

# **LOK SABHA DEBATES (English Version)**

**First Session  
(Twelfth Lok Sabha)**



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**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
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# LOK SABHA DEBATES

## LOK SABHA

Wednesday, March 25, 1998/Chaitra 4, 1920 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at  
Fifteen Minutes past Twelve of the Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Secretary-General may call out the names of the Members who have not yet taken the Oath or made the Affirmation.

### MEMBERS SWORN

Lt. Gen. (Retd.) N. Foley (Nominated)

Dr. (Mrs.) Beatrix D'Souza (Nominated)

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY (CALCUTTA NORTH WEST): Sir, more than 105 people died in West Bengal and Orissa due to tornado. That is dangerous.... *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Secretary-General to lay on the Table a copy of the Presidents' Address.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: President's Address.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Introduction of Ministers by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I am coming to that.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I am coming to the next item.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): It is after the obituary reference.

SHRI E. AHAMED (MANJERI): Obituary reference has to be taken first...*(Interruptions)*

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (MAVELIKARA): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the first item was obituary reference. How can we deviate from that?...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY (MADURAI): Mr.

Speaker, Sir, there are points of order also after the obituary reference.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: There should be an obituary reference to the people who died because of tornado. Sir, that should also be done here.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): They have died yesterday...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY: More than 105 people have died in West Bengal and Orissa.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: More than 105 people have died...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Silence please.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Silence please. I am coming to that.

12.23 hrs.

### OBITUARY REFERENCES

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have to inform the House about the sad demise of Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda former Prime Minister, Shri E.M.S.Namboodiripad, former Chief Minister of Kerala and eleven of our other esteemed friends, Shri Srikrishna Vajinath Dhamankar, Shrimati Vimla Deshmukh, Sarvashri Mohinder Singh Saylanwala, Chakleshwar Singh, Tridib Chaudhuri, Nurul Islam, Mohammad Idris Ali, Bimalkanti Ghosh, M.A. Sreenivasan, Vaidya Dau Dayal Joshi and Shri Bhola Nath Sen.

Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda was a Member of First, Second and Third Lok Sabhas representing Sabarkantha Parliamentary Constituency of erstwhile Bombay State during 1952-67. Later, he was elected to Fourth and Fifth Lok Sabhas during 1967-77 from Kalthal Parliamentary Constituency of Haryana.

An able Parliamentarian, he was actively associated in the governance of the nation. Shri Nanda was a Minister of Planning and Irrigation and Power during 1952-57; Minister of Labour and Employment and Planning during 1957-62; Minister of Planning during 1962-63; Minister of Home Affairs during 1963-66 and Minister of Railways during 1970-71. He served as the Prime Minister twice for brief periods i.e., from 27 May to 9 June, 1964 and 11 to 24 January, 1966.

Earlier, Shri Nanda was a Member of Legislative Assembly, Bombay during 1937-39 and 1947-50. He served the State Government of Bombay as a Parliamentary Secretary (Labour & Excise) during 1937-39 and Minister of Labour and Housing during 1947-50.

A veteran freedom fighter, Shri Nanda joined non-

cooperation movement in 1921, actively participated in the Satyagraha Movement in 1932 and the Quit-India Movement in 1942. He suffered incarceration many a time for his patriotic ventures. Despite holding very high positions, Shri Nanda, like a true Gandhian, led an austere and a pious life.

A widely travelled person, Shri Nanda was appointed a substitute Government Delegate to the Asian Regional Conference in 1947. He was a Leader of the Indian Delegation to the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee in 1955 and Indian Parliamentary Delegation to the International Labour Conference held at Geneva in 1959.

The country honoured him with its highest civilian award 'The Bharat Ratna' in July, 1997. Earlier he was also awarded the Padma Vibhushan.

An active social and political worker, Shri Nanda was associated with various trade unions from 1921 in different capacities. He took keen interest in the proceedings of the House and by dint of his sheer hard work, turned out to be one of the most successful Parliamentarians in the country.

A man of letters, Shri Nanda wrote several articles on wide ranging topics. His publications include '*Some Aspects of Khadi*', '*History of wage adjustment in the Ahmedabad Textile Industry*', '*Approach to the Second Five-Year Plan*' and '*Some Basic Considerations*'.

Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda passed away on 15 January, 1998 at Ahmedabad, Gujarat at the age of one hundred years.

Shri E.M.S. Namboodiripad popularly known as 'EMS' was born in an aristocratic and conservative Brahmin family in Malabar district of Kerala in June 1909. By the time he began his graduation, he had revolted against both Brahminical conservatism and British imperialism. He left his studies to join the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932. He was chosen as a General Secretary of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee. In 1937 he, along with the late Shri P. Krishnapillal formed the first Communist Group within the Congress in Kerala.

Shri Namboodiripad was the pioneer of the Communist Movement in the country and had a stupendous role to play in helping the Communist Party of India (Marxist) become a major force in the political arena of the country.

As a leader, he headed the first over elected Communist Government in the world in 1957, when he became the Chief Minister of Kerala and returned again in 1967. He served as the Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Legislative Assembly from 1969 to 1970 and later in 1977.

Apart from being an astute politician, he was an author, historian and a social commentator. All that he earned from his books and columns went to the party as he led a spartan life.

Shri E.M.S. Namboodiripad breathed his last at

Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala on 19 March, 1998 at the age of 89 years.

Shri Shrikrishna Vajinath Dhamankar was a Member of the Fifth Lok Sabha representing Bhiwandi Parliamentary Constituency of Maharashtra during 1971-77.

A businessmen by profession, Shri Dhamankar was a well known political and social worker. He worked hard for Hindu-Muslim unity for forty years in Bhiwandi and Thana districts.

A renowned educationist, Shri Dhamankar strived hard for promotion of education and was associated with various educational and social institutions in his area.

Shri Dhamankar took keen interest in the upliftment of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections of the society. He worked relentlessly for the promotion of child welfare, agriculture and community development.

Shri Dhamankar passed away on 6 April, 1995 at Bhiwandi at the age of 90 years.

Shrimati Vimla Deshmukh was a Member of the Third Lok Sabha representing Amravati Parliamentary Constituency of Maharashtra during 1965-67.

Shrimati Deshmukh was also a Member of Rajya Sabha during 1967-72.

An active social and political worker, Shrimati Deshmukh worked relentlessly for the upliftment of women. She was a member of the All India Women's Conference, Vidarbha Branch and the Founder-member of the Bharatiya Gramin Mahila Sangh.

A widely travelled person, Shrimati Deshmukh was a delegate to the International Social Workers' Conference held in Toronto, Canada during 1954. She was elected as the leader of the Youth Group to represent India in the Toronto Conference.

Shrimati Vimla Deshmukh passed away on 9 September, 1997 at Nagpur, Maharashtra at the age of 91 years.

Shri Mohinder Singh Saylanwala was a Member of the Sixth Lok Sabha representing Ferozepur Parliamentary Constituency of Punjab during 1977-79.

Earlier, he was a Member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly during 1969-77.

An agriculturist by profession, Shri Saylanwala was also a well known political and social worker. He served his district as Chairman, Panchayat Samiti and Vice-Chairman, Zila Parishad, Ferozepur.

Shri Mohinder Singh Saylanwala passed away at Ferozepur on 7 November, 1997 at the age of 66 years.

Shri Chakleshwar Singh was a Member of Fifth Lok Sabha representing Mathura Parliamentary Constituency of Uttar Pradesh during 1971-77.

An agriculturist by profession, Shri Singh was an active social and political worker. He was a member of various social organisations and served his State in different capacities.

A veteran freedom fighter, Shri Singh participated in the 'Quit India Movement' and suffered imprisonment in 1942.

Shri Chakleshwar Singh passed away on 14 November, 1997 at Mathura, Uttar Pradesh at the age of 75 years.

Shri Tridib Chaudhuri was a member of First to Seventh Lok Sabhas representing the Berhampore Parliamentary Constituency of West Bengal during 1952-84. He was a sitting Member of Rajya Sabha, having been elected to that House twice, first in July, 1987 and then in August, 1993.

A veteran freedom fighter, Shri Chaudhuri was detained without trial as a suspected revolutionary from 1931-37 and again during 1940-46. Shri Chaudhuri was also imprisoned by the Portuguese authorities in Goa for participating in the Liberation Satyagraha Movement against Portuguese colonialism.

An able parliamentarian, Shri Chaudhuri was a member of several Parliamentary Committees including the Standing Committees on External Affairs and Railways and the Committee on Subordinate Legislation in Rajya Sabha.

An active social worker, he worked relentlessly for the upliftment of the working class and the youth and was connected with various social organisations and trade unions.

A man of letters, he authored several articles in various literary and political journals in Hindi, Bengali and English languages.

Shri Tridib Chaudhuri passed away on 21 December, 1997 in West Bengal at the age of 86 years.

Shri Nurul Islam was a Member of Seventh, Tenth and Eleventh Lok Sabhas representing the Dhubri Parliamentary Constituency of Assam during 1983-84 and 1991-97

Earlier, he was a Member of Assam Legislative Assembly during 1972-78. He was Chairman, Public Undertakings Committee, Assam Legislative Assembly during 1974-78.

