

# **LOK SABHA DEBATES**

## **(English Version)**

**Tenth Session**  
**(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)**



Gazettes & Publications Unit  
Parliament Building  
Room No. 625  
Block 'A'

Acc. No. ....12.....  
Dated.....16 July 2007

*(Vol. XXV contains Nos. 1 to 10)*

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**  
**NEW DELHI**

*Price : Rs. 80.00*

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## CONTENTS

(Fourteenth Series, Vol. XXV, Tenth Session, 2007/1928 (Saka))

No.1, Friday, February 23, 2007/ Phalguna 4, 1928 (Saka)

SUBJECT	COLUMNS
ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA .....	iii-xviii
OFFICERS OF LOK SABHA .....	xix
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS .....	xxi-xxiii
NATIONAL ANTHEM – <i>Played</i> .....	1
PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS .....	1-16
WELCOME TO PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO .....	17
STATEMENT BY MINISTER	
Fire due to explosion in Delhi – Attari Link Express near Panipat .....	17-19
OBITUARY REFERENCES .....	19-22

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Shiwankar, Prof. Mahadeorao (Chimur)  
Shukla, Shrimati Karuna (Janjgir)  
Sibal, Shri Kapil (Chandni Chowk)  
Siddeswara, Shri G.M. (Davangere)  
Sikdar, Shrimati Jyotirmoyee (Krishnagar)  
Singh Deo, Shrimati Sangeeta Kumari (Bolangir)  
Singh, Chaudhary Bijendra (Aligarh)  
Singh, Chaudhary Lal (Udhampur)  
Singh, Dr. Akhilesh Prasad (Motihari)  
Singh, Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad (Vaishali)  
Singh, Dr. Ram Lakhani (Bhind)  
Singh, Kunwar Manvendra (Mathura)



Singh, Kunwar Sarv Raj (Aonla)  
Singh, Rao Inderjit (Mahendragarh)  
Singh, Shri Ajit (Baghpat)  
Singh, Shri Ajit Kumar (Bikramganj)  
Singh, Shri Akshaya Pratap (Pratapgarh)  
Singh, Shri Brijbhushan Sharan (Balrampur)  
Singh, Shri Chandra Bhushan (Farrukhabad)  
Singh, Shri Chandrabhan (Damoh)  
Singh, Shri Dushyant (Jhalawar)  
Singh, Shri Ganesh (Satna)  
Singh, Shri Ganesh Prasad (Jahanabad)  
Singh, Shri Kalyan (Bulandshahar)  
Singh, Shri Kirti Vardhan (Gonda)  
Singh, Shri Lakshman (Rajgarh)  
Singh, Shri Manvendra (Barmer)  
Singh, Shri Mohan (Deoria)  
Singh, Shri Prabhunath (Maharajganj, Bihar)  
Singh, Shri Rakesh (Jabalpur)  
Singh, Shri Rampal (Vidisha)  
Singh, Shri Rewati Raman (Allahabad)  
Singh, Shri Sartaj (Hoshangabad)  
Singh, Shri Sita Ram (Sheohar)  
Singh, Shri Sugrib (Phulbani)  
Singh, Shri Suraj (Ballia, Bihar)  
Singh, Shri Uday (Purnea)  
Singh, Shri Vijayendra Pal (Bhilwara)  
Singh, Shri Vishvendra (Bharatpur)  
Singh, Shrimati Kanti (Arrah)  
Singh, Shrimati Pratibha (Mandi)  
Sippiparai, Shri Ravichandran (Sivakasi)  
Solanki, Shri Bharatsinh Madhavsinh (Anand)  
Solanki, Shri Bhupendrasinh (Godhara)  
Sonowal, Shri Sarbananda (Dibrugarh)  
Soren, Shri Shibu (Dumka)  
Srikantappa, Shri D.C. (Chikmagalur)  
Subba, Shri M.K. (Tezpur)  
Subbarayan, Shri K. (Coimbatore)

Sugavanam, Shri E.G. (Krishnagiri)  
Sujatha, Shrimati C.S. (Mavelikara)  
Suklabaidya, Shri Lalit Mohan (Karimganj)  
Suman, Shri Ramji Lal (Firozabad)  
Sumbrui, Shri Bagun (Singhbhum)  
Surendran, Shri Chengara (Adoor)  
Suryawanshi, Shri Narsingrao H. (Bidar)  
Swain, Shri Harihar (Aska)  
Swain, Shri Kharabela (Balasore)

Taslimuddin, Shri (Kishanganj)  
Thakkar, Smt. Jayaben B. (Vadodara)  
Thangkabalu, Shri K. V. (Salem)  
Thomas, Shri P.C. (Muvattupuzha)  
Thummar, Shri V. K. (Amrelli)  
Thupstan, Shri Chhewang (Ladakh)  
Tirath, Shrimati Krishna (Karol Bagh)  
Topdar, Shri Tarit Baran (Barrackpore)  
Tripathi, Shri Chandra Mani (Rewa)  
Tripathy, Shri Braja Kishore (Puri)  
Tytler, Shri Jagdish (Delhi Sadar)

Vaghela, Shri Shankersinh (Kopadvanj)  
Vajpayee, Shri Atal Bihari (Lucknow)  
Vallabhaneni, Shri Balashowry (Tenali)  
Varma, Shri Ratilal Kalidas (Dhandhuka)  
Vasava, Shri Mansukhbhai D. (Bharuch)  
Veerendra Kumar, Shri M.P. (Calicut)  
Velu, Shri R. (Arakkonam)  
Venkatapathy, Shri K. (Cuddalore)  
Venkatswamy, Shri G. (Peddapalli)  
Venugopal, Shri D. (Tiruppattur)  
Verma, Shri Beni Prasad (Kaisarganj)  
Verma, Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh (Jalaun)  
Verma, Shri Rajesh (Sitapur)  
Verma, Shri Ravi Prakash (Kheri)  
Verma, Shrimati Usha (Hardoi)

Vijayan Shri A.K.S. (Nagapattinam)  
Vijayashankar, Shri C.H. (Mysore)  
Vinod Kumar, Shri B. (Hanamkonda)  
Virendra Kumar, Shri (Sagar)  
Virupakshappa, Shri K. (Koppal)  
Vundavalli, Shri Aruna Kumar (Rajahmundry)

Waghmare, Shri Suresh (Wardha)

