

[Shri A.J.V.B. Maheswara Rao]

munication system in this area will receive the appropriate attention of the Govt. immediately. Also, the TV net work is not adequate in this part of the State. Since the entire area is inhabited by the farming community, it is necessary to provide them TV facility, so that they can acquaint themselves well with the modern methods of farmings. There are no proper approach roads in this area. It is an accepted fact that no area can develop without proper roads. Many villages in my constituency remain unconnected. They are not connected even with the nearest towns even after 40 years of independence. Though grants are being provided under NREP, RLEGP etc for construction of roads much progress has not been made so far. There is no proper monitoring of the grants provided and of the progress made. There is no proper assessment to see how far the schemes were useful to the public.

Sir, though the steps are being taken to provide water for drinking and irrigation purposes a lot still remains to be done. Andhra Pradesh has been making repeated pleas to the Centre to accord sanction to Polavaram project. Similarly there is a constant demand, both from the State Govt. and the Members of Parliament to clear the Telugu Ganga project. But these important projects have not yet been cleared. Let me hope that at least now these important projects will be cleared.

Sir, the Central Govt. is treating non-Congress I ruled State Govts. on a different footing. Step motherly treatment is being meted out to them. The Central Govt. is not cooperating with the non-Congress I ruled states in implementing various welfare schemes. All the States should be treated equally. Both the Congress ruled States and opposition ruled States should be treated alike while extending financial help for implementation of various welfare measures. The country is one and the people are one. The Central Govt. should keep this in view and extend help to all the States alike. Equal treatment of all States is essential if the nation has to make an alround progress. Let me hope that the opposition ruled States will get better treatment hereafter.

Sir, I conclude my speech thanking you for providing an opportunity to speak.

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to thank all members who have participated in this debate. Many interesting comments have come; some useful suggestions have been made. But the general tenor of the debate has been worthy of the highest, parliamentary tradition. For that, I congratulate all the members.

1987 was a year of persistent challenge and determined response, a year of achievement in the face of great difficulties. Some of the difficulties were caused by disruptive forces within the country; some difficulties were caused by disruptive forces inspired from abroad; some were caused by the weather.

Twenty years ago, Indiraji faced difficulties of a similar kind that were forced on us by weather. In 1966-67, when she launched the Green Revolution it was her farsightedness that had given our economy its strength and resilience today—the strength and resilience that has led us meet the present crisis through our own efforts and our own endeavours. We have not carried the begging bowl to any one. We have not compromised on our freedom of action. At that time, Indiraji's strategy was opposed by a segments of expert opinion, by even some myopic elements from the benches opposite; but Indiraji prevailed and because of her faith in our kisans, because of her confidence in the ability of our scientists, and because of her trust in the performance of our extension workers, she pushed forward with policies which led to the Green Revolution. She assured our farmers required inputs at reasonable prices despite subsidies that the economy might have to bear. She gave remunerative prices to the farmers as a cardinal principle of the new strategy; and she took the banks to the rural areas, to the farmer, to give him credit. She introduced a countrywide system of procurement to give the farmer stability in his prices.

Indiraji ensured that the strategy for the agricultural sector and the Green Revolution was in the interest of all the sections of our rural community—the farmer, the small and marginal cultivator, the landless labour, and even rural artisan.

In these two decades, we doubled our output because of her integrated vision of rural India, because of her sympathy and understanding of each segment of our rural society, because of her assiduous attention to inputs costs and subsidies.

Today after four years of bad monsoon, two years of poor rains and two years of severe drought, we can hold our head high and look to the future with confidence because Indiraji laid foundations which were sure, sound and secure. Our drive to maximise the rabi crop is meeting with encouraging success. We hope that the shortfall will not exceed 10 per cent of last year's output. Perhaps we will be able to hold it down to 7 per cent. But I would like to remind members that the drought is not over. The dry months are still ahead and in some States there is going to be another difficult period that we have to cross. We have to be watchful and vigilant.

We have done much to mitigate the distress in the drought areas. Relief programmes have been handled efficiently by and large. The ceilings on assistance have been put at Rs. 1400 crores, approximately half of it earmarked to Gujarat and Rajasthan where the drought has been severest. Surcharges on taxes have put the burden of drought relief on the richest sections of our society.

Using the foodgrains from the buffer stocks we have launched programmes to generate employment and to build assets to cushion against future droughts. Through worthwhile drought relief schemes we have ensured that expenditure on relief became expenditure on development. We have rushed fodder from areas of surplus to areas of scarcity. We have introduced special programmes for drinking water. We have introduced special programmes for lifting the output of village artisans and the handloom weavers, because these are sections which have been hit indirectly by

the drought and it has caused them severe problems. We have tried to bring programmes for this special section in a manner such that they do not move out of their trade and we do not lose the expertise that we have gained over thousands of years.