An able parliamentarian, Shri Nurul Islam was a member of Estimates Committee and Standing Committee on Defence of Lok Sabha and Consultative Committees of the Ministries of Industry and Defence.

A well known educationist, Shri Nurul Islam was instrumental in establishing various schools and colleges in Assam.

Shri Nurul Islam passed away on 30 December, 1997 at New Delhi at the age of 66 years.

Shri Mohammed Idris Ali was a Member of the Eleventh Lok Sabha representing the Jangipur Parliamen-

tary Constituency of West Bengal during 1996-97.

Earlier, he was a Member of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly during 1969-77. He was Chairman, Estimates Committee and member, Public Accounts Committee, Public Undertakings Committee and Committee on Government Assurances in West Bengal Legislative Assembly.

An advocate by profession and a well known educationist, Shri Idris Ali was instrumental in establishing many schools, libraries and clubs.

Shri Mohammed Idris Ali passed away on 30 December, 1997 at Murshidabad, West Bengal at the age of 65 years.

Shri Bimalkanti Ghosh was a Member of the Fourth and the Eighth Lok Sabhas representing Serampore Parliamentary Constituency of West Bengal during 1967-70 and 1984-89.

An active social and political worker, Shri Ghosh was associated with various social and rural reconstruction programmes.

A well known educationist, Shri Ghosh worked relentlessly for the spread of education.

Shri Bimalkanti Ghosh passed away at Serampore on 1 January, 1998 at the age of 74 years.

Shri M.A. Sreenivasan was a Member of the Constituent Assembly representing the erstwhile Princely State of Gwalior during 1947-48.

Shri Sreenivasan had an illustrious career in the Civil Service in the then State of Mysore. He served as Mysore's Trade Commissioner in London. During the Second World War, Shri Sreenivasan also held offices of Controller of Supplies and Controller of Purchases in the Government of India.

Known as the voice of the Cooperative Sector in the country, Shri Sreenivasan was the first Indian Chairman of the John Taylor Company which was then mining gold at Kolar Gold fields. He also served as Chairman of Consolidated Coffee Limited and Coffee Lands and Industries. He worked as Director of Air India, Buckingham and of Carnatic Mills and other companies.

He became Minister in Princely State of Mysore under Dewan Sir, M. Madhava Rao and handled portfolios of Industries, Agriculture and Food and Civil Supplies during 1943-46. He became Dewan (Vice-President of Executive Council) of the erstwhile princely State of Gwalior under Maharaja Jivaji Rao Scindia during the crucial days of accession to the Indian Union.

He founded an Agriculture College, at Hebbal, Mysore, wrote an autobiography and authored a book titled 'The Raj, Maharaja and Me'.

Shri Sreenivasan was the founder President of the

Greater Mysore Chamber of Commerce and Industry during 1976-79 and worked tirelessly for its growth.

Shri M.A. Sreenivasan passed away on 15 January, 1998 at Bangalore, Karnataka at the age of hundred and one years.

Vaidya Dau Dayal Joshi was member of the Ninth to Eleventh Lok Sabhas representing Kota Parliamentary Constituency of Rajasthan during 1989-97.

Earlier, he was member of Rajasthan Legislative Assembly during 1977-89.

A Medical Practitioner by profession, Vaidya Dau Dayal Joshi was a votary of the age-old system of Indian Medicines and many a time highlighted the values of Indian Medicines in the House.

An able Parliamentarian, Vaidya Joshi was a member of Estimates Committee, Standing Committee on Human Resource Development and Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Vaidya Dau Dayal Joshi passed away on 16 January, 1998 at Jaipur, Rajasthan at the age of 87 years.

Shri Bholu Nath Sen was a member of Eighth Lok Sabha representing Calcutta South Parliamentary Constituency of West Bengal during 1984-89.

Earlier, Shri Sen was a member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly during 1972-82. An advocate by profession Shri Sen was Senior Standing Counsel in West Bengal during 1971-72.

Shri Bholu Nath Sen served as a Cabinet Minister in the State Government of West Bengal during 1972-77. An able parliamentarian, he was a member of Estimates Committee of Lok Sabha during 1985-86.

Shri Bholu Nath Sen passed away on 18 January, 1998 at Calcutta at the age of 74 years.

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

As the hon. Members are aware, more than hundred persons have met with untimely death in the tragedy due to the tornado which hit the States of West Bengal and Orissa yesterday. The tornado which was accompanied by heavy rains, flattened a primary school building in Orissa's Balasore district, killing 16 children. Many people have been rendered homeless and there has been a heavy loss of property. We deeply mourn this tragedy.

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

12.38 hrs.

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

[English]

(Interruptions)

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Sir, I am on a point of order under Rule 376...(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Sir, I request the hon. Minister to speak on the victims of the tornado in West Bengal and Orissa...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please, I will come to you.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: One minute please. There is a listed business. I am coming to you.

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK (BULDHANA): Mr. Speaker, Sir, in obituary reference, one correction has to be made. At number 3, instead of Shir Shrikrishna Vijinath Dhankar there should be Shri Shrikrishna Vijinath Dhamandkar. That correction will have to be made.

MR. SPEAKER: We will make that correction.

12.41 hrs.

#### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the Secretary-General will lay on the Table a copy of the President's Address.

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the President's Address\* to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on this day, the 25th of March, 1998.

#### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS\*

Hon'ble Members,

I have great pleasure in addressing this first session of both Houses of Parliament after the 12th General Election to the Lok Sabha. I extend my warm felicitations to the members of the new Lok Sabha.

I thank the Election Commission of India for conducting the General Election with despatch and efficiency.

The just concluded mid-term election reflected the firm conviction of our people in democratic processes of change. Contrary to forecasts that the turnout would be low, in fact nearly 62 per cent of the electorate exercised their franchise. The results are indicative of regional aspirations seeking a place in the national perspective. My Government will ensure the fulfilment of these aspirations even while looking after national interest.

\*The President delivered the Address in English.

Also placed in Library. See No. LT-2/98

Parliamentary arithmetic alone cannot provide the key to good governance. That key lies in the willingness of all to rise above notions of parliamentary majority and minority and work in a spirit of cooperation, conciliation and consensus. My Government, imbued with this spirit, will chart a new course in governance that seeks to unify and not divide: dialogue, debate and discussion will replace the narrow antagonisms of the past.

After the mid-term election, the nation now looks forward to a Government that will get down to business. This is precisely what the Government proposes to do. The most immediate tasks include the passage of the Supplementary Demands for 1997-98 and the Vote on Account for 1998-99. Thereafter, pending matters, including legislative business, will be taken up in right earnest.

Starting now, all our efforts will be directed at building a New India — an India free from the triple-curse of insecurity, hunger and corruption; an India free from illiteracy and disease; an India where more and more people are gainfully employed; an India where every citizen, irrespective of his caste, creed or faith, feels proud to be an Indian.

Secularism is integral to India's traditions. My Government is unequivocally committed to upholding our secular values.

My Government's top priority will be to reach out to the underprivileged and the unempowered. More than a third of our people live below the poverty line. An even larger number does not have access to basic education and health care facilities. This vast multitude must be facilitated to obtain its meaningful share in national prosperity.

Government proposes to accomplish this through the three-fold strategy of ensuring food security to every household by better targeting of the Public Distribution System, accelerating generation of employment opportunities in every sector of the economy and providing shelter to the largest possible number.

One of the weaknesses of socio-economic policies so far has been the less than adequate attention to the social sector. The Government is pledged to investing larger resources in social infrastructure. The commitment to progressively step up spending on education to 6 per cent of GDP will be fulfilled. Every effort shall be made to provide basic health facilities to all. Simultaneously, potable drinking water shall be made available in every village and habitat, within a specified time frame.

Our population growth rate is a matter of grave concern. The Government will soon formulate a National Population Policy which will aim at stabilising the population growth through, among other things, incentives and disincentives.

In a civil society, children are born to be happy. Unfortunately, large numbers of children in our society are born only to toil in factories, workshops and fields. My

Government believes that children should be in schools and playgrounds and not toiling away their childhood. Apart from implementing the constitutional provision of free and compulsory primary education, Government will introduce a National Charter for Children which, among other things, will ensure that no child goes to sleep hungry. Children have rights, and these will be upheld.

Special efforts will be made to remove gender disparities and injustice that exist, especially in access to education, employment opportunities and political representation. Government will provide free education to women up to graduation so that India can become an example of a developing country overcoming the handicap of poor female literacy. By investing in education for women, my Government will be investing in the future generations of Indians.

The pending legislation seeking to reserve 33 per cent seats for women in Parliament and State Assemblies will be taken up immediately. A Development Bank, the first of its kind, will be set up for women entrepreneurs.

By synergising legal, executive and societal efforts, the Government will strive for rapid social, economic and political empowerment and uplift of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes and Minorities. My Government will take all appropriate measures to uphold existing percentages of reservation in educational institutions at the State level. In keeping with its belief that governance must seek to unify than divide, Government will strive for social harmony and justice in place of social conflict and injustice.

Prosperity and economic well-being cannot be the privilege of a few; it must percolate to the last person in the last row. Hence, my Government will pursue the twin objectives of total eradication of poverty through generation of employment opportunities as well as sustaining a higher GDP growth of 7 to 8 per cent. The Central theme of my Government's national development plan will be "Berozgar Hatao".