Yadav, Dr. Karan Singh (Alwar)  
Yadav, Kunwar Devendra Singh (Etah)  
Yadav, Prof. Ram Gopal (Sambhal)  
Yadav, Shri Akhilesh (Kannauj)  
Yadav, Shri Anirudh Prasad alias Sadhu (Gopalganj)  
Yadav, Shri Balleshwar (Padrauna)  
Yadav, Shri Bhal Chandra (Khalilabad)  
Yadav, Shri Chandra Pal Singh (Jhansi)  
Yadav, Shri Devendra Prasad (Jhanjharpur)  
Yadav, Shri Dharmendra (Mainpuri)  
Yadav, Shri Giridhari (Banka)  
Yadav, Shri Jay Prakash Narayan (Monghyr)  
Yadav, Shri Kailash Nath Singh (Chandouli)  
Yadav, Shri M. Anjan Kumar (Secundrabad)  
Yadav, Shri Mitrasen (Faizabad)  
Yadav, Shri Paras Nath (Jaunpur)  
Yadav, Shri Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu (Madhepura)  
Yadav, Shri Ram Kripal (Patna)  
Yadav, Shri Ramakant (Azamgarh)  
Yadav, Shri Sita Ram (Sitamarhi)  
Yadav, Shri Umakant (Machhlishahar)  
Yaskhi, Shri Madhu Goud (Nizamabad)  
Yerrannaidu, Shri Kinjarapu (Srikakulam)

Zawma, Shri Vanlal (Mizoram)

## **OFFICERS OF LOK SABHA**

### **THE SPEAKER**

Shri Somnath Chatterjee

### **THE DEPUTY-SPEAKER**

Shri Chamjit Singh Atwal

### **PANEL OF CHAIRMEN**

Shri Giridhar Gamang

Dr. Satyanarayan Jatiya

Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan

Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey

Shri Balasaheb Vikhe Patil

Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan

Shri Arjun Sethi

Shri Mohan Singh

Shrimati Krishna Tirath

Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav

### **SECRETARY GENERAL**

Shri P.D.T. Achary

## **COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**

**Dr. Manmohan Singh**

**The Prime Minister and also in-charge of the Ministries/  
Departments not specifically allocated to the charge of any  
Minister viz.:**

- (i) Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions;**
- (ii) Ministry of Planning;**
- (iii) Department of Atomic Energy;**
- (iv) Department of Space; and**
- (v) Ministry of Coal**

**Shri Pranab Mukherjee**

**The Minister of External Affairs**

**Shri Arjun Singh**

**The Minister of Human Resource Development**

**Shri Sharad Pawar**

**The Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Consumer Affairs,  
Food and Public Distribution**

**Shri Lalu Prasad**

**The Minister of Railways**

**Shri Shivraj V. Patil**

**The Minister of Home Affairs**

**Shri A.K. Antony**

**The Minister of Defence**

**Shri A.R. Antulay**

**The Minister of Minority Affairs**

**Shri Sushilkumar Shinde**

**The Minister of Power**

**Shri Ram Vilas Paswan**

**The Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers and Minister of Steel**

**Shri S. Jaipal Reddy**

**The Minister of Urban Development**

**Shri Sis Ram Ola**

**The Minister of Mines**

**Shri P. Chidambaram**

**The Minister of Finance**

**Shri Mahabir Prasad**

**The Minister of Small Scale Industries and Minister of Agro and  
Rural Industries**

**Shri P.R. Kyndiah**

**The Minister of Tribal Affairs**

**Shri T.R. Baalu**

**The Minister of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways**

**Shri Shankersinh Vaghela**

**The Minister of Textiles**

**Shri Vayalar Ravi**

**The Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs**

**Shri Kamal Nath**

**The Minister of Commerce and Industry**

**Shri H.R. Bhardwaj**

**The Minister of Law and Justice**

**Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev**

**The Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises**

**Prof. Saif-ud-din Soz**

**The Minister of Water Resources**

**Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh**

**The Minister of Rural Development**

**Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni**

**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minister of Information  
and Broadcasting**

**Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar**

**The Minister of Panchayati Raj, Minister of Youth Affairs and  
Sports and Minister of Development of North Eastern Region**

**Shrimati Meira Kumar**

**The Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment**

**Shri Murli Deora**

**The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas**

**Shrimati Ambika Soni**  
**Shri A. Raja**  
**Shri Dayanidhi Maran**  
**Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss**  
**Shri Kapil Sibal**  
**Shri Prem Chand Gupta**

**The Minister of Tourism and Minister of Culture**  
**The Minister of Environment and Forests**  
**The Minister of Communications and Information Technology**  
**The Minister of Health and Family Welfare**  
**The Minister of Science and Technology and Minister of Earth Sciences**  
**The Minister of Company Affairs**

#### **MINISTERS OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)**

**Shri Oscar Fernandes**  
**Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury**  
**Shri Subodh Kant Sahay**  
**Shri Vilas Muttemwar**  
**Kumari Selja**  
**Shri Praful Patel**  
**Shri G.K. Vasan**

**The Minister of State of the Ministry of Labour and Employment**  
**The Minister of State of the Ministry of Women and Child Development**  
**The Minister of State of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries**  
**The Minister of State of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy**  
**The Minister of State of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation**  
**The Minister of State of the Ministry of Civil Aviation**  
**The Minister of State of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation**

#### **MINISTERS OF STATE**

**Shri E. Ahamed**  
**Shri Suresh Pachouri**  
**Shri B.K. Handique**  
**Shrimati Panabaka Lakshmi**  
**Dr. Dasari Narayan Rao**  
**Dr. Shakeel Ahmad**  
**Rao Inderjit Singh**  
**Shri Naranbhai Rathwa**  
**Shri K.H. Muniyappa**  
**Shri M.V. Rajasekharan**  
**Shri Kantilal Bhuria**  
**Shri Manikrao Hodiya Gavit**  
**Shri Shriprakash Jaiswal**

**The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs**  
**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs**  
**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs**  
**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**  
**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Coal**  
**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology**  
**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence**  
**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways**  
**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways**  
**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Planning**  
**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Minister of State in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**  
**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs**  
**The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs**

