel, the Editor, by way of abundant caution, should have cross checked the facts.

In any case, despite certain shortcomings, the Volumes are of immense value to understand the ideas of Shri Vithalbhai Patel which evolved within the specific historical context subsuming the first three decades of the 20th century.

—Rabi Ray

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APPENDIX I

STATEMENT SHOWING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE LEGISLATURES OF THE STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES DURING THE PERIOD
1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 1997

Legislature	Duration	Sittings	Govt. Bills	Private Bills	Starred Questions	Unstarred Questions	Short Notice Questions
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
STATES							
Andhra Pradesh L.A.*	10.2.97 to 27.3.97	31	22	1	1077(272)	126 ^(a)	180(10)
Arunachal Pradesh L.A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Assam L.A.	7.3.97 to 8.4.97	20	15	—	1138(358)	237(736)	58(47)
Bihar L.A.	16.12.96 to 28.12.96	7	5(5)	—	1338(831)	06(485)	449(36)
Bihar L.C.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Delhi L.A.	6.1.97 to 14.1.97	14	3(5)	—	1119(260)	(457)	7(6)
—	17.3.97 to 31.3.97	—	—	—	—	—	—
Goa L.A.	13.3.97 to 31.3.97	10	13(14)	—	537(319)	230(230) ^(b)	—
Gujarat L.A.	19.2.97 to 21.3.97	29	17(16)	17	3987(2292)	23(16)	32(4)
Haryana L.A.	5.3.97 to 21.3.97	13	10(13)	—	340(253)	15(12)	1
Himachal Pradesh L.A.	10.3.97 to 11.4.97	23	14(14)	—	1267(657)	73(38)	2(2)
Jammu & Kashmir L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jammu & Kashmir L.C.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Karnataka L.A.	11.2.97 to 27.3.97	22	14(11)	—	2016(240)	(1481)	—
Karnataka L.C.	11.2.97 to 27.2.97	22	(11)	—	1110(120)	(232)	1(1)
—	17.3.97 to 27.3.97	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kerala L.A.	6.3.97 to 8.4.97	21	12(9)	9	(1282)	(12538)	4
Machya Pradesh L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Maharashtra L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Maharashtra L.C.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Manipur L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Meghalaya L.A.	7.3.97 to 8.4.97	21	6(6)	—	397(382)	157(157)	—
Mizoram L.A.	11.3.97 to 21.3.97	9	6(6)	—	341(328)	67(65)	—
Nagaland L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Orissa L.A.	21.2.97 to 5.4.97	31	7(3)	4	3393(2182)	3003(3693)	87(6)
Punjab L.A.	3.3.97 to 20.3.97	10	2(2)	—	445(316)	116(73)	—
Rajasthan L.A.	20.1.97 to 20.3.97	13	10(10)	—	1389(1255)	1144(1039)	2
Sikkim L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tamil Nadu L.A.**	—	—	—	—	(217)	(107)	—
Tripura L.A.**	19.2.97 to 27.2.97 17.3.97 to 29.3.97	17	6(6)	—	668(632)	142(139)	—
Uttar Pradesh L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Uttar Pradesh L.C.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
West Bengal L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
UNION TERRITORIES							
Pondicherry L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

*Information received from the States/Union territory Legislatures contained NIL report

**Information not received from the State Union territory Legislatures

Notes: (a) Included as given as starred Questions and admitted as Unstarred Questions

(b) 167 Notices; four starred admitted as unstarred

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Delhi L.A.	3(2)	—	—	2(2)	2	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	(1)	—	2(1)	2(1) ^d
Goa L.A.	1(1)	—	—	—	1(1)	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	9	—	4(1)	1 ^e
Gujarat L.A.	3(2)	—	—	4(4)	—	1	3	9(4)	1	3	—	—	3(2)	—	—	8(3) ^f
Haryana L.A.	1(1)	9(1)	1	—	5	17(2)	10(1)	9(1)	13(1)	—	9	10	15	10	4(1)	2 ^g
Himachal Pradesh L.A.	4(2)	—	1	—	2(1)	6(7)	—	6(7)	—	2	—	—	9(32)	—	—	33(36) ^h
Jammu & Kashmir L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jammu & Kashmir L.C.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Karnataka L.A.	3	6(1)	3	1	2	6(1)	2	4	6(2)	—	1	—	10(6)	—	—	15(1) ⁱ
Karnataka L.C.	3(3)	3	4(2)	2(1)	5(1)	6(1)	2	4	—	—	1	—	10(6)	—	—	15(1) ^j
Kerala L.A.	4(2)	7	10(1)	9(2)	1	10(2)	10(1)	11(4)	14(3)	—	8	5	12(5)	3(1)	—	54(14) ^k
Madhya Pradesh L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Maharashtra L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Maharashtra L.C.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Manipur L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Meghalaya L.A.	1	4	2	—	—	4(1)	1	4	6	—	1	—	7(5)	—	—	—
Mizoram L.A.	1(1)	4(1)	1	—	—	2	3(1)	—	1(1)	—	—	—	5(1)	—	—	—
Nagaland L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Orissa L.A.	4	4(1)	4(1)	—	—	2(3)	1	—	4(1)	—	—	—	10(4)	2(1)	1	11(6) ^l
Punjab L.A.	2(2)	1	—	—	—	—	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rajasthan L.A.	5(5)	14	15(1)	—	13	8	13	21(1)	14(5)	—	12	14	18(10)	—	18	25(1) ^m
Sikkim L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tamil Nadu L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tripura L.A.	2(2)	1	—	2(1)	1	(1)	—	5	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—