Shelter is a basic human necessity. The Government will evolve policies to accelerate the construction of housing units and facilitate the participation of private sector in order to ensure that housing for all becomes a reality.

Urgent measures will be taken to substantially step up investment in the infrastructure sectors, including power, roads and bridges, railways, inland waterways, sea ports, shipping, airports, telecommunications and information technology. Government will evolve a sound framework for fiscal and monetary policies.

The Government believes that India can - and shall - be built by Indians. No country that is largely or entirely dependent on resources from abroad can truly prosper. Hence, efforts will be made to increase national saving to 30 per cent of the GDP over the next five years. Foreign Direct Investment will be encouraged in the core sector of the economy and in physical infrastructure development.

About 40 per cent of our GDP comes from the unincorporated sector, which has so far been neglected. The Government proposes to evolve an appropriate policy framework for facilitating the growth of millions of small enterprises that exist in the country. For meeting the financial requirements of this crucial sector of the economy, which was a very high potential for growth and generation of employment opportunities, Government will consider the setting up of a dedicated Development Bank.

The Government will ensure to make labour an equal partner in national reconstruction. Special care will be taken to look after the interests of agricultural labour who are largely unorganised.

Agriculture has suffered on account of declining investment. Government will halt this decline and earmark up to 60 per cent of Plan funds for this crucial segment of our economy. Subsidies will continue but they will be better targeted. Government is committed to re-establish our farmers as a strong and self-confident community enjoying the fruits of prosperity.

Apart from setting into motion plans for all-round development of rural India, my Government will also cushion farmers from unforeseen natural calamities by introducing effective crop insurance policies. All efforts will be made for rapid rural industrialisation, with special emphasis on agro-based industry.

Since maintenance of ecological balance is crucial for our survival, the Government will initiate institutional measures to ensure that all development programmes are in conformity with the principles of sustainable development. Government firmly believes that science and technology have a vital role to play in the achievement of sustainable development and transforming India into a prosperous, strong and self-confident nation.

On Centre-State relations, my Government will immediately act on the Sarkaria Commission's recommendations as well as seek ways and means for greater devolution of powers up to the panchayat level. The Governor's office has often been the centre of unseemly controversy. Raj Bhavans will not be used for securing political objectives.

The Government will set up a Committee to study the feasibility of treating all the 18 languages included in Schedule VIII of the Constitution as official languages.

The Government will attend to the State's demand for higher allocation of resources. A Backward Areas Commission will be set up to identify those areas which need extra assistance so that they do not lag behind in development.

Government is committed to initiate action to carve out Uttaranchal in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand in Bihar and Chhattisgarh in Madhya Pradesh. Delhi will be given full Statehood.

A National Water Policy which will provide for effective and prompt settlement of disputes and their time-bound implementation will be evolved.

Security of the nation and its citizens is paramount. My Government will not compromise on this. The nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity will be protected at all costs. We will not bow to any pressure on this front. My Government joins the country in saluting the bravery of the personnel of our armed forces who are ever prepared to make sacrifices for the defence of the nation.

Every citizen has the right to feel secure and be free from fear. Government will strive to combat the menace of terrorism, subversion and insurgency that has come to haunt the common man. Violence has no place in a democracy. Differences should and can be resolved through dialogue and discussion.

My Government re-affirms India's commitment to peace among all nations, to the prosperity of the peoples of the world and to enhance its role in the international arena. We will strive for Asian solidarity and enhanced regional cooperation. Renewed efforts will be made to improve bilateral relationship with neighbouring countries without any third party mediation or interference.

One of the urgent issues before the world community is the restructuring of the United Nations and its organs in order to make it more democratic and more representative of the contemporary world. Our views on the restructuring of the United Nations have been projected before the world community and we will pursue our objective with vigour. As a founder member of the non-aligned movement, we, along with our fellow members, share the responsibility for ensuring a fair treatment for the developing countries and we will work together to attain this goal. Economic cooperation among developing countries is another priority of the non-aligned movement which we will seek to promote.

The Government will evolve a National Media Policy which will integrate the advances in various visual, audio and print media in order to bring about a cohesiveness of purpose, keeping in view our societal needs and cultural values.

Fifty years after Independence, the time has come to rejuvenate our institutions so that they are strong enough to meet the challenges of the future. The Government proposes to do so, as well as appoint a Commission to review the Constitution and make recommendations so that anomalous experiences of the past are not repeated in the future.

Earlier, I have referred to the Government's solemn commitment to providing the people of India with good governance. This can be possible only when Government rests on the foundation of morality and ethics. All around us today we find increasing cynicism towards morality in politics and ethics in governance. This has severely eroded faith in the State.

The Government proposes to make all those who hold public office accountable by enacting the Lok Pal Bill. The Official Secrets Act will be reviewed so that we can put



In place a right to information law that will enable transparency and integrity in decision making without compromising national security.

One of the causes of corruption and corrosion of values in our polity, as well as criminalisation of politics, stems from flaws in the electoral process. To ensure free, and fearless elections and to prevent the use of money and muscle power, Government will introduce a comprehensive Electoral Reforms Bill for which considerable ground work has already been done.

Consensus-building is an essential part of nation-building. Cooperation for the larger good of society has been the cornerstone of our civilisation. Ours is a multi-party democracy in which constructive dialogue, consultation and cooperation between the ruling and the opposition parties are essential for evolving a broad platform of national consensus.

The Government will, therefore, strive for evolving a consensus mode of governance as far as practicable. Some of the issues on which a national consensus is most urgently called for are electoral reforms; Centre-State relations; population policy; empowerment of women by legislating 33 per cent reservation for them in all elected bodies; resolution of inter-State water disputes; environmental protection and effective institutional guarantees for the welfare of the weaker sections of society while pursuing economic reforms.

Hon'ble Members, you have the rare privilege of contributing constructively to this process of consensus-building on which the future of our great nation depends critically in the 21st Century and the coming millennium.

This year is significant in more ways than one. It is the Golden Jubilee of our Independence. It also marks the 50th anniversary of the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi - one of the greatest men of this Century. We are the inheritors of the fruits of the sacrifices made by the Mahatma and other freedom fighters. We have the responsibility to live up to their dreams and ideals.

My best wishes are with you in this momentous task.

Jai Hind

[*English*]

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY (MADURAI): I am on rule 376. May I...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: One minute please.

DR. JAYANTA RONGPI (AUTONOMOUS DISTRICT-ASSAM): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the obituary reference may...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Now, we take up introduction of Ministers by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAJO SINGH (BEGUSARAI): First Hon'ble Minister Shri Ram Naik has to move it...(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

DR. JAYANTA RONGPI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the obituary references, you left the names of persons who laid down their lives for the democracy in Assam...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I will come to you.

SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA (GUWAHATI): Sir, we have to listen to him. A Member is raising something which is very important. The Government in its Presidential Address has mentioned that it will fight terrorism. A man, a candidate has died during elections. He has requested you to mention him in the obituary reference. I request you to do that...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please cooperate with the Chair. Let us finish the business of introduction of Council of Ministers.

DR. JAYANTA RONGPI: During last elections, ULFA gave a call to boycott elections and it was against all democratic norms and all the political parties...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BIJOY KRISHNA HANDIQU (JORHAT): Are you not listening to him?...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (CHANDIGARH): He can give the names today and we can make an obituary reference tomorrow. Why should there be a controversy? ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I will listen to you later. First, we will take up introduction of Ministers.

DR. JAYANTA RONGPI: Sir, I want your assurance because I want this to be done...(*Interruptions*)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN (MAVELIKARA): He is asking something about obituary reference, for an addition in the obituary reference...(*Interruptions*) Kindly listen to him and give your ruling because it is a very important matter...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA: There has to be a mention in the obituary reference...(*Interruptions*)

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Kindly listen to him and give your ruling.

MR. SPEAKER: I will listen to him later.

(*Interruptions*)

DR. JAYANTA RONGPI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, during the elections, the ULFA gave a call to boycott the elections and the people fought against ULFA and facing the ULFA's bullets a candidate of our party who went for canvassing was shot dead by the ULFA militants who are anti-nationals. I want that all the names of those martyrs including Prof.

Anil Baruah who laid down his life to uphold the democratic system, to uphold the parliamentary democracy, should be included in the obituary reference.

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I will listen to you. Please be seated.

*[Translation]*

SHRI AJIT JOGI (RAIGARH): The people who were killed...*(Interruptions)*

12.42 hrs.

### INTRODUCTION OF MINISTERS

*[English]*

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to introduce to you and through you to the august House my colleagues.