<b>Shri Prithviraj Chavan</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office</b>
<b>Shri Taslimuddin</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Minister of State in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution</b>
<b>Shrimati Suryakanta Patil</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Rural Development and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs</b>
<b>Shri M.A.A. Fatmi</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Human Resource Development</b>
<b>Shri R. Velu</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways</b>
<b>Shri S.S. Palanimanickam</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance</b>
<b>Shri S. Regupathy</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs</b>
<b>Shri K. Venkatapathy</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Law and Justice</b>
<b>Shrimati Subbulakshmi Jagadeesan</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment</b>
<b>Shri E.V.K.S. Elangovan</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Textiles</b>
<b>Shrimati Kanti Singh</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Department of Heavy Industry, Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises</b>
<b>Shri Namo Narain Meena</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Environment and Forests</b>
<b>Shri Jay Prakash Narayan Yadav</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Water Resources</b>
<b>Dr. Akhilesh Prasad Singh</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Minister of State in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution</b>
<b>Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance</b>
<b>Shri Anand Sharma</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs</b>
<b>Shri Ajay Maken</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Urban Development</b>
<b>Shri Dinsha Patel</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas</b>
<b>Shri M.M. Pallam Raju</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence</b>
<b>Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Mines</b>
<b>Dr. Akhilesh Das</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Steel</b>
<b>Shri Ashwani Kumar</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry</b>
<b>Shri Jairam Ramesh</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry</b>
<b>Shri Chandra Sekhar Sahu</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Rural Development</b>
<b>Shrimati D. Purandeswari</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Human Resource Development</b>
<b>Shri M.H. Ambareesh</b>	<b>The Minister of State in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting</b>

# LOK SABHA DEBATES

No.1, Vol. XXV, First Day of the Tenth Session of Fourteenth Lok Sabha

## LOK SABHA

Friday, February 23, 2007/Phalgun 4, 1928 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at Thirty five minutes past  
Twelve of the Clock*

(MR. SPEAKER in the Chair)

### NATIONAL ANTHEM

*The National Anthem was played.*

12.37 hrs.

### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS\*

[English]

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the President's Address\*\* (Hindi & English Versions) to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 23rd February, 2007.

Honourable Members,

This is a very special year for our country. We are celebrating the 60th anniversary of our Independence. This year, we also observe the 150th anniversary of the First War of Indian Independence and the Centenary of Satyagraha. These are occasions for us to renew our commitment to building a strong, modern, inclusive, secular and dynamic India.

I would like to begin, by expressing my sincere condolences for the innocent victims of the dastardly and cynical terrorist attack on Samjhauta Express. Our hearts go out to the families of these innocent people. We should not allow this tragic event to affect our common quest for normalization of relations between India and Pakistan.

We meet here today at a time of great optimism about our economic performance and prospects. The last three years have recorded an average annual rate of growth of national income of over 8%. By all estimates, we will grow by close to 9% in the current year. This augurs well for the launch of the Eleventh Five Year Plan. My

\* The President delivered the Address in the Central Hall in English. Hindi text of the Address was read by the Vice-President there.

\*\* Also placed in Library. See No. L.T. 5788/2007

Government has set a target of attaining an annual growth rate of 9% during the Eleventh Plan. Given current trends and the general policy direction, this is a feasible proposition. However, economic growth is not an end in itself. It is a means by which we hope to generate more employment, distribute incomes more equitably, across social groups and regions, and liberate the poorest of the poor from the scourge of poverty, ignorance and disease.

My government recognizes that keeping a check on inflation is an essential element of any strategy for inclusive growth. During the first half of 2006, my Government took a number of steps to insulate our people from the fallout of the steep increase in global oil prices and resurgence in global commodity prices. However, in recent months, the rate of inflation has shown an upward trend. As growth and investment accelerate rapidly and incomes rise, there is bound to be a rising demand for all products, particularly products of day-to-day consumption. This rise in demand has to be met by a rise in supply which takes some time to materialize. During the last eight weeks, my Government has taken a number of fiscal and monetary steps to moderate inflation. Besides, a number of steps have been taken to improve supplies of essential commodities. My Government will continue to take all necessary steps to ensure that the poor, are not adversely affected by inflation. This is our solemn commitment.

To sustain the growth process and to fiscally empower the Government to address its commitment to inclusive growth, it is essential that our public finances are managed with prudence and wisdom. Fiscal responsibility is not an academic obsession. It is a prudent course of action aimed at ensuring the sustainability of our growth process, ensuring equity and keeping inflation under check.

My Government has decided that the goal of the Eleventh Plan would be to ensure that economic growth is not just faster, but also more inclusive and equitable. The Eleventh Plan strategy will aim at putting the economy on a sustainable, accelerated, growth trajectory and creating productive employment opportunities across the country in all sectors of the economy. The Approach Paper of the Eleventh Five Year Plan has identified nine major challenges facing the economy. These are: (1) regaining agricultural dynamism; (2) changing employment patterns and generating new jobs; (3) providing essential public services to the poor; (4) increasing manufacturing competitiveness; (5) developing human resources; (6) building world class infrastructure; (7) protecting the environment;



(8) improving rehabilitation and resettlement practices; (9) improving governance. By addressing these challenges, we will address the larger challenge of inclusive growth.

My Government is building a new architecture of inclusive growth. This architecture consists of Bharat Nirman, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the National Rural Health Mission, the strengthened and expanded Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the universalisation of the Mid-day Meal and ICDS Programmes and the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission. Considerable progress has been made under each of these flagship programmes of the Government. Most of the yearly targets have been met for projects undertaken through Bharat Nirman, except in a few States. Programmes for rural roads, rural electrification, rural telephony, rural housing and rural drinking water supply are on track. States that are lagging behind, especially the less developed parts of the country, have been urged to pay greater attention to implementation issues.

The National Rural Health Mission aims to improve the health status of people through a partnership between the Central and State Governments, Panchayati Raj institutions and the community in the management of primary health facilities. The Mission is focused on improving public health indicators through decentralised district level planning. About 3.2 lakh village-based accredited women social health activists (ASHA) have so far been inducted in 18 demographically weaker states.

The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission is under implementation in 63 cities. City Development Plans have already been prepared for 61 cities, charting out their vision and goals in urban governance and development. These plans also include investment plans with a focus on provision of city-wide urban infrastructure services such as water supply, sanitation, drainage, basic services and social housing to the urban poor. So far, 102 projects for slum improvement and development have been sanctioned. Our cities desperately need major reform of urban governance and improved and democratic functioning of our municipalities. This is being encouraged and a new draft law to facilitate street vendors is being finalized in consultation with all stakeholders.

Each of these programmes will generate additional employment, a major focus area of my Government. A sustained increase in the rate of investment, which has touched a record level of 34% of GDP, will generate additional employment. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) passed by my Government has

emerged as a very major programme both for providing a social safety net to the poor as well as for building rural infrastructure. Over 1.4 crore households have benefited under the scheme operational in 200 districts. Over 500,000 works are under operation under the NREGA in different parts of the country of which over half is in the area of water conservation and drought proofing, contributing to rebuilding of the natural resource base. A social safety net of this dimension has never been undertaken in the world. Therefore it is being observed with great interest. My Government is committed to covering the whole country under the NREGA in five years from the coming into force of it and more districts will be taken up in the next year.

