

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(English Version)

Thirteenth Session
(Fourteenth Lok Sabha)



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Dated... 15 Jan 2009

(Vol. XXXII contains Nos. 1 to 10)

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CONTENTS

[Fourteenth Series, Vol. XXXII, Thirteenth Session, 2008/1929 (Saka)]

No. 1, Monday, February 25, 2008/Phaiguna 6, 1929 (Saka)

SUBJECT	COLUMNS
ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS OF FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA	(iii)
OFFICERS OF LOK SABHA.....	(xi)
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS	(xii)
NATIONAL ANTHEM—Played	1
PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS	1—18
OBITUARY REFERENCES	18—24

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Singh, Shri Sartaj (Hoshangabad)
Singh, Shri Sita Ram (Sheohar)
Singh, Shri Sugrib (Phulbani)
Singh, Shri Suraj (Balua, Bihar)
Singh, Shri Uday (Purnea)

Singh, Shri Vijayendra Pal (Bhitwara)
Singh, Shri Vishvendra (Bharatpur)
Singh, Shrimati Kanti (Arrah)
Singh, Shrimati Meena (Bikramganj)
Singh, Shrimati Pratibha (Mandi)
Sippiparai, Shri Ravichandran (Sivakasi)
Solanki, Shri Bharatsinh Madhavsingh (Anand)
Solanki, Shri Bhupendrasinh (Godhara)
Sonowal, Shri Sarbananda (Dibruagarh)
Soren, Shri Shibu (Dumka)
Srikantappa, Shri D.C. (Chikmagalur)
Subba, Shri M.K. (Tezpur)
Subbarayan, Shri K. (Coimbatore)
Sugavanam, Shri E.G. (Krishnagiri)
Sujatha, Shrimati C.S. (Mavelikara)
Suklabaidya, Shri Lalit Mohan (Karimganj)
Suman, Shri Ramji Lal (Firozabad)
Sumbui, Shri Bagun (Singhbhum)
Surendran, Shri Chengara (Adoor)
Suryawanshi, Shri Narsingrao H. (Bidar)
Swain, Shri Harihar (Aska)
Swain, Shri Kharabela (Balasore)
Taslimuddin, Shri (Kishanganj)
Thakkar, Shrimati Jayaben B. (Vadodara)
Thangakabalu, Shri K.V. (Salem)
Thomas, Shri P.C. (Muvattupuzha)
Thummar, Shri V.K. (Amreli)
Thupetan, Shri Chhewang (Ladakh)
Tirath, Shrimati Krishna (Karol Bagh)
Topdar, Shri Tarit Baran (Barrackpore)
Tripathi, Shri Chandra Mani (Rewa)
Tripathy, Shri Braja Kishore (Puri)
Tytler, Shri Jagdish (Delhi Sadar)
Vaghela, Shri Shankersinh (Kapadvanj)
Vajpayee, Shri Atal Bihari (Lucknow)

Vallabhaneni, Shri Balashowry (Tenali)
Varma, Shri Ratilal Kalidas (Dhandhuka)
Vasava, Shri Mansukhbhai D. (Bharuch)
Veerendra Kumar, Shri M.P. (Calicut)
Velu, Shri R. (Arakkonam)
Venkatapathy, Shri K. (Cuddalore)
Venkatswamy, Shri G. (Peddapalli)
Venugopal, Shri D. (Tiruppattur)
Verma, Shri Beni Prasad (Kaisarganj)
Verma, Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh (Jalaun)
Verma, Shri Rajesh (Sitapur)
Verma, Shri Ravi Prakash (Kheri)
Verma, Shrimati Usha (Hardoi)
Vijayan Shri A.K.S. (Nagapattinam)
Vijayashankar, Shri. C.H. (Mysore)
Vinod Kumar, Shri B. (Hanamkonda)
Virendra Kumar, Shri (Sagar)
Virupakshappa, Shri K. (Koppal)
Vundavalli, Shri Aruna Kumar (Rajahmundry)
Waghmare, Shri Suresh (Wardha)
Warsi, Shri Anil Shukla (Bihaur)
Yadav, Dr. Karan Singh (Awar)
Yadav, Kunwar Devendra Singh (Etah)
Yadav, Prof. Ram Gopal (Sambhal)
Yadav, Shri Akhilesh (Kannauj)
Yadav, Shri Anirudh Prasad alias Sadhu (Gopalganj)
Yadav, Shri Arun (Khargone)
Yadav, Shri Baleshwar (Padrauna)
Yadav, Shri Chandra Pal Singh (Jhansi)
Yadav, Shri Devendra Prasad (Jhansi)
Yadav, Shri Dharmendra (Mainpuri)
Yadav, Shri Giridhari (Banka)
Yadav, Shri Jay Prakash Narayan (Monghyr)
Yadav, Shri Kailash Nath Singh (Chandouli)
Yadav, Shri M. Anjan Kumar (Secundrabad)
Yadav, Shri Mitraeen (Faizabad)
Yadav, Shri Paras Nath (Jaunpur)
Yadav, Shri Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu (Madhepura)
Yadav, Shri Ram Kripal (Patna)
Yadav, Shri Sita Ram (Sitamarhi)
Yadav, Shri Umakant (Machhlishahar)
Yaskhi, Shri Madhu Goud (Nizamabad)
Yerrannaidu, Shri Kinjarapu (Srikakulam)
Zawma, Shri Vanlal (Mizoram)