The genesis of the Green Revolution was a scientific breakthrough, a scientific breakthrough which brought new hybrid seeds and a package of inputs to the irrigated lands. This led us to self-sufficiency in foodgrains. We must now ensure that there is no levelling off in this output. The scientific community must once more be galvanised into providing answers for the next phase of the Green Revolution to take it to new crops and to give it resilience against the vagaries and changes in the weather. Already, thanks to the Special Rice Production Programme, the Green Revolution is moving east-wards, into eastern U.P., which is rapidly becoming a new greenary for India.

Dryland farming has been boosted by the Technology Mission for oilseeds and the national project on pulses. The primary cause of our not surpassing the 1983-84 record of foodgrains output is the weather and, therefore, it would be reasonable to hope for a better monsoon this year.

Our objective remains to regain the Seventh Plan targets for food production. We will give a new thrust and a new impetus to agriculture. We have given careful attention to agriculture. I have held review meetings at various levels and, following these I have given specific directions to the Planning Commission to revamp the Plan for agriculture, to re-order priorities, to give agriculture the highest importance.

I have asked the Planning Commission to furnish a detailed action plan, which should be ready any time now, based on each district, its cropping pattern, its needs for water, power, fertiliser and other inputs. In the remaining two years of the Seventh Plan we must regain the lost momentum. We must hit 175 million tonnes of foodgrains production by the end of the Seventh Plan.

[Shri Rajiv Gandhi]

To this end, the Budget allocations for agriculture have been substantially increased. The Finance Minister has announced major fiscal and financial incentives for the farm sector. We are committed to the kisan as the backbone of our economy. We are committed to promoting productive agriculture. We are committed to promoting investment in agriculture. We must galvanise rural India by placing the results of the best technology in the hands of the poorest farmer, by providing subsidies where they are required to ensure inputs at reasonable costs.

We have to look at the subsidies themselves. While we are giving very large amounts on subsidies, we have to see that these are used to the maximum benefit of the farmer. There are some doubts raised in this regard. And I have asked the Finance Minister to look at these subsidies to see whether there is need for a change in the method of subsidy so that the same amount can be used more effectively for the benefit of the farmer.

We have to see that attractive prices are given to the farmer so that farming is more remunerative.

And we have to carry with us all sections of the rural community. When we look at the problems of the farmer, we must look beyond just the farmer, at the whole rural community and bring about programmes for all their uplift. Of course, the key element is the farmer because economic activity revolves around the farmer in the rural areas. But while looking at the farmer, we must look at the full community. This cannot be done by pitting the farmer against everybody else. It cannot be done by raising false dichotomy between agriculture and industry. It cannot be done by opportunistic alliances with vested interests, who nurture their own interests raise unreasonable demands and hold country and the farmer to ransom. We shall never surrender under pressure. We shall never surrender under the pressure of vested interests and we shall be always at the forefront to fight for the genuine rights and needs of the farmer and the rural community.

While facing up to the difficulties in agriculture during this year we have pushed ahead most satisfactorily in other areas. Infrastructure has done very well, almost entirely in the public sector. It has returned a performance to fill the heart of every Indian with pride. Despite the drought which curtailed hydel generation, our overall power generation has increased by 7.6 per cent—thanks to thermal generation increasing by 16 per cent. The Plant Load Factor has gone up from 44 per cent in 1979-80 to 50 per cent in 1983-84 to 55 per cent in 1987-88. Coal production has increased by 10.2 per cent over last year. Railway freight has gone up by 5.4 per cent over last year.

Overall industrial performance is most satisfactory. Despite drought industrial growth is likely to exceed 8 per cent, making it over 8 per cent for four years in succession. This proves that our industrial policies have clearly succeeded. We will continue to give full support to the productive forces in industry to encourage greater competition in our industry. But there is no room for complacency. The impact of drought might come in the coming months and may be soon in a slowing down in industrial growth. We will watch developments very carefully and we will try to maintain the high momentum. Till a few years ago, drought meant disaster. There was a drought in 1979-80—although it was nowhere near as bad as the drought that we have gone through during these past two years. Then the GNP declined by 4.7 per cent. This year there is no fall in the GNP—perhaps even a moderate increase. On all such previous occasions, only retrogression has taken place; there has been no question of progress. This year we have moved ahead. For the first time in the history of our planning, we have achieved 86 per cent of the Central sector outlay in real terms in the first four years of the Seventh Plan. Never before have we seen such dynamism in investment. Project management has considerably improved. Many major public sector enterprises will shortly be coming on stream.