	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Uttar Pradesh L.A.*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Uttar Pradesh L.C.**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Bengal L.A.**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UNION TERRITORIES																
Pondicherry L.A.**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Information received from State/Union territory Legislatures contained NIL report

**Information not received from the State/Union territory Legislatures

Notes :

- (a) Backward Classes Committee-7 sittings; and Committee on Women and Child Welfare-3 sittings
- (b) Employment Review Committee-1 sitting and 1 report; Act Implementation Committee-2 sittings; and Committee on the Welfare of other Backward Classes and More other Backward Classes-2 sittings and 1 report
- (c) Women and Child Development Committee-11 sittings; Bunkar Welfare Committee-27 sittings; Nivedan Committee-22 sittings; Special Committee on Demolition of Shri Lakshman Swarnkar MLA's House by District Administration, Girdih-1 sitting; Joint Committee on Alkatra (Bitumen) Scandal-10 sittings; and Special Committee on Land Scandal-9 sittings
- (d) Committee on Unauthorised Construction-1 sittings and 1 report; and Committee on Cremation Grounds-1 sitting
- (e) House Committee on Code of Communication-1 sitting
- (f) Committee on Panchayati Raj-4 sittings and 1 report; Committee on Welfare of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes-3 sittings and 1 report; and Committee on Absence of Members-1 sitting and 1 report
- (g) Press Gallery Committee-2 sittings
- (h) General Administration Committee-4 sittings and 4 reports; Educational Committee-3 sittings and 7 reports; Health and Family Welfare Committee-4 sittings and 7 reports; Agricultural and Horticultural Committee-6 sittings and 9 reports; Forest Committee-5 sittings and 3 reports; Revenue Committee-7 sittings and 5 reports; Tourism Committee-4 sittings and 1 report
- (i) Committee on the Welfare of BCs and Minorities-7 sittings; Committee on Papers laid on the Table-2 sittings; and Committee on Women and Children Welfare-6 sittings and 1 report

- (j) Committee on the Welfare of BCs and Minorities-7 sittings; Committee on Paper laid on the Table-2 sittings; and Committee on Women and Children Welfare-6 sittings and 1 report
- (k) Committee on Environment-13 sittings and 1 report; Committee on the Welfare of Backward Classes Communities-8 sittings; Subject Committee (I to X)-15 sittings and 7 reports; Committee on the Welfare of Women and Children-10 sittings and 4 reports; Committee on Papers laid on the Table-8 sittings and 2 reports
- (l) Committee on Papers laid on the Table-5 sittings and 1 report; Subject Committee on Water Resources-1 sitting and 1 report; Subject Committee on rural Development-1 sitting and 1 report; Subject Committee on Panchayati Raj-1 sitting and 1 report; Subject Committee on Agriculture-1 sitting and 1 report; and House Committee on Prawn Culture-2 sittings and 1 report
- (m) Women and Child Welfare Committee-11 sittings and 1 report; and Question and Reference Committee-14 sittings

APPENDIX II**LIST OF BILLS PASSED BY THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
AND ASSENTED TO BY THE PRESIDENT DURING THE
PERIOD 1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 1997**

Sl. No.	Title of the Bill	Date of assent by the President
1	2	3
1.	The Indian Contract (Amendment) Bill, 1996	8.1.1997
2.	The Maulana Azad National Urdu University Bill, 1996	8.1.1997
3.	The Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidalaya Bill, 1996	8.1.1997
4.	The Apprentices (Amendment) Bill, 1996	8.1.1997
5.	The Companies (Amendment) Bill, 1996	8.1.1997
6.	The Special Court (Trial of Offences Relating to Transactions in Securities) Amendment Bill, 1997	19.3.1997
7.	The Industrial Reconstruction Bank (Transfer of Undertakings and Repeal) Bill, 1997	19.3.1997
8.	The Depositories Related Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1997	19.3.1997
9.	The Appropriation (Railways) Vote on Account Bill, 1997	20.3.1997
10.	The Appropriation (Railways) Bill, 1997	20.3.1997
11.	The Appropriation (Railways) No.2 Bill, 1997	20.3.1997
12.	The Uttar Pradesh Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 1997	20.3.1997
13.	The Uttar Pradesh Appropriation Bill, 1997	20.3.1997
14.	The Income-tax (Amendment) Bill, 1997	25.3.1997
15.	The Port Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1997	25.3.1997
16.	The National Highways Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1997	25.3.1997
17.	The Lalit Kala Akadami (Taking over of Management) Bill, 1997	25.3.1997
18.	The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (Amendment) Bill, 1997	25.3.1997
19.	The Appropriation Bill, 1997	25.3.1997
20.	The Appropriation (No.2) Bill, 1997	25.3.1997
21.	The Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 1997	25.3.1997
22.	The National Environment Appellate Authority Bill, 1997	26.3.1997
23.	The Reserve Bank of India (Amendment) Bill, 1997	28.3.1997
24.	The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Bill, 1997	28.3.1997

APPENDIX III

LIST OF BILLS PASSED BY THE LEGISLATURES OF THE STATES AND THE UNION TERRITORIES DURING THE PERIOD 1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 1997**ANDHRA PRADESH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