OFFICERS OF LOK SABHA

THE SPEAKER

Shri Somnath Chatterjee

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Shri Charanjit Singh Atwal

PANEL OF CHAIRMEN

Shri Giridhar Gamang

Dr. Satyanarayan Jatiya

Shrimati Sumitra Mahajan

Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey

Shri Balasaheb Vikhe Patil

Shri Varkala Radhakrishnan

Shri Arjun Sethi

Shri Mohan Singh

Shrimati Krishna Tirath

Shri Devendra Prasad Yadav

SECRETARY GENERAL

Shri P.D.T. Achary

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

CABINET MINISTERS

Dr. Manmohan Singh	The Prime Minister and also in-charge of the Ministries/Departments not specifically allocated to the charge of any Minister viz.:
	(i) Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions;
	(ii) Ministry of Planning;
	(iii) Department of Atomic Energy;
	(iv) Department of Space;
	(v) Ministry of Coal; and
	(vi) Ministry of Environment and Forests
Shri Pranab Mukherjee	The Minister of External Affairs
Shri Arjun Singh	The Minister of Human Resource Development
Shri Sharad Pawar	The Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Shri Lalu Prasad	The Minister of Railways
Shri A.K. Antony	The Minister of Defence
Shri Shivraj V. Patil	The Minister of Home Affairs
Shri A.R. Antulay	The Minister of Minority Affairs
Shri Sushilkumar Shinde	The Minister of Power
Shri Ram Vilas Paswan	The Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers and Minister of Steel
Shri S. Jaipal Reddy	The Minister of Urban Development
Shri Sis Ram Ola	The Minister of Mines
Shri P. Chidambaram	The Minister of Finance
Shri Mahabir Prasad	The Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Industries
Shri P.R. Kyndiah	The Minister of Tribal Affairs
Shri T.R. Baalu	The Minister of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways
Shri Shankersinh Vaghela	The Minister of Textiles
Shri Vayalar Ravi	The Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs
Shri Kamal Nath	The Minister of Commerce and Industry
Shri H.R. Bhardwaj	The Minister of Law and Justice
Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev	The Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises
Prof. Saifuddin Soz	The Minister of Water Resources
Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh	The Minister of Rural Development
Shri Priya Ranjan Dasmuni	The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minister of Information and Broadcasting
Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar	The Minister of Panchayati Raj, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports and Minister of Development of North Eastern Region

Shrimati Meira Kumar	The Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment
Shri Murlidhar Deora	The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas
Shrimati Ambika Soni	The Minister of Tourism and Culture
Shri A. Raja	The Minister of Communications and Information Technology
Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss	The Minister of Health and Family Welfare
Shri Kapil Sibal	The Minister of Science and Technology and Minister of Earth Sciences
Shri Prem Chand Gupta	The Minister of Corporate Affairs

- MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)

Shri Oscar Fernandes	The Minister of State of the Ministry of Labour and Employment
Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury	The Minister of State of the Ministry of Women and Child Development
Shri Subodh Kant Sahay	The Minister of State of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries
Shri Vilas Muttemwar	The Minister of State of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
Kumari Selja	The Minister of State of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation
Shri Praful Patel	The Minister of State of the Ministry of Civil Aviation
Shri G.K. Vasan	The Minister of State of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

MINISTER OF STATE

Shri E. Ahamed	The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs
Shri Suresh Pachouri	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
Shri B.K. Handique	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
Shrimati Panabaka Lakshmi	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Dr. Dasari Narayan Rao	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Coal
Dr. Shakeel Ahmad	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
Rao Inderjit Singh	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence
Shri Naranbhai Rathwa	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways
Shri K.H. Muniyappa	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways
Shri M.V. Rajasekharan	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Planning
Shri Kantilal Bhuria	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Minister of State in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Shri Manikrao Hodya Gavit	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
Shri Shriprakash Jaiswal	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs
Shri Prithviraj Chavan	The Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office

Shri Taslimuddin	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Minister of State in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Shrimati Suryakanta Patil	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Rural Development and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
Shri M.A.A. Fatmi	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Human Resource Development
Shri R. Velu	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways
Shri S.S. Palanimanickam	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance
Shri S. Regupathy	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Environment and Forests
Shri K. Venkatapathy	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Law and Justice
Shrimati Subbulakshmi Jagadeesan	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
Shri E.V.K.S. Elangovan	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Textiles
Shrimati Kanti Singh	The Minister of State in the Department of Heavy Industry, Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises
Shri Namu Narain Meena	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Environment and Forests
Shri Jay Prakash Narayan Yadav	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Water Resources
Dr. Akhilesh Prasad Singh	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture and Minister of State in the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance
Shri Anand Sharma	The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs
Shri Ajay Maken	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Urban Development
Shri Dinsha Patel	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
Shri M.M. Pallam Raju	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence
Dr. T. Subbarami Reddy	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Mines
Dr. Akhilesh Das	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Steel
Shri Ashwani Kumar	The Minister of State in the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Shri Jairam Ramesh	The Minister of State in the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
Shri Chandra Sekhar Sahu	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Rural Development
Shrimati D. Purandeswari	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Human Resource Development
Shri M.H. Ambareesh	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Shrimati V. Radhika Selvi	The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs

LOK SABHA DEBATES

Vol. No. XXXII, First Day of the Thirteenth Session of the Fourteenth Lok Sabha No. 1

LOK SABHA

Monday, February 25, 2008/Phalgun 6, 1929 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at Twenty Five Minutes past
Twelve of the Clock.*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

NATIONAL ANTHEM

The National Anthem was played.

