

## LOK SABHA DEBATES

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Friday, May 24, 1996/ Jyaistha 3, 1918 (Saka)

(The Lok Sabha met at Thirty Two  
Minutes past Twelve of the Clock)

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

[English]

#### MEMBERS SWORN

MR. SPEAKER : Now Members who have not already taken oath or affirmation will take oath or affirmation.

Shri Anand Mohan (Sheohar)

Shri Gyan Singh (Shahdol)

12.34 hrs.

[English]

#### PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

SECRETARY-GENERAL : I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the President's Address\* (in English and Hindi) to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 24th May, 1996.

#### President's Address

[Translation]

Honourable Members,

It gives me great pleasure to address both Houses of Parliament at this first session after the eleventh general election to the Lok Sabha. I extend my warm felicitations to the Members of the new Lok Sabha.

The general election, just concluded, has demonstrated the democratic credentials of the country. The nation and the world have witnessed the majesty of the democratic process in India. The recent general election was organized with efficiency and despatch. Our people participated in large numbers and exercised their sovereign right in electing their representatives. Once again, India has demonstrated the strong, vibrant and enduring nature of her democratic ethos. Government will fully honour the mandate implicit in the result of the election. The present session of Parliament should enable the House of the People to determine whether it has confidence in the Council of Ministers.

\* The President delivered the Address in Hindi. Also Placed in Library. See No. LT-2/96

The country stands at the crossroads of history. As the century comes to a close and the millennium turns, our destiny as a strong and a powerful nation beckons us. The Government is conscious of our common responsibility to fulfil these historic tasks. Our endeavour should be to strive for a wholesome consensus on all vital national issues.

Among our primary tasks is that of ensuring to the State its due honour, prestige and strength. The basic institutions devised by the founding fathers with a view to providing good governance have to be strengthened. This may necessitate appropriate reforms in our polity and governance.

Providing clean and efficient administration is the need of the hour and the Government must commit itself to this goal. Probity and accountability have to be the key norms of public administration. Due propriety, promptitude and effectiveness should characterize every measure : administrative, legislative and political.

The deficiencies in our electoral processes are to be attended to. The matter has been pending for long and we can ill-afford any further delay. A large number of suggestions have been made from time to time. On the basis of the wealth of material available and otherwise, necessary reforms will be taken up urgently. The prime objectives would be that the use of money power in the electoral process is eliminated, accountability of political parties is ensured and unfair practices are removed.

An in-depth review of our decision making processes is another field which requires immediate attention. The primary task is to reduce as much as possible the scope of arbitrary decision making by ensuring that our process are made simpler and more transparent. For a meaningful implementation of such a programme, we will have to provide for expeditious means for speedy disposal of public grievances.

Government is committed to uphold the prestige and independence of the judiciary. A comprehensive examination of the work methods and environment, emoluments and conditions of service of the subordinate judiciary is being undertaken by the First National Judicial Pay Commission. Government will facilitate its work with a view to ensuring speedy submission of its report.

Every effort will be made to reduce the arrears in the Courts through the spread of modern management techniques and expeditious filling of the vacancies of judges.

Government is conscious of the need to improve the welfare of Central Government employees. The Fifth Pay Commission is currently looking into their emoluments, structure and service conditions. Since the final report of the Commission is likely to take