1. The A.P. Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 1996
2. The A.P. Buildings (Lease, Rent and Eviction) Control (Amendment) Bill, 1996
3. The A.P. Commission for Backward Classes (Amendment) Bill, 1996
4. The Dravidian University Bill, 1996
5. The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage (Amendment) Bill, 1996
6. The A.P. Women's Commission Bill, 1996
7. The A.P. Prohibition of Absorption of Employees of State Government Public Sector Undertakings into Public Services Bill, 1996
8. The A.P. Urban Areas (Development) (Amendment) Bill, 1997
9. The A.P. Water Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1997
10. The A.P. (Regulation of appointments to public services and rationalisation of staff pattern and pay structure) (Amendment) Bill, 1997
11. The A.P. Municipal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1997
12. The A.P. Tax on Luxuries (Amendment) Bill, 1997
13. The A.P. General Sales Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1997
14. The National Academy of Legal Studies and Research Bill, 1997
15. The A.P. Water Resources Development Corporation Bill, 1997
16. The A.P. Farmers Management of Irrigation System Bill, 1997
17. The Payments of Salaries and Pension and Removal of Disqualification (Amendment) Bill, 1997
18. The A.P. Prohibition (Amendment) Bill, 1997
19. The A.P. Appropriation Bill, 1997
20. The A.P. Appropriation (No.2) Bill, 1997

BIHAR VIDHAN SABHA

1. The Bihar State Child Labour Commission, Bill, 1996
2. The Bihar Self Sufficient Co-operative Committee Bill, 1996
3. The Bihar Appropriation (No.5) Bill, 1996
4. The Bihar State Weaker Section Legal Aid (Amendment) Bill, 1996
5. The Jharkhand Area Autonomous Council (Second Amendment) Bill, 1996

DELHI VIDHAN SABHA

1. The Delhi Medical Council Bill, 1997
2. The Punjab Courts (Delhi Amendment) Bill, 1997

Awaiting assent

3. The Delhi Members of Legislative Assembly (Removal of Disqualification) Bill, 1997
4. The Appropriation Bill (No.1) 1997
5. The Appropriation Bill (No.2) 1997

GOA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

- * 1. The Goa Police Bill, 1995
- * 2. The Goa Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board (Amendment) Bill, 1996
- * 3. The Goa Industrial Development (Amendment) Bill, 1997
- 4. The Goa Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 1997
- 5. The Goa Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 1997
- * 6. The Goa Municipalities (Amendment) Bill, 1997
- * 7. The Goa Excise Duty (Amendment) Bill, 1997
- * 8. The Goa Public Libraries (Amendment) Bill, 1997
- * 9. The Court Fees (Goa Amendment) Bill, 1997
- * 10. The Maharashtra Co-operative Societies (Goa Amendment) Bill, 1997
- * 11. The Goa (Portaria Provincial No. 332 dated 24 November 1871) Repeal Bill, 1997
- * 12. The Goa Tax on Infrastructure Bill, 1997
- * 13. The Goa Motor Vehicles Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1997
- * 14. The Goa Motor Vehicles (Taxation on Passengers and Goods) (Amendment) Bill, 1997

GUJARAT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

1. The Gujarat Legislative Assembly Members (Removal of Disqualifications) (Amendment) Bill, 1997
2. The Gujarat Tax on Luxuries (Hotels and Lodging Houses) (Amendment) Bill, 1997
3. The Gujarat Secondary Education (Amendment) Bill, 1997
4. The Gujarat Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 1997
5. The Gujarat Sales Tax (Validation) Bill, 1997
6. The Bombay Land Revenue (Gujarat Amendment) Bill, 1997
7. The Gujarat Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1997
8. The Gujarat Contingency Fund (Temporary Increase) Bill, 1997
9. The Gujarat (Supplementary) Appropriation Bill, 1997
10. The Bombay Stamp (Gujarat Second Amendment) Bill, 1997
11. The Gujarat State Tax on Professions, Trades, Callings and Employments (Amendment) Bill, 1997
12. The Bombay Motor Vehicles Tax (Gujarat Amendment) Bill, 1997
13. The Gujarat Carriage of Goods Taxation (Repeal) Bill, 1997
14. The Gujarat Entertainments Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1997
15. The Gujarat Sales Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1997
16. The Gujarat Appropriation Bill, 1997

*Awaiting assent

HARYANA VIDHAN SABHA

1. The Maharshi Dayanand University (Amendment) Bill, 1988
- *2. The Kurukshetra University (Amendment) Bill, 1988
- *3. The Haryana Lokpal Bill, 1996
4. The Haryana Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 1997
- *5. The India Stamp (Haryana Amendment) Bill, 1997
6. The Kurukshetra University (Amendment) Bill, 1997
7. The Maharshi Dayanand University (Amendment) Bill, 1997
8. The Punjab Excise (Haryana Amendment) Bill, 1997
9. The Haryana Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1997
- *10. The Haryana Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 1997
11. The Haryana Appropriation (No.1) Bill, 1997
12. The Haryana Appropriation (No.2) Bill, 1997
13. The Haryana Legislative Assembly (Allowances and Pension of Members) Amendment Bill, 1997

HIMACHAL PRADESH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

1. The H.P. Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 1997
2. The H.P. Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 1997
3. The H.P. Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 1997
4. The H.P. Village Common Land Vestings & Utilisation (Amendment) Bill, 1997
5. The H.P. Tenancy & Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill, 1997
6. The H.P. Appropriation Bill, 1997
7. The Criminal Law (H.P. Amendment) Bill, 1997
8. The H.P. Appropriation (No.2) Bill, 1997
9. The H.P. Prohibition of Smoking & Non-smokers Health Protection Bill, 1997
10. The H.P. Town & Country Planning (Amendment) Bill, 1997
11. The Salaries & Allowances of Ministers (H.P.) (Amendment) Bill, 1997
12. The Salaries & Allowances of Deputy Ministers (H.P.) (Amendment) Bill, 1997
13. The H.P. Legislative Assembly Members (Removal of Disqualifications) (Amendment) Bill, 1997
14. The H.P. Legislative Assembly (Allowances & Pension of Members) Amendment Bill, 1997

