

ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT—15 FEBRUARY 1956

Lok Sabha	—	First Lok Sabha
Session	—	First Session of the Year
President of India	—	Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Vice-President of India	—	Dr. S. Radhakrishnan
Prime Minister of India	—	Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru
Speaker, Lok Sabha	—	Shri G.V. Mavalankar

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,

I am happy to address you once again and welcome you to the new session of Parliament. The past year has been one of considerable endeavour and achievement for us, both in the domestic and the international spheres. Our people and Parliament may, with reason, look upon them and their own labours with satisfaction and cautious optimism. There have been, however, events at home and abroad, and certain developments which must cause us apprehension. These we must meet with courage, patience and redoubled efforts and remind ourselves that there is room neither for complacency nor for despair.

Our relations with foreign countries continue to be friendly. During the year, greater understanding and co-operation have developed with many of them, and there is also increasing appreciation of the approach that we strive to pursue. We have had distinguished visitors from many countries visiting us, including many Heads of States and Governments, Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers, and we have been happy to welcome them in our midst. My Prime Minister paid official and goodwill visits to the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Austria, Yugoslavia, Italy and Egypt.

We were deeply grieved at the death of His Majesty King Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah of Nepal, in whom our country has lost a good friend and Nepal an enlightened and courageous king. The recent visit of His Majesty King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah and his gracious consort has further cemented the warm and friendly relations between the Indian and Nepalese peoples. I wish His Majesty a progressive and prosperous reign.

With Pakistan, negotiations to renew rail traffic between India and West Pakistan and to liberalise the Indo-Pakistan visa system have been successfully concluded, while negotiations in regard to the canal water

dispute are being continued. Agreement has also been reached in regard to moveable property of evacuees.

The exodus of population from East Pakistan* into India has lately increased in numbers and causes us much concern. This is a human problem of great magnitude, with tragic significance to large numbers of people. The State of West Bengal already heavily burdened, has to shoulder this additional burden. My Government will continue to hope that the Pakistan Government will take appropriate measures to alleviate the circumstances which lead to this exodus.

My Government regret that, inspite of our peaceful approach to the solution of the problem of the Portuguese colonies in India, the Portuguese Government have made no response and persist in their methods of colonialism, suppression and terrorism. My Government deeply regret the reference made by the Secretary of State of the United States to the Portuguese conquests abroad as 'provinces' of Portugal and the further implication that they are an integral part of the country of Portugal itself.

The Conference of the countries of Asia and Africa at Bandung, at which twenty-nine countries were represented has been hailed not only as an outstanding event in Asia, but is also recognised as one of world importance. The Bandung Declaration, which is a historic document and to which the world has paid much attention, commits the participating countries to the outlook and policy of peaceful approach for the solution of all problems and for the furtherance of world peace and co-operation.

In the continent of Africa, my Government hope that self-government and independence will soon be an established fact in the Gold Coast and that that country will be enabled to become an equal partner both in the Commonwealth and the United Nations. Somewhat similar developments are taking place in some other parts of West Africa, and my Government hope that this progress will gather momentum and that the example will spread to the other parts of Africa now under colonial rule. We welcome also similar developments in Malaya.

We welcome the emergence of the Sudan as a free and independent Republic and we pay tribute to the notable and historic part played both by Britain and Egypt in this development. My Government have established diplomatic relations with the Republic of the Sudan. We have also concluded a treaty of friendship with Egypt.

My Government have declared their sympathy with the struggles of peoples who strive for their liberation from colonial rule and, more particularly, in respect of the peoples of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. It is the firm belief of my Government that in the peaceful approach and negotiations for reaching agreed settlements is alone to be found the right and hopeful way for the solution of these problems.

* Now known as Bangladesh.

The recent session of the United Nations has been notable for breaking the deadlock in regard to the greater universality of its membership. Sixteen new nations have been admitted. We are particularly happy that among these are our close neighbours, Nepal and Ceylon*, as well as Cambodia, Laos, Libya and Jordan. It is a matter of deep regret, however, that Japan and Mongolia still await entry into that organisation. My Government will use their best endeavours to assist in resolving this problem, and also look forward to the admission of the Sudan in the near future.