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Shri Lal Krishna Advani   | Minister of Home   |
| Shri Ananth Kumar         | Minister of Civil Aviation   |
| Shri Sikander Bakht       | Minister of Industry   |
| Shri Surjit Singh Barnala | Minister of Chemicals and Fertilisers with additional charge of Food |
| Shri George Fernandes     | Minister of Defence  |
| Shri Ramakrishna Hegde    | Minister of Commerce   |

SOME HON. MEMBERS: He is not here. Why is he not here?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Dr. Satyanarayan Jatiya        | Minister of Labour  |
| Shri Ram Jethmalani            | Minister of Urban Development   |
| Dr. Murlidhar Manohar Joshi    | Minister of Human Resource Development with additional charge of Science and Technology |
| Shri K. Ramamurthy             | Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas   |
| Shri Madan Lal Khurana         | Minister of Parliamentary Affairs with additional charge of Tourism                     |
| Shri Rangarajan Kumaramangalam | Minister of Power   |
| Shri M. Thambi Durai           | Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs  |
| Shri Nitish Kumar              | Minister of Railways  |

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Shri Naveen Patnaik    | Minister of Steel and Mines              |
| Shri Suresh Prabhu     | Minister of Environment and Forest       |
| Shri Kashi Ram Rana    | Minister of Textiles                     |
| Shri R. Muthiah        | Minister of Surface Transport            |
| Shri Yashwant Sinha    | Minister of Finance                      |
| Shri Buta Singh        | Minister of Communications               |
| Shrimati Sushma Swaraj | Minister of Information and Broadcasting |

### Ministers of State (Independent Charge)

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Shri Dalit Ezhimalai   | Minister of State of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare |
| Shrimati Maneka Gandhi | Minister of State of the Ministry of Welfare                   |
| Shri Babagouda Patil   | Minister of State of the Ministry of Rural Development         |
| Shri Dilip Ray         | Minister of State of the Ministry of Coal                      |

### Ministers of State

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Shri Omak Arang            | Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism                    |
| Shri Sukhbir Singh Badal   | Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry                   |
| Shri Bandaru Dattatreya    | Minister of State in the Ministry of Urban Development          |
| Shri Ramesh Bains          | Minister of State in the Ministry of Steel and Mines            |
| Sushri Uma Bharti          | Minister of State in the Ministry of Human Resource Development |
| Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar | Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas  |
| Shri R.K. Kumar            | Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance                    |

SOME HON. MEMBERS: He is not there.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA): He is busy in the meeting of the Business Advisory Committee of Rajya Sabha.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Shri Mukhtar Naqvi        | Minister of State in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting  |
| Shri Ram Naik             | Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs |
| Dr. A.K. Patel            | Minister of State in the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers   |
| Shri Debendra Pradhan     | Minister of State in the Ministry of Surface Transport   |
| Shri Kabindra Purkayastha | Minister of State in the Ministry of Communications  |
| Sushri Vasundhra Raje     | Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs  |
| Shri Satyapal Singh Yadav | Minister of State in the Department of Civil Supplies  |
| Shri R. Janarthanan       | Minister of State in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions                               |
| Shri Babulal Marandi      | Minister of State in the Ministry of Environment and Forests   |

12.49 hrs.

## STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

*[English]***Natural Calamity in West Bengal and Orissa**

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): Sir, with your permission, I would like to make a brief statement on the natural calamity in West Bengal and Orissa.

Hon. Members may be aware of the devastation caused by the severe local weather phenomena known as Nor'wester or "Kal Baisakhi" which hit the coastal areas of West Bengal and Orissa, particularly the districts of Midnapore and Balasore, last night. Reports reaching us indicate that about hundred persons including children have lost their precious lives and a large number of people have been rendered homeless. We express our heartfelt sympathies to the people of the affected areas, specially those who have suffered bereavement and loss of property.

Considering the gravity of the calamity, I have already deputed a high level team consisting of the Minister of State for Agriculture, Shri Som Pal, and two Members of Parliament to tour the affected areas for getting a first-hand report.

I have also released Rs. 1 crore out of the Prime

Minister's Relief Fund for providing immediate relief to the families of those who have lost their lives or who have suffered injuries. In addition, the Government is making an advance release of Rs. 10.20 crore to Orissa and Rs. 10.60 crore to West Bengal towards the Central Government's share of the Calamity Relief Fund.

The Government is awaiting reports from the State Governments giving details of the loss of life and the magnitude of the damage caused. As soon as the reports of the State Governments are received, further necessary relief would be provided...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): Sir, I want to raise one query.

MR. SPEAKER: Let us now take up the next item, that is, papers to be laid on the Table. Shri Ram Naik.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Let the papers be laid.

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK (BULDHANA): Sir, in view of the grave situation in the State, the Government should immediately send a team headed by a Minister of State to visit all the affected places and to find out for itself the extent of damage done...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Sir, we want to know as to who those two Members are.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I will hear you later. First, let us take the item of papers to be laid on the Table.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Mr. Prime Minister, who are those two Members who have been sent to West Bengal and Orissa?

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Who are those two Members of Parliament?

MR. SPEAKER: When the Speaker is on his legs, you are supposed to sit. Please be seated.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What is this? I am on my legs, please be seated.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (PANSKURA): We would like to know as to who those two Members are.

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): I want to speak...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I will allow you later.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Sir, I want to seek one clarification from the Prime Minister, that is, who those two Members are.

SHRI ANIL BASU (ARAMBAGH): We just want to know as to who those two Members are...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I will give time to you. Please be seated.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The Members are requested to please be seated. I will allow you. This is not good. I am on my legs, please be seated.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not good, please be seated I will allow you. This is not good.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No. Please take your seats.

(Interruptions)

12.55 hrs.

At this stage, Shri Anil Basu and some other hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please go back to your seats.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please go back to your seats.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not good. Please go back to your seats.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: It is unfortunate that you are not taking your seats. How can you expect anything to be said if you do not take your seats? No. It is not good.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You must give respect to the Chair.

12.58 hrs.

At this stage, Shri Anil Basu and some other hon. Members went back to their seats.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The Home Minister will address now.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: The Home Minister would like to speak now. The Prime Minister is on his legs.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: It is not good. Please be seated. The Prime Minister is on his legs.

(Interruptions)

13.00 hrs.

MR. SPEAKER: The Prime Minister is on his legs.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: If you do like this, it is not good. Please be seated.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJESH PILOT (DAUSA): Please listen to us...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: It is not good. When I am on my legs, please be seated.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: What is this? When I am on my legs, please be seated.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Sir, I have a submission to make. Please listen to us first. He has mentioned the problems. Let the hon. Prime Minister reply...(Interruptions) You are not listening to us and you are asking us to listen to the Prime Minister. This is not correct.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Rajesh Pilot, you know all the procedures. First, please be seated. What is this? This is not good.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Will you first sit down? This is not good.

(Interruptions)

SHRI R.S. GAVAI (AMRAVATI): Sir, I have got a point of order...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No. You are not supposed to talk like this. First, please be seated.

[Translation]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): Mr. Speaker Sir, please give me an opportunity to clarify the situation...(Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, today morning when I received news about this natural calamity first of all I contacted Shri Indrajit Gupta because he represents Midnapore in Lok Sabha. I told him that we wanted to send a Delegation and it would be better if he accompanied it. But he expressed his inability to go there today...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: There is another Member of Parliament, Shri Sudhir Giri, from Contal. His constituency has seriously been affected. Could you ever try to find out from him?... (Interruptions) Could you ever try to find out from the other Member?... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This is not good. When the Prime Minister is on his legs, please be seated.

*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Amongst the Members of Parliament, one member is from Balasore. Balasore is also affected by the storm. There is also one member from West Bengal, and she is Mamata Banerjee.

*[English]*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: How was she selected?...*(Interruptions)*

13.04 hrs.

*At this stage, Shri Ram Chandra Dome and some other hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table*

MR. SPEAKER: Please go back to your seats. This is not good.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please go back to your seats.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: First, all of you should go back to your seats.

13.05 hrs.

*At this stage, Shri Ram Chandra Dome and some other hon. Members went back to their seats.*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Is this the way you conduct the House? I am requesting you to give me an opportunity because my State is suffering, Orissa is suffering. I deeply appreciate that you are making a reference to it. I appreciate the Prime Minister's statement. But it is a very serious matter that in a matter of natural calamity, this Government is practising politics...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI HARIN PATHAK (AHEMDABAD): We had informed your leader. The Prime Minister had informed Shri Indrajit Gupta but you did not respond...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Although I appreciate that he has taken steps, yet the way he has done it shows that he is trying to play dirty politics and that too on a natural calamity. Therefore I walk out in protest.

13.07 hrs.

*At this stage, Shri Somnath Chatterjee and some other hon. Members left the House.*

*[Translation]*

SHRI MUKUL WASNIK (BULDHANA): You talk of

consensus but if you behave in this manner, House cannot conduct its business...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI AJIT JOGI (RAIGARH): Such a big natural calamity has occurred and you are behaving like this...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR (BARAMATI): Mr. Speaker Sir, these people are talking of consensus and hence they should take the members of Parliament into confidence and evolve consensus. But the way they have behaved does not reflect the policy of consensus. If they continue to behave in this manner, I feel that it would become difficult for us to maintain consensus.

13.08 hrs.

*Shri Sharad Pawar and some other Members then left the House*

*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Panja, please be seated. I will give you a chance later.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY (MADURAI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am on point of order. It is a matter of urgent public importance. The Home Minister is also here.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. I will give you a chance.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Please listen to my point of order. I have given you a notice...*(Interruptions)* Attack on the Press freedom is a very important issue...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Subramanian Swamy, please sit down. I will give you a chance to speak after the items in the List of Business are over.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is as per your Directions. May I read out from your Directions that after the Papers are laid on the Table, it is the time for point of order...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I will give you a chance later.