This is practical socialism—socialism, which has doubled investment in the public sector over a single Plan period; socialism, which has pushed up public sector perfor-

mance, productivity and profitability to levels that it had never achieved before. Our commitment is to a strong public sector, a public sector with much greater autonomy. We will be spelling out plans in a White Paper to be presented shortly to Parliament on the steps that we wish to take the public sector.

There is one area that is of major concern to all of us, and that is prices. We share this concern with many of the Members who have pointed it out. We regard the control of inflation as one of our top priorities. We have taken steps to hold back the pressures of inflation. In 1979-80—and it is best to compare with 1979-80 because that was the last time that we had a drought although as I said, the drought was nowhere near as bad as the drought that we have had this time—the Government was formed by some of our friends sitting on the opposite benches. And you will remember, Sir, how the prices were allowed to rise by 21.4 per cent at that time.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur) : What about 1977-78 ?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : These was no drought in 1977-78. And 1977-78 was the momentum from 1975 to to 1977 that had carried them through. It was when the momentum was destroyed that the true colours of the Government had come out... (*Interruptions*). I have to say 'true colours' because it was not one colour

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : If there is a progress under new regime, that is the momentum of the past, if there is degradation, that is on their own. That seems to be their logic.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I am glad that Dandavate Ji agrees with me. As I understand he said that progress... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : He said your logic.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Of course, we have done well. Our Government in these three years has done well only because Indira Ji, in the five years preceding,

had given that momentum, and I have no hesitation in saying so. If she had not given that momentum, we would have found this drought very difficult. Let me remind our friends also that if she had not given that momentum upto 1977, I hate to even imagine what could have happened to the country because even with the momentum that she had given they almost destroyed the country.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : The latest momentum was the destruction of democracy.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member talked of democracy. I don't think many heard it. I would like to remind the hon. Member that it was Indiraji who called for elections in 1977. It was not the Opposition. (*Interruptions*).

Yes, that is what shows her commitment and the Congress's commitment to democracy. (*Interruptions*.)

Sir, some of our friends are very vociferous. But I would like to remind them that they should think back to where they were ten years ago

Sir, prices are a serious problem. But in spite of the trying circumstances, we have managed to keep the inflation rate below 10% and we will keep a very careful watch to see that it is not allowed to go up.

AN HON. MEMBER : But it will be allowed to go up.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : In the previous two years, inflation has averaged only 4.5% per annum. We have done this by keeping the lid on the budget deficit by deploying monetary and fiscal policies in tandem to contain prices. We have done this by ensuring essential supplies, with additional imports of edible oil, to meet the shortages. We will continue to closely monitor the price index and we will do everything that can be done to keep the prices down. I am particularly concerned at Government expenditure. This is an area where we have not been able to do as much as we had wanted to do, not that that we have not made progress—we have—but much more needs to be done.

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We also have to concentrate on the productivity of Government. Again in some areas like infrastructure in the public sector, we have done well. A lot more needs to be done. But in other areas a lot more has to be done.

Sir, the over-riding priority of this Government is the elimination of poverty. The key to poverty elimination, we feel, lies in good education for the poorer sections of our society. The key to poverty elimination is in the healthy growth of our economy and the key also is in our anti-poverty programmes. In taking all three together, we have made a major dent on poverty during these years. No previous Government has earmarked as large a sum as we have for anti-poverty programmes. No previous Government has introduced as many improvements as we have in the administration of these programmes.

One hon. Member complained of the leakage of development funds. We are plugging loopholes through concurrent evaluation which enables us to make adjustments in on-going programme, which enables us to do the fine tuning to change the system sometimes so that leakages can be reduced. But let me say that all leakages are bad, leakages which go to the bureaucratic system are bad. But perhaps even worse are those leakages which go to the cadres of the party. *(Interruptions.)*

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY (Katwa) : You are talking about loan melas.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Why are you feeling guilty ?

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : You are holding loan melas with whom ?

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir let me remind hon. Members that there are only two or three cadre-based parties in this House.

(Interruptions)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : We are happy about the confession, Sir.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, the poverty ratio fell dramatically during the Sixth Plan period. We are aiming at a further dramatic reduction in the poverty ratio in the Seventh Plan and we shall make a determined effort to end this scourge by the turn of the century. Government have addressed themselves to these challenges with seriousness and with success. Regrettably, the same cannot be said of the Opposition.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : What ?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I should not have to repeat things to those with head phones on.

Sir, while the country has confronted the severest drought of the century and threats to the integrity and security of the nation, the Opposition has been chasing chimeras in the vain hope that pursuit of scandal will make up for paucity of policy.

(Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER : Fairfax.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Fairfax and Bofors.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Not only that, more than that. You will find out who is right and who is wrong.

Sir, precious parliamentary time has been wasted and I believe that more than one Member from the opposite side, from the Opposition, has complained of the inadequate time that they got to discuss the Demands of last year's budget. But may I remind the Members, Sir, where was that time taken up ? Where was that time wasted ?

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Why ?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Who usurped that time ? Who usurped the time that was set aside for serious issues ?

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : To expose you.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : On chasing ghosts.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : To expose your corruption.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : The only corruption that has come to light...

(*Interruptions*).

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : The flight of capital is no corruption ?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, the only ruption that hat has come to light on the issues that were raised in the first half of last year is the statement made by the ex-President of India, where the ex-President has said that Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 crores were made available to him. (*Interruptions*) Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the ex-Prehsident on the strong moral stand that he took and was not carried away by them.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Sir in that very statement he has said that the members of the Rajiv Government were responsible for that. He has made it very clear.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : A bad thing is a bad thing, whosoever it may be.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Order, order. Sit down.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Sir, we are prepared for another Commission if they want. We rdemand a Commission on that.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, I would not like to quote directly from what he said because I don't have the words here with me.

(*Interruptions*)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I have got a copy, Sir. You read the article in *Sunday* in which the interview is given. He has alleged that the members of the present Cabinet were also responsible for pressurising.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Order, order.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Order, order. Please sit down.

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR SPEAKER : What are you doing ?

[*English*]

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : If I remember rightly .. (*Interruptions*)

SARI BASUDEB ACHARIA : He said, 1/3rd of the Ministers were there (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER What are you doing ?

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : If I remember rightly, he specifically mentioned certain members of my Cabinet, who are no longer members of my Cabinet.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Sir, he has mentioncd, they continue to be members of the Cabinet today. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : They are in your Cabinet. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Order, order. It is a very serious matter.

You can appoint a committee for that.

(*Interruptions*)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Shall I lay that interview on the Table of the House for the education of the Prime Minister ?

PROF. K.K. TEWARY : Those Ministers are sitting with the Opposition now They are sitting with the Opposition, Sir.

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS : I am on a point of order. About the time of the House, he said, the House time has been misused. It is an aspersion on you, Sir. *(Interruptions.)*

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit nowd.

*(Interruptions.)***

MR. SPEAKER : Not allowed. Sit down.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, I would like just to say again, I did not say "misused". I said, "usurped".

*(Interruptions)***

MR. SPEAKER : Sit down.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I may point out to you that in exposing the Mundhra scandal, the father of the Prime Minister took a lot of time of the House. But that was fully justified. Mr. Feroze Gandhi was fully justified in taking the time of the House to expose the Mundhra corruption. Let him remember that.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I agree entirely with anybody who wants to spend the time of the House in exposing corruption and we will spend time of the House in exposing corruption—but come with some facts.

MR. SPEAKER : I have heard these things. I do not know whether I should intervene at this stage. But Sir, what you have said and what they have said—I think, this is a serious matter for the security and safety of this country. I think, we should do something to find out the truth about this.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Thank you, for your observations

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Sit down.

****Not recorded,**

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Mr Speaker, Sir, on your direction...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Order, order. Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER : What are you doing ?

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Don't talk to them.

[*English*]

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on your directions, I will request the Home Minister to find out where this 30 or 40 crores is and how it was acquired.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Sir, we fully support you. We congratulate you.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : He should report to the House.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Let a House Committee be constituted, to find out this. We are ready.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I would also request the Home Minister to try and find out how this money was to be used, because there is no campaigning in a Presidential election, in that sense—how was this 30-40 crores intended to be used in a Presidential election. *(Interruptions.)*

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Let your direction be followed by the Home Minister, Sir.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : Why not a House Committee ?

16.00 hrs.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER : Why are you making a noise ?

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Why are you creating a nuisance ! :

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Are you ready to appoint a House Committee ?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat) : Are we to understand from what you have said just now that you are making the Home Minister responsible for holding an inquiry and finding out who was offering that money to the ex-President ?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Also who are the Members of the Cabinet ?

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Why don't you allow the P M to speak ?

[English]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Are you making the Home Minister responsible for finding it out ?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : No. I am asking him to find out what is the best way to go into this

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : He must be made responsible.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : The entire interview of the ex-President should be investigated because he has referred to the present Members of the Cabinet.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Sit down and take your seats. Sit down now.

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : You please sit down (Interruptions). You please sit down.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : We will follow your interruptions. It is sad that certain progressive....

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER ; Nothing doing.