Mahatma Gandhi's vision of Gram Swaraj was given a legal framework through the efforts of late Shri Rajiv Gandhi. My Government is committed to deepening Panchayati Raj and therefore has taken up the task of strengthening decentralized district planning through an integrated plan for removal of backwardness in 250 districts. The Backward Regions Grant Fund is designed to fill gaps in critical development interventions based on local assessments.

My Government attaches the highest importance to education. As a nation of young people, India will be able to gain from a demographic dividend only if we invest in the capabilities and the intellectual and emotional development of our children. There has been a quantum leap in the funds allocated for primary and secondary education during the last three years. The strengthened Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Mid-day Meal Programme reaffirm our commitment to the empowerment of our children through education. Under the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme, over 2000 new residential schools at upper primary level have been sanctioned in the last 3 years for girls belonging predominantly to SC, ST, OBC and minority communities.

The rights of women and children and their aspirations are of paramount importance in our march towards an inclusive and equitable society. Keeping in view the Constitutional provisions and in order to give greater focus to issues relating to women and children, an independent Ministry of Women & Child Development has been created. This emphasizes the importance being given to women as equal partners in development. Landmark legislations that ensure women's safety and protecting them from domestic violence have been enacted. Investment in the well-being of children is an investment in the future of the country. Eradication of malnutrition is receiving topmost priority, including through a rapid

expansion of anganwadis whose numbers will reach one million soon. At the same time issues relating to child protection are high on my Government's agenda.

The focus of our efforts in higher education is to revitalise the system, expand access and build new institutions of excellence. My Government attaches great importance to increasing access to education for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and the socially and educationally backward sections among Minorities. It is also committed to rewarding hard work and merit among all students. The National Knowledge Commission has submitted its first report placing emphasis on the need to invest in education at all levels of the knowledge pyramid. My Government is committed to revitalizing vocational and technical education. Several new Indian Institutes of Science, Education and Research, Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Information Technology are proposed to be set up in various parts of the country. New Central Universities are being set up in the North Eastern region.

My Government is committed to providing food security to the poor and is taking further steps to strengthen the public distribution system. Wheat production has been low but wheat stocks have been replenished in order to control the rise in prices. At the same time, the minimum support prices for wheat and coarse cereals have been suitably enhanced as an incentive for higher production. Timely and appropriate decisions have improved the lot of sugarcane farmers, reducing sugarcane arrears to an all time low. For coordinated and focussed attention on the issues of dryland and rainfed farming, the National Rainfed Area Authority has been set up to guide policy in this regard. The National Fisheries Development Board has been set up to enhance the productivity of our marine and inland fisheries. The National Horticulture Mission is helping farmers diversify into more income generating crops.

Honourable members are already aware of the steep increase in credit availability for agriculture. The target of doubling credit flow to agriculture and allied activities has been met. A Rs.13,000 crore package for the revival of the cooperative credit structure has also been worked out and is under implementation. To give a thrust to agricultural research and transfer new technologies to the field, a National Agriculture Innovation Project (NAIP) has been approved. Efforts are also on for improving productivity of plantation crops like Coconut, Tea and Coffee and several new schemes have been formulated.

A special package amounting to more than Rs.16,000 crores is being implemented in 31 districts worst affected by farmers' suicides. The interventions cover short term as well as long term measures and address issues of credit, irrigation facilities, agriculture inputs and alternative sources of income. An expert group is looking into the problem of agricultural indebtedness and will suggest measures to provide relief to farmers in distress.

Taken together, all these initiatives of my Government will increase the rate of investment in agriculture, enhance production and productivity growth, increase farmers' incomes and welfare and unleash the Second Green Revolution. It is heartening that agricultural growth in 2005-06 was 6%. However, this needs to be sustained through credible measures, which maintain a high rate of investment, bring new technologies and farming systems into use, improve marketing channels, provide better risk management facilities and generate better returns to our farmers. This, my Government is committed to doing.

Acquisition of agricultural land for industrial development and related purposes and the terms of compensation have become issues of major public concern in our country. On the one hand there are genuine concerns of farmers regarding acquisition of agricultural land and on the other hand, there is a need to use land to generate employment through industry, and related activities. Therefore, issues of humane rehabilitation and the need for fair pricing of agricultural land need to be addressed both in policy and in law. My Government is committed to bringing in a new rehabilitation policy, which will be backed by amendments in the Land Acquisition Act wherever necessary.

My Government recognizes the serious nature of the problem of water availability and water use, both in agriculture and in the urban economy. We need a social consensus on water management practices, including participatory irrigation management; regulated use and conservation of water; timely completion of irrigation projects and maintenance of existing projects to ensure water availability to farmers; improved ground water recharge and rain water harvesting. My Government is committed to developing both the irrigation potential of the country and its hydro-power potential.

Taking care of our environment and ensuring ecological sustainability of our growth process is a major challenge, nationally as well as globally. The threat of climate change and global warming will have adverse consequences for life on our planet and for our development prospects. We need economically affordable,

technologically feasible and socially equitable policies to deal with the challenge of sustainable development. Drawing on the wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi who said, "the Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed", the international community must evolve a framework for sustainable development that takes into account the growth aspirations of the developing world. India is committed to promote environmentally sustainable development strategies. A major programme for massive afforestation of degraded forest lands, "Green India", is under active consideration of my Government.

Our Wild Life is our invaluable heritage. My Government took several corrective steps for sanctuaries on the basis of the recommendations of the Tiger Task Force. A Tiger Conservation Authority has been constituted as well as a Wildlife Crime Control Bureau. The Government proposes to strengthen activities for environment education and respect for wildlife through the school curriculum.

My Government recognizes the vital importance of the food processing sector in improving the incomes of the farming community and generating employment in rural areas. The Government's Vision 2015 for the sector aims to triple the size of the food sector in the next decade. A National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship & Management is proposed to be set up. With a view to ensuring that our food sector matches up to the best global standards, my Government enacted an integrated food law called the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and a Food Safety Authority is being established shortly. This autonomous Authority will set standards and license the manufacture of food products which are healthy and safe.

