

## ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT—23 FEBRUARY 1984

<b>Lok Sabha</b>	—	<b>Seventh Lok Sabha</b>
<b>Session</b>	—	<b>First Session of the Year</b>
<b>President of India</b>	—	<b>Giani Zail Singh</b>
<b>Vice-President of India</b>	—	<b>Shri M. Hidayatullah</b>
<b>Prime Minister of India</b>	—	<b>Smt. Indira Gandhi</b>
<b>Speaker, Lok Sabha</b>	—	<b>Dr. Bal Ram Jakhar</b>

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

It gives me pleasure to welcome you to this first session of Parliament in 1984 and to extend to you my best wishes for the successful completion of the budgetary and legislative business ahead.

In the current year the economy has made impressive recovery and progress overcoming the adverse effects of widespread failure of rains. Agricultural production is expected to grow by 9 per cent as against a decline of 4 per cent in the previous year. The production of foodgrains is likely to exceed the target of 142 million tonnes, compared to the actual production of 128.4 million tonnes in 1982-83 and the previous best record of 133.3 million tonnes. The buoyancy in agricultural production reflects the soundness of the strategies and programmes followed over the years. The irrigation potential, which increased by 2.34 million hectares in 1982-83, is expected to increase further by 2.37 million hectares in 1983-84. Special efforts have been made to improve the utilisation of the potential so created. The high yielding varieties programme has continued to expand and the 1983-84 coverage is expected to be 52 million hectares. Fertiliser consumption during 1983-84 will be well above the Plan target.

Special attention is being paid to dryland farming; 4,246 micro watersheds have been identified for adoption of new technologies which will help the poorest rural communities. A centrally sponsored scheme for assisting small and marginal farmers was also launched in 1983-84.

The recovery of the industrial economy and the improvement of the infrastructure have maintained good tempo. Coal production has shown steady improvement after September and the output during 1983-84 will be close to 140 million tonnes. During the first nine months of 1983-84, power

generation has grown by about 5 per cent over the previous year. The production of crude oil, which was 10.5 million tonnes in 1980-81 and 21.06 million tonnes in 1982-83, is expected to increase further to 26 million tonnes in 1983-84. Special efforts have been made to maintain railway freight at a level higher than the previous year's. Port capacity is being expanded and the total traffic handled by the major ports in 1983-84 is expected to be an all-time-high of over 101 million tonnes.

The growth of the industrial sector, which was sluggish in the first half of the year, improved in the second half and overall industrial growth rate of 4.5 per cent is likely in 1983-84. The manufacturing sector has performed well; textiles, engineering and cement industries have shown substantial improvement.

The industrial relations situation also continued to be satisfactory during the year, in spite of various stresses and strains in different parts of the country. The common worker has responded to the Government's call to maintain the momentum in economic development, which is reflected in increased production.

The growth rate of GNP this year is expected to be 6 to 7 per cent, as compared with only 1.8 per cent in 1982-83. In the first four years of the Sixth Plan, the average growth rate of GNP will be about 5.4 per cent. The country can take legitimate pride in this achievement.

The price situation has caused us anxiety. On January 7, 1984, the annual rate of inflation reached 10.4 per cent. The inflationary pressures on the economy largely reflect the low growth of output on the economy in 1982-83 due to the drought. A number of measures to counteract these pressures and to bring down inflation have been taken. These include: incentives for increasing production of foodgrains, oilseeds and pulses; the expansion and strengthening of the public distribution system; a vigorous procurement drive; timely marginal augmentation of domestic supplies through imports; incentives for increasing industrial production; and enforcement of fiscal and monetary discipline aimed at reduction of excess liquidity in the system. The record crop of 1983-84 and the continuing improvement in the infrastructure and the industrial sector will help in bringing down the rate of inflation in the months ahead. The Government have also taken several steps to curtail expenditure while maintaining the stimulus to production, efficiency and full utilisation of capacity.

The situation regarding our external payments has improved. The trade gap is expected to decline for the second successive year. During April-October 1983, exports (excluding oil) grew by 9.9 per cent compared to the same period of 1982-83, and the value of imports (net of oil exports) declined by 2.5 per cent. The policy of building production capacities in critical sectors and reducing bulk imports has yielded dividends. Another

encouraging factor is the substantial improvement in the flow of funds from Indians abroad.

As our foreign exchange reserves have increased, the Government have decided voluntarily not to make any further drawals under the Extended Fund Facility with the International Monetary Fund after the current year. Out of the total SDR 5 billion we are utilising only 3.9 billion, thus making SDR 1.1 billion available to the IMF to assist other developing countries. Our people can be proud of the success of our external adjustment policies.