12.26 hrs.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS*

[English]

SECRETARY-GENERAL: I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the President's Address** (Hindi & English Versions) to both the Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 25th February, 2008.

Honourable Members,

I convey my best wishes to all of you and to our people. The Parliament convenes at a time when the economy is on the move. My Government remains firmly committed to ensuring that the economic growth process is socially inclusive, regionally balanced and environmentally sustainable. The measures taken by my Government have created the necessary **architecture of inclusive growth**.

Several programmes have been launched to make the growth process socially inclusive and regionally balanced. These include **Bharat Nirman**, aimed at

* The President delivered the Address in the Central Hall in English. Hindi text of the Address was read by the Vice-President there.

** Laid on the Table and also placed in Library, See No. LT 8092/2008.

bridging the rural-urban gap in development; the **National Rural Employment Guarantee Act** to soften the sharp edges of poverty and offer basic livelihood security; **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan**, for giving equal opportunity to our children in realizing their potential, further strengthened through a **universal midday meal programme**; the **National Rural Health Mission**, offering the rural poor access to basic health care; and, the **Jawaharlati Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission**, promoting socially inclusive and economically manageable urban development. To make the growth process more participatory, responsive and accountable, Government has sought to strengthen **panchayat raj** institutions and has enshrined in law a **Right to Information Act**.

My Government's strategy of "inclusive growth" has been enabled by, and has in turn contributed to, the acceleration of economic growth. For the first time in history, the Indian economy has grown at close to 9.0 per cent per annum for four years in a row. The historically high investment rate, of over 35% of GDP, and savings rate, of over 34% of GDP, symbolize a new dynamism in our economy. I am confident that the creativity, enterprise and hard work of our young people will be able to sustain these high rates in the years to come.

This performance is all the more creditable against the background of high international oil prices and rising commodity prices, including for food. It will continue to be the endeavour of my Government to sustain growth while keeping prices under check. My Government has endeavoured to insulate the Indian consumer from these global inflationary trends. World crude oil prices have almost doubled in the past two years to reach an all-time high of US\$100 per barrel, yet my Government has managed to moderate the impact on the domestic consumer.

The **architecture of inclusive growth** is further consolidated through the **Eleventh Five Year Plan**. The Plan has set a target of 9 per cent GDP growth for the country as a whole to be achieved in a manner that would provide equality of opportunity for quality education, for employment and for enterprise, free people from the burden of ill-health and eliminate discrimination.

The share of the Central Gross Budgetary Support allocation to key sectors is being substantially increased. The outlay on education goes up from 7.68% of the Central Gross Budgetary Support in the 10th Plan to over 19% in the 11th Plan. The outlays on agriculture, health and rural development have been tripled. Taken together with education, these sectors account for more than half of the Central Gross Budgetary Support as compared to less than 1/3rd in the 10th Plan. This is a major structural shift in plan priorities, aimed at reducing disparities and empowering people.

The Plan hopes to raise the total annual investment in infrastructure from 5% of GDP to 9%. Public sector investment will continue to play an important role in infrastructure development supplemented by private investment wherever feasible. My Government will augment the skills and resources needed for enabling marginalized groups and regions to benefit from the processes of growth.

My Government has been paying special attention to the welfare of our farmers and has reversed the decline in public investment in agriculture. The target set in the **National Common Minimum Programme** of doubling agricultural credit in three years has been substantially exceeded. The target set for 2007-08, of Rs. 2,25,000 crore, has already been achieved by December 2007. Government has taken up the revival of the Rural Cooperative Credit structure. Government had appointed an Expert Group on **Agricultural Indebtedness** under the chairmanship of Prof R. Radhakrishna and its report has since been received. The recommendations of the Group are under Government's active consideration.

To bring the "financially excluded" population within the formal banking system, banks have been directed to utilize the services of self-help groups (SHG), micro finance institutions and other civil society organizations to this end. Over 5 lakh self-help groups are being assisted under the **Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana** and 52 per cent of the swarajgaris are women. Government has also introduced the **Micro Financial Sector (Development and Regulation Bill)** in Parliament. The **Swarna Jayanti Shehari Rozgar Yojana** is providing opportunities for skill development and employment for the urban poor, especially women.

My Government has taken two major initiatives for the agriculture sector in recent times: the **National Food Security Mission** and the **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana**.

The **National Food Security Mission** has been set up to enhance the production of rice, wheat and pulses by 10, 8 and 2 million tonnes respectively during the 11th Plan period. The **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana**, with an outlay of Rs. 25,000 crore for farm revival, aims at stepping up agricultural growth to 4 per cent in the 11th Plan by incentivising States to invest more in the sector.

With the efforts of my Government, there has been a substantial increase in agricultural production. The combined resources for Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Resources including a major **Flood Management Programme** will go up from Rs. 46,131 crores in the 10th Plan to Rs. 1,38,548 crore in the 11th Plan. My Government effected an unprecedented steep hike of over 50% in the **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** for wheat and about 33% for paddy in the last four years.

My Government aims at tripling the size of the processed food sector by 2015, and doubling its share in global trade. To achieve these objectives, **30 Mega Food Parks** and an **Integrated Cold Chain** will be established. A **National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management** is being set up at Kundli as a knowledge institution for the sector.

