

elections in Jammu and Kashmir in the month of either September or October.

**SHRI JAG MOHAN :** Sir, he is taking of...(Interruptions)

**SHRI XAVIER ARAKAL :** Sir, this process of a dialogue between the people of Kashmir and the rest of India should be started.

I take another objection to what some hon. Members say. There should not be any identity, any nationality as far as India is concerned. That is wrong. India is full of nationalities, cultures, sub-cultures. Unity cannot be achieved in all respects. No, it is not possible.

Therefore, I submit that this Resolution extending the period of President's Rule is a welcome move. Simultaneously, real and concrete steps should be taken for initiating a meaningful dialogue, based on understanding and assimilation of the will and desire of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, with the rest of India without delay.

**THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI H. D. DEVE GOWDA) :** Respected Mr. Speaker, Sir, while moving the Resolution for the extension of President's Rule for a short period, even though it has been mentioned in the Motion 'for six months', I assured the House, while moving the Motion for consideration of this august House, the elections would be held either in September or in the first week of October.

Sir, I heard the former Governor of Jammu and Kashmir and the hon. Member of this House who spoke about several events of the past history. We have come to the stage of handing over the State to its elected representatives. Debating on the past history starting from 1958 to what happened till 1996 is not going to bring any peace in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It is only a futile exercise, an exercise of showing our talents as to who knows better about the past events. That is not going to bring any solution. I do not want to deliberate particularly about the past events.

This is the first time that I visited Kashmir. I have never been to Kashmir earlier, let me be very plain and frank. When I decided to go to Kashmir last time on night of my journey the Emergency was declared. I then cancelled my air-ticket and went back to Bangalore.

During my visit, I tried to meet a cross section of people. My purpose of visit was to have a spot study of the natural calamity and to discuss with the officers about the quantum of loss caused by the floods. At the same time, I had given indication to the officers and the Governor that I was equally anxious to meet all political party leaders, if they really wanted to

meet me. There was no special invitation offered to them. Sir, I am happy to inform the House that all political parties, including the National Conference, collectively met me and their unanimous demand was that early election should be held in Jammu and Kashmir. Of course, one of the political parties did try to impress upon me on this autonomy factor. In the same meeting where all the political parties were represented including the BJP, they all agreed that the question of autonomy which is mentioned in the Common Minimum Programme of the United Front should not be discussed at that stage.

Let us first go to election. We want early peace. We do not want to allow the neighbouring country to again play with the lives of the people of Kashmir. I would like to mention what they said. They said, "We are a part and parcel of this country. We are an integral part of this country. We do not want to again give scope to the external forces to spoil the atmosphere here."

Sir, there are some forces which tried to propagate and present a distorted picture to various other countries that the parliamentary election that was held in Jammu and Kashmir was not free and fair. They want to create this impression in the international world. I would like to compliment the previous Government and its decision to hold the election even when some of the political parties wanted to boycott them. It is one of the best decisions that they had taken. I must compliment the people of Kashmir and at the same time I must also compliment the administrative machinery and the Army people who created a congenial atmosphere for a heavy turnout at the polling booths. I do not think any sensible man can call this election a farce or an election that was not free and fair.

Sir, I would like to inform the whole world, through this House, a propaganda being made by the divisive forces that it was only a manipulated election. I would say that it was not so.

Sir, in Baramulla Parliamentary constituency, the turn-out was 46.63 percent. In Srinagar Parliamentary constituency, the turn-out was 41 percent. In Jammu Parliamentary constituency, the turn-out was 48 percent. In Ladakh Parliamentary constituency, the turn-out was 83.26 percent. In Anantnag Parliamentary constituency, the turn-out was about 51.14 percent. In Udhampur Parliamentary constituency, the turn-out was 53 percent. This is a clear indication to the whole world that people want their own Government today. Let us have a frank analysis of all these things.

I would like to ask a very senior Leader and a former Governor - for whom I have got a great respect

- what happened in Gujarat. In Gujarat, in the last Parliamentary election, the polling was hardly 39 per cent. But here is a case where, in no Parliamentary constituency, the polling was less than 42 per cent or 45 per cent. This itself is a clear indication that the people want their own Government. So, we wanted that election to the State Assembly is held as early as possible. I am not interested in who is going to win, which Party is going to participate, and what will be the type of combination. Let me be very plain on this issue. Whether you are going to win or the Congress is going to win or the Janata Dal is going to win, that is not my concern. My concern is that elections must be held and the power should go to the people. Then, the question of autonomy will be discussed with the elected representatives. That is the right method. With whom should the Central Government discuss now? I cannot act according to the taste of individual political Parties. The Central Government will discuss about the quantum of autonomy and some other allied issues with those people who get the people's mandate. You know how they felt during the discussion which they have had with me. Your own Party Leaders were there. When I was discussing with them, they started telling me so many things viz. how they have been treated on the developmental side and so on. I will tell you that they have realised today the amount of sufferings the common man had to undergo who used to earn his bread through tourism. Today, the common men are in the streets. They are jobless. Their living conditions are very bad. They have honestly realised that they want normalcy. They want to go back to the old Kashmir. It has got its own pride. People want such an atmosphere. The railway-line from Udhampur to Jammu, the power projects and so many other projects have been stopped due to various reasons.

Sir, this Government is prepared to give maximum weightage to see that the people should feel that this Central Government is not going to discriminate, so far as Kashmir is concerned. Whatever may be the financial constraint, I am going to start this process. I tell you very frankly I have given this assurance.