Vigorous implementation of the Twenty-Point Programme, with its emphasis on anti-poverty measures, is transforming the condition of the rural poor. Under the Integrated Rural Development Programme, 9 million rural families, including 3.2 million families belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, have been assisted in the first three years of the Sixth Plan. The total outlay on this programme during the first three years has been Rs. 22,530 million. In the current year another 3 million families are being helped. Targets to generate additional employment under the National Rural Employment Programme were fully achieved during the first three years of the Plan and the progress during the current year is satisfactory. A new Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme was launched on August 15, 1983. Rs. 6000 million have been allocated for it. There has been excellent response also to the new programme of providing self employment to the educated unemployed. A target of assisting 2.5 lakh educated persons has been set for 1983-84.

Honourable Members of Parliament are aware of the achievements of Indian Science in 1983-84. On April 17, 1983, the Rohini satellite was placed in a near earth orbit. INSAT-1B was successfully launched on August 30, 1983. Since October 15, 1983 it has been serving our telecommunication, television, radio and meteorology programmes. A large expansion of television services has been planned to increase coverage of population from 23 per cent in 1983-84 to 70 per cent by 1984-85. India has signed the Antarctica Treaty and has become the fifteenth consultative member State. So far three expeditions to Antarctica have been organised and a regular station established. For the first time two women scientists have gone to that continent. We have registered ourselves with the International Sea-bed Authority for a pioneer area for extensive survey of polymetallic nodules in the central Indian Ocean. The first unit of the Madras Atomic Power Station, which was designed and fabricated indigenously, attained criticality on July 2, 1983 and has been operating at power levels up to 200 MW.

Parliament has recently approved the National Health Policy which lays stress on preventive, promotive and rehabilitative aspects of health care. The core of the policy lies in community participation and the provision of health services through primary health centres to millions of families in the

far-flung rural areas. Vigorous measures are being pursued for control of tuberculosis, leprosy and blindness. India's efforts in family planning received international recognition when our Prime Minister was given the United Nations Population Award at a special ceremony held on September 30, 1983, in New York. An all-time-high rate of around 25.9 per cent has been achieved in couple protection. The number of acceptors of various family planning methods had increased by 15 per cent in April-December 1983 over the corresponding period of the previous year.

In education the focus of attention continued to be on universalising elementary education in the age group of 6-14, with emphasis on girl's education, and on eradicating adult illiteracy by 1990. Taking advantage of the growth of television and radio, a vigorous programme of non-formal education has been planned. In higher education, it has been our effort to improve the functioning of universities and institutions of higher technology. The work of the two commissions set up to study the role of teachers has made progress.

A National Council of Arts has been established under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister which will formulate policies to improve the national endeavour in various fields of cultural development and conservation of our heritage. A National Book Development Council has also been set up for the development of our book industry.

The country can achieve sustained progress only in a climate of harmony and determination to resist any threats to its unity and integrity. We can ill afford to ignore the harm done by disruptive activities of communal and secessionist elements, violent agitations and systematic efforts to denigrate the many-sided achievements of our people. Together, these trends in our body politic are weakening national cohesion. Some internal as well as external forces are at work to undermine India's political and social stability.

In today's complex international situation, it is essential to intensify our vigilance to preserve our economic and political independence. Every patriotic citizen must cooperate with the Government in putting down forces that seek to divide the people on the basis of caste, creed, region or language. At the recent meeting of the National Integration Council there was a heartening consensus, cutting across differences of political outlook and ideology, that the fabric of national unity must be strengthened and the sense of Indianness promoted. There is agreement amongst most parties against the use of violence in support of agitations and the harbouring of anti-social elements in religious places. The use of places of worship by criminals affects their sanctity and harms the interests of the nation; apart from bringing a bad name to religion. I urge Honourable Members to convert this growing feeling into a national programme to bind different parties in the country and different sections of our people into a strong and vibrant national entity.

In Assam, the State Government have made strenuous efforts to promote peace and stability. This endeavour has been widely supported by the public who have realised that violence leads only to social and economic dislocation on a large scale. Tribunals have started working to facilitate a resolution of the foreigners' issue. Firm measures have also been taken to check illegal immigration. I trust Honourable Members will help in the process of reconciliation.

Punjab has witnessed tragic violence against innocent persons. Some forces have sought to weaken the centuries old fraternal bonds between communities. It is however heartwarming that the majority of the people, irrespective of the community to which they belong have refused to be misled by the sinister propaganda of hate let loose. It is imperative to restore normalcy and peace in that State. The Government have always been anxious that the problems in Punjab be solved through dialogue between all concerned.