My Government has placed great emphasis on the empowerment of **Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes** through increased access to education. Close to Rs. 900 crore have been provided for scholarships for about 30 lakh children belonging to the Scheduled Castes and an amount of over Rs. 225 crore has been provided for more than 10 lakh tribal children. The **Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship** and schemes for special coaching for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students are being actively implemented. The **Indira Gandhi National Tribal University** will be founded at Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh to promote studies and research in art, culture, tradition, languages, customs and medicinal systems of our tribal communities, besides promoting educational opportunities for tribal students.

The **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act** is a landmark legislation aimed at correcting the historical deprivations of the tribal and traditional forest dwellers and restoring to them their rights on land. State Governments have been requested to implement the provisions of this Act expeditiously.

With a view to provide social security to workers in the unorganized sector, who constitute a majority of our workforce, my Government has introduced the **Unorganised Sector Social Security Bill, 2007**. The **Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana** to provide health cover of Rs. 30,000 for every unorganized sector worker living below poverty line and for the family, the **Aam Aadmi Bima Yojana** to provide relief to about 1 crore families of rural landless labour in the first year itself and the **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme**, entitling those below poverty line and above 65 years to a monthly pension of Rs. 200, have been launched. Government has also enhanced the **National Floor Level Minimum Wage** from Rs. 66 to Rs. 80 per day. The eligibility limit for payment of bonus to workers has been raised from Rs. 3,500 to Rs. 10,000 per month. Workers employed by building contractors have also been made eligible for payment of bonus.

My Government has put in place a **National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy** with effect from October 2007 to address the long standing grievances of people displaced from their land by development projects. The policy provides for basic minimum requirements to be fulfilled in all the projects leading to involuntary displacement. In order to give statutory backing to the policy, a **Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2007** and a **Land Acquisition (Amendment) Bill 2007** have also been introduced in Parliament.

Inclusive growth demands inclusive governance. The key instrument for this is panchayati raj. Government has strengthened panchayati raj through untied funds to support local area development planning in addition to reorienting delivery systems to work through panchayats. To address the problem of regional imbalances, my Government is helping less developed regions through the **Backward Regions Grant Fund**.

To provide access to justice, both civil and criminal, to our less privileged citizens at their doorstep, my Government has brought forward a legislation to establish **Gram Nyayalayas**.

The **Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme** launched by my Government aims at ensuring that benefits of the development programmes flow equitably to the minorities. Certain proportion of development projects will be located in minority concentration areas and, wherever possible, 15 per cent of targets and outlays under various schemes would be earmarked for the

minorities. To improve the economic and educational status of the minorities, several programmes have been launched based on the recommendations of the **Sachar Committee Report**. The 11th Plan provides Rs. 800 crore for Merit-cum-Means based scholarship for professional courses, nearly Rs. 3300 crore for post and pre-matric scholarship programmes for minority students and Rs. 3780 crore for the development of 90 minority concentration districts. The proportion of priority sector lending going to the minority communities will be stepped up from the present 9% to 15%. These initiatives are important pillars of the architecture of inclusive growth.

"Women hold up half the sky", it is said. **Empowerment of women** through female literacy is our single biggest challenge in the social sector. The **National Literacy Mission** will make acceleration of female literacy its key goal. We have moved closer to complete **Legal Equality for Women** in all spheres by removing discriminatory legislation, amending existing legislation and by enacting new legislation that gives women equal rights of ownership of assets like houses and land. Amendments are being considered to the **Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986**, the **Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961**, and the **Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971**. Laws pertaining to bonded labour, plantation labour, factory and migrant labour will also be made gender sensitive. Removal of age-old prejudices, particularly bias against women in society is the biggest challenge to achieve equality. My Government is committed to strictly enforce laws relating to dowry, female infanticide, female foeticide and human trafficking and to realize a gender-neutral India.

To ensure proper enforcement of children's rights, a **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights** has been set up. Government proposes to launch a series of measures designed to address the serious issue of malnutrition among a large number of our children.

Our sportspersons are increasingly making their mark in a range of games. Preparations for the **Commonwealth Games 2010** are in full swing. My Government will also launch the "**Panchayat Yuva Khel aur Krida Abhiyan**" to promote sports and nurture talents at the block and village levels.

Hon'ble Members, as I mentioned earlier, the architecture of inclusive governance is defined by my Government's "flagship programmes". To strengthen the safety net provided by Government for those seeking

employment in rural areas, it has been decided to expand the coverage of the **National Rural Employment Guarantee Act** from 330 districts to cover all rural districts of the country from April 2008.

Under this Act, 2.7 crore people were provided employment till the middle of January 2008 during the current financial year. Transparency has been made critical to programme implementation through social audit and for the first time even muster rolls are put up on the Internet. The programme has been courting public scrutiny to ensure that benefits flow to those for whom they are intended. We are confident that with the active support of State Governments, panchayati-raj institutions and civil society collaboration, the NREGA will achieve its ambitious goal.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for elementary education is being strengthened with expansion of the midday meal programme for children to the Upper Primary level in 3479 educationally backward blocks of the country. My Government seeks to provide universal access to secondary education by supporting 6000 new high quality model schools, with one school in each block in the country to set standards of excellence that can be emulated. Higher education will receive massive investment in the 11th Plan with 30 new Central Universities, 370 new colleges in educationally backward districts, and expansion in the number of technical institutions with 8 new Indian Institutes of Technology, 20 new Indian Institutes of Information Technology, 7 new Indian Institutes of Management, and 2 more Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research in addition to the three started at Pune, Kolkata and Mohali. **The National Skill Development Mission** will ensure employability of our youth and address the skill deficit presently felt in some sectors of our economy.