The focus on "inclusive growth" has also meant giving special attention to the needs of the weaker sections of our society. My government attaches great importance to social justice and to the social, educational and economic empowerment of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, Minorities, women and children. Education empowers by creating capabilities. Hence, my Government has extended scholarships to SC and ST students and widened access to higher education for OBCs. To empower the most deprived among the Scheduled Castes, my Government has launched a new "Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers Scheme". My Government has made considerable progress in filling the backlog of unfilled reserved posts for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and is committed to filling up the rest.

At its last session, the Parliament enacted a historic bill to provide rights a over land to Scheduled Tribes and forest dwellers on land historically in their occupation but classified as forests. This is a path-breaking legislation which will provide security to these sections, prevent their harassment and enhance their livelihoods. We have formulated a National Tribal Policy addressing important concerns of the tribal community.

My Government is committed to the welfare of the minorities, especially the most backward among them. A separate Ministry of Minority Affairs has been created to ensure focused attention on the welfare of all our minorities. A High Level Committee chaired by Justice Rajindar Sachar was appointed to report on the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India. The report was tabled in Parliament on 30th November, 2006 and will be discussed in this Session. We will take all measures necessary to ensure that the fruits of development are shared equitably and backward minority groups become active participants and beneficiaries of our growth processes. My Government is considering the formulation of a programme for those districts and towns that have the highest concentration of minority populations.

The Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities was adopted last year. The programme has identified certain important developmental schemes and created a mechanism to ensure that the benefits of these schemes flow equitably to the minority communities also. Certain minority communities continue to remain relatively backward, with a large number of out-of-school children, high dropout rates and low educational attainments. These require focused intervention. In addition to the existing schemes, my Government proposes to introduce comprehensive scholarship schemes from primary to post graduate levels for eligible students belonging to the minorities. My Government firmly commits itself to equity and welfare of all sections of society.

To sustain the growth process we have to ensure energy security. Accelerated economic development and growing demand for commercial energy require a new paradigm of energy security for India. There is urgent need for a national consensus on energy pricing and distribution policies. My Government is conscious of the need to augment energy supplies from both conventional and renewable sources. The coal sector will continue to remain the mainstay of energy security for the country. Therefore, it is imperative that coal production is substantially increased in the coming years. A number of steps have been taken to achieve this objective. Simultaneously, my Government will encourage new

investment in power generation. Competitive tariff bids have already been approved for setting up of two Ultra Mega Power Projects and further efforts in this direction will continue. The tremendous hydropower potential in the country will also be harnessed with the cooperation and willing support of the state governments concerned. My Government has taken important steps to help develop the full potential of civilian nuclear energy and of all sources of renewable energy, both for meeting energy needs and to address concerns on environment.

My Government has placed great emphasis on building world class infrastructure in our country. The National Highway Development Programme has been greatly expanded with an investment target of Rs.227,000 crores. The Golden Quadrilateral is nearing completion. Work for construction of the North-South and East-West corridors has also been awarded. The Government has also approved 4-laning of around 4,000 km of national highways and 6-laning of 6,500 km of national highways, including the Golden Quadrilateral. My Government is implementing the Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for the North-East, keeping in view the urgent need to improve connectivity to the region.

My Government has succeeded in ensuring a turnaround of Indian Railways. Over the last 30 months, railway freight volumes have grown by 8-10% and growth in passenger volumes has doubled. Container business has been opened up to private businesses. As a result of improved supply and demand management, rational utilization of capacity and a market-driven pricing policy, Indian Railways are once again on track. It is necessary that this momentum is maintained. For this, modernization and creation of additional infrastructure would be vital. Infrastructure development through public private partnerships will be promoted. There has been an encouraging response to the offer to allow private container trains. Preliminary work on the proposed Dedicated Rail Freight Corridor has begun. The project will provide the necessary infrastructure support for growth in container, coal and other mineral traffic. This project is proceeding on a fast track basis and a Special Purpose Vehicle called the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited has been formed to implement the project.

The civil aviation sector has witnessed unprecedented growth in recent years. My Government has initiated the modernization of major airports in the country and liberalization of air services to cope with rapidly growing air traffic demand. Investment in airport development is on an upswing.

In order to keep pace with our fast increasing share of global trade, my Government has taken up a programme for massive capacity expansion of port infrastructure. An Indian maritime University is proposed to be set up in Chennai with regional campuses at Kolkata, Mumbai and Visakhapatnam. Stretches of Godavari and Mahanadi are also proposed to be declared as inland waterways.

My Government has made serious attempts to promote Public Private Partnerships as a strategy for building infrastructure such as roads, ports, airports and power generation. Such a strategy brings in additional investment which adds to limited public sector resources. Further, private sector efficiency results in lower costs, quicker completion of projects and better delivery of services. Substantial improvements can be seen in these sectors as a result of these efforts.

Honourable Members will be happy to learn that in 2006-07 the rate of growth of manufacturing sector output was estimated at close to 11%. The performance of key sectors, like the automotive industry, textiles, pharmaceuticals, steel, petrochemicals, cement and so on has been impressive. We have clearly succeeded in re-energising domestic enterprise. The National Strategy for Manufacturing prepared by the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council provides a basis for accelerated industrial and employment growth. An Automotive Mission Plan 2006-2016 has been prepared to provide the framework for the growth of the auto sector in India. The industrial sector has also benefited from increased inflows of foreign direct investment. Here too, FDI inflows have exceeded US\$10 billion this year and also exceeded FII inflows for the first time ever.

It is a matter of satisfaction that our textile industry has been able to generate considerable employment and promote exports and improve its performance in the post-Multi Fibre Agreement regime. A focused approach to helping weavers is in place with an increase in the number of cluster development centers, more yarn depots, support to technology upgradation, health and life insurance programmes for weavers and a new "Handloom Mark" for branding handloom products.

My Government has restructured the Kendriya Khadi and Village Industries Commission. The Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Rural Industries has been set up at Wardha to further promote rural industries which provide gainful employment to a very large section of our rural population. The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act 2006 has become operational. This will facilitate the promotion, development and enhancement of competi-

tiveness of these enterprises. My Government is committed to providing a minimum social safety net for workers in the unorganized sector and a draft law for this purpose is under consideration. My Government will launch a massive skill development programme to improve the skills and capabilities of our work force through a Mission on Vocational Education and other initiatives. This is essential if we have to take advantage of the demographic dividend that we are going to have through an increasingly youthful workforce.

Our Information Technology sector continues to develop and remain globally competitive. The year 2007 will be the Year of Broadband. We are committed to bridging the digital divide by providing broadband coverage throughout the country. My Government is encouraging the growth of the electronic hardware industry and the semiconductor industry. My Government will take forward the National Identity Card Project under the National e-Governance Plan for nationwide roll-out in a phased manner so as to ensure better delivery of services to our citizens.