KARNATAKA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

1. The Karnataka Contract Carriages (Acquisition) (Amendment) Bill, 1997
2. The Karnataka Silkworm Seed, Cocoon and Silk Yarn (Regulation of Production, Supply Distribution and Sale) (Amendment) Bill, 1997
3. The Karnataka Legislature Salaries, Pension and Allowances (Amendment) Bill, 1997
4. The Karnataka Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 1997

*Awaiting assent

5. The Karnataka Industrial Areas Development (Amendment) Bill, 1997
6. The Karnataka Appropriation Bill, 1997
7. The Karnataka Stamp (Amendment) Bill, 1997
8. The Karnataka Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1997
9. The Karnataka Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 1997
10. The Karnataka Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 1997
11. The Karnataka Appropriation (No.2) Bill, 1997

KERALA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

1. The Kerala Cutchi Memons Bill, 1996
2. The Kerala Appropriation Bill, 1997
3. The Kerala Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 1997
4. The Kerala Motor Transport Workers' Payment of Fair Wages (Amendment) Bill, 1997
5. The Kerala Co-operative Hospital Complex and the Academy of Medical Science (Taking over the Management) Bill, 1997
6. The Payment of Salaries and Allowances (Amendment) Bill, 1997
7. The Kerala Payment of Pension to Members of Legislatures (Amendment) Bill, 1997
8. The Agricultural University (Amendment) Bill, 1997
9. The Kerala Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 1996

MEGHALAYA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

- * 1. The Court Fees (Meghalaya Amendment) Bill, 1997
2. The Meghalaya Appropriation (No.1) Bill, 1997
- * 3. The Meghalaya Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 1997
4. The Meghalaya Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 1997
- * 5. The Meghalaya Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1997
6. The Meghalaya Appropriation (No.2) Bill, 1997

MIZORAM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

1. The Mizoram Appropriation (No.1) Bill, 1997
2. The Mizoram Appropriation (Vote on Account) (No.2) Bill, 1997
3. The Mizoram Profession, Trades, Callings and Employment Taxation (First Amendment) Bill, 1997
4. The India Stamp (Mizoram Amendment) Bill, 1996
5. The Court Fees (Mizoram Amendment) Bill, 1996
6. The Mizoram Sales Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1997

ORISSA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

1. The Orissa Appropriation Bill, 1997

*Awaiting assent

2. The Orissa Panchagada Ananga Narendra School of Education (Taking Over of Mangement) Bill, 1997
3. The Orissa Appropriation (No.2) Bill, 1997

PUNJAB VIDHAN SABHA

1. The Punjab Appropriation (No.1) Bill, 1997
2. The Punjab Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 1997

RAJASTHAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

- *1. The Rajasthan Appropriation (No.1) Bill, 1997
- *2. The Rajasthan Land Revenue (Amendment) Bill, 1997
- *3. The Rajasthan Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1997
- *4. The Rajasthan Agricultural Produce Markets (Amendment) Bill, 1997
- *5. The Jaipur Metals and Electricals Ltd. (Acquisition of Share) (Amendment) Bill, 1997
- *6. The Rajasthan Laws Repealing Bill, 1997
- *7. The Rajasthan Imposition of Ceiling on Agricultural Holdings Amendment) Bill, 1997
- *8. The Rajasthan Finance Bill, 1997
- *9. The Rajasthan Appropriation (No.2) Bill, 1997
- *10. The Rajasthan Appropriation (No.3) Bill, 1997

TRIPURA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

1. The Tripura Land Revenue and Land Reforms (Seventh Amendment) Bill, 1997
2. The Tripura Appropriation (No.2) Bill, 1997
3. The Tripura Appropriation Bill, 1997
4. The Tripura Appropriation (No.3) Bill, 1997
5. The Tripura Professions, Trades, Calling and Employments Jaxation Bill, 1997
6. The Tripura Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Vacancies in Services and Posts) First Amendment Bill, 1997

APPENDIX IV
ORDINANCES PROMULGATED BY THE UNION AND STATE GOVERNMENTS DURING THE PERIOD
1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 1997

Sl. No.	Title of Ordinance	Date of Promulgation	Date(s) on which laid before the House	Date of Cessation	Remarks
UNION GOVERNMENT					
1.	The Port Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997	9.1.97	20.1.97	3.4.97	Replaced by legislation
2.	The Reserve Bank of India (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997	-do-	-do-	-do-	—
3.	The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
4.	The Sugar Export Promotion (Repeal) Ordinance, 1997	15.1.97	-do-	-do-	—
5.	The Depositories Related Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997	-do-	-do-	-do-	Replaced by legislation
6.	The Special Court (Trial of Offences Relating to Transaction in Services) Amendment, Ordinance, 1997	16.1.97	-do-	-do-	-do-
7.	The Industrial Reconstruction Bank (Transfer of Undertaking and Repeal) Ordinance, 1997	24.1.97	-do-	-do-	-do-
8.	The Electricity Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997	-do-	-do-	-do-	—

