

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Prime Minister will now speak.

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (MAVELIKARA) : Your Minister has staged a walk out. What is your reaction to that?... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Order please.

...(Interruptions)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN : We want to have a reaction from the hon. Prime Minister. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Prof. Kurien, Please take your seat.

...(Interruptions)

SHRI VAIKO (SIVAKASI) : Why are you disturbing him? ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : No running commentaries please.

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13.21 hrs.

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S
ADDRESS — (Contd.)

[*Translation*]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE):

Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I reply to the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, may I say that the reply has actually to be given by Shrimati Sushma Swaraj and I am only intervening in the debate. I would first of all like to wish our President a speedy recovery from his operation of cataract. The operation has been successful and he would be returning to Delhi in a few days. We also wish him a long life. Two of our former Prime Ministers have also gone abroad for treatment. It is my wish that they may recover soon and be in our midst and I hope that the House is with me in the good wishes.

Nearly 40 Members participated in the debate and a variety of subjects came up for detailed discussion. I regret that I could not be present in the House during the entire debate. I concede that I should have been present.

SHRI P. SHIV SHANKER (TENALI) : Your Minister was present.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : It shows that they had not walked out. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the President's Address depicts a realistic picture of the situation. It neither exaggerates the achievements of the Government nor makes tall promises. Our Government is going to complete one year in the office and, during this one year, we have tried to improve the situation and the situation has improved also. Even our severest critics acknowledge that all the predictions made

about the Government—that it will collapse or disintegrate — have proved wrong. We have demonstrated our majority in the House and have achieved success in improving the economic situation. Above all, we are striving to make a success of this experiment of coalition Government which has so far failed in this country. It does not appear that there will henceforward be the domination of any single party. The All India parties will now have to function in collaboration with regional parties. The regional parties have become so influential primarily because of certain shortcomings of the national parties. It becomes difficult for the national parties to reflect the region's feelings and to represent their hopes and aspirations. But the regional parties have their roots among the people of the region and they reflect their wishes and problems. This country is full of diversities and this diversity is reflected in the political sphere by way of differences. And this is as it should be.

When no party got a clear majority, we decided to form the Government. It is difficult to run a coalition Government, but in a democracy this difficult task has also to be performed. We are taking those parties with us in collaboration with whom we had contested the elections. It is not a question of mere sharing of power. In Punjab, our cooperation with the Akali Dal is not only for power. It is very useful in sustaining the feelings of brotherhood. This applies to other regions also. We want to make a success of this experiment and hope to be successful.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the situation that prevailed a year ago has now changed. It is a different atmosphere now. After the Pokharan test, an attempt was made to isolate India ...(*Interruptions*)

DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD (MADHUBANI) : But you were defeated in the elections after that...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER : Dr. Shakeel Ahmad, please do not disturb. What is this?

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Dr. Shakeel Ahmad, you are unnecessarily disturbing the House, wasting its time.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker, Sir, attempts were made to isolate us in the world. Economic sanctions were imposed. They believed that India would not be able to stand to this challenge, but that did not happen. We had carried out the Pokharan explosion in view of our security concerns. Today, the foreigners who come to India, and those of our foreign friends who maintained a distance from us, do not ask us as to why we carried out a nuclear test at Pokharan? On the other hand, they talk of trade and commerce and want to expand economic cooperation with us. They have a fresh understanding of our security concerns now. Our nuclear

explosion was not meant to be a show of strength. The need of county's defence was behind it. This aspect is now being increasingly appreciated and more and more countries are now understanding it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was surprised to read the speech of an Hon. Member. He said that India's voice was no more heard in the international arena. He also said that our relations with SAARC countries were not good. This is unnecessary criticism. It is not that we do not welcome criticism. We welcome criticism. There is a proverb in Marathi which says "A critic's house should be nearby your house." A Hindi poet has also said that it is advisable to keep a critic by your side because a yesman would do you no good. But criticism should be bonafide. The fact is that our relation with all SAARC countries have improved. We have arrived at an agreement with Sri Lanka and a final shape is being given to it. We shall fully protect the interests of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, this is our promise. A transit Treaty has been signed with Nepal so that there does not remain any uncertainty in this regard. Our relations with Bangladesh have been strengthened. A decision has been taken to operate a bus service between Dhaka and Calcutta. I got an opportunity to go to Pakistan at the invitation of Pakistan Prime Minister. I took advantage of the bus service which was starting the same day. I am happy that our talks went well. In the Lahore Declaration and in the Memorandum of Understanding prepared by the foreign Secretaries, some new measures were announced. Now, both India and Pakistan are nuclear states. There is no other way than to live together in peace. A nuclear weapon is not a weapon of attack, it is a weapon of defence. It is a weapon that has contributed in maintaining peace. If there was no balance of power or balance of terror during the days of the cold war, the odds could have been in favour of one party and it could have committed excesses. But this did not happen. The Prime Minister of Pakistan asked me as to why we undertook the nuclear explosion at that particular time whether the date had been fixed after some consideration. I said we had taken this step after due consideration, but asked him why he was putting this question. He laughed and said that our action coincided with the lowest ever foreign exchange reserves position in Pakistan, creating a crisis for them. We too had to pass through a crisis, but we successfully faced it with the cooperation of the people and the House. This is an evidence of our sound economy. We are capable of meeting any crisis. We want to solve all our problems with Pakistan through negotiations. There have been three wars between us during the last 50 years. Measures would now have to be taken to stop the war for ever. For this, there is no alternative other than negotiations. Whatever the issue, we are prepared for talks