My Government regret that the progress achieved as a result of the efforts of last year to bring about negotiations and to resolve differences between the United States and China has not made much headway, and observe with concern that the alternative to a negotiated settlement is fraught with grave possibilities. My Government will continue to use their best endeavours to advance the cause of peaceful negotiations.

In Indo-China, the work of the International Commissions in regard to supervision and control has been reasonably satisfactory, despite certain incidents. The political solutions agreed to at Geneva by the great Powers, as well as the parties concerned in Indo-China itself, however, stand challenged in respect of Vietnam and have encountered serious difficulties in Laos. The Commission is confronted with this problem even in its tasks of supervision and control. My Government hope that the parties concerned and the two co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference, as well as the other powers involved, will use their best efforts not merely to maintain the armistice, but to further real political settlements which will contribute to the welfare of those countries and the stability of Asia and remove the menace of conflict, the bounds of which it is not easy to foresee.

In the Far East and Asia generally, the continued exclusion of China from the United Nations and the trade and other embargoes and discriminations imposed against her, make for instability and conflict. My Government will try their utmost, in common with like-minded governments, both at the United Nations and outside, to help remedy this situation which continues to be perhaps the gravest threat to world peace.

The world situation, as a whole has shown considerable improvement during the year, as a result of various developments and conferences and notably the Conference of the Heads of four Governments at Geneva. We regret that this progress has not been continued and there has been some deterioration. No actual progress has been made in respect of disarmament or the allaying of the hostilities and fears of the cold war. Our own country continues to have friendly relations with all countries, but this deterioration in the world situation has had adverse results in the development of peaceful relations and co-operation in our part of the world also.

* Now known as Sri Lanka.

More particularly, the policy of military pacts, based upon balance of power and mutual suspicion and fear, has led to deterioration in Western Asia, created division in the Arab world and resulted in the building up of armaments in Western Asia. This causes us concern even on our near frontiers. We deeply regret the conclusion of the Baghdad Pact as we did that of the SEATO.

The period of our first Five Year Plan will soon come to an end and my Government have been actively engaged in preparing the second Five-Year Plan. The success of the first Plan has produced confidence in our people and has laid the foundations for a more rapid growth of the national economy. The targets of the first Plan have been in many cases exceeded and the national income has risen by 18 per cent. Industrial production has increased by 43 per cent and agricultural production by 15 per cent. It is particularly satisfactory that the production of foodgrains has increased by about 20 per cent, even though there have been disastrous floods in North India and cyclones caused havoc in the south of India. I should like to pay a tribute to the work done by Government, and even more so by the people themselves, in repairing the damage caused by these calamities.

Our objective is to establish a socialist pattern of society and, more particularly, to increase the country's productive potential in a way that will make possible progressively faster development. The question of providing more employment is of vital importance. Special stress has been laid on enlarging the public sector and, more especially, on developing basic and machine-making industries. Three new major iron and steel plants and a plant for the manufacture of heavy electrical machinery have been decided upon. It is proposed to carry out mineral surveys on an extensive scale so as to discover and exploit the potential resources of the country. With a view to creating employment as well as the production of many types of consumer goods, reliance will be placed on labour-intensive methods of production and, more particularly, village and cottage industries. The Community Projects and the National Extension Service have already produced revolutionary changes in many of our rural areas. These will be continued and expanded and, it is hoped, that by the end of the second Plan period, they will cover nearly the whole of our rural area.