[Translation]

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : What are your instructions ?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : What I have said is there on the record...

(Interruptions)

SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS : We want a House Committee,

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Enough is enough. Please sit down Please let the Prime Minister speak.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : This is the best intervention in the entire debate.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : It is sad that so-called progressives express reactionary views when it comes to updating technology. Obsolete technology gives us low levels of productivity. It gives us low wages and it gives us low growth, perhaps no growth. where will we get millions of additional jobs ? Without growth, how will we give employment to our young men and women ? Nothing is more anti-worker than condemning the workers to outdated units which inevitably grow sick. Nothing can be more anti-worker than threatening his job by denying him opportunity and denying opportunity to millions on the register. If the number of units, the sick units, has increased eight-fold, as one Member has said, the basic reason is out-moded technology, bad management and unthinking trade unionism. This is what we have to face. (Interruptions)

Sir, that Member's solution is no technology upgradation Only manual labour. Such a policy will bleed the economy while ensuring galloping sickness. To end the curse of unemployment, what we need is proper education, fast growth and constant upgradation of skills on the job. Then, as technology advances, the

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same worker will find that his drudgery is reduced, his productivity is increased and his wages are enhanced. Meanwhile, employment opportunities will increase to those that are in the queue.

Our policies have given two years of excellent labour relations. A new consciousness of the imperatives of higher productivity, of lower costs and better quality, has come into our industry and into labour. A greater participation of labour in management is taking place, especially in the public sector units.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Where ? Give us one instance.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, the Congress Party is not only a party of the farmers and the rural-folk but it is also the true party of the working-class *(Interruptions)*.

It represents the employed, the unemployed and the unorganised. The Congress does not promote as some parties do, the interests of a small minority of the working-class to the detriment of the vast majority of the working-class. Development in our country. *..(Interruptions)*.

Sir, some people's minds will never come into the 20th century. They will remain there with Marx.

(Interruptions)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Atleast the minds of some of us are on the 20th Century; others' are on the 18th century.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Even in the 17th century

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, unfortunately, they think of Karl, but behave like Groucho.

Sir, development in our country is rooted in democracy. If we want more development, we must have more democracy. This is one of the significant

conclusions that we have been getting from the seminars and workshop of District Magistrates that we have been holding. *(Interruptions)*.

From these workshops, a few things have already become clear. One is that it is difficult for the administration to work if the devolution of democracy at the district level is not done adequately and properly. The second is that there has been no adequate attention to the needs of the district itself in planning for the District. This needs attention. And to make a truly responsive administration at the grassroot-level, we need to build this partnership between democratic institutions at the district-level and the administration at the district level. For this, we must ensure that elections at lower-levels take place regularly and without delay.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : What about Bihar, Orissa, U.P. and other States ? You hold elections in your-State.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : The hon. Member has raised a question. We have given instructions to our Chief Ministers yesterday from the Working Committee of the Congress to hold elections in all our States. In most States, they have either been announced or held.

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO (Vijayawada) : Even in the Capital, elections have been postponed.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : They promulgated an Ordinance and put-off the elections by one year.

(Interruptions)

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO : You hold elections in your party.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I would like to emphasise that the elections must be fair and not rigged.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : What did you do in Tripura and Meghalaya ?

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I have not said so. Some Members of the Government, they said so. I do not know.

(Interruptions)

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUHEY (Midnapore) : Why not you hold election in the Congress Party ?

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : On the other hand, we intend to take into account local needs and local requirements when we look at our national objectives and national targets, I am requesting the Planning Commission to start looking now at the Eighth Plan and the formulation of the Eighth Plan based on the district as a unit, to build up the Eighth Plan from district plans and I have asked them to give instructions to all the State Governments to start preparing their Eighth Plan on the basis of District Plans for their own States.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : We have already done it in West Bengal even at the block level.

(Interruptions)

SHRI AMAL DATTA (Diamond Harbour) : You call the members of Planning Commission jokers.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, some States claim that they have done it. But let me assure you, Sir, that when it comes to actually looking at numbers on the paper, there is no State which has done it. Neither a Congress State nor any opposition State.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : It is just not there on paper.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : West Bengal, we have already done block level planning.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I do not want to argue with the Hon. Members.

SHRI AMAL DATTA : Members of the Planning Commission, you call jokers.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : What Groucho ?

SHRI AMAL DATTA : The Planning Commission members whom you call jokers have not kept you informed.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I will have to call him Groucho from now on.

SHRI AMAL DATTA : You can call me anything but you call them jokers also

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Whatever you are saying ..(Interruptions). It does not look nice.