					Replaced by legislation
9.	The National Highways Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
10.	The Laik Kala Akadami (Talking over of Mangement) Ordinance, 1997	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-
11.	The Telecom Regulatory Authority of Indian Ordinance, 1997	25.1.97	-do-	-do-	-do-
12.	The National Environment Appellate Authority Ordinance, 1997	30.1.97	-do-	-do-	-do-
STATE GOVERNMENTS					
ANDHRA PRADESH					
1.	The A.P. Water Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997	2.01.96	12.2.97	—	Replaced by legislation
2.	The A.P. Tax on Luxuries (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997	4.01.97	-do-	—	-do-
3.	A.P. General Sales Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997	4.01.97	-do-	—	-do-
4.	The A.P. Prohibition of Absorption of Employees of State Government Public Sector Undertakings into Public Service Ordinance, 1997	15.1.97	-do-	—	-do-
5.	The A.P. (Regulation of Appointments to Public Services and Relationisation of Staff Pattern and Pay Structure) Ordinance, 1997	18.1.97	-do-	—	-do-
6.	The A.P. Water Resources Development Corporation Ordinance, 1997	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-

4.	The H.P. Tenancy and Land Reforms (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997	26.12.96	-do-	-do-
KARNATAKA				
1.	The Karnataka Silkworm Seed, Cocoon and Yarn (Regulation of Production, Supply, Distribution and Sale) Amendment Ordinance, 1997	06.01.97	-	-
ORISSA				
1.	The Panchagada Ananga Narendra School of Education (Taking over of Management) Ordinance, 1997	19.01.97	25.02.97	Replaced by legislation
RAJASTHAN				
1.	The Rajasthan Universities Teachers and Officers (Selection for Appointment) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1996	27.12.96	20.1.97	-

**B. PARTY POSITION IN RAJYA SABHA
(AS ON 8 APRIL 1997)**

Sl.No.	State/Union Territories	Seats	INC	BJP	JD	CPI (M)	Others	Unatt-ached	Total	Vacancies
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
STATES										
1.	Andhra Pradesh	18	7	—	—	1	10(a)	—	18	—
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—
3.	Assam	7	4	—	—	—	2(b)	1	7	—
4.	Bihar	22	4	3	12	—	3 (c)	—	22	—
5.	Goa	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
6.	Gujarat	11	5	5	—	—	—	1	11	—
7.	Haryana	5	5	—	—	—	—	—	5	—
8.	Himachal Pradesh	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	3	—
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	4	1	—	—	—	3 (d)	—	4	—
10.	Karnataka	12	9	—	3	—	—	—	12	—
11.	Kerala	9	3	—	—	3	3 (e)	—	9	—
12.	Madhya Pradesh	16	8	8	—	—	—	—	16	—
13.	Maharashtra	19	9	4	—	—	4 (f)	2	19	—
14.	Manipur	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
15.	Meghalaya	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
16.	Mizoram	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
17.	Nagaland	1	—	—	—	—	1 (g)	—	1	—
18.	Orissa	10	3	—	7	—	—	—	10	—
19.	Punjab	7	7	—	—	—	—	—	7	—

Appendices

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
20.	Rajasthan	10	3	6	—	—	—	1	10	—
21.	Sikkim	1	—	—	—	—	1 (h)	—	1	—
22.	Tamil Nadu	18	3	—	—	—	15 (i)	—	18	—
23.	Tripura	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
24.	Uttar Pradesh	34	4	15	1	—	10 (j)	4	34	—
25.	West Bengal	16	1	—	—	11	4 (k)	—	16	—
UNION TERRITORIES										
	Delhi	3	—	3	—	—	—	—	3	—
	Pondicherry	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
	Nominated	12	4	—	—	—	—	—	4	8
TOTAL		245	88	45	23	15	56	10	237	8

- (e) T.D.P.-8; T.D.I.-1; C.P.I.-1
 (b) Assam Gana Parishad - 1; Autonomous State Demand Committee-1
 (c) C.P.I. - 3
 (d) N.C.-3
 (e) M.L.-2; Kerala Congress (M)-1
 (f) Shiv Sena - 4
 (g) Nagaland People's Council - 1
 (h) Sikkim Sangram Parishad - 1
 (i) AIADMK - 14; DMK-1
 (j) Samajwadi Party - 7; Bahujan Samaj Party-3
 (k) R.S.P. - 1; C.P.I. - 1; F.B. - 2

C. PARTY POSITION IN STATE LEGISLATURES

State/Union territory	Seats	Cong. (I)	Janata Dal	BUP	CPI (M)	CFI	Others Parties	Ind.	Total	Vacancies
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Andhra Pradesh L.A. (15.4.97)	295	26	—	3	15	18	221 ^(a)	11	294	1
Assam L.A.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Assam L.A.**	126	37	—	4	2	3	69 ^(b)	11	126	—
Bihar L.A. (15.4.97)	325	29	165	43	6	26	42 ^(c)	13	323*	1
Bihar L.A. (31.12.96)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bihar L.C.**	70	17	1	49	—	—	—	3	70	—
Goa L.A. (15.4.97)	40	23	—	1	—	—	10 ^(d)	3	40	—
Gujarat L.A. (31.3.97)	182	45	—	69	—	—	53 ^(e)	15	182	—
Haryana L.A. (31.3.97)	90	12	—	11	—	—	56 ^(f)	2	89*	—
Himachal Pradesh L.A. (31.3.97)	68	52	—	7	—	—	2 ^(g)	7	68	—
Jammu & Kashmir L.A.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Jammu & Kashmir L.C.**	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Karnataka L.A. (1.4.97)	225	42	112	40	1	—	10 ^(h)	18	223*	1

THE JOURNAL OF PARLIAMENTARY INFORMATION INDEX TO VOL. XLIII (1997)