The National Rural Health Mission has been expanding the public health infrastructure and services in the rural areas of our country. So far 1.38 lakh sub centres, 22,669 primary health centres, 3,947 community health centres and 540 district hospitals have been supported with resources under this Mission. Nearly 5 lakh ASHAs (Accredited Social Health Activists) and Link Health Workers are now in position in our villages. **Rural sanitation** coverage has improved significantly from 22% of rural households in 2001 to about 50% today through enhanced peoples' participation incentivised by the Nirmal Gram Puraskar.

Bharat Nirman has sought to connect rural India to growth opportunities through connectivity to roads, electricity and telephones. From 2005 till the end of 2007, 17,000 habitations have been connected by all weather roads, over 44,000 villages have been connected to electricity, 40 lakh houses have been constructed for the rural poor, 2 lakh habitations have been provided drinking water supply and more than 36 lakh hectares have been provided irrigation. During this period the target for telephone connectivity to all villages has almost been met, with only 14,000 villages remaining to be connected as of December 2007. Rural tele-density has improved dramatically.

The Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission has been widely welcomed by States and cities covered by it. Projects worth Rs. 25,287 crore are under implementation in 51 cities across 26 States. Under its Basic Services component, more than 8 lakh houses have been sanctioned for the urban poor. The Central Government will promote affordable Housing through the **National Housing and Habitat Policy**.

Rapid modernization and development of our infrastructure have been a priority for my Government. Various measures, including the allotment of coal blocks with the capacity to support 68,000 MW of power generation have been taken already. Nine sites have been identified in nine States for setting up coal-based **Ultra Mega Power Projects (UMPP)** with capacity of 4000 MW each, and work has started on the Sasan and Mundhra projects. Modern and environment friendly technology will be used in these plants. Units 3 and 4 of the **Tarapur Atomic Power Station**, India's first 540 MWe nuclear power plant, were dedicated to the Nation in 2007, constituting a major milestone in our indigenous nuclear power programme.

Required policy initiatives are being taken to promote investment for the development of all sources of energy including hydro-power, other renewable energy and nuclear energy. National Policies on bio-fuels and renewable energy are being finalized. **The Chief Ministers' Conference on Power Sector** endorsed various initiatives aimed at capacity addition, economic pricing and power sector reform.

My Government has placed great emphasis on enhancing energy security through rapid exploration of domestic oil and gas reserves, combined with acquisitions abroad. Significant oil and gas reserves have been

discovered in 15 blocks. The first commercial production of Coal Bed Methane began recently, and the first deep water natural gas production will also commence in this year. Another 57 blocks are being offered through international competitive bidding under NELP-VII. Our oil companies are actively acquiring blocks overseas. The **Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Authority** has been made operational. The **Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology** has been set up to meet the shortfall of trained technical manpower in the petroleum sector.

A new **Coal Distribution Policy** has been notified to meet the full requirements of the defence, railway, power and fertilizer sectors. The increase of over 20% in the royalty on coal and lignite will benefit the producing States. A new Mineral Policy, which will greatly expand the investment and employment opportunities in mining, is under finalisation.

The six-laning of 6,500 kms of existing **National Highways** has been approved. Under NHDP Phase VI, 1000 kms of fully access controlled expressways will be constructed. Government has also approved widening and improvement of National and State highways in the North-Eastern region to ensure better connectivity to all the 85 district headquarters in the region. The traffic handled by the major ports has increased by over 13 per cent in the current year. With the approval of the new Model Concession Agreement for private sector participation in the major ports and revised guidelines for tariff setting for projects under the Public-Private Participation (PPP) model, investment in this sector is expected to get a fillip during the coming year.

My Government has achieved a major turnaround in the financial and technical performance of the **Indian Railways**. To further improve rail connectivity and infrastructure development, 22 stations located at metropolitan centres and major tourist centres will be developed through the Public-Private-Partnership route. The Mumbai-Delhi-Kolkata **Dedicated Freight Corridor** will be a landmark in railway infrastructure, and will also support massive industrialization alongside.

The **civil aviation** sector is witnessing an unprecedented boom with both passenger and cargo traffic increasing at an exponential rate. Government has given priority to upgradation and modernization of Airport infrastructure and to increase availability of skilled personnel in the sector. New international airports at

Bangalore and Hyderabad will be inaugurated this year. Construction of new terminals at New Delhi and other Metros is underway. Air connectivity to different parts of the country, including North-East has been increased.

The Indian **telecom** sector has emerged as the fastest growing in the world with the addition of over 7 million subscribers per month. A scheme has been launched to provide support for setting up and managing telecom infrastructure in rural areas to affordably and quickly expand mobile telecom services.

My Government has identified growth of electronics and IT hardware manufacturing as a thrust area. A special scheme has been announced to encourage semiconductor fabrication and other micro and nano technology manufacturing industries. The **National e-Governance Plan**, to make Government transparent and citizen-friendly, is at an advanced stage of implementation all over the country. Use of information technology in about 13,000 district and subordinate courts across the country has been initiated. An **Integrated National Knowledge Network** to provide gigabit broadband connectivity will be set up to connect all institutions of higher learning and research in the country.