[English]

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, I have never called the Planning Commission members as jokers. Let me be very clear about that. It seems jokers are around here opposite who distort things.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : It came in the newspapers. You have not refuted it.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I do not bother to refute everything that is printed in the newspaper. Let me be very clear. I have tremendous respect for the Planning Commission. My only complaint about the Planning Commission is that they are not aggressive enough in their planning, that they are limiting themselves to balancing the inputs from Ministries. I want them to step out much further and produce a much more aggressive plan. That is what I have been talking to them about.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur) : But you are the Chairman of the Planning Commission.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : That is why I have directed them to do that.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : You direct yourself also.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, perhaps, some day in the distant future, the Hon. Member will be a Member of the Government. Then he will know how the Planning Commission runs.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE
(SHRI K C. PANT) : No chance.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : He may change parties ! *(Interruptions)*.

Sir, to this end, we would like to strengthen the capacity of the district administrations to prepare adequate plan proposals and we like to give the district administration greater flexibility in deploying the resources for development. We would like to give new life to participatory development by harnessing local democracy for local development.

Sir, the Chief Ministers who have accompanied me to these workshops have said how useful these encounters have been—useful for themselves and useful for the district magistrates. There was one Chief Minister who declined our invitation to attend. And only one. And then after declining the invitation to attend he complained of conspiracies behind his back. Sir, let me say that there is only one conspiracy—and that is to have a more responsive administration. I have been very impressed during these workshops by the dedication to duty, by the drive and by the resounding faith in democracy of our district magistrates

Sir, let me turn to Punjab. In Punjab, representative democracy was given every opportunity. Unfortunately, the elected leadership failed to rise to the occasion. And there is still insufficient evidence on the part of any faction of the party that was elected to power to be ready to face up to terrorism with determination and unambi guity. Only with such readiness, can the normal political process be re-

established. The menace of terrorism cannot be left unchecked. Firm police action is essential and indispensable and we will carry on with firm tough police action. The unity of the country and the integrity of the country demands nothing less.

For several months, after President's rule, the security forces were gaining on the terrorists. In recent weeks, the terrorists have had some grisly successes. But if we are firm in our resolve, then ultimately we shall prevail.

One of the Members had mentioned Tripura. The benches opposite have generated much heat over the declaration of a disturbed area in Tripura. Sir, the people of the State have given their verdict on whether Tripura was a disturbed area or it was not a disturbed area... *(Interruptions)*.

Sir, the previous Government, through a dangerous combination of incompetence and naivete had allowed insurgency to overtake the State. It is ironic that one Member accuses us of encouraging fissiparous tendencies when it was his party's softness and shilly-shallying that brought Tripura to this terrible pass.

SHRI AMAL DATTA : There had been no violence, do you know that ? TNV murders were only before the elections and not afterwards; not a single one ...*(Interruptions)*.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : There can be no democracy for common murderers of unknown innocents. Our system reflects the will of the people. It entrusts the elected Government with authority to discharge its responsibilities. The changes proposed by one Member opposite would destroy our stability and endanger our democracy itself.

In April-May last year there was an outbreak of communal violence in Meerut and elsewhere. It was shocking and painful. Sir, effective action was taken to stamp out the violence; but alas, not before many innocent lives had been lost. Allegations of atrocities have been looked into, the district administration shaken up, rehabilitation undertaken, the fanatics

contained and fundamentalism has been restrained.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: What about Hashimpura ?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : We are relieved that since then communal violence has not flared up again in Meerut and in that area and has not spread further afield. By and large, the country has remained free of any major incident of communal violence.

Sir, our greatest asset in fighting communalism is that our people are overwhelmingly not communal. We have a long tradition of tolerance and brotherhood. Our composite culture is a reality. We have five thousand years of experience of unity in diversity. Communalism is the work of a few misguided elements who sometimes succeed in inciting communal passions by exploiting specific social disorders and tensions. To marginalise the communalists, we need determined political action ; we need vigilance of the local community and the local leadership ; we need an administration that is impartial and seen to be impartial ; that is seen to be firm and determined in dealing with violence. And, above all, we fight communalism by fostering and preserving the values and standards embedded in our culture and our traditions.

Our traditions of tolerance, of assimilation are threatened from two angles. One threat is from materialism overtaking certain sections of our society. The second threat is from fundamentalism and communalism, regionalism and other such isms that are based invariably on intolerance and violence that misleads in projecting simplistic solutions to highly complex problems. Economic opportunity has opened the door to unprecedented mobility for our population. This mobility is uprooting millions from traditional cultural moorings. Many millions more than ever before are interacting at a personal level with people of different languages, of different cultures and of different faiths. For all of them we must make our diversity a living reality. Our education system is being improved to inculcate the right values. Our seven Zonal Cultural Centres are taking the message of diversity to the people at their door-steps doing commendable

work in remote and far-flung areas, in city slums and in small towns, of bringing people together from every corner of the country and bringing the culture of different parts of the country together.