ADDRESSES		To Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, President of India, by Mem- bers of Parliament	385
At the Birth Centenary Cele- brations of Late Shri V.K. Krishna Menon	256		
At the Conference of the Chairman and Members of Public Accounts Committees in SAARC Parliaments	393	AFGHANISTAN New coalition	302
At the Conferment of the Outstanding Parliamentarian Award, 1996 on Shri Somnath Chatterjee, MP	153	ALBANIA New Prime Minister	190, 472
At the Inauguration of the Eighth Conference of the Chairman of the Committees on Public Accounts of Parliam- ent and State Legislatures	166	ANDHRA PRADESH By-election results Change of party affiliation Death of Minister	64, 187 187 187
At the Inauguration of the Regional Commonwealth Parli- amentary Conference for the North Eastern Region of India, Kohima	251	ANGOLA New Government	302
At the 60th Conference of Presiding Officers of Legisla- tive Bodies in India	12	APPENDICES 110, 226, 330, 511	
At the Unveiling of the Statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose	3	ARTICLES "Golden Jubilee Commemora- tive Session of Parliament" by G.C. Malhotra	410
By Shri K.R. Narayanan on the assumption of office as the President of India	361	Inter-parliamentary Specialized Conference on "Towards Part- nership Between Men and Women in Politics- An Over- view" by John Joseph	16
By the President of India, Shri K.R. Narayanan at the Commemorative Function of the Golden Jubilee of India's Independence	364	"Members of the Eleventh Lok Sabha—A Socio-Economic Study" by LARRDIS	420
By the President of India to Parliament	143	"Subject Committee System in West Bengal Legislative As- sembly" by Satyabrata Dutta	175
Special Session of the Parliam- ent on the Ocasion of the Golden Jubilee of India's Inde- pendence	369	"Towards Partnership Between Men and Women in Politics - The Indian Scenario" by S. Gopalan	267
To Shri K.R. Narayanan, Chair- man, Rajya Sabha, by Mem- bers of the Rajya Sabha	390	ARUNACHAL PRADESH By-election results Expansion of Cabinet	64 64
		ASSAM By-election results New Governor	64 468

BANGLADESH		CANADA	
New President	68	Prime Minister re-elected	302
Resignation of Minister	470	CHINA	
BIHAR		Transfer of Hong Kong	302
By-election results	64, 300	CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA	
Ministers dismissed	300	Conference of the Chairman of Public Accounts Committees in SAARC Parliaments	458
Political developments	468	Commemorative function on the Golden Jubilee of India's Independence	457
Resignation of Ministers	300	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Post-Election Seminar, Lusaka, Zambia	458
BIRTH ANNIVERSARIES OF NATIONAL LEADERS		Conference on 'India's Democracy at Fifty', Washington, USA	462
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad	50	Conference of Secretaries of Legislative Bodies in India	48
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar	293	CPA/Wilton Park/International Alert Conference	182
Lokmanya Bai Gangadhar Tilak	462	Eighth Conference of the Chairman of Committees on Public Accounts of Parliament and State Legislatures	289
Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee	462	First Regional Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference for the North Eastern Region of India	291
Shri C. Rajagopalachari	50	International Conference on governance for sustainable growth and equity	458
Deshbandu Chittaranjan Das	50	Inter-Parliamentary Specialized Conference on "Towards Partnership Between Men and Women in Politics"	182
Chaudhary Charan Singh	50	Meetings of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association	291
Shri Dadabhai Naroji	462	Meeting of the Standing committee of the Conference of Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers	182
Mahatma Gandhi	49	Ninth Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar	292
Smt. Indira Gandhi	50	43rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference	460
Babu Jagjivan Ram	293	46th Commonwealth Parliamentary Seminar	182
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru	50		
Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri	49		
Lala Lajpat Rai	183		
Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya	51		
Shri Morarji Desai	183		
Pandit Motilal Nehru	293		
Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore	293		
Shri Rajiv Gandhi	462		
Dr. Rajendra Prasad	50		
Dr. Rammanohar Lohia	183		
Smt. Sarojini Naidu	183		
Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose	183		
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel	49		
BOOK REVIEW	99, 214		
BOLIVIA			
New President	472		
BUREAU OF PARLIAMENTARY STUDIES AND TRAINING (BPST)			
Courses/Programmes	53, 184, 294, 464		

60th Conference of Presiding Offices of Legislative Bodies in India	48	GREECE	
		Vote of Confidence	68
98th Inter-Parliamentary Conference	459	GUJARAT	
Special meeting of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Group (CWPG)	458	By-election results	65, 188, 300
Special Session of Parliament	457	Election of Speaker	66
Symposium on the Relationship between the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary and their role in the present-day Context	48	New Chief Minister	65
Wilton Park Conference	458	Resignation of MLA	188
CONGO		HAITI	
New Government	302	Resignation of Prime Minister	302
DOCUMENTS OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND PARLIAMENTARY INTEREST		HARYANA	
The Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections (Amendment) Bill, 1997	475	By-election result	60
The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996	71	Death of Minister	300
The Vice-President's Pension Act, 1997	304	Expansion of Cabinet	188, 470
DUTTA, SATYABRATA,		HIMACHAL PRADESH	
Article, "Subject Committee System in West Bengal Legislative Assembly"	175	By-election results	66
EDITORIAL NOTE	1, 142, 249, 357	New Governor	470
FIJI		IRAN	
Cabinet reshuffle	472	New President	302
FRANCE		IRELAND	
Vote of confidence	68	New Prime Minister	302
Resignation of Prime Minister	302	ISRAEL	
GOA		Resignation of Minister	303
By-election result	65	Vote of Confidence	303
Resignation of MLA	188	JAMMU AND KASHMIR	
GOPALAN, S.		Election results	66
Article, "Towards Partnership Between Men and Women in Politics - The Indian Scenario"	267	JAPAN	
		Election of Prime Minister	68
		JORDAN	
		Resignation of Prime Minister	190
		JOSEPH, JOHN	
		Article, Inter - Parliamentary Specialized Conference on "Towards Partnership Between Men and Women in Politics—An Overview"	16
		KARNATAKA	
		By-election results	67, 301
		Resignation of Minister	470