The climate for **Industrial development** in our country continues to improve. To ensure that Indian industry generates more employment and becomes more globally competitive, Government has tasked the **National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council** to suggest appropriate policies. The competitive position of Indian industry, especially in sectors like steel and metallurgy, textiles, automobiles and auto components, pharmaceuticals and bio-technology, petrochemicals and cement, is stronger than ever before. India's merchandise exports have shown a healthy annual growth at the rate of over 25 per cent from US \$ 84 billion in 2004-05 to US \$ 126.4 billion in 2006-07. A stable policy framework and continuous effort by the Government to reduce trade barriers and transaction costs have created a favourable environment for international trade.

My Government has placed great emphasis on ensuring a turnaround in the performance of our **Public Sector Undertakings**. Revival packages have been approved for more than 25 sick and loss making companies. The Net Profit of Central PSUs has shown a healthy growth of over 17% last year. Profitability of public sector steel companies has gone up substantially from Rs. 5,373 crore in 2003-04 to Rs. 15,567 crore in

2006-07, energizing companies like Steel Authority of India Limited to go in for major expansion plans.

The **Special Economic Zones** promoted by Government have already provided direct employment to about 100,000 persons, with indirect employment estimated at twice as much. They have attracted investment of over Rs. 50,000 crores, and are expected to generate exports of Rs. 67,000 crores this year.

My Government is committed to the promotion of our **Textile Industry**. A technology mission on textiles will be implemented during the 11th Five Year Plan. Four Centres of excellence will be set up in key segments like Meditech, Geotech, Agritech and Buildtech. The **Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme** has been extended for the 11th Plan.

My Government has taken various measures to promote **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**. This sector is vital to employment generation, entrepreneurship development and balanced regional development, and Government will continue to provide financial, infrastructural and marketing support to it.

Government has placed great emphasis on **science and technology** development, substantially increasing financial support to S&T in the 11th Plan. A Nano Technology Mission has been launched.

The Indian **space** programme continued its march towards achieving self-reliance in space technology. The indigenously developed cryogenic upper stage of the GSLV was successfully tested on November 15, 2007. The INSAT-4CR, using our own Geo-synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle and INSAT-4B were both launched in 2007. Our space programme has enabled us to extend tele-medicine, tele-education, tele-communications and other services both at home and abroad. A new **Indian Institute of Space Technology** has been established to build upon these successes. India's first unmanned Lunar Mission 'Chandrayan-I' is scheduled for launch later this year.

My Government acted with urgency on the issue of climate change and set up a **Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change** to plan and implement appropriate strategies for mitigating and adapting to climate change. A comprehensive **National Action Plan on Climate Change** is under preparation. India is willing to ensure that its per capita emissions shall at no time exceed the

average per capita emissions of developed countries. At the Ball Conference on Climate Change, India constructively engaged with the international community to launch a comprehensive process on long-term cooperative action to deal with this issue in accordance with the provisions and principles of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The **River Conservation Programme** will be revamped to focus on cleaning of major rivers. An **Earth Science Organisation Council** has been created to guide policies of the newly created Ministry of Earth Sciences. A state of the art **Tsunami Warning System** has been commissioned.

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the First War of Indian Independence, the Red Fort was added to UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. I am happy to note that the sacred "**Rigveda**" was included in the "Memory of the World" Register last year.

Government has focused on strengthening All India Radio and Doordarshan services in J&K and the North-East. The **Urdu Channel of Doordarshan** has commenced 24x7 services. Frequency Modulated Radio Channels have seen a huge expansion with 152 channels already operating and expected to grow to 266 soon. Community radio has been given a major boost through a new policy. The Indian Entertainment and Media industry including sectors like Print, Television, Radio, Film and Entertainment, is witnessing huge growth, contributing to large employment generation.

Tourism has high potential for generating both income and employment across the country. The "**Incredible India**" campaign has given a thrust to tourism in India, with foreign tourist arrivals touching 5 million for the first time. Foreign exchange earnings from tourism have touched US\$ 12 billion in 2007.

The overall **internal security** situation remains under control. My Government is fully alive to the threat of terrorism and Left-wing extremism. The entire nation stood as one in condemning inhuman acts of terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Assam. Government has been resolute in trying to stamp out Left-wing extremism. The **Conference of Chief Ministers on Internal Security** underscored the importance of Centre and the States working together to fight the menace of extremism and terrorism. Government is helping States affected by Left-wing extremism both on the internal security and the development and social empowerment fronts. Modernization of the police and

security forces and of intelligence gathering systems is receiving high attention of Government.

In the face of extreme acts of violence against innocent people, including those near religious places, the people of India have stood as one in rejecting the politics of hatred. Their refusal to be provoked demonstrates once again the innate humanism of our people and their commitment to the unity and integrity of our nation, to our constitutional values of pluralism and secularism. It is largely due to this that an environment of communal harmony and amity prevails across the nation. My Government will remain ever vigilant against the machinations of any anti-social and anti-national groups seeking to disrupt law and order, communal harmony and the unity and integrity of our Republic.

My government, working with the State Governments, is pursuing a multi-pronged strategy to ensure peace, normalcy and development in Jammu & Kashmir. The **Prime Minister's Reconstruction Plan** is being implemented vigorously with focus on improving connectivity and infrastructure, including power, and generating employment. As part of this Plan a **Housing Project for Kashmiri Migrants** is under implementation in the State.