Almost all States have cooperated with us in bringing the best in education to talented boys and girls from all sections especially the poorer, weaker and deprived sections. There is only one State that has not. It has, of course, a vested interest in the continuation of poverty in the curious belief that the core curricula should be built around alien ideologies. While that State continues to ensure poor education for the poor people, happily the rest of the country forges ahead. Operation Blackboard has been...*(Interruptions)*. If you agree, we will give some good schools to your State also.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : Why don't you raise the number...

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Why only one Navodaya Vidyalaya in one district ? Why not all schools be Navodaya Vidyalayas ?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : If you agree...

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : After 40 years of Independence there is only one school in a district. What is the meaning of this ?

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down, You cannot do like this.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, after 40 years of Independence when we have found that the State Governments have not bothered to give good schools for the poor, we have had to step in and give good schools to the poor. There are only one or two States where the State Governments are still refusing to give good schools to the poor. *(Interruptions)*

Now Operation Blackboard has been undertaken to assist State Governments in equipping primary schools. This is a State subject. Should we have to come in to do this ? But we are doing it because we are worried about the poor.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Education is in the Concurrent List.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : That is why we are giving it to you. The Centre can only provide supplementary assistance. The responsibility must be that of the States. When will the States take this responsibility seriously ?

SHRI R.L. BHATIA (Amritsar) : Sir, open a school for their education also !

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Now over 200 Navodayas Vidyalaya have already been opened. More are in the offing. The single largest segment of boys and girls in Navodaya Vidyalayas come from the poorest sections of our society.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : How many students are there ?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : The Navodaya Vidyalayas have established that the background of the students is overwhelmingly rural. Two things have been established : one that there is tremendous intelligence which was being lost because good schools were not available to these poor children. Second, that by losing this, the country was losing. It was losing one whole reservoir and the Navodaya Vidyalayas have pulled that reservoir out. For the first time, the children of the poorest people in the country have access to the best education that is available. It is by drawing on such a reservoir of excellence that our country will progress and develop faster and we will fight the vested interests which insist on denying good education to the poor. We will give good education to the poor.

Sir, one other area which has been of major interest to us is the uplift of women and giving women their full rights. During these years, we have legislated on a number of fronts to give women protection. We have legislated some very strong legislation, the type of which has never been legislated before in this House just to give women their rights.

We have given free schooling for girls in all States. We have worked out a detailed plan to assure women their full rights. A National Committee on Women,

which brings together distinguished women from different disciplines, is being set up to advise on the formulation and implementation of programmes for women.

Our country is growing younger.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Growing young !

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : It is true. The average age of our country—while some of us grow older and older and senile, the country is growing younger. Approximately 70 per cent of the country today is under 40 and the problems of our youth are very much a national priority. The biggest problem is employment. For employment, the first thing that was needed was a structural change in our education system. We have already started that process. We need to inculcate an ethos of enterprise, of initiative in our youth. We need to change attitudes. We need to make them proud of India and its heritage. We have greatly expanded the expenditure on our youth programmes and our sports activities and this will give us an improved quality of youth activities.

Sir, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes continue to suffer under social and economic pressures. To end their disabilities, we are promoting, at a higher level than ever before, programmes for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes—welfare programmes, development programmes—and ensuring them justice. We have made major structural improvements in revamping the SC/ST Commission and strengthening the hands of the Commissioner. I am closely monitoring the deployment of funds that have been earmarked for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.

The minorities are an integral part of our many-faceted diversity, our composite heritage and our valued traditions. India cannot remain India if we lose any part of the totality of our culture. Some minorities have, on an average, done exceptionally well. Others, for various reasons, suffer specific handicaps and need special attention. The key to the resolution of the problems of the minorities is in the conscientious implementation of Indiraji's

15-point programme. We have greatly strengthened the monitoring apparatus for this programme. We will do all we can to ensure that the minorities play a role in national life, commensurate with the contribution that they have made and the contribution that they can make.