KERALA		ORISSA	
By-election results	67	By-election results	67, 301
New Governor	188	Expansion of Cabinet	471
		New Governor	189
KUWAIT		PAKISTAN	
Election results	69	Expansion of Cabinet	473
LARRDIS		PARLIAMENTARY AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS	
Article, Members of the Eleventh Lok Sabha—A Socio Economic Study	428	Developments abroad	68, 190, 302, 472
		Developments around the States	64, 187, 300, 468
LATVIA		Developments at the Union	63, 187, 298, 467
New Prime Minister	472	PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS	
MADHYA PRADESH		Foreign Delegations Visiting India	51, 183, 463
By-election results	67, 188, 301	Indian Parliamentary Delegations going abroad	52, 184, 293, 463
Death of MLA	301	PARLIAMENTARY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES	
Resignation of MLA	188	Feature	48, 182, 299, 457
MALHOTRA, G.C.,		POLAND	
Article, Golden Jubilee Commemorative Session of Parliament	410	New Constitution	303
MAHARASHTRA		PRIVILEGE ISSUES	
By-election results	67, 188	LOK SABHA	
Expansion of Cabinet	188	Alleged casting of reflections on the Prime Minister and some other members by a former member in a book authored by him	58
MEGHALAYA		Alleged misconduct by a member	55
Death of Minister	470	STATE LEGISLATURES	
Induction of Minister	301	RAJASTHAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY	
New Speaker	470	Alleged leakage by the Government of the Report of an Inquiry Commission before laying it on the Table of the House	59
MIZORAM		PROCEDURAL MATTERS	
Resignation of Ministers	301	LOK SABHA	
MOLDOVA		All the constituents of the Government cannot be given time separately	296
New President	69		
MONGOLIA			
New President	303		
NEPAL			
Expansion of Cabinet	190		
Induction of Minister	472		
Political Developments	190		
Resignation of Minister	303		
Vote of Confidence	69		
NEW PRESIDENT AND VICE-PRESIDENT OF INDIA	404		

Consent to notices of adjournment motion with held since the matter could be raised during discussion on Statutory Resolution and since it was <i>sub Judice</i>	61	Members permitted to ask clarificatory questions on Calling Attention as a special case	61
		State subjects are not to be admitted	296
Instance when adjournment motion was admitted, discussed and later converted into motion under rule 184	466	PUNJAB	
Instance when the appointed hour for commemorate of sitting after lunch was postponed under orders of Presiding Officers	466	By-election result	301
Instance when duration of Private Members' Business was reduced by half-an-hour for presentation of General Budget	186	Election results	189
Instance when members were not permitted to ask clarifications	186	Election of Deputy Speaker	301
Instance when a member other than either of the Presiding Officers and member of panel of Chairman presided	186	Election of Speaker	68
Instances when a member other than either of the Presiding Officers and member of panel of Chairman presided	62,187	Expansion of Cabinet	67, 471
Instance when members were permitted to seek clarifications from Ministers	297,466	New Chief Minister	67
Instance when Speaker Concurrence regarding convening of the Session was obtained through Fax	466	QATAR	
Instance when the Speaker addressed the House under rule 36 ^o	466	New Prime Minister	69
Matter of <i>sub-judice</i> not to be discussed in the House	296	RAJASTHAN	
Members not to refer to the conduct of members of the other House	296	By-election results	68
Member other than the mover of Calling Attention permitted to ask clarificatory question on request from the former	62	RECENT LITERATURE OF PARLIAMENTARY INTEREST	
		Feature	103, 221, 324, 502
		ROMANIA	
		New President	69
		SESSIONAL REVIEW	
		LOK SABHA	
		Adjournment Motion regarding serious situation arising out of passive attitude of the Central Government over recent developments in Bihar	478
		Agreement on International Transit of Goods between the Republic of India, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan	201
		Budget (General), 1997-98	197
		Companies (Amendment) Bill, 1996	86
		Discussion on India's foreign policy	82
		Discussion on the rise in prices of essential commodities	83
		Heavy loss of lives and property due to natural calamities	481

Indira Gandhi National Open University (Amendment) Bill, 1997	485	Statutory Resolution regarding approval of continuance in force of proclamation by the President in respect of the State of Uttar Pradesh	193
Improved people-to-people contacts with Pakistan	202	Statutory Resolution regarding approval of proclamation by the President in relation to the State of Uttar Pradesh	80
Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwa-vidyalaya Bill, 1996	84	Statutory Resolution regarding disapproval of the depositories related laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997 and the depositories related laws (Amendment) Bill, 1997	203
Maulana Azad National Urdu University Bill, 1996	84	Statutory Resolution regarding the disapproval of the National Environment Appellate Authority Bill, 1997	203
Motion of Thanks to the President for his Address to members of Parliament	191	Statutory Resolution regarding disapproval of Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections (Amendment) Ordinances and the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections (Second Amendment) Bill, 1997	484
Ninth SAARC Summit	313	Statutory Resolution regarding disapproval of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Ordinance, 1997 and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Bill, 1997	204
Obituary References	86, 314, 486	Streamlining of the Public Distribution System	482
Problems of Textile Industry	312	Targeted Public Distribution System	200
Railway Budget, 1997-98	194	The situation arising out of the mid-air collision between a Saudi Arabian Airlines Boeing 747 and a Kazakhstan Airlines IL-76 aircraft on 12 November 1996 near Charkhi Dadri in Haryana resulting in the death of 349 persons on board	78
References by the Speaker to Lok Sabha	74	Vice-President's Pension Bill, 1996	314
References regarding the 53rd Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki	476		
References regarding the 55th Anniversary of the Quit India Movement	477		
Statement by the Minister of Agriculture regarding situation arising from the cyclone in Andhra Pradesh and Discussion under Rule 193	79		
Statement by the Minister of External Affairs on the situation in Afghanistan	74		
Statement by the Minister of External Affairs on the visit of the President of the People's Republic of China to India	76		
Statement by the Minister of Home Affairs regarding seeking of army assistance by CBI in Patna	483		
Statement by the Prime Minister on the visit of the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to India and the signing of a treaty on the sharing of the Ganga waters at Farakka	77		
		RAJYA SABHA	
		Appointment of Judges in Supreme Court and High Court	318
		Apprentices (Amendment) Bill, 1995	92