A distressing development is the recent spread of communal violence to Haryana. I hope that peace will soon be restored in the affected areas.

The Government have been seriously concerned over the acceleration of the activities of communal and anti-national elements which constitute a serious threat to the security and integrity of the country. The dastardly assassination of an Indian diplomat in the United Kingdom by a gang of terrorists who claim to represent a secessionist movement in Jammu & Kashmir has emphasised the need for vigilance and preparedness on our part. The wider repercussions of such developments should be kept in mind.

Our polity has sufficient strength and resilience to overcome these difficulties. The health of our democratic institutions is sound. The Indian people have time and again shown their determination to protect their hard-won freedom and unity. It is up to us to harness their unbounded energy and idealism for the strengthening of the nation.

The international situation is disturbing. The arms race has continued unabated with the global expenditure on armaments exceeding \$ 600 billion annually. Disarmament negotiations have not registered any progress. The talks between the USA and the Soviet Union on the limitation of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces have been suspended. The prospect of redressing economic disparities is equally bleak.

The security environment in our own region has worsened. The militarisation of the Indian Ocean area continues. The induction of highly sophisticated weapons in our neighbourhood causes concern. We prefer to spend our scarce resources on development, but we cannot afford to be blind to our defence requirements. In spite of this build up all around us,

we have persevered in our policy of seeking friendship with all our neighbours. We should like the Government of Pakistan to respond positively to our desire for better relations and our proposals for friendship, peace and cooperation and to take steps to curb the propaganda directed against us. The ethnic violence in Sri Lanka, in which Indian nationals and Tamils and others of Indian origin suffered heavy casualties and loss of property, naturally caused deep concern to the entire country. It is gratifying that the Sri Lanka Government accepted our offer of good offices to facilitate a viable political settlement. We hope that the All-Parties Conference will lead to a lasting and satisfactory solution. Efforts aimed at the normalisation of relations with China, including the settlement of the boundary question are continuing. A number of visits have been exchanged and discussions held with the countries of the region with a view to resolving outstanding problems and further improving bilateral relations. A positive development was the launching of an integrated programme of South Asian Regional Cooperation. We were privileged to have the King of Bhutan as our chief guest on Republic Day in this year.

An event of high significance in 1983 was the Seventh Conference of Non-Aligned Countries in New Delhi. The Conference reaffirmed the continued relevance and validity of the policy of non-alignment. The Prime Minister, as Chairperson of the Movement has already taken a number of initiatives to promote peace, disarmament and economic cooperation. The most significant initiative was the organisation of informal consultations at summit level in New York at the time of the UN General Assembly. These consultations were widely acclaimed as having contributed to a useful process of dialogue on some of the critical issues of the day. Another step was the sending of a non-aligned ministerial group to West Asia in connection with the developments with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. The Government firmly adhere to the principled policy of extending every possible support to the PLO and to liberation movements in South Africa and Namibia. We also played host to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in November. It brought together Heads of the Government belonging to industrialised as well as developing countries and gave new support to initiatives for peace and international cooperation.

The tradition of friendly cooperation with the Soviet Union and the Socialist countries is growing. We were deeply grieved at the passing away of Mr. Yuri Andropov, the General Secretary of the CPSU and President of USSR. The Prime Minister flew to Moscow to convey India's sympathy to the Soviet people in their sorrow. She had a useful meeting with Mr. Konstantin Chernenko, the new General Secretary of the CPSU, at which the desire to Strengthen mutual relations was reiterated.

The Prime Minister had a useful exchange of views with President Reagan in New York. Preparations are under way for the holding of Festivals of India in the United States and France. Our relations with the countries

of Western Europe were further strengthened by various high-level visits in both directions.

I paid State visits to Czechoslovakia, Qatar and Bahrain. The Prime Minister visited Yugoslavia, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Austria, Cyprus and Greece. She also met the President of France in Paris. In addition to the participation of Heads of State/Government at the NAM Summit and CHOGM, we also had the privilege of playing host to a number of distinguished visitors from abroad. Queen Elizabeth II combined a State visit to India with the opening of the CHOGM. The President of Bulgaria, the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, the President of the Republic of Maldives and the Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia were other distinguished guests. These visits have helped strengthen the friendly ties and cooperation between India and these countries.

Honourable Members, the Republic is passing through a period of stress. Important national tasks require steadfast devotion on the part of its public servants and people's representatives. We must give more to the nation than we take from it. A re-dedication to national ideals is needed so that all of us may give our best to the cause of national unity and progress.

I wish Honourable Members all success in their strenuous endeavours that lie ahead.

Jai Hind.