You are aware that my Government had held a series of **Round Table Conferences** with all segments of population in Jammu & Kashmir. These deliberations reflect a wide-ranging civic and political consensus on political and developmental issues. Government is working on a holistic approach aimed at confidence building amongst all sections of society, easier travel across the Line of Control, better governance and closer attention to the aspirations of the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

Improving connectivity, expanding infrastructure and generating employment have been the focus of my Government's initiatives in the **North Eastern Region**. The North Eastern Council has been collaborating with the Airports Authority of India to upgrade 18 airports in the North Eastern Region. Greenfield Airports will be built in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The North Eastern Council has taken the initiative to establish a dedicated airline for the region. **Special Accelerated Roads Development Programme in North East (SARDP-NE)**, with a funding of Rs. 43,000 crore, has been formulated to construct, improve and widen roads in the region. A **Trans-Arunachal Pradesh Highway** will be constructed across the length of the State. A comprehensive plan for

improving availability of power in the region is in the making. Broadband and wireless connectivity is being further enhanced to improve communications networks. New initiatives in education include setting up of new Universities and other institutions of national importance. Industrial development is being promoted through the **North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy**. Work on the Assam Gas Cracker Project, which will further contribute to the industrial development of the region, has started.

Government attaches great importance to the achievements of the People of Indian Origin in different parts of the world, and their contributions to the Nation. In recognition of their contributions, several initiatives have been taken up. The first **People of Indian Origin University** is on the anvil. To tap the resources of the Indian diaspora it has been decided to establish the **Prime Minister's Global Advisory Council of People of Indian Origin**. To facilitate potential migrant workers and help those overseas workers who are in distress, an "**Overseas Workers Resource Centre**" and the "**Council for Promotion of Overseas Employment**" are being set up.

My Government has taken several steps to promote the modernization and welfare of our **armed forces** and ensure defence preparedness of the country. Our armed forces safeguard our frontiers, help in maintaining peace and security in insurgency affected areas and provide valuable aid to the civil authority in disaster management and in providing required relief and rehabilitation. The **Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007**, would provide a meaningful opportunity to service personnel for judicial review of Court Martial decisions and grievances relating to service matters. The successful launch of **Agni-III Missile** and the induction of **BrahMos Missile System** into our armed forces constitute major milestones in the upgradation of our defence technology.

The **foreign policy** of my Government seeks to promote an environment of peace and stability in our region and in the world to facilitate accelerated socio-economic development and safeguard our national security. Government has made vigorous efforts to develop friendly and cooperative relations with all our neighbours and to strengthen engagement with major powers. Since the 14th SAARC summit in New Delhi in April 2007, India has made every effort to strengthen SAARC, moving it from a declaratory to an implementation phase. Progress

has been registered towards the establishment of the SAARC Development Fund, the South Asia University and the SAARC Food Bank.

Our goal remains a peaceful, stable and prosperous neighbourhood. India is committed to extending full support to Nepal's development during its political transition. India also stands ready to assist the Nepalese people's choices in the transition to a democratic, stable and prosperous State. As a close and friendly neighbour, India would prefer to see a peaceful, stable and liberal democratic Bangladesh. It is our hope that the people of Bangladesh will be able to exercise their will through free and fair elections for restoration of full democracy. There has been an unfortunate increase in violence in Sri Lanka. We are clear that there can be no military solution to the ethnic issue. It is necessary to find a negotiated political settlement within the framework of a united Sri Lanka that is acceptable to all sections of society. We will continue to help Afghanistan in whatever manner we can in its reconstruction and in building a pluralistic and prosperous society. We are committed to peace, friendship and good neighbourly relations with Pakistan. A stable and prosperous Pakistan, at peace with itself, is in the interests of our entire region. When conditions permit we will resume our dialogue process with Pakistan, aimed at building mutual confidence and resolving outstanding issues, premised on an atmosphere free from terror and violence. We hope that Myanmar's on-going national reconciliation and political reform process and the recognition of the need to expedite the process will make it more inclusive so as to ensure peaceful and stable democratization.

India attaches high importance to its bilateral relations with the People's Republic of China, with which we have a Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity. This partnership has been further enhanced and given a global dimension with the signing of a Shared Vision for the 21st Century during the visit of the Prime Minister to China last month. Peace and tranquility have been maintained on our border with China and both countries are determined that this should continue.

My Government has made rapid improvements in our relationships with the major powers of the world. Our relations with the United States of America have improved in the past few years, and now span a wide spectrum including high technology, space, agriculture, education and trade and other linkages. It is our hope that civil nuclear cooperation with the USA and other friendly

countries will become possible. Government has been working to further develop the time-tested friendship with Russia. The visit of Prime Minister to Moscow in November 2007 contributed to further strengthening our strategic partnership with Russia. We attach importance to our relations with the member states of the EU individually as well as collectively. The 8th India-EU Summit was held in New Delhi in November 2007. Most recently Prime Minister of UK visited India and the President of France was the Chief Guest at our Republic Day.

Government has achieved significant progress in the implementation of its "Look East Policy" through participation in the ASEAN-India and the East Asia Summits in Singapore in November 2007. India continues to work with Japan to strengthen its partnership. India's increasing engagement with countries of Africa and Latin America received further impetus with the visit of the Prime Minister to Nigeria in October 2007 and the visits of the Presidents of Brazil and Mexico to India in 2007. Prime Minister led the Indian delegation to the 2nd IBSA Summit held in Pretoria in October 2007. India will host the first India-Africa Forum Summit in April this year.

