

Amendments having been passed. I, therefore, appeal to the Government to act speedily on these issues.

The loss of lives in Assam and the on-going violence in the North-East have legitimately agitated us. We express our full support to our colleagues from the North-East in voicing their anxieties and concerns, and we call upon the Government to strengthen the democratic institutions and take urgent corrective steps.

I do hope the Treasury Benches would have noted the responsible manner in which the Congress Party helped in passing certain Bills. ...*(Interruptions)* This is a fact. You cannot deny it.

The Constitution (Ninety-first) Amendment Bill on Delimitation is another piece of legislation on which all of us, all Parties including the Treasury Benches, need to think carefully and act jointly since this has major consequences.

However, Sir, I would like to state that such cooperation from our side may not be forthcoming on some of the draft laws the Government has introduced during this Session. In regard to many of these, we shall voice our strongest reservation and concern on behalf of the people.

In the meantime, as we return to our constituencies for the winter vacations, we have some weighty responsibilities to discharge. Much work needs to be done, particularly in those areas, which have been badly affected by natural calamities.

All of us, Members of this House, have a special responsibility in cooling down communal passions which have again been unnecessarily aroused by statements made outside the House by senior Members of the Government while this Session was in progress.

During the inter-session period, Parliamentary and Department Related Standing Committees will also meet. Here again, I would like to appeal to the Government to pay more attention to the suggestions, which may come up in these meetings. This is a view, which is shared not only by us, but also by colleagues belonging to other parties as well as your side. Despite repeated requests this demand of ours has not been acceded to.

All of us will also attentively watch the Government's handling of the Jammu and Kashmir situation during the inter-session period. We have already expressed our support to the Government for the initiatives taken for bringing peace in the Valley and, at the same time, we do hope that the

Government has a contingency plan ready in case there are disruptions in the cease-fire. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV (Sambhal) : Speech is not being concluded.

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI . It is going to be concluded.

[English]

As the first year of the new millennium comes to an end, it is but right that we all introspect, that we do some stock taking and reflect upon the more enduring aspects of our polity. It is our great fortune that we have been chosen as representatives of the people. It is hence incumbent on each one of us to give his or her best in the service of the nation. Let us not narrow our horizons nor distort our vision, which is to further strengthen our pluralistic ethos and our secular democracy.

Sir, in the end, I would like to extend my good wishes to you, to the Prime Minister, to his Government and to all the Members of this House for a very happy and prosperous New Year.

[Translation]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, today the fifth session to the 13th Lok Sabha is coming to an end. With this session, the year is also going to end. We will meet in the new century, new millennium. The facts you have put forward give the full details of work done.

18.00 hrs.

During this session, Bills were passed in large number, new Bills were introduced and despite disruptions, several matters of public importance were debated upon. This is a brighter side which reflects the vibrancy of Indian democracy. However, you have also mentioned the number of days when the business could not be transacted. Perhaps, the number of such days is eleven. Can we think of changing this scenario in the new century, in the next year. I have already stressed on this point and I would like to reiterate that the Parliament is the mirror of the time and symbol of the hopes and aspirations of the society. Therefore, people's acrimony, grudges, dearth and injustice, if any, done to them, are always reflected and must be reflected. But the question

is that what is the way of reflecting it in a parliamentary democracy. Is it necessary to stall the Question Hour?

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : Sometimes it becomes unavoidable in a democracy to stall the Question Hour. It is necessary for a specific period of time.

SHRI ATAL BIHARIVAJPAYEE : This matter has been raised earlier also and today I would like to raise it again. There is a need to convene all party meeting in order to discuss this matter prior to the commencement of the next session. We may start the proceedings at 11 a.m., it may be postponed till 12 p.m., it would not matter. It appears that opposition is determined to stall the parliamentary proceedings. However, the questions may be asked while proceedings are going on and the Government may be forced to give the reply. The opposition have been in power for a long time. They know very well if questions addressed to the Ministers are put off some day and the member who has asked a particular question is absent, it is a great relief for the Minister. It does not mean that the questions should not be asked. Question hour will go on but it is being stalled. What is the need of stalling the proceedings for several days.

Today, we do not make complaints of any sort and we stress only on the brighter side and think over it that how our democracy can be strengthened and how can the parliament fulfill the aspirations of the people. But the leader of opposition has not spared us even on this occasion. It is unprecedented. The leader of the opposition has become member of this House recently. I have been a member of Parliament for the last 40 years and remained in opposition. But I always ensured that the dignity and decorum of the House is maintained. If one has to make complaints against the Government and for that last day is chosen then it is unpredictable what scene would be presented. This dignity has been maintained in the past but today it has been violated.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : Decorum is violated by saying 'shame-shame'. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : To some extent. ...*(Interruptions)*

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : Shri Mulayam Singh is keeping a restrain and everybody is seeing it.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mulayam Singh ji, sometimes inclines to this side and sometimes inclines to that side.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : We do not incline this side or that side. We are always with the truth.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : You are the only truthful person is Kaliyug.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, democracy is a lively process. It has been a practice that the Parliament is allowed to function smoothly and opportunities are thrown upon for discussion which may include even a censure motion. During the session, an adjournment motion was moved and debated upon. In the other House, where the Government does not enjoy a majority, emphasis was laid on division. That proved that we did not enjoy a majority in that House. But it was also proved that we are in majority in the Lok Sabha. No one has any complaint against it. Whatever is done should be done properly. It should be done as per the process of democracy. This should pave the way for the new generation. As regards the plight of farmers, the Government is equally concerned. We have taken many steps in this direction but we feel handicapped because we have inherited the fall out of WTO Agreement which has many repercussions and we have to face them. We are ready to face them but if such ways and means are adopted, which have a tendency of weakening our democracy and incite acrimony, it will not be good. We want to take certain measures with regard to the situation prevailing in Manipur, but we do not enjoy a majority in the other House. Here we have some limitations and we need cooperation. Sometimes we do get cooperation. We get more cooperation earlier, now it has diminished. Aggressiveness will increase as the election comes nearer. I do not blame for it. The game of figures, the game of number is clear but the process as well as what we say is important. However, the manner in which we say is rather more important, views may be expressed, policies may be explained, necessary steps may be taken in commensurate with that but the decorum of the House must be maintained.

Speaker, Sir, we have full sympathy with you. On that day I had asked a question that why such thing happens? You said that we were asking you? Questions are asked from us but sometimes it looks good to ask questions from you but it should be considered. I would like to reiterate it. It is time to put our heads together once again and ponder over the way we could ensure the smooth functioning of parliament when we have to face new challenges at the close of the year and also the century.

Come to the question of women' reservation. The government was definitely in favour of providing for women's reservation and we had also suggested alternate option in order to achieve success, but in vain. Now who is blamed? Should I also blame a person by name? Why other

suggestion was not accepted? If the women's empowerment is our moto then their representation should be increased. If it is our aim then the same objective can be achieved through other way. On one side a part of opposition is adamant on the otherside the entire opposition has become adamant. Allegations are made on non issue. I do not want to blame anyone. The session is over. We will meet in next session. I extend my greetings for forthcoming festival of Christmas. We will celebrate Id. Greetings to all for that. This country will be under one flag to face the new challenges in new millenium, as it is today, I understand that we will ensure it, this is our foremost duty. I am of the opinion that this House is contributing in this direction.

[English]

18.09 hrs.

NATIONAL SONG

(The National Song was played)

MR. SPEAKER : The House stands adjourned *sine die*.

18.10 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned sine die.