Tourism has enormous potential and we are already seeing its benefits. In recent months, there has been an impressive growth in foreign tourist arrivals, foreign exchange earnings and employment generation. However, given the potential of tourism and India's rich heritage and diversity, we can do much more to increase the number of domestic as well as foreign tourists. Apart from improving the quality of tourism infrastructure, my Government is encouraging public private partnerships in tourism across the country.

To sustain our efforts in the advanced fields of modern science and technology we must increase the number of scientists and improve the quality of Indian science. My Government is deeply concerned about the inadequate enrolment of students in basic sciences and that Indian science is lagging behind other newly industrializing economies. India needs a new thrust in the field of science and technology. There is also a need to energise our university system and enable it to respond to the pressures of the market so that it can retain and attract talent.

A Vision for the development of an empowered S&T base by 2015 has been prepared. Steps will be taken to attract talent, rejuvenate university research, enable women scientists to re-enter careers in science, strengthen technology business incubation processes, promote excellence in research, engage private sector in R&D and create greater science awareness and a scientific temper among our people. My Government intends to increase

the financial allocation for science and technology from less than 1% of GDP to 2% of GDP.

Our scientists have distinguished themselves in the fields of nuclear energy, space, bio-technology, genetics and pharmaceuticals. This year has witnessed impressive achievements in our space programme. The recent ninth consecutive successful launch of PSLV, placing four satellites precisely in predetermined orbit, and the Space Capsule Recovery Experiment as also the progress being made in preparation for the Chandrayaan Mission testify to the well-deserved reputation for excellence that ISRO and our space programme enjoy. The Department of Atomic Energy, which is engaged in harnessing nuclear technology to produce safe, economic and eco-friendly energy using indigenous resources, has brought on stream the indigenously developed 540 MWe Units 3 & 4 at Tarapur. We are committed to the development of our indigenous three stage nuclear programme.

My government is paying special attention to the modernization of the police forces, security forces and intelligence agencies. A focused and holistic attempt to deal with the challenges of internal security in the North Eastern Region, in Jammu & Kashmir and in regions affected by naxalite activity is yielding dividends. My government recognizes the challenge posed by terrorism and extremism and has been resolute in dealing with it. While our security and intelligence agencies have successfully foiled many attempts by terrorist groups to strike terror, there have been tragic, dastardly and cowardly acts of terrorism, as in Mumbai and Assam and, most recently, in the attack on Samjhauta Express. My Government is dealing firmly with the challenge posed.

While ensuring law and order and internal security in the North East, Jammu & Kashmir and naxalite affected regions, my government will remain focused on the overall social, economic and cultural development of these parts of our country, aimed at ensuring the active participation of all sections of our society in the national mainstream. My Government will continue to impart a healing touch both in Jammu & Kashmir and in the North East, while maintaining utmost vigil against terrorist and extremist forces. My government attaches the highest importance to ensuring that all agencies respect basic human rights, even in the most trying circumstances.

There is growing public concern about urban crime and violence, especially involving children and women. My Government is committed to making our police forces more sensitive to the concerns and needs of our citizens, and more efficient and humane in responding to them.

My government is committed to judicial reforms aimed at speeding up the justice delivery system and ensuring greater efficiency, transparency and integrity in our judicial system, especially where it impacts on the welfare of our citizens. A Bill for setting up the National Judicial Council for greater accountability and transparency in the judiciary has already been tabled in Parliament. The Grameen Nyayalay Bill for setting up people-friendly local courts with flexibility of procedures for speedier disposal of petty cases, is on the anvil.

The Defence of the country is an unshakeable commitment of my Government. At a time when new and unconventional threats to national security are increasingly visible, even while the strategic environment continues to be fragile, the Government shall maintain focus on strengthening the Defence of the country. We shall provide our Armed Forces with the best possible means to do so. My government is investing in the modernization of our Armed Forces and of our indigenous Defence industry, to make them fully capable of dealing with existing and emerging challenges. Our Armed Forces have also been engaged in cooperative exercises with many partner countries, and their performance has invariably come in for praise. The nation is grateful to them for their contribution. The welfare of our ex-servicemen is a priority of my Government.

My Government's foreign policy has been shaped by the desire to create an external environment conducive to peace and stability in the region, ensuring our accelerated economic development and the safeguarding of our national security. In pursuit of this enlightened national interest, my Government has undertaken a comprehensive engagement with the world - with all major powers, with our extended neighbourhood and with our partners in the developing world and the Non-aligned Movement.

Recently in February, we signed a new India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty in place of the earlier one of 1949. The new Treaty updates the legal basis of our bilateral relations to reflect the contemporary reality. It would enable us to further strengthen and enhance our relationship to a higher level to meet the aspirations of our two peoples. We have reiterated our full support to the restoration of multi-party democracy in Nepal and the success of the peace process. As a friend and neighbour, India is interested in a democratic, stable and prosperous Bangladesh. We have conveyed at high political levels to Sri Lankan leaders the need for a negotiated, political settlement to the ethnic issue that is acceptable to all sections of Sri Lankan society. It is a matter of satisfaction that the dialogue process with Pakistan is progressing steadily. The Composite Dialogue,

the Joint Commission and the Anti-terrorism Institutional Mechanism have provided a structural framework within which all major issues are being discussed. We remain concerned over infiltration and cross-border terrorism, and the success of the dialogue process is predicated on Pakistan fulfilling its commitment not to permit any territory under its control to be used to support terrorism in any manner.

In April this year, India will host the 14th SAARC Summit. As the SAARC Chair, India will work for ensuring that SAARC becomes a vehicle for peace and progress in our region. The people of South Asia have a shared heritage and a shared destiny. We are particularly happy that Afghanistan will join as SAARC's eighth Member at the forthcoming Summit. The importance of India-Afghanistan relations was underlined at the second Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan in November 2006 co-hosted by India and Afghanistan.

The transformation in the India - US bilateral relationship has resulted in wide-ranging engagement across many fields including Defence and security issues, counter-terrorism, science and technology, health, trade, space, energy - including nuclear energy, agriculture, maritime cooperation and environment. Members are aware of our efforts to arrive at an agreement with the US on civil nuclear energy cooperation within the parameters laid out in the July 18, 2005 India-US Joint Statement and the March 2, 2006 Separation Plan. India shares a strategic partnership with the European Union, which covers a wide range of areas including trade and investment, culture, science and technology. Negotiations are to be launched on a broad-based India-EU trade and investment agreement.