Sir, hon. Members are aware of General Secretary Gorbachev's initiative to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan. We welcome his initiative. So do all those who seek a peaceful settlement. We hope that the talks in Geneva will be successful. We hope that the Geneva Accord will be signed before the 15th of March so that the withdrawal process on 15th May can start. We have been working since 1980 to help resolve the problem. Indiraji had talks with the Afghanistan Prime Minister. We have had many discussions at the Foreign Ministers' level. We have played a key role in the Non-aligned formulation to stop intervention and interference which is one of the key aspects of the discussions that are taking place today. I have had repeated discussions and talks with General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan beginning in May-June 1985. I have had a long discussion with President Najib when he was in India at the end of last year. And, in recognition of our constructive role, both the USA and the USSR have taken us into confidence in the resolution of this problem. Key Afghan personalities have appreciated our contribution. Some people have questioned the need for India's involvement in the solution of the problem in Afghanistan. We cannot remain indifferent. We have a vital stake in what is happening in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is in our neighbourhood. Afghanistan is an integral part of our region. The developments in Afghanistan have brought about the confrontation between the major powers in our region to our very doorstep. Now we have an opportunity to strengthen the forces of Non-alignment. It is for that reason that I invited the President of Pakistan to Delhi for a working visit. President Zia has not been able to come. He has said, because of his pre-occupations with political activity at home. At his suggestion, I have named our Foreign Secretary as my special

emissary. For stability in our region, India and Pakistan need to work together on this issue to find a solution. I wanted to talk to President Zia about this. In evolving a solution, we can work together to the benefit of each, for the good of all. I hope there will be opportunities soon for wide-ranging consultations.

In Sri Lanka, significant forward movement has taken place in recent days on the implementation of the Agreement. The Agreement secured justice for the Tamils and the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka. It secured our security interests and it secured Non-alignment in the region. President Jayewardene has reiterated a general amnesty for those who lay down arms. We have made definite progress towards the devolution of powers to Provincial Councils. President Jayewardene has made a commitment to holding elections towards the middle of this year. Elections to the North and the East will be to a single Provincial Council making a reality of the merger. Thus, the Tamils of Sri Lanka will have an opportunity of democratically choosing their own representatives to administer their affairs. The Tamils of Sri Lanka will have an opportunity to test the claims of different groups of Tamils to represent the Tamils. This should be determined through the ballot box.

(Interruptions)

SHRI N V N. SOMU : Innocent Tamils are being killed there. *(Interruptions)***

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down. No interruptions please. The hon. Member is not allowed.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I agree entirely with the hon. Member. We are not for innocent Tamils getting killed. We will do everything to protect the innocent Tamils and we have done that.

*(Interruptions)***

MR. SPEAKER : Not allowed.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : In fact, the very task of IPKF is to protect the innocent Tamils. *(Interruptions)*

****Not recorded.**

[Shri Rajiv Gandhi]

This will give an opportunity for the Tamils in Sri Lanka to see who really represents the Tamils and represents them through the ballot box, not through the barrel of a gun.

An encouraging indication or index of the return to normalcy is the return of the refugees. A steady stream of refugees has been going back to their homeland.

I must take this opportunity to pay the highest tribute to the gallantry of our soldiers in the IPKF for the discipline and courage with which they have carried out this delicate task. It is deplorable that anyone in this House should give credence to the malicious fabrications about the work of the IPKF.

*(Interruptions)***

MR. SPEAKER : No interruptions please. Do not record.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI: We are always in danger of getting too engrossed in the minutiae of development. Yes, statistics and indices are important but we must look to the larger vision of India. India has mattered in the world. We have led in the world of Ideas. Our major contribution has been to enduring values and standards, to the soul and the spirit of human kind. Our national task is to take India again to its rightful place to the front rank of human civilization. Development is an essential tool in this endeavour, but the real challenge is the response to what lies beyond mere development and mere growth. To that great task the nation is summoned in this 40th year of our independence.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to express my support to the motion of thanks to the President for his inspiring Address and urge the House to do likewise.

MR. SPEAKER : A number of amendments have been moved by Members to the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address. Shall I put all the amendments to the vote of the House together ?

***Not recorded.*

MANY HON. MEMBERS : Yes, yes.

MR. SPEAKER : All right.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, one submission to you. Under Rule 184 I have given a notice of a motion authorising you to set up a House Committee to enquire into the allegations made by the former President of India against sections of the Cabinet as well as the opposition. Please consider that.

MR. SPEAKER : I shall now put all the amendments moved to the Motion of Thanks together.

*All the amendments were put and
negatived.*

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :
"That an Address be presented to the President in the following terms :

'That the Members of Lok Sabha assembled in this Session are deeply grateful to the President for the Address which he has been pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 22nd February, 1988.'

The motion was adopted.

16-40 hrs

AUTHORISED TRANSLATIONS
(CENTRAL LAWS) AMENDMENT
BILL—Contd.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : The House will now take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri Chintamani Panigrahi on the 23rd February, 1988, namely :—

"That the Bill to amend the Authorised Translations (Central Laws) Act, 1973, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."