SHRI HARIN PATHAK: But Papers are yet to be laid, Sir...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA (CALCUTTA NORTH-EAST): Sir, I only want to know whether the Chief Minister of West Bengal and his Cabinet have gone to the spot or not. They have not gone there. They have got two helicopters...*(Interruptions)*

Mamata Benerjee has gone there...(Interruptions)

But here, they have gone for lunch, They are hungry.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Now, Papers to be laid.

13.11 hrs.

#### PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

##### Ordinances under article 123 (a) of the Constitution

[English]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM NAIK): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

a copy each of the following Ordinances (Hindi and English versions) under article 123(2)(a) of the Constitution :—

- (1) The Representation of the People (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997 (No. 23 of 1997), promulgated by the President on the 23th December, 1997.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-3/98]

- (2) The Finance (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 1997 (No. 24 of 1997), promulgated by the President on the 24th December, 1997.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-4/98]

- (3) The Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous provisions (Amendment) Second Ordinance, 1997 (No. 25 of 1997), promulgated by the President on the 25th December, 1997.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-5/98]

- (4) The Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Second Ordinance, 1997 (No. 26 of 1997), promulgated by the President on the 25th December, 1997.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-6/98]

- (5) The Merchant Shipping (Amendment) Second Ordinance, 1997 (No. 27 of 1997), promulgated by the President on the 25th December, 1997.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-7/98]

- (6) The Income-tax (Amendment) Second Ordinance, 1997 (No. 28 of 1997), promulgated by the President on the 26th December, 1997.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-8/98]

- (7) The Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Amendment Second Ordinance, 1997 (No.

29 of 1997), promulgated by the President on the 26th December, 1997.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-9/98]

- (8) The Contingency Fund of India (Amendment) Ordinance, 1997 (No. 30 of 1997), promulgated by the President on the 26th December, 1997.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-10/98]

- (9) The Lotteries (Regulation) Second Ordinance, 1997 (No. 31 of 1997), promulgated by the President on the 30th December, 1997.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-11/98]

- (10) The Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Second Ordinance, 1998 (No.1 of 1998), promulgated by the President on the 2nd January, 1998.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-12/98]

- (11) The National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research Ordinance, 1998 (No. 2 of 1998), promulgated by the President on the 21st January, 1998.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-13/98]

- (12) The Representation of the People (Amendment) Ordinance, 1998 (No. 3 of 1998), promulgated by the President on the 22nd January, 1998.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-14/98]

- (13) The Contingency Fund of India (Amendment) Ordinance, 1998 (No. 4 of 1998), promulgated by the President on the 24th January, 1998.

[Placed in Library, See No. LT-15/98]

13.12 hrs.

#### DEPARTMENTALLY RELATED STANDING COMMITTEES—A REVIEW

[English]

SECRETARY GENERAL: Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the Hindi and English versions of the 'Departmentally Related Standing Committees (1996-97)—A Review.'

[English]

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY (MADURAI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I raise my point of order? ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Now, we take up item No. 5—The Interim Budget (Railways).

The Hon. Minister, Shri Nitish Kumar.

*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI LALU PRASAD (MADHEPURA): Send one committee of Parliament there...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: I am calling Shri Nitish Kumar.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Sir, the point of order has to be taken up now...*(Interruptions)*

13.13 hrs.

*(At this stage Shri Surendra Yadav and some other hon. Member came and stood on the floor near the Table)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please go to your seats first. I am asking the leaders to take their Members to their seats.

*(Interruptions)*

13.14 hrs.

*(At this stage Shri Surendra Yadav and some other Members went back to their seats)*

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Shri Nitish Kumar.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am on a point of order...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHI RAM RANA): You speak afterwards.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY (MADURAI): You cannot speak after Budget.

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: Now, I am calling Shri Nitish Kumar and not you. Please be seated.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: I have given you the notice.

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the point of order has to come before this. I have given you the notice...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: We will go according to the List of Business.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: No business can come before a Point of Order.

MR. SPEAKER: We will hear you later.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: You said that you would allow my Point of Order.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no Point of Order. This is not a business item. At this stage, there is no point of order.

SHRI AJIT JOGI (RAIGARH): You have to hear the Point of Order and give your ruling on that.

*[Translation]*

SHRI RAJESH PILOT (DAUSA): Mr. Speaker Sir, Hon'ble Prime Minister is present here, you take up the issue of farmers. Today in Rajasthan conditions of farmers of eight Districts have deteriorated. The Prime Minister should make announcement for sending Central Team there. The Government of Rajasthan is paying to the farmers at the rate of Rs. 600/- per hectare. Today every member of Parliament is raising the cause of farmers. You should give an assurance that you are despatching the Central team to Rajasthan. Why are you not prepared to send Central team? You send two teams in Rajasthan and Maharashtra. You please do something urgently for these states.

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER: I am calling upon Shri Subramanian Swamy only.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: It is about the Central team for the survey. The Prime Minister is responding ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: I am on Rule 376...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have called upon Shri Subramanian Swamy. Please be seated.

*[Translation]*

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (DEORIA): Mr. Speaker Sir, the condition of Uttar Pradesh is not different. It has also suffered due to hail storm. You send team there also ...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: I am on Rule 376...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated. I have called upon Shri Subramanian Swamy. He has to make a Point of Order. Please be seated. This is not good.

*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA (JHABUA): Mr. Speaker Sir,

condition of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh is not different. These states have not received any financial help.

SHRI LALU PRASAD: Mr. Speaker Sir, in Bihar and West Bengal also, the condition is the same. You set up a parliamentary committee and send Central team there...*(Interruptions)* For sending Central team you listen...*(Interruptions)*

*(English)*

MR. SPEAKER: I will allow you later.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR (BARAMATI): You may please allow him after Shri Subramanian Swamy.

SHRI SPEAKER: I will allow him.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I will allow you later. Let him mention his point of order.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: You may assure them that you will call them turn by turn...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This is not good. I have allowed Shri Subramanian Swamy.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Sir, I am an orderly member of the House. I am at a disadvantage ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: I have allowed Shri Subramanian Swamy only.

*(Translation)*

SHRI LALU PRASAD: My name is Laku Prasad not "Yadav".

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: I am on Rule 376, Sub-sections (1) and (2)...*(Interruptions)*

*(Translation)*

SHRI LALU PRASAD: You send all party team there. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (DEORIA): Since natural calamity has occurred there and in Uttar Pradesh heavy loss has been caused due to hail storm...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI LALU PRASAD: People from all parties should be sent there...*(Interruptions)*

*(English)*

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Mr. Speaker, I have the permission of Shri Laku Yadav also.

*(Translation)*

SHRI LALU PRASAD: I am not "Lalu Yadav" I am "Lalu Prasad Yadav".

*(English)*

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Yes, Lalu Prasad Yadav.

*(Translation)*

I want favour from Lajuji.

*(English)*

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am on a point of order under Rule 376, sub-rules (1) and (2)

MR. SPEAKER: You have to address the Chair, not Shri Lalu Prasad Yadav.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: I was only making a passing reference to him. I am on a point of order to raise a very urgent matter which should have caught the attention of the House because it deals with the freedom of the Press. *The Dina Malar* is one of the most respected newspapers of Tamil Nadu. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: I will explain it. Fifty goondas...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: This is a point of order. It was an attack by the son of the Chief Minister. The hon. Minister of Home Affairs must make a statement about the attack on the office of *The Dina Malar*.

MR. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: The point of order is that the hon. Minister of Home Affairs must make a statement when the freedom of the Press...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: This will not go on record.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: The point of order is that the business before the House should be a statement from the hon. Minister of Home Affairs about the attack by the son of the Chief Minister... has attacked the office of *The Dina Malar*. There should be a CBI inquiry into it. The hon. Minister of Home Affairs should make a statement.

MR. SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: There is lawlessness in the State of Tamil Nadu. When there is lawlessness,



either you dismiss the Government or take action. The hon. Minister of Home affairs should assure the House that he will make a statement about the attack on the office of *The Dina Malar* newspaper by the son of the Chief Minister.

MR. SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI R.S.GAVAI (AMRAVATI): I have got every right...*(Interruptions)* Please bear with me for two minutes. The hon. the Prime Minister has issued a statement under the Rules of Procedure...*(Interruptions)* Please bear with me. I would say that he may not have got the correct information on the prevailing situation and the exact impact of the calamity. As far as the calamity in the country is concerned, I do not blame him but at the same time there has been a hue and cry from the hon. Members coming from West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. ...*(Interruptions)*

Hear me please. Mine is a relevant point. What I suggest is that we can make amendments. As a matter of fact, it is the moral and bounden duty that his statement ought to be circulated to the hon. Members...*(Interruptions)* I have got the right to amend it. I want to amend it, to incorporate the names of the rest of the States. I will refer to them again—Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. It should be accepted.

*[Translation]*

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): It would be better if we go on solving all the problems one by one. Just now Shri Gavai has mentioned about some states and requested that a statement should be made with regard to the condition of these states.

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV (SAMBHAL): Mr. Speaker Sir, it would be much better if Prime Minister speaks after listening to all the Members...*(Interruptions)*

*(English)*

MR. SPEAKER: The Prime Minister is on his legs. Please listen first.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA (BANKURA): Mr. Prime Minister, you listen to us first. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please be seated.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: The Prime Minister is on his legs.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: It is not good to interrupt.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav, please be seated.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please keep silence. The Prime Minister is on his legs.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: The Prime Minister is on his legs.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: You must know the procedure.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: It is not good to interrupt.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: The Prime Minister is already on his legs.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: The Prime Minister is on his legs.

