

LOK SABHA

Friday, December 13, 1996/Agrahayana 22,  
1918 (Saka)

(The Lok Sabha met at Two Minutes Past  
Eleven of the Clock)

[Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair]

RE: AGREEMENT SIGNED AT WTO  
MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE AT SINGAPORE

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly) : What has happened in Singapore yesterday? There is a total reversal of the position of the Government of India declared here and also outside. We were assured that in respect of labour standards, MTA and also importers, the Government has taken a firm position that they will never surrender to the pressures being brought by United States and other nations. But today reports are coming that there is a total reversal of the position. We are proud that we have taken a firm stand in respect of CTBT. Now we find that we have surrendered to the pressures of the United States at the cost of our sovereignty, economy and exports.

There should be a discussion on this matter and the Government should respond. The Finance Minister and the Industry Minister are here. They should respond. What is the position of the Government on this matter?...(Interruptions)

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dumdum) : It is going to be one world of the multi-nationals only and, therefore, a discussion on this matter is a must...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES (Nalanda) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it must be taken for discussion but it is to be signed today. We have taken this matter to the Government of India. The Forum of Parliamentarians on Intellectual Property held several meetings here. The meeting was also held with the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Minister of Finance. The hon. Commerce Minister who has gone Singapore to sign this treaty was also present at that time. We were clearly and categorically told that it would not be signed on the basis of any condition. If you go through the today's newspaper, you will find the evidence of such assurance since Tejendra Khanna States from there that he had again consulted the Government of India. The media persons from India asked him whether he had suddenly changed his stand? Sir, 1989 is again being repeated...(Interruptions) When Indian representatives were discussing in Punta del Este in 1947, the same thing had happened.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it will be signed there within one hour. The Government must do something if it wants to save its prestige and future of the country and does not want to hand over the country's interest in the hands of Multi-National Companies. This matter is not going to wait even till Question Hour since the future of the country is in danger...(Interruptions). All this happened in 1989 and 1987 and it is simply repetition of the history...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Let them make a statement today...(Interruptions)

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : The whole nation is concerned about this.

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : We have experience it that there is no need to accept it...(Interruptions) Who has given you right to mortgage the country...(Interruptions) The hon. Minister should reply as to why it is going to be signed when it was assured earlier that it would not be signed...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : It is a very important matter. The Finance Minister is here. Let him clarify the position...(Interruptions)

LT. GENERAL PRAKASH MANI TRIPATHI (Deoria) : This is a total turn around in the stated position of the Government of India...(Interruptions) What the Commerce Secretary has stated in Singapore is a total turn around of what has been stated here...(Interruptions) It is a very serious matter.

[Translation]

VAIDYA DAUDAYAL JOSHI (Kota) : The Government has surrendered before the MNCs...(Interruptions). The Government has marred the pride of the country...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : They should either deny or confirm it.

[Translation]

SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE (Ratnagiri) : Please, suspend the question Hour and instruct the hon. Minister to reply...(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : Does the present Government continue the policy of the previous Government? Now, the Finance Minister is here. Let him clarify the position...(Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. SATYA NARAYAN JATIA (Ujjain) : The hon. Financial Minister should tell the actual position ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Mr. Minister, do you want to say something?

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : It is a very important matter. It has got to be discussed now itself...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH (Balia) (Bihar) : The hon. Minister is giving clarification. Please let him speak...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

LT. GENERAL SHRI PRAKASH MANI TRIPATHI (Deoria) : This is a very serious matter. This is a turn around of what has already been stated here. The Secretary goes to Singapore, takes a total turn around and says something else...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Let us hear the Minister

LT. GENERAL SHRI PRAKASH MANI TRIPATHI : We have no information about it. The point is that the information is not important. The important thing is the turn around...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Let us hear the Minister.

[Translation]

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : Did it all happen as per the hon. Minister will...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : When the Minister wants to reply, you do not allow him. What can he do?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : Sir, the brief to the delegation was very clear, that we have a very clear and strong position on issues relating to labour standards and on the proposed educative process on the multilateral agreement on investment. The delegation was led by the Commerce Minister. There are newspaper reports about the statements made by the Commerce Minister in the Plenary. And, I think the hon. Members, when they get to read the text of the statement, will be fully satisfied that the position taken by India was completely consistent with what was discussed here and what was discussed or disclosed to either this House or to Members of Parliament individually or in groups. The text of the statements made by the Commerce Minister will clearly uphold the fact that we took a strong and categorical position.