When I was in Lahore, the news came of a massacre taking place in Rajori the same day. I took up the matter immediately with the Pakistan Prime Minister and told him that "if this process of killing innocent people did not stop, the bus of our friendship would come to a halt before their corpses. These killings must come to an end. When relations between our two countries are improving, care should be taken to ensure that no terrorists including foreign mercenaries cross into India. It is true that both the countries blame each other

for such incidents taking place in their territories. But we cannot kill our own people. They have also not been victims of any rivalry between them. Then who are their killers? They have come from across the border. Please stop them.

In the declaration, both the countries have expressed their determination to fight terrorism in all its forms. It says that we would honour the Shimla Agreement both in the letter and the spirit. The complaint did not mean that the importance of Shimla Agreement had been downgraded. In fact, we enhanced the importance of the Shimla Agreement. Confidence building steps between the two countries are being taken. We propose to change the visa system. Fishermen going on seas to catch fish are themselves sometimes caught and thrown in prisons. They have been languishing there for months and they must be released. This happens in both countries. There are prisoners of war also. Their cases should also be considered for release. We need to increase the people's visits, open the doors for trade and commerce, cooperate with each other and take steps to solve all the pending issues. I feel assured that both the countries will tread this path.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, a number of issues have been raised during the debate. It will not be possible to reply to each and every point, but I would like to take up some of them. Some Hon. Members have said that there is no mention of family planning in the President's Address. I accept it. But our coalition Government does have a policy on family planning and the same has been stated in our National Agenda. It says that for population control, a judicious and intelligent mix of incentives and disincentives will soon be presented to establish our national commitment to this matter of great importance. The Government has prepared a document on family planning and there has been some discussion on it in the Cabinet. This matter has been referred to a small group of Ministers. It is a delicate issue on which a consensus should be formed. However, the foreigners who come to India are surprised to find that family planning programme has been successfully going on in India. The rate of population of growth has gone down from 2.1 per cent to 1.85 per cent. However in spite of this decline, we are adding 1.70 crore people to our population every year. Here, we differ from China. In some of our States, the family planning programme has been implemented with even greater success. However, some others have been left behind. It is somewhat surprising, and it should not happen that the States which are successfully carrying on family planning are losing the number of the Lok Sabha seats. This would have to be reversed. The number of seats should be fixed for every State and adequate steps should be taken for family planning. I was happy to read the speech of Shri Soz who refuted the contention that the population of Jammu and Kashmir is increasing. He said that the people of that State believed in family planning and the population of Jammu and Kashmir was not increasing and that a wrong propaganda was being done in this regard. The issue of family planning is a national issue and all of us will have to sit together to ponder over it. It is a national issue. No party or Government by itself can find a solution to this problem. The question is not only of formulating a policy, but also of its implementation. And from this viewpoint, all the parties should come together and consider what steps are to be taken.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the paper on agricultural policy is ready. Opinion of experts is being sought and the final document will be presented before the House soon. Several Members have raised the question of delay in implementing the crop insurance policy. The existing crop insurance policy does not include all farmers and all crops. It is confined to those farmers who take loans. In our amended crop insurance policy, we are going to remove all these shortcomings for promoting the interest of the farmers. The scheme is almost ready and we propose to give effect to it with the 1999 kharif crop. The cabinet has approved it in principle. Under the new scheme, more crops will be included and efforts for participation by all farmers in it will be made. The farmers will be getting more benefits under this scheme. The farmers who have taken loans will, of course, be included in it, but the scheme will also take note of those who have not taken loans, but become victims of floods or drought. Nearly six lakh farmers have so far been issued credit cards. The public sector banks have been told that this number should go up to 20 lakhs by the end of the next year.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition, Shri, Sharad Pawar, raised the question of a memorial of Baba Saheb Ambedkar in Delhi. Dr. Ambedkar used to live at 26 Alipur Road. The demand is to acquire this place and convert it into his memorial. The contention that no funds have been spent so far is incorrect. The issue of Baba Saheb Ambedkar Memorial is not a party issue. Even before we came to power, the Department of Social Justice had advanced an amount of Rs. 7.12 crores on 26 March, 1997 for acquisition of this building. But the policy to acquire it was challenged. In an interim order, the Land Acquisition Collector was directed not to declare the compensation award until the disposal of writ petitions. The matter is pending in the Court, since then. We are trying to have the court decision soon. Different concerned Ministries are in contact with each other. Negotiations are also going on with the owners of the property. If Shri Pawar can wield any influence on them, we will welcome his intervention.