The second Plan is more ambitious than the first Five Year Plan and involves a far greater effort on the part of our people. We have a long way to go before we reach our objective of a socialist pattern of society and the national income has been raised to an adequate level and there is equal opportunity for all. But we are well set on the road to progress. The basic criterion for determining our lines of advance must always be social gain and the progressive removal of inequalities. We have arrived at one stage of our journey and we are now going to embark upon another and

more fateful one. The progress we have made during the past years gives us satisfaction and a sense of self-reliance and hope for the future. But our capacity to progress as well as to make any useful contribution to world peace and co-operation depends upon our economic strength and our unity. It depends on our sense of nationhood and our devotion to the basic ideals and principles which were laid down for us by the Father of the Nation. Without that indomitable sense of national unity and that spirit of dedication to the common cause, which enabled us to achieve independence, we can neither attain progress nor serve the larger causes of the world.

The targets of the second Five Year Plan include: new irrigation of 21 million acres, additional 10 million tons of foodgrains, an increase in power generation by 3.4 million kilowatts, an increase in the production of coal by 23 million tons so as to reach the target of 60 million tons in 1960, an increase by 3.3 million tons of finished steel, 5.2 million tons of cement, and an additional 1.7 million tons of fertilizers. It is expected that as a result of the new schemes, additional employment will be provided for 10 million persons in industry and agriculture.

Recent events in some parts of India have caused me great distress, as they must have pained all of you also. In our legitimate love of our languages some of us have forgotten for the moment that this great land is our common heritage and our common motherland. The reorganisation of States is an important matter and we must apply all our wisdom and tolerance to it; but, in the larger perspective of India and of India's future, it is a small matter what administrative boundaries we prescribe for a State. Above all, there can be no progress for our country if we do not adhere to non-violence and tolerance and to the basic integrity which makes a people great. We have witnessed, in recent years, great achievements by our people. We have also witnessed some of our old failings still coming in our way and encouraging the spirit of separateness and intolerance. Many a time in the past, we have had to face and have overcome severe crises, and again we are on our trial as a nation and as a people. We shall succeed only by adherence to our principles and ideals. I earnestly trust that you will consider these matters in a spirit of broad tolerance, always keeping in view the greater good of this great country of ours which we cherish and wish to serve. I hope also that, whatever Parliament, in its wisdom, decides will be willingly accepted by all our people.

As you are aware, the old Imperial Bank of India has been converted into a State bank and my Government, after careful consideration, have decided to nationalise the life insurance business. As a preliminary step and in order to safeguard the interests of the policyholders during the interim period, an Ordinance was issued last month vesting in the Central Government the management of life insurance business. A Bill will soon be

placed before Parliament to convert this Ordinance into an Act. I have no doubt that this step will prove to be in the interests of the public as well as of insurance and will be a step towards the socialist ideals we have before us.

My Government attach importance to the reorganisation of rural economy and to the development of co-operatives, both in agriculture and in small-scale industries. Legislation for the purpose of organising agricultural marketing, processing, warehousing and production through co-operatives will be introduced in Parliament.

My Government will introduce a Bill in regard to the reorganisation of States. There are a number of Bills pending before Parliament, some of which have been considered by Select Committees. There will be legislation to amend the lists of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the light of the recommendations of the Backward Classes Commission and their examination by my Government. Legislative proposals in regard to the levy of sales tax on inter-State transactions and on essential goods, as recommended by the Taxation Enquiry Commission, will also be placed before Parliament.

Three Ordinances, which have been promulgated since the last session of Parliament, will be placed before Parliament. These are:—

- (1) The Representation of the People (Amendment) Ordinance, 1955;
- (2) The Life Insurance (Emergency Provisions) Ordinance, 1956; and
- (3) The Sales Tax Laws Validation Ordinance, 1956.

A statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the Government of India for the financial year 1956-57 will be laid before you.

We shall celebrate this year a very significant event. Two thousand five hundred years ago, one of the greatest sons of India, the Buddha, attained *parinirvana* leaving a deathless memory and an eternal message. That living message is with us still in all its truth and vitality. At no time in the history of the world was it needed more than now when we are confronted by the terrible threat of the atomic and hydrogen bombs. May this message of tolerance and compassion of the Buddha be with you in your labours.