*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Mr. Speaker Sir, the hon'ble Members are talking about deteriorating conditions in the country due to natural calamity. We have got some information and we will collect certain information immediately and after compiling all the details we will put it before you in the form of statement on which you can take up discussion afterwards...*(Interruptions)* You can give suggestions.

13.28 hrs.

#### INTERIM BUDGET (RAILWAY)\* 1998-99

*[Translation]*

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to place before the House the Annual Financial Statement for the Indian Railways showing the estimated receipts and expenditure for the year 1998-99 . . . *(Interruptions)* The estimates are for the whole of the financial year 1998-99 but as the time available now for discussion of the Demands for 1998-99 is very limited...*(Interruptions)* I seek from the House, for the present, only a vote on account, sufficient to cover the estimated expenditure for the first four months of the financial year...*(Interruptions)* leaving the supplies for the rest of the year to be voted separately.

#### Review of Performance in 1996-97

I shall now briefly go over the operating results of 1996-97, the last completed financial year...*(Interruptions)* Mr. Speaker, Sir, during the year 1996-97, Railway achieved a loading of 409.02 million tonnes of revenue earning freight traffic, which was 18.33 million tonnes more than the loading in 1995-96, it means growth was 4.7%...*(Interruptions)* Passenger traffic recorded a growth of 3.8%. The

\*Also placed in the Library. See No. LT-16/98.

"Excess" of receipts over expenditure improved by Rs. 201 crore over Budget. The Budget estimate for the year 1996-97 was Rs. 8,130 crore which was increased to Rs. 8,300 crore in the revised estimate...*(Interruptions)*

13.29 hrs.

*At this stage, Dr. Shafiqur Rahman Barq and some other hon. Members came and stood on the floor near the Table.*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER : Please go back to your seats.

*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : As compared to this actual expenditure incurred was Rs. 8,310 crore.

#### Revised Estimates 1997-98

For the year 1997-98, a target of 430 million tonnes of revenue earning freight traffic was laid down ... *(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER : Please go back to your seats.

*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Having loaded 387.35 million tonnes till February, 98, which is higher than the expectation target of 386.40 million tonnes up to that month, Railways are hopeful of meeting the full year's target. Alongwith this passenger traffic increased by 5%.

#### Gross Traffic Receipts

In the current financial year, the trend of earnings has been encouraging therefore in the revised estimate Rs. 1,000 cr. was increased. Since the outlook for realisation of old outstanding dues of the power sector is not encouraging...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER : Please go back to your seats.

*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Therefore it is expected that Gross Traffic Receipts will increase by only Rs. 800 crore.

#### Working Expenses

As the House is aware, Government's decision on the Fifth Pay Commission's recommendations have been implemented in 1997-98. Railways had kept a provision of Rs. 3,300 crore in the Ordinary Working Expenses for this purpose. This has been reduced to Rs. 2,694 crore in the

Revised Estimate in view of payment of a part of the arrears on this account being deferred to the next year. Taking into account certain other post-budgetary factors, mainly the hike in the price of diesel as well as electricity tariffs, higher payment of Productivity Linked Bonus, lease charges and repairs of track affected by breaches, a net reduction of Rs. 284 crore is expected. Railways have, however, had to provide for a higher pensionary outgo of Rs. 1,167 crore, over and above Rs. 2,200 cr. provided for Pension Fund in the Budget Estimate...*(Interruptions)*

13.32 hrs.

*At this stage, Dr. Shafiqur Rahman Barq and some other hon. Members went back to their seats.*

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : On the other hand, the requirement for Depreciation Reserve Fund is lower by Rs. 96 crore. With this, the total Working Expenses stand revised from Rs. 25,135 crore to Rs. 25,922 crore, an increase of Rs. 787 crore.

As a result of these variations and a marginal change in the Net Miscellaneous Receipts, the Net Revenue is higher at Rs. 3,016 crore as compared to the Budget Estimate of Rs. 3,004 crore.

A provision of Rs. 1,630 crore was made towards payment of dividend in Budget Estimate 1997-98. This has now been scaled down to Rs. 1,546 crore, resulting from certain adjustments relating to the years 1995-96 and 1996-97.

With these changes, the "Excess" of receipts over expenditure works out to Rs. 1,470 crore as against Rs. 1,374 crore anticipated in the Budget. This is being appropriated to the 'Capital Fund' and 'Development Fund'...*(Interruptions)*

*[English]*

MR. SPEAKER : First of all, you please be seated

*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRI NITISH KUMAR :

#### Annual Plan for 1997-98

The Railways' developmental programme for 1997-98 envisaged a total outlay of Rs. 8,300 crore. The Revised Estimate of Rs. 8,403 crore includes an increase of Rs. 170 crore of capital from General Exchequer and market borrowing of Rs. 370 crore, but there has been a shortfall in the private investment component.

#### Budget Estimates 1998-99

#### Gross Traffic Receipts

I shall now deal with the Budget Estimates for 1998-99. Gross Traffic Receipts for the year at the existing level

of fares and freights are estimated at Rs. 31,022 crore an increase of Rs. 2,367 crore over the Revised Estimate for the current year. The increase is based on an estimated 5% growth in passengers and a revenue earning freight traffic of 450 million tonnes, 20 million more than the 1997-98 target.

#### Ordinary Working Expenses

The estimate of Ordinary Working Expenses has been placed at Rs. 23,370 crore, representing an increase of Rs. 2,719 crore over the Revised Estimate for the current year. This will cover normal increases and arrear payments deferred to 1998-99.

To meet the higher pensionary payments as a result of the Fifth Pay Commission's recommendations, appropriation to the Pension Fund has been enhanced to Rs. 4,000 crore, which is higher than the Revised Estimate of 1997-98 by Rs. 633 crore. The contribution to Depreciation Reserve Fund is proposed to be kept at Rs. 1,500 crore.

The Total Working Expenses will amount to Rs. 28,870 crore, leaving Net Traffic Receipts of Rs. 2,152 crore. A sum of Rs. 359 crore is estimated by way of Net Miscellaneous Receipts, and thus Net Revenue would amount to Rs. 2,511 crore.

#### Financial Results 1998-99

Dividend to General Revenues for the year 1998-99 has been computed provisionally on the basis adopted for the year 1997-98. After payment of dividend of Rs. 1,756 crore to General Revenues, the "Excess" of receipts over expenditure works out to Rs. 755 crore.

#### Annual Plan 1998-99

The Annual Plan for 1998-99 has been kept tentatively at Rs. 8,300 crore. It will be my endeavour to increase the Plan outlay so as to meet the investment needs better.

Sir, rail transport is far more efficient in energy use and far more friendly to the environment than road transport. Yet there has been a continuous decline in the share of Railways in land transport. This undesirable trend needs to be reversed. There is a new interest in reviving Railways all over the world. It will be my endeavour to take all the necessary steps to strengthen the Indian Railways to enhance their role in providing efficient transport of both freight and passengers.

Sir, I deem it an honour to work under the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee ji and it is my proud privilege to head the railway family...*(Interruptions)*

What do you find objectionable in it. Infact, I would like to urge upon all the Members to continue lending support for the entire five year term. If you want to stay here for the full term, you should extend your support to the Government...*(Interruptions)*

The House will no doubt appreciate the total dedication

to duty displayed by railway employees at all levels. I am confident that the railways will continue to get the full support of the House and the railway users in achieving its goals.

13.37 hrs.

*(English)*

#### SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS

1997-98—RAILWAYS\*

MR. SPEAKER : Now, Item No. 6.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): Sir, I beg to present a statement (Hindi and English versions) showing the Supplementary Demands for Grants in respect of the Budget (Railways) for 1997-98.

13.38 hrs.

*(English)*

#### INTERIM BUDGET (GENERAL)\*\*

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): Sir, I rise to present the Interim Budget (General) for 1998-99.

This Interim Budget is being presented for the purpose of a Vote-on-Account to enable the Government to carry on its business and meet essential expenditure during the first four months of the next financial year. The Demands for Grants and the Annual Financial Statement, which are for the full financial year, will be revised and finalised at the time of presentation of the Regular Budget in a few weeks time. I shall also introduce a Finance Bill today, which merely seeks to continue the existing tax structure for a full year.

As regards the economic situation, we are concerned to note that overall economic growth has slowed to five per cent in 1997-98, agriculture has registered negative growth of two per cent, industry continues to be in the doldrums averaging only 4.6 per cent growth over the 12 months up to January 1998, and exports have recorded negative growth in dollar terms in each of the three most recent months up to January 1998, for which data are available. The bottlenecks in key infrastructure sectors are well known, the capital market has been lacklustre and the fiscal situation is significantly worse than expected.

I would like to assure the House that these trends and difficulties will be fully addressed in the Regular Budget for 1998-99 that I shall bring before the Hon'ble Members shortly. The usual Economic Survey will also be presented to the House at that time.