SHRI CHAMAN LAL GUPTA : At the same time there should be no discrimination between Ladakh and Leh.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : All right, there is no question of discrimination between Jammu and the Valley or the Hindu Pandits and the Muslims. They have been like one family. I was astonished and happy to hear, I do not want to claim that I know everything about the culture of the Kashmiri people, how they have come up. The Muslims today have

stopped eating beef. They treat the cow as a sacred animal. That is the tradition. Hindus will not eat pork. They themselves have said this in my presence. I am so much amazed. I will tell you how they have come up. Do you know, we have destroyed the culture, the old tradition and the bondage between the two communities, we mean, the politicians. I do not want to go back to the past. I only promised this august House that I will try my best to have free and fair elections. This is all what they want.

So far as the omission and commissions in the electoral process i.e. in the voting list etc., are concerned, I have told the Governor, the Chief Secretary and other officers to see that proper media coverage is given in the electronic media as well as the newspapers, etc., requesting those people who have not registered their names in the voters list to take advantage of this opportunity and get themselves registered. I asked the Governor to get two or three lakh more forms printed and given to various political parties.

Some of the militant youths have approached me. They are also prepared to participate in the elections and they tried to explain certain problems. Of course, when they met me, the Governor was also there with me, there was no question of any secret meeting. I asked the Governor to sit by my side. I told them to first go before the people, show their sincerity to the people and if the people voted for them, then they will also be called for discussion as far as autonomy and other issues are concerned.

There is a change of hearts. Even some of the youths, who were earlier misled by the neighbouring country, have realised this and wanted to see that they should cooperate for normalcy in the entire Jammu & Kashmir State.

In certain areas certain omissions and commissions are there about constituencies etc. All these things are there. I cannot set right all these things before September. It will take time and that is why let us hold the election as it is.

Later on, in subsequent years, when the elections are going to be held, all these things can be looked into by the coming elected Government. Sir, as I have already promised, I will write to the Election Commission. It is they who have to fix the date. The Government of India will make all necessary arrangements. We will make security arrangements for Doda District or any other disturbed area. We will give maximum protection and will see there is a heavy turn-out in the coming election.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh) : How will you ensure the migrated persons to vote?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : This issue was raised in the meeting of all senior leaders of Parties.

including Shri Vajpayee. I am telling you there are about 96,000 voters. This time, in the Parliamentary election, about 30,000 people have voted. There were some confusions at that time as to who was to certify that they were the migrants. We have also simplified the postal votes. There will be no question of any hurdle. We have simplified and everybody who wants to vote through postal ballots, will be accommodated. There will be no question of any problem even for those people.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh) : Unless you give them a chance, how will they vote? For example, they are sitting in Delhi. They cannot go to Kashmir Valley to fill up the forms for the inclusion of their names. You have to do two things. You give them the option in Delhi. They may fill up the form and you get it verified. That is number one. The postal ballot will not serve the purpose. Why do you not create polling booths for them in Delhi or Calcutta or Chandigarh or wherever they are? Let them go and cast their votes. Out of 93,000 only 23,000 cast their votes.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : Where to create the polling booths, how many polling booths, in which area whether it is outside India or outside Kashmir, those are left to the wisdom of the Election Commission. It is not for me to say. Your point also will be well-taken. I am not going to argue. It is left to the Election Commission so far as creating the polling booths outside Kashmir or inside Kashmir is concerned. I cannot encroach upon the rights of the Election Commission. I would only make a suggestion.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN : We want their involvement in the election and also a free and fair election.

MR. SPEAKER : The Prime Minister has well-taken the point.

SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN (Tripura East) : You can conduct first round in Delhi, second round in Jammu and the third round postal ballot in Srinagar. We would very much like to have the election on that method.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh) : That you know it much better. You have gone by that method. Kindly take the House into confidence about your talks with the militants also. You have said it on the floor of the House that you have talked to the militants. Which were the militant groups that had talked to you? What were the talks? You have talked to the militants but you have not talked to the families affected by terrorists. Coming from the Prime Minister that he had a meeting with them is a very serious matter. Please take the House into confidence.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : I cannot talk to the individual families.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh) : But you have talked to the militants. What was the talk? What was the issue?

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : At least you must appreciate that after nine years, a Prime Minister has taken the courage to go there.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh) : We appreciate that.

MR. SPEAKER : I think it is already 7.30 p.m. It is enough.

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh) : You are talking about autonomy. What do you mean by autonomy?

SHRI E. AHAMED (Manjeri) : Whatever autonomy will be given, it will be within the framework of the Constitution.

MR. SPEAKER : I do not think we have to go into all these details.

SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA : I only assure this august House including our friends on the other side that I will try my best to have a free and fair election and I will take steps to hold the elections in the month of September, if possible, or in the first week of October. With this assurance, I request all of them to give their unanimous support for the Resolution.

MR. SPEAKER : I shall now put the Resolution regarding approval of the continuance in force of the proclamation dated the 18th July, 1990 in respect of Jammu & Kashmir, issued under article 356 of the Constitution by the President, for a further period of six months with effect from the 18th July, 1996, moved by the Prime Minister, to the vote of the House.

The question is

"That this House approves the continuance in force of the proclamation dated the 18th July, 1990 in respect of Jammu & Kashmir, issued under article 356 of the Constitution by the President, for a further period of six months with effect from the 18th July, 1996."

*The motion was adopted*

19 35 hrs.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT RE: APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY-GENERAL, LOK SABHA

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, I have one announcement to make. Hon. Members may be aware that in 1990 a Committee of eminent parliamentarians