Budget (General), 1997-98	209	Power crisis in the country	490
Deteriorating law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh	207	Proclamation issued by the President in relation to Uttar Pradesh	90
Discussion on Economy and Infrastructure	492	Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Bill, 1996	93
Discussion on Human Development and Science and Technology	491	Question Hour	93, 319, 497
Discussion on India and the World	493	Railway Budget, 1997-98	208
Discussion on the working of the Ministry of External Affairs	317	Statement by the Prime Minister on the Nagaland Peace Talks	487
Discussion on the working of the Ministry of Planning and Programme Implementation	316	Statement on the situation arising from cyclone in Andhra Pradesh	87
Discussion on the working of the Ministry of Welfare	317	Special sittings of the House on the occasion of celebrations of Fifty Years of Independence	490
Diversion of funds to personal ledger account by West Bengal Government	488	Statement by the Prime Minister on the Ninth South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit	315
Discussion on Parliamentary Democracy	494	Successful launching of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Corporation (IOR-ARC)	210
Failure of the Ministry of Finance to provide funds for the payment of outstanding dues to labourers and workers of Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs)	489	Statutory Resolution seeking disapproval of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Election (Amendment) Ordinance, 1977 (No. 13 of 1997) promulgated by the President on 5th June 1997 and the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections (Amendment) Bill, 1997	497
Fire in Baripada, Orissa	210	Steep rise in the prices of essential commodities	92
Increasing insurgency in the North-Eastern States	318	Visit of the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to India and the signing of a Treaty on the sharing of the Ganga waters of Farakka	88
India's stand on the Singapore Declaration of the World Trade Organization	88		
Indira Gandhi National Open University (Amendment) Bill, 1997	496		
Issue of seeking Army Assistance by CBI for execution of a warrant of arrest in Patna	487		
Motion of Thanks on the Address by the President	206		
Move to invite private firms in the insurance sector	91		
National Environment Appellate Authority Bill, 1997	319		
Need for a review of the foreign policy of India	90		
Obituary references	94, 319, 498		
		STATE LEGISLATURES	
		ARUNACHAL PRADESH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY	
		Election of Deputy Speaker	94
		Financial business	94, 320
		Legislative business	320

ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY		PUNJAB VIDHAN SABHA	
Address by the Governor	320	Election of Speaker	500
Financial business	211, 320	Legislative business	500
Legislative business	211	Obituary references	500
Obituary references	211, 320, 498	RAJASTHAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY	
GUJARAT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY		Address by the Governor	213
Address by the Governor	321	Financial business	213
Election of Speaker	94	Legislative business	213
Financial business	321	Obituary references	213
Legislative business	321	SIKKIM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY	
Obituary references	321, 498	Financial business	97
HIMACHAL PRADESH VIDHAN SABHA		Legislative business	97
Legislative business	95	Obituary references	97
Obituary references	95	WEST BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY	
KARNATAKA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY		Address by the Governor	98, 501
Financial business	499	Election of Speaker and Deputy Speaker	98
Legislative business	499	Financial business	98, 501
Obituary references	499	Legislative business	98, 501
KARNATAKA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL		Obituary references	98, 501
Address by the Governor	211	SIKKIM	
Financial business	212, 500	Expansion of Cabinet	301
Legislative business	212, 500	SINGAPORE	
Obituary references	212, 500	Election results	190
MAHARASHTRA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY		SOUTH KOREA	
Address by the Governor	321	New Prime Minister	180
Financial business	96	STATE LEGISLATURES	
Legislative business	96, 321	Bills passed	125, 233, 344, 526
Obituary references	97, 322	Ordinances issued	128, 238, 347, 530
MAHARASHTRA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL		Party position	137, 246, 354, 538
Address by the Governor	322	Statement showing activities	118, 226, 337, 519
Financial business	323	TAMIL NADU	
Legislative business	95, 322	Death of Governor	68
Obituary references	95, 322	Death of Minister	471
MANIPUR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY		New Governor	189
Financial business	212	THAILAND	
Legislative business	212	Censure Motion	473
Obituary references	212		
ORISSA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY			
Legislative business	212		

TRIPURA		UTTAR PRADESH	
By-election results	68	By-election result	301
Re-allocation of portfolios	189	Election results	68, 189
TURKEY		Election of Speaker	190
Resignation of Prime Minister	303	Formation of government	189
Vote of Confidence	473	Political development	471
UK		Presidents rule imposed	68
Election results	303	YUGOSLAVIA	
New Prime Minister	303	New President	473
USA		ZAIRE	
Election of President	69	New Prime Minister	303
Election of Speaker	190		