The Regular Budget will seek to impart the necessary

\*Also Placed in the Library. See No. LT - 17/98

\*\*Also Placed in the Library. See No. LT - 18/98

[Shri Yashwant Sinha]

stimulus to agriculture and industry, restore dynamism to exports, encourage larger flows of foreign investment in line with the National Agenda for governance, take decisive initiatives to improve the state of infrastructure, strengthen the financial system, accelerate the reform of the public sector while building a strong and transparent system for PSU disinterments, and bring about a strict fiscal discipline. It will also embody other new directions included in our National Agenda for Governance.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the external economic environment is fraught with unusual uncertainty. The East Asian crisis has swept across much of Asia in the last nine months, bringing massive economic and financial disruption to several hitherto fast growing economies. It is the inherent strength of our economy, built over decades, which has enabled us to hold our heads high and not succumb to the economic gales that have been sweeping through the Asian region. But we must remain ever watchful and vigilant and conduct our economic policies with foresight and flexibility. Only then can we be sure of achieving rapid economic growth with low inflation and external stability despite the difficult international economic scenario.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, turning briefly to the Revised Estimates for 1997-98, the most noteworthy point is major shortfalls in tax collections and disinvestment receipts. Net tax revenues for the Centre are estimated at only Rs. 99,158 crore, reflecting a drop of Rs. 14,236 crore, or a 12.6% decline over Budget Estimates. The shortfall is primarily due to much lower customs revenue on account of both lower volume and unit price of imports. The decline in excise resulted from unusually low industrial growth. Receipts from PSU disinterments are estimated to fall short of the Budget Estimates of Rs. 4,800 crore by Rs. 3,894 crore. The Revised Estimates for total expenditure are expected to exceed the Budget Estimates by only Rs. 3,069 crore. This is less than the additional expenditure of Rs. 4,432 crore incurred on account of the single item of loans to States and Union Territories against small savings collections, which have been exceptionally buoyant during the year. The net result is a deterioration of the fiscal deficit from the budget target of 4.5% of the GDP to 6.1%. However, if the increase in expenditure attributable to small savings loans is excluded, the fiscal deficit, adjusted for the increase over budget in small saving loans to States and Union Territories, would be 5.8% of GDP in 1997-98.

In regard to collections under the Voluntary Disclosure of Income Scheme (VDIS), estimated at Rs. 10,050 crore, my predecessor, Mr. Chidambaram, who is sitting here, had announced a decision to devolve to the States 77.5% of the collection under the scheme up to the end of December, 1997 amounting to a sum of Rs. 4,379 crore. With the blessings of the Prime Minister, I propose to go a step further and devolve to the States 77.5% of the Revised Estimates of VDIS collections for the full year 1997-98. As a consequence, the States will now receive an additional Rs. 3,215 crore, thus taking the total devolution on this account to Rs. 7,594 crore in the current financial year.

Furthermore, I propose to provide an additional sum of Rs. 1,000 crore by way of Additional Central Assistance to States on account of externally aided projects in order to settle all pending claims in the current financial year itself.

Taken together, these two decisions will give to the States an additional sum of Rs. 8,594 crore in the current financial year 1997-98. This is fully in accord with the commitment in our National Agenda to extend great assistance to the States.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, according to the Budget as prepared, total expenditure in 1998-99 is estimated at Rs. 2,64,988 crore against Rs. 2,35,245 crore in the current year. Of this, the gross budgetary support to the Central, State and the Union Territory Plans is placed at Rs. 84,461 crore against Rs. 60,630 crore in the current year. We propose a review the level and content of the budgetary support for our Annual Plan 1998-99 in the Regular Budget. It is our firm resolve to review the Ninth Plan and to revise the Budget Estimates so that they reflect our thinking and priorities. We propose to complete this exercise in time for the Regular Budget which will be presented shortly.

Non-Plan expenditure, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in 1998-99 is estimated to be Rs. 2,00,527 crore against Rs. 1,74,615 crore in the current year, an increase of Rs. 25,912 crore. The main reasons for increase over RE 97-98 are on account of an increase of Rs. 10,300 crore in Interest Payments, an increase of Rs. 4,747 crore in Pension, an increase of about Rs. 3,900 crore in Defence expenditure and an increase of about Rs. 1,500 crore in major subsidies.

Total non-debt receipts, including tax revenues at existing rates of taxation, are estimated at Rs. 1,68,173 crore, while total expenditure is estimated at Rs. 2,64,988 crore. The fiscal deficit emerging from these estimates for 1998-99 will be about 6% of GDP. This is clearly not acceptable and it will be our endeavour to bring down to a reasonable limit in the Regular Budget through appropriate measures.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, while it would take some time for us to formulate our specific strategies in this regard, immediate action is called for to contain the growth in establishment expenditure and initiate the process of PSU disinvestment at an early date to avoid shortfalls in receipts experienced in previous years.

Honourable Members are aware that the Tenth Finance Commission had recommended an alternative scheme for sharing of resources between the Centre and the States under which 29% of the gross proceeds of almost all Central taxes is to be assigned to the States. This recommendation has been under consideration of Government. On the basis of a consensus arrived at in the Third Meeting of the Inter-State Council held on July 17, 1997 the previous Government had decided to accept this scheme in principle. We intend to bring forward the enabling Constitution Amendment Bill to give effect to this decision which has been endorsed by all the States.

I would like to assure the Hon'ble Members of this august House that I shall make every effort in my Regular Budget to implement the economic goals enunciated in our National agenda for Governance. Economic reforms will be deepened, broadened and accelerated. Our goal is to make India an economically strong and vibrant nation which will participate in the world economy with confidence and from a position of strength. We are determined to build an India in which there is no place for hunger, poverty, unemployment and deprivation.

With these words, I commend the Budget to this august House.

13.49

[English]

SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS  
1997-98—GENERAL\*

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : I beg to present a statement (Hindi and English versions) showing the Supplementary Demands for Grants in respect of the Budget (General) for 1997-98.

13.50 hrs.

FINANCE BILL, 1998\*\*

MR. SPEAKER : Item No. 9—the Finance Minister to move for leave to introduce the Finance Bill, 1998.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to continue the existing rates of income-tax for the financial year 1998-99.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to continue the existing rates of income-tax for the financial year 1998-99."

*The motion was adopted.*

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA : I introduce the Bill.\*\*

13.52 hrs.

RE: NATURAL CALAMITIES IN WEST BENGAL,  
ORISSA AND OTHER STATES

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav, what is your problem?

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV (Sambhal) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am thankful that you have given me an opportunity to speak. I want to raise one point. Sir, you know that Hon'ble Somnath Chatterjee is a very senior leader and parliamentarian of this House. We had adopted a resolution in regard to whatever is happening in the House today as the House was specially convened for six days for this purpose. The major issue in that was not to rush to the well. This resolution was strongly supported by Shri Somnath Chatterjee, but you can see that his feelings were not respected and as a result he was compelled to express his anger (Interruptions)

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (CHANDIGARH) : He became annoyed as Mamataji was sent there...(Interruptions)

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : You will come to know about Mamataji...(Interruptions). What is Mamata. She was requesting that Mulayam Singhji should not visit Calcutta ...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please address the Chair.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : Please stop them...(Interruptions)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shri Somnath Chatterjee had said that Member of Parliament from the concerned area should have also been taken into confidence. If Hon'ble Indrajit Gupta was taken into confidence, Shri Giri should have also been taken into confidence because he is also a local Member of Parliament. Their leader Shri Somnath Chatterjee was also there. I think that the Hon. Prime Minister might have said this unknowingly otherwise he should have surely taken Shri Somnath Chatterjee into confidence. Everyone talks of transparency. My request is that you should listen to Shri Somnath Chatterjee seriously and listen to other leaders also. When the farmers of our country are ruined, the country will also be ruined. Day before yesterday, crops were completely destroyed in Uttar Pradesh. I have information about eight districts—Agra, Ferozabad, Etah, Mainpuri, Itawah, part of Kanpur, Farrukhabad, and Allahabad...(Interruptions). I am telling about entire Uttar Pradesh where crops were completely damaged due to hail storm.

[English]

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (CHANDIGARH) : Sir, what is he speaking on? Is he on a Point of Order or on a point of information? Is he speaking on West Bengal or on Uttar

\* Also Placed in the Library, See No. LT-19/98

\*\* Published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 2, dated 25.3.98

\*\*\* Introduced with the recommendation of the President.

[Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav]

Pradesh? We want to know as to what he is speaking on?  
...(Interruptions)

SHRI HARIN PATHAK (AHMEDABAD): The Prime Minister has already assured the House that he will come before the House with reports on the States which are affected by natural calamities. What else do they want from him at this stage?... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that you should listen to all the Members and Hon'ble Girji is a Member of Parliament from that area. An all party Committee including Shri Somnath Chatterjee and other leaders should be constituted on the various problems being faced by the farmers and should be reported upon following which the Hon'ble Prime Minister will look at these problems. It will be helpful to him. It will be helpful for the Prime Minister in understanding those problems and at the same time it will also help us in giving cooperation to him.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Ballia) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, not from yesterday, but for the last 15 days we are listening that the country is facing challenges and there is a need for consensus. But the beginning has been very unpleasant. No consensus can be seen anywhere. It is regretful that we start quarrelling even on an issue like natural calamity. The issue could have been resolved if the Prime Minister had listened to one or two Members. It is true that you are new to this post, but our Minister of Parliamentary Affairs is a senior Member. He is aware of the conventions of this House. If Shri Somnath Chatterjee had stood up to say something, Sharmaji should not have raised the Question of Rules. What are rules? The House will not work if you run it through rules only. It is necessary to understand each other's feelings also... (Interruptions)

SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA (Outer Delhi) : I have not raised any point.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : I was saying that if any incident has occurred in any Member's constituency, the Government should have taken him in confidence. If he was not there, his party leader should have been taken into confidence. It is Government's mistake. It is not the job of the Prime Minister. This work pertains to the department which in my opinion is the Ministry of Agriculture. I am not very sure about it. I do not know in what manner and by whom this delegation was formed. It is a grave mistake. Sometimes it is necessary to accept the mistake... (Interruptions)

SHRI HARIN PATHAK (Ahmedabad) : I did not even know about the calamity which occurred in my constituency.