The recent landmark visit of President Putin as the Chief Guest at our Republic Day highlighted the broad-based cooperation that marks India's long-standing relationship with Russia. The development of the Brahmos missile through a joint venture between our countries demonstrates the mutual benefits of our cooperation. The agreements reached during the visit will significantly expand our cooperation in the fields of energy, high technology, Defence and space. The strategic partnership between India and Russia is poised to deepen even further.

The visit of Chinese President Hu Jintao to India in November 2006 strengthened the process of sustained and comprehensive development of India-China relations. The two countries agreed on a 10-pronged strategy to add greater content to our strategic partnership and to develop an action oriented agenda for the future.

India's "Look East Policy" has contributed to increasing engagement with ASEAN and our East Asian neighbourhood. India's participation in the East Asian and India-ASEAN Summits has rejuvenated our ancient links with the region and strengthened economic ties. Singapore, China, Japan, Korea and other countries have shown great interest in the "Nalanda Project" which seeks to create an Asian centre for inter-civilizational dialogue in India.

India's relations with Japan have entered a new era with the launch of a Global and Strategic Partnership last year. A Special Economic Partnership Initiative will promote investment, especially in infrastructure, power generation and setting up of an industrial corridor. Negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement are underway. We look forward to the visit of Prime Minister Abe later this year.

At the Non-Aligned Summit last year, India worked with the other members to bring development to the center of the international agenda. My Government is actively pursuing strengthened relations with countries of West Asia and the Persian Gulf region. We would like to see durable peace and stability in the region. We have called on all parties in West Asia to renounce violence and seek a comprehensive solution through peaceful negotiations taking into account the legitimate interest of all concerned. My Government has also reiterated its desire to see a stable, peaceful, prosperous, united and democratic Iraq. The visits to India of the Emir of Kuwait and the King of Jordan following that of HM the King of Saudi Arabia last year, and the recent visit of the External Affairs Minister to Iran highlight the importance attached to our enduring interests in this region, vital for energy security and employment opportunities for Indians. India has also been working to further deepen and diversify its relations with countries in Africa and Latin America. India's relations with South Africa and Brazil received a fillip last year. The historic India-Brazil-South Africa Summit brought together the largest democracies of Asia, Africa and Latin America revitalizing our commitment to South-South cooperation. The Pan African e-Network which is being implemented with our support has provided a unique platform to promote high tech collaboration between Africa and India.

My Government has paid special attention to the protection and welfare of overseas Indian workers, especially those in West Asia and the Gulf. We admire their spirit of enterprise and would like to see them more actively engaged in India's development. The Overseas Citizen of India Card scheme has addressed a long-

standing demand of persons of Indian origin. We are now working on a proposal to establish a PIO University in India. My Government will take steps to encourage a "reverse brain drain" so that some of the brightest and talented children of India return to their Motherland.

India has welcomed the resumption of negotiations across all areas of the Doha Round in the World Trade Organization (WTO) with a view to reaching an early positive conclusion. In order to break the impasse, developed countries must make meaningful offers to reduce the large trade-distorting subsidies provided to their agriculture sector. At the same time, the role of agriculture as a major source of livelihood in developing countries makes it imperative that governments are enabled to mitigate risks associated with price declines, price volatility and predatory competition facing their low-income and vulnerable farmers through appropriate policy flexibilities. Equally important is increased market access for products and services of export interest to developing countries to ensure that the Doha Round is indeed a Development Round.

Honourable Members, our country is on the threshold of a new era of development. The sense of confidence of our working people, our professionals and entrepreneurs and their dynamism give us reasons to be hopeful. However, my Government recognizes that for development to be meaningful it must be inclusive. To this end, it is necessary to revitalise our rural economy and address issues of widening rural-urban disparities. The reform of Government, making it more transparent and responsive, and the elimination of the cancer of corruption are necessary elements of any strategy of inclusive growth. The Right to Information Act is one means of empowering our citizens. The more powerful instrument in their hands is their right to have their voice heard and their grievances redressed in these august premises of our Parliament. Eternal vigilance, as it has been said, is the price of democracy. You, Honourable Members, are here as the representatives of our people. It is incumbent upon you to ensure through the great institutions of our democracy that the people of our country are the recipients of better governance. I hope you will put to good use the power at your disposal in the interests of our people and our nation. I convey my best wishes for the purposeful conduct of the proceedings of Parliament this year.

**Jai Hind!**

12.38 hrs.

# WELCOME TO PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have to make an announcement.

On behalf of the hon. Members of the House and on my own behalf, I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Barendra Sinanan, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Her Excellency Dr. Linda Baboolal, President of the Senate and the Members of the Parliamentary Delegation from the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago who are on a visit to India as our honoured guests.

They arrived in India on Thursday, 22nd February, 2007. They are now seated in the Special Box. We wish them a happy and fruitful stay in our country. Through them, we convey our greetings and best wishes to the President, the Parliament, the Government and the friendly people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

12.40 hrs.

## STATEMENT BY MINISTER

### Fire due to explosion in Delhi-Attari Link Express near Panipat

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Lalu Prasad to make the Statement.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): Sir, I am deeply aggrieved to inform the House.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Just you can lay the Statement on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

SHRI LALU PRASAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I beg to lay the Statement on the Table of the House.

\*The unfortunate incident of sudden fire due to explosion in two general coaches of train no. 4001 Delhi-Attari link Express took place at 23.55 hours on 18.2.07 near Panipat station of Northern Railway.

Railway Officers and relief team from Panipat immediately proceeded to the site of incident. Rescue and relief teams of Railways from Delhi and Ambala were also dispatched to the accident site and senior officers of Northern Railway Headquarter and Delhi Division also immediately proceeded to the site of incident. Rescue work was started on war footing with the help of Fire fighting and medical relief teams of the Railway and the Local Administration. Hon'ble Minister of State for Railways, Chairman Railway Board, Director General, Railway Protection Force and Director General, Railway Health Services also reached the site of incident along with senior officers. I myself went to the site of incident and reviewed the relief and rescue measures. We visited the hospital to meet the injured persons and ordered necessary arrangements for treatment. Hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs also visited the site of incident.

As per the information received so far, 68 persons including 3 railway employees lost their lives, 7 persons suffered grievous injuries and 5 persons suffered simple injuries. Continuous efforts are being made for identification of dead bodies and for bringing the relatives of those dead persons to India in coordination with Ministries of External Affairs, Home Affairs and the Local Police. Injured persons were taken to Safdarjang Hospital at Delhi for specialized treatment.