It is not true that funds were not allocated to different institution meant for the welfare of the Dalits. For the year 1997-98 Rs. 611.77 crores were allotted for the Dalits, out of which Rs. 610.24 crores were spent. In 1998-99, the allocation was increased to Rs. 733.70 crores out of which Rs. 699.56 crores had been spent till 12 March, 1999. The Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition also referred to Dr. Ambedkar Overseas Fellowship. Enquires have shown that the Governing Body of the Foundation had terminated this scheme in 1977, before we took over the reins of the Government. However, the National Overseas Scheme for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is very much in operation and the amount of stipend given under it to the researchers has been enhanced from \$ 6600 to \$ 7700. Previously, there was a restriction of two boys from the same family getting stipend under the post-matric scholarship scheme. This has now been removed. Many facilities are being provided in the North Eastern States under this scheme. A special programme is being implemented for girls belonging to the Scheduled Tribes since they are the most illiterate among them. Forty districts have been identi-

fied where literacy among the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people is merely two percent. Separate allocation has been made for them and the money is also being spent. It is also not true that funds have not been allotted to N.G.Os working among scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes. The fact is that an assistance of Rs.10.64 crores was given to these N.G.Os during 1997-98. If need be, this amount can be increased.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, one issue relates to public sector undertakings. When industries were set up in the public sector, I was among those who had welcomed the move. Panditji eulogized it, and a campaign of capital investment in industries by Government was launched. The country expected that these undertakings will be our national assets and contribute to the welfare of the nation. But the picture that exists today is naturally causing concern. What is the reason, why the public sector units turn sick in such large numbers, suffer losses and come to the brink of closure? According to the figures available with me, the total losses suffered by the sick public sector units so far add up to Rs. 41,264.55 crores. Of the 236 public sector undertakings, 104 are running in losses. The biggest loss has been suffered by the Fertilizer Corporation of India. Other main loss suffering enterprises are in that sectors of textiles, coal and steel.

If the profits earned by the oil companies of the public sector are excluded, the net profit of the entire public sector will be very small. Due to the fall of oil prices in the international market, our profits in the oil sector have increased. A serious consideration needs to be given to the ailing units of the public sector.

It was a policy that we had inherited, and we are trying to pursue it. However, I feel that the time has come when the leaders of all parties, particularly those who have been associated with public sector industries and have worked among the labour should sit together and analyse why the public sector became a losing proposition.

There are some other aspects also to be considered. If some public undertaking can be revived, how it is to be done? If the workers are to be retired, what policy should be adopted? We have to be careful that the enterprises which can be run may not become sick. It is an issue that requires consensus. We are not bound by any pre-determined notions. We want to pursue practical policies in the realm of economy. There can be no place for any 'ism' in the matter of economic development because, that would neither be in the interest of the country, nor in the interest of the common man. The basic consideration is the interest of the nation. When some step is taken in the direction of economic development, but a remark is made that we are selling the country, I am pained to hear it. Who can sell a great country like India? And who can purchase it?

There can be differences on matters of policy and genuine differences can be there. We had a debate on EMR and product patent. When our leftist friends targeted us only ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR) : We have targeted both.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : There is no need to target both.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : You have been faithfully following all their bad policies...(Interruptions)

SHRI MURLI DEORA (MUMBAI SOUTH) : In fact, they are opposing...(Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (BANKURA) : When they were in the Opposition...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : What about the Law Commission ? ...(Interruptions)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : The Law Commission Report and decision of the Parliament are two different things.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Let it be discussed in the House.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : The issue is being discussed. As you know, we are in favour of public sector industries. We are seriously considering had IDPL can be revived and steps are being taken towards that end. But I also want to urge upon you not to follow too much of 'ism'. If you will continue to hang on to a policy which has been proved impracticable, which has got a beating the world over, you will be cut off...(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : If you run all the units properly, we will not say anything...(Interruptions)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : You will be cut off from the mainstream...(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : We will help you in that ...(Interruptions)

[English]