[English]

I went there on my own... (Interruptions) No body has contacted me... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

Once a calamity occurred in my constituency Ahmedabad... (Interruptions)

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI (JHANSI) : Please pardon me, but it was not a mistake. You are talking of consensus but even discussion on the proposed amendment before the House could not be completed ... (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR) : Hon. Member is interrupting... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I am allowing Shri Chandra Shekhar, not you.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR : You can neither make me angry nor compel me to keep quiet by making noise in the House. I would only like to submit that the Government should accept with respect and courtesy the suggestion given by Shri Mulayam Singhji and create such an atmosphere in the House so that consensus can at least be evolved on such calamities.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, ... (Interruptions)

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA (CALCUTTA NORTH EAST): Allow us to speak... (Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR) : He has called me to speak... (Interruptions)

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, allow us also.

MR. SPEAKER : He has been allowed to speak. Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR) : Sir, I myself complimented the hon. Prime Minister for taking prompt action. This is a matter which cannot be a matter of politics. I hope not. I sincerely hope not. Now, when the hon. Prime Minister has taken the steps of sending a Central Minister immediately to go to the affected areas to personally supervise or personally inspect what has happened and the extent of damage. We appreciate it. I said it openly. I am not objecting to any particular Member going when you have decided to send Members of Parliament, obviously for the purpose of assisting the people and the Minister also. Therefore, on what basis, selection is made.

14.00 hrs.

You can send anybody you like. But if the concerned M.P. is not selected what is the message that goes?

Therefore, I had requested that this is a matter of natural calamity which should not be made a subject of politics. The selection of the hon. Members of Parliament who have gone—only one name we have got, the other name we have not got yet—shows that it has been done on political basis. Therefore, my only request was that it was graceful on the part of the Prime Minister to have accepted my request.

We have been told that we have now got an able Prime Minister. I know him from 1971, I have the good fortune of knowing both, the illustrious number one and number two Division number holders, the Prime Minister and Shri Advani. It is my great pleasure to know them. This is a matter on which he should have openly said 'yes'.

I am glad that he has consulted Shri Indrajit Gupta. But if he is trying to run this House totally ignoring the presence of the largest group from West Bengal, then, I think, the Prime Minister is committing a mistake. He should openly admit what Shri Chandra Shekhar has said. The Prime Minister has committed a mistake. Be gracious to accept that and say that he has been impressed by his immediate political motive because the Confidence Vote is yet to be taken up. That is why he is applying certain standards.

Therefore, I hope, Mr. Prime Minister, accepts that position. Of course, I cannot ask my Member to be sent by another plane. No doubt, he will go, but the question is: the facility of accompanying a Minister going there immediately is lost to the Member and everybody says: 'Look at the concern of other Members and the Member of the Constituency has no concern'. This is the way he is trying to utilise a natural calamity for his political benefit. Therefore, I cannot but protest against that...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I am allowing Shri Ajit Kumar Panja, not you.

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA : We must thank our Prime Minister for quickly sending all help to the affected areas, Orissa and West Bengal. There were no politics in it. Immediately we came to know about it, we contacted on our own. If they slip there, it is their fault. It is not anybody's fault...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. SPEAKER : Please listen to him.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : This is the consensus your partners are saying...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. SPEAKER : Please listen.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA : Sir, you please ask them to sit down. They cannot stop me...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Please understand that when Shri Somnath Chatterjee was speaking, Shri Panja heard without disturbing him. You also hear what Shri Panja is saying...*(Interruptions)*

DR. RAM CHANDRA DOME (BIRBHUM) : Those words should be withdrawn from the records...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRAMOTHES MUKHERJEE (BERHAMPORE): Shri Panja should withdraw those words...*(Interruptions)*.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (PANSKURA): Shri Indrajit Gupta is rushing to his constituency this evening...*(Interruptions)*. Earlier, the Prime Minister gave him only half an hour's notice to go. Naturally, he could not make it in half an hour...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. SPEAKER : Madam, please go to your seat. This is not good.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : I have requested you to allow me to raise this subject...*(Interruptions)*.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not good.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Please be seated. When Shri Somnath Chatterjee was speaking, Shri Panja heard him patiently. Now you must also hear him.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : This is not good. Please be seated.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ANIL BASU (ARAMBAGH) : Sir, what Shri Panja has said is unparliamentary. It should be removed from the record...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I shall go through the record. If there is anything unparliamentary, I shall remove it.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record. I have allowed Shri Panja.

*(Interruptions)\**

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing will go on record. Only what Shri Panja says will go on record.

*(Interruptions)\**

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA : Then the Prime Minister contacted Shri Indrajit Gupta who represents Midnapore. Therefore, Sir, you must make an inquiry immediately whether anybody from West Bengal has gone to the spot. I know that nobody from the Government of West Bengal, not even the Chief Minister, has gone there. Since yesterday nobody has visited the spot. But the Prime Minister took the trouble of sending his Minister there. By the normal flight, anybody could have gone there but nobody has gone. They saw the newspapers when they got up.

[Shri Ajit Kumar Panja]

I request the Prime Minister to consider giving further aid to West Bengal after getting a report from the Minister and Shrimati Mamata Banerjee.

[Translation]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I associate myself with the views expressed by my friend Shri Chandra Shekhar and Shri Somnath Chatterjee...*(Interruptions)*. The issues regarding natural calamities should not be politicized at all nor we have any such intention to do so. If you find any politics in whatever has happened then it is my fault and I do admit it.

I asked the Minister of Agriculture to visit the affected areas immediately. At that time I had an impression that Shri Indrajit Gupta is representing Midnapore and therefore I contacted him. I would not have contacted him if I wanted to get political mileage out of it. Had I known that four other members are also associated with that area, I could have sent them also. I am ready to make arrangements for them if they want to visit the area. It has not been done deliberately...*(Interruptions)*

The Member from Balasore and Kumari Mamata Banerjee has come. She said that if the Minister of Agriculture was going there, she would like to accompany him.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : How she came to know that a special plane was going there?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I told her that she may go but...*(Interruptions)*. Mr. Speaker, Sir, now I would like to say something to Shri Chandra Shekhar...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI ANIL BASU (ARAMBAGH) : Sir, I represent a part of Midnapore district. You have not informed me...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA (CALCUTTA-NORTH EAST): Sir, let Shri Somnath Chatterjee go with the hon. Minister of Home Affairs, Shri L.K. Advani now...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : There is total chaos and I am unable to know as to what is being spoken and by whom...*(Interruptions)* Please sit down. *(Interruptions)* Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I was saying that idea of playing politics or ignoring someone deliberately has never crossed my mind. I have been in opposition for the last 40 years and my conduct has been above board and unobjectionable. I would like to know as to whether it is essential to rush

to the well of the house or to go to hon. Speaker's podium for expressing views in this House. Every Member should be given an opportunity to make his point. If Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav or Shri Laloo Prasad Yadav want to say something, they should be given a chance first of all. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I seek your direction. The details of the natural calamity in the state, loss incurred due to it, amount of relief required for it and other measures to be taken to tackle the situation are being collected. It will be presented in the House if you so direct. I am prepared to convene an all party meeting for it and I will abide by whatever is decided there.

[English]

SHRI INDER KUMAR GUJRAL (JALANDHAR) : Sir, I want to commend and appreciate what the hon. Prime Minister has said. I think this is an attitude which will help the House to run better. I want to thank him for that...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR (BARAMATI) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, regarding this calamity, the problem which was raised in the House, more importance, of course, was given to West Bengal and Orissa and that is correct also. But there are also problems in certain other States like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. The hon. Prime Minister has given an assurance that he would collect the information and make a statement in the House. I think this Session will continue up to Tuesday. If we are able to get that statement before Tuesday, it will be appreciated...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : All your senior Members have spoken.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SANSUMA KHUNGGUR BWISHWMUTHIARI (KOKRAJHAR) : Sir, I would like to add one sentence. I request you to include our worst drought affected 'Bodoland area' also in your list of natural calamity affected areas. Therefore, I request you to send a special team to the Bodoland area for an on the spot study. This is my humble request to the hon. Prime Minister and to this august House...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Prime Minister has heard about the serious situation. He will very shortly be making a statement on this. No further clarification is required.

The House is adjourned to meet again at 11 A.M. tomorrow 26th March, 1998.

14.15 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, March 26, 1998 / Chaitra 5, 1920 (Saka)*