Considering the seriousness of the incident, I have announced ex-gratia payment of Rs. 10 lakh for the next kith and kin of the dead persons and Rs. 50,000/- to the injured persons which is many times more than the normally payable amount. Compensation upto Rs. 4 lakh to the affected persons will be additionally payable by Railway Claims Tribunal as per the extant rules. I have also ordered free rail services for the relatives of the dead traveling for identification of the dead and for transportation of dead bodies back.

Forensic experts have stated the probable cause of the sudden fire as due to explosion based on the evidence and samples taken from the accident site. Bomb disposal squad has recovered three suitcases from the accident site containing I.E.D. (Improvised Explosive Device) and Kerosene oil/Petrol. Government Railway Police, Panipat has registered a case under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, The Railway Act and the Indian Explosives Act and is investigating into the accident. Statutory inquiry by Commissioner of Railway Safety, Northern Circle is also under progress.

Custom and immigration related checks of the passengers of Delhi-Attari Link Express are conducted at

\* Laid on the Table and also Placed in Library. See No. L.T. 5788A/2007



Attari. To prevent the recurrence of such incidents in this train and the Thar Express, security is being further beefed up at stations and in these trains by the Railway Protection Force with the help of State Government. Steps like having only reserve accommodation in these trains, identification of individual passengers and their luggage before boarding the train, permitting excess baggage in a separate compartment after checking etc. are also being taken.

In view of the serious incident of bomb blasts, steps are being taken to strengthen and modernize Railway Protection Force. In addition to, increasing numbers of sniffer dogs in all the Dog Squads, explosive detection devices, bomb disposal equipments, Door frame and Hand held metal detectors are being made available in several sensitive railway divisions for providing better security to train passengers. Besides this, equipments like CCTVs and smart video cameras are being installed at all sensitive stations. Railway Protection Force is escorting more than 1450 trains every day. In order to remove shortage of man-power in the force, existing vacancies are being filled on priority and matter for creation of new posts is also under consideration. Intensive training is being given to RPF for enhancing its professional competence and efficiency.

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi): Sir, this statement reflects the utter failure on the part of Government. ...*(Interruptions)*

Sir, we want a discussion on that. It cannot go like this. The Government has miserably failed.

MD. SALIM (Calcutta, North-East): We also want a discussion. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: We will have a discussion.

...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I am now reading the Obituary References.

12.41 hrs.

## OBITUARY REFERENCES

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have to inform the House of the sad demise of Shri Manabendra Shah, a sitting Member of this House and one of our former colleagues, Shri Shyamacharan Shukla.

Shri Manabendra Shah was a sitting Member of the Fourteenth Lok Sabha representing Tehri Garhwal Parliamentary Constituency of Uttarakhand (erstwhile Uttaranchal). Shri Shah was also a Member of the Second to Fourth and Tenth to Thirteenth Lok Sabhas from 1957 to 1970 and 1991 to 2004, representing the same Parliamentary Constituency.

An able parliamentarian, Shri Shah was the Chairman, Committee on Health and Drinking Water for the Hills during the Third Lok Sabha and a Member, Committee on Finance and Consultative Committee, Ministry of Surface Transport during Tenth Lok Sabha.

In Eleventh Lok Sabha, he was Member, Committees on Public Undertakings and External Affairs and also of the Consultative Committee, Ministry of Power. During Twelfth Lok Sabha, he was the Chairman, Committee on Public Undertakings and Member, General Purposes Committee, Committee on Transport and Tourism and Consultative Committee, Ministry of Defence. He served as Member, Committee on Home Affairs during Thirteenth Lok Sabha. He was the Member of General Purposes Committee, Committees on Estimates, Transport, Tourism and Culture in Fourteenth Lok Sabha.

A member of the erstwhile royal family, Shri Shah was actively associated with socio-religious and educational trusts, institutions and associations and also took keen interest in the development of hill regions. He served as Patron, Badri-Kedar Shrines, President, Temple Board of Management, Tehri Garhwal and Trustee of Maharaja Narendra Shah Trust and Maharaja Kirti Shah Trust.

Shri Shah served as Ambassador to Ireland from 1980 to 1983. A widely travelled person, Shri Shah was member of the Indian Parliamentary Delegation to Australia in 1996.

Shri Manabendra Shah passed away on 5 January, 2007 at New Delhi at the age of 86, after a prolonged illness.

Shri Shyamacharan Shukla was a Member of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha from 1999 to 2004, representing Mahasamund Parliamentary Constituency of Chhattisgarh (erstwhile Madhya Pradesh).

An able parliamentarian, Shri Shukla served as a Member of the Committee on Petroleum and Chemicals from 1999 to 2000 and thereafter in Consultative Committee, Ministry of Defence.

Earlier, Shri Shukla was Member, Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly for six terms from 1957 to 1977 and

1990 to 1999. He was also the Leader of Opposition in Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly from 1967 to 1969. Shri Shukla also adorned the office of Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh for three terms from 1969 to 1972, 1975 to 1977 and during 1989-90 and ably served the State.

A leader of the masses, Shri Shukla made significant contributions to the overall development of Madhya Pradesh, particularly in the fields of irrigation and agriculture, during his tenure as the Chief Minister.

Shri Shyamacharan Shukla passed away on 14 February, 2007 at Raipur, Chhattisgarh at the age of 82, after prolonged illness.

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

As the hon. Members are aware, on 18 February, 2007, around 68 passengers lost their lives and several others were injured when two bomb blasts rocked the Pakistan bound Attari-Samjhauta Express near Panipat, Haryana. The powerful blasts set two bogies afire which were completely gutted.

The perpetrators of this senseless act of violence sought to derail the ongoing peace initiatives taken by India and Pakistan. Such acts of violence will not deter us

from our fight against terrorism. Let us resolve to firmly deal with all such divisive forces and maintain peace and tranquility.

In another tragedy on 20 February, 2007, around 15 students and three teachers of a Primary School in Kerala lost their lives when their boat capsized in the Bhoothathankettu Reservoir off the Thattekkad Bird Sanctuary near Kothamangalam.

The House expresses its profound grief over the loss of lives and injuries caused in these tragedies.

The House may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.

12.43 hrs.

*The members then stood in silence for a short while.*

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12.44 hrs.

MR. SPEAKER: The House now stands adjourned till Monday, February, 26, 2007.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock. on Monday, February 26, 2007/Phalgun 7, 1928 (Saka).*

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**Published under Rules 379 and 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business  
Lok Sabha (Eleventh Edition) and Printed by Sunlight Printers, Delhi - 110006**

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