We will support you. Please run them properly.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : During the last few months, there have been attacks on our Christian brothers and their institutions. It is a matter of great regret and great concern. True, the number of these incidents is not large, but why would such incidents take place at all in this country? The media has also a duty not to blow up these incidents out of proportion as they incite the people. At times, the report

turns out to be wrong. A world wide news agency flashed a report of an attack on a couple at Allahabad, but later on the same couple denied the report and said there was no attack on them. I am not aware whether that news agency carried a clarification or not, but some restraint should be observed on all sides. Every citizen of this country, particularly belonging to smaller communities, must be protected. Those people should be our special concern. The increasing intolerance in the country signifies a danger bell. The very basis of our culture is tolerance, it is well-known for it. The Indian thinking has been in terms of the entire world, the whole universe, but if some people feel on the basis of their community that justice is not being meted out to them, or if they develop a feeling of insecurity, it is not only a matter of concern, but a challenge also. Wherever any incidents have taken place, the culprits have been arrested and they are being prosecuted in courts. Gujarat is also included in this. But in Orissa, the name of a prominent suspect is being widely mentioned as the main culprit. He has not yet been arrested and efforts are being made all over the country to apprehend him. He must be brought to book. The burning of an Australian citizen along with his children is a most heinous crime. It has been condemned the world over, and we must put our home in order. There are elements that would like to derive political advantage out of it, they should not be provided a handle. Our Government is determined to ensure security for every citizen, create confidence among minorities and strengthen the law and other machinery. There should be no laxity in this matter. Any person, howsoever influential, and any organisation howsoever strong, will be dealt with according to the law for any activity violative of the law. We will see to it that...(Interruptions) It is not right to allege that no action is taken; action is taken.

14.00 hrs.

We have ensured the cricket match between the Indian and Pakistani teams. It has taken place after all. A similar problem had cropped up 10 years back during the Congress regime. There were warnings of disrupting the match and uncertainty prevailed on whether the match should be held or not. The Congress Government cancelled the entire series. But we have got it done...(Interruptions). The Calcutta incident is a different matter. We do not blame our leftist friends for that. But they must share the responsibility to some extent. At times, such incidents occur all of a sudden, but it is necessary to check them...(Interruptions)

SHRI MOHAN SINGH : They are leftists and you are capitalists.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Shri Mohan Singhji, where do you stand between these two? You are unnecessarily poking yourself. Where do you stand !

SHRI MOHAN SINGH : Here, before you.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : We are ready for confrontation. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will not take much time of the House. I am thankful to you for giving me the time to speak. I would appeal to all the Hon. Members...(Interruptions)

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (CALCUTTA SOUTH) : *[English]*
What was the impact of the Calcutta incidents at Lahore?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I would speak about this in Calcutta.

SHRI SUSHMA SWARAJ (SOUTH DELHI) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is the greatness of Atalji that he said he is only intervening in the debate and reply to the debate will be given by me. There is no arrangement for this in our rules and nor courtesy demands. Rule 20, sub-rule (2) provides that after the reply of Prime Minister neither the mover nor the seconder of the motion has any right to reply. Going one step ahead, I would like to say that even if there had been such provisions in the rules, then courtesy demands that after reply of Prime Minister no one should speak by way of reply. How beautifully he has summed up this whole discussion and replied to the debate and I think after that there is no need for anyone to speak.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : A number of amendments have been moved by hon. Members to the Motion of Thanks. Shall I put the amendments together to the vote of the House ?

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH : You call the name of Members one by one separately....*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Basu Deb Acharia, shall I put all the amendments together ?

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Not together, Sir.

[Translation]

When they are separate then how it can be put together.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Mohan Singh, are you moving the amendment or not?

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH : Sir, in this Address mention has been made about the President Rule in Bihar, Situation has changed there now. My amendment is about enforcing President's Rule in Bihar. I would like to say that when President's Rule has been revoked there then it would be improper to make any mention of it in President Address. This is also against his dignity and against the traditions. I would like to request that at least amendment for deletion of that portion should be accepted then I will not press for my amendment.

MR. SPEAKER : Now, I shall put amendment Nos. 1 to 8, moved by Shri Mohan Singh, to the vote of the House.

The amendments were put and negatived.

MR. SPEAKER : I shall put amendment Nos. 33 to 41 and 328 and 329 moved by Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee to the vote of the House.

The amendments were put and negatived.

MR. SPEAKER : I shall put amendment Nos. 63 to 81 moved by Basu Deb Acharia to the vote of the House.

The amendments were put and negatived.

MR. SPEAKER : Now, I shall put amendment Nos. 104 to 113 moved by Shri C. Kuppusami to the vote of the House.

The amendments were put and negatived.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (MAHABUBNAGAR) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, now you can put the remaining amendments together to the vote of the House.

MR. SPEAKER : I shall now put all the other amendments moved to the Motion to the vote of the House.

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, 1999.' "

The motion was adopted

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Now, the House will take up Matters under Rule 377. Hon. Members, today, you have to forego the lunch. Is it the sense of the House to forego the lunch?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Yes.

14.09 hrs.

(MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER : If any hon. Member wants to go out of the House, he may quietly do so. Let them not stand here.