It appears again that the situation was evolving. Many countries which stood by the position - you advocated that when you were in the previous Government - in the Conference held here and Harare, have changed their position. This was something which one has to take into account. The newspaper reports have also referred to the letter, for example, of the Malaysian Minister a few days ago to the Commerce Minister and the position has changed.

So, the Leader of the Delegation and the Delegation has continued to make strong statements both in the committees as well as in the plenaries. The final text of the Singapore Minister's Meeting is not available to me in any event so far I have not seen the text as of yesterday. I do not believe that the text has come. The Commerce Minister is expected to return soon and I am sure that the Commerce Minister will make a full statement on the position taken by India, the situation as it evolved and the final declaration adopted in Singapore. I think, the hon. Members should await the Commerce Minister's statement on the matter because only he can give a full picture of what has happened.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : He has indicated it because other people are deluding their intentions. This is what is indicative of it...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Let us hear Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : After hearing the hon. Finance Minister, the stand of the Commerce Minister seems to be all right. But once you sign it and then come and give a statement, that will be a *fait accompli*...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : Let us listen to him first. I am allowing it deliberately because I know the subject.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : What I feel is that the Finance Minister or the Government should verify it ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : This is not a matter of Question Hour. This is really an important matter for the country. Are you understanding the implications to this? I am allowing it deliberately because I know and I have taken the initiative in this matter. Please do not disturb him.

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT (Nagpur) Please save the country.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Shri Chidambaram has rightly explained the situation. He is not aware of the fact whether the situation has changed or not. But he says that some of the previous supporters have changed their position. Let us get an assurance before the lunch hour or after the lunch hour. Singapore is not far away by the present communication system.

MR. SPEAKER : No place is far away these days.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : Something should come before we adjourn the House for the day, otherwise, once it is signed with so much of assurances from so many people, it will lead to various troubles. I

think, we can give time to the Government to come with the information...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : The message should be sent to him that we should not get away from our position. The message should be communicated ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT : The House may be adjourned for-half-an-hour.

*[Translation]*

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister has not been empowered to go back to assurance. This matter should be taken seriously.

*[English]*

SHRI P.R. DASMUNSI (Howrah) : We can adjourn the House for half-an-hour. Let them communicate and come back to the House...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : What is the decision of the Government? They can communicate it to the House. Let the message go from this House that this House is not at all prepared to surrender to the diktats of the American lobby which will affect our economic sovereignty. Let this message go from this House to the Government, outside and also to Singapore ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Let us give them half-an-hour's time and let them come back ...*(Interruptions)*

*[Translation]*

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ (South Delhi) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, when the hon. Minister, after signing the treaty will come, this matter would have become *fait accompli* and then you would say that nothing could be done on the matter. It is a question of India's pride and prestige. Therefore, please adjourn the House and hold a discussion on it.

*[English]*

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : Let us adjourn for half-an-hour.

MR. SPEAKER : Half-an-hour will not be enough.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : This message must go from this House that we do not endorse this position.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : They take the House for a ride.

MR. SPEAKER : I think, from the statement of the hon. Finance Minister, it is clear that things have changed and things are changing. At the moment, the Government does not have full information about that. I share the sentiments of the House. It is a very serious matter. As Parliament is in Session, if India has to sign, I think, Parliament has got to know before India signs

I adjourn the House till two o'clock. Let the Government, during this time, ascertain the position and come back.

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### Production of Tea

\*321. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the target fixed for producing tea in the Eighth Plan period and the achievements made so far; and

(b) the projection made for the production of tea in the Ninth Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Year-wise targets for production of Tea in the Eighth Plan and Sactual achievements have been as under:

Year	(Million Kg)	
	Target	Achievement
1992-93	765	736.00
1993-94	730	768.05
1994-95	770	743.33
1995-96	780	762.35
1996-97	790	-

(b) A target of production of 1000 Million Kgs. of tea has been proposed for the terminal year (2001-2002) of the Ninth Plan. This is yet to be finalised.

### Schemes for Handloom Weavers

\*322. SHRI S.D.N.R. WADIYAR :  
SHRI DINSHA PATEL :

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have conducted any study regarding implementation of the Schemes sponsored for the upliftment of handloom weavers in the States and proper utilisation of funds provided thereof to the respective State Governments;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government are aware of the inordinate delay being committed by the State Government in releasing funds for different Schemes for handloom workers even after receipt of the funds from the Union Government;

(d) if so, the guidelines and the directives given by the Union Government to the State Government in this regard; and

(e) the steps taken to check the plight of handloom workers?