We have considerably enhanced our interactions with countries of the Gulf region that is home to over 4.5 million Indians and is an important economic partner and a major source for our oil and gas imports. The countries of West Asia have age-old links with India culturally and economically and are part of our extended neighbourhood. Developments in this vital region impact directly on our interests and security. India is keen on cooperating with these countries to promote peace and stability in the region. Government has been closely following events in Iraq and hopes that peace and stability would soon return in Iraq. Government has also supported a rejuvenated Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and looks forward to a peaceful resolution of issues leading to an independent state of Palestine living side by side at peace with its neighbours. Sadly, recent events in Gaza and the West Bank have caused deplorable misery and hardship to the people of Palestine. India will extend additional assistance to the Palestinian people and stands ready to help the peace process to move forward.

India has also been engaged with Central Asian countries in our extended neighbourhood to widen cooperation with them. As an Observer State, India participated in the Heads of State and Heads of Government meetings of Shanghai Cooperation

Organisation in August and November 2007 respectively. The India-Russia-China trilateral Foreign Ministers dialogue also continues to be productive.

India remains committed to universal, non-discriminatory and comprehensive nuclear disarmament as reflected in the Action Plan presented by the late Prime Minister **Rajiv Gandhi** and has called for renewed efforts for general and complete disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament.

To commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's birthday every year as the International Day of Non-Violence, India piloted a resolution in the UN General Assembly which was adopted by consensus. The First International Day of Non-violence was observed at the UN on 2nd October 2007.

Government has played a constructive role in the Doha Development Round of WTO trade negotiations and carried forward negotiations for establishing trade and economic partnership agreements with important trading partners and regional groupings to create a better external economic environment for our growth. The negotiations on the India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement are scheduled to be completed soon. India worked with the international community to address key global challenges such as terrorism, energy security, sustainable development and reform of the United Nations.

Hon'ble Members, India is on the move. There is an air of optimism among our youth and of expectation among the less-privileged sections of society. The challenge before us is to sustain the development process in the face of external and internal threats. The people of India have the potential to fuel the engine of global growth. My Government has been able to sustain historically high rates of growth through prudent and sound economic management. This has contributed to the stability of the growth process, and to predictability and transparency in policy. This is reflected in the rising investment rate and in the buoyancy of tax revenues for both Central and State governments. Your leadership can unleash the full potential of our people and ensure the stability and sustainability of our growth process. I sincerely hope, therefore, that the proceedings of Parliament this year will be purposeful, peaceful and productive.

Today, more than ever before, the world watches this great hall of democracy with hope and expectation.

Our ability to liberate millions of our people from poverty, ignorance and disease within the framework of an open society and an open economy has always had global significance. At a time when the democratic way of life has come under renewed pressure from the forces of intolerance, India's success as a plural, secular and inclusive democracy gives renewed hope to millions who are concerned about the rise of chauvinism, extremism and the ideologies of exclusion and hatred.

Hon'ble Members, each one of you must remember that as elected representatives of the people what you do gives new hope not just to your own voters, but to all our people, and to all peace and freedom loving people in our region and around the world. Therefore, what you say and do in these hallowed portals of democracy will have a bearing not just on the destiny of our people but also on the future of democracy and free societies around the world. With these thoughts, I once again wish you well. Jai Hind.

12.28 hrs.

OBITUARY REFERENCES

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have to inform the House of the sad demise of Shri Prakash Paranjpe, a sitting Member of this House and six of our former colleagues, Shri Alkha Ram, Shri Trilok Chand, Dr. Pratap Chandra Chunder, Shri P. Ganga Reddy, Shri Mohammad Mahfoz Ali Khan and Shri Manphool Singh Chaudhary, the renowned social reformer Shri Murlidhar Devidas Amte popularly known as Baba Amte and Sir Edmund Hillary the renowned mountaineer.

Shri Prakash Paranjpe was a sitting Member of the Lok Sabha representing the Thane Parliamentary Constituency of Maharashtra. Earlier he was a Member of the Eleventh, Twelfth and Thirteenth Lok Sabhas from 1996 to 2004 representing the same constituency.

Shri Paranjpe was a Member of the Committee on Industry and House Committee. Earlier he was a Member of the Committee on Commerce; Committee on Papers Laid on the Table and Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Surface Transport during the Eleventh Lok Sabha. He was Member of the Rules Committee;

Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests and its Subcommittee on Ganga Action Plan and Consultative Committee, Ministry of Environment and Forests during the Twelfth Lok Sabha. He was a Member of the Committee on Finance; Public Accounts Committee and Consultative Committee, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas during the Thirteenth Lok Sabha. He evinced special interest in budgeting of institutions.

An active political and social worker, Shri Paranjpe served as Municipal Councillor, and Corporator in Municipal Corporation, Thane, from 1974 to 1980 and 1986 to 1996 respectively. He was the Leader of the Municipal Corporation during 1990 and its Leader of Opposition during 1992.

Shri Paranjpe was associated with Marathi Theatre and acted in various Marathi plays. He organized the *Sangeet Mahotsava* and was closely associated with various social and cultural activities.

A sports enthusiast, Shri Paranjpe was the President, District Badminton Association, Thane and Vice-President, Maharashtra Badminton Association.

Shri Prakash Paranjpe passed away on 20th February, 2008 at Thane at the age of 61 after a prolonged illness.

Shri Alkha Ram was a Member of the Eighth Lok Sabha from 1984 to 1989, representing Salumbar Parliamentary Constituency of Rajasthan.

Earlier, Shri Alkha Ram was a Member of the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha from 1972 to 1977 and 1980 to 1984.

During the Eighth Lok Sabha, Shri Alkha Ram was a Member of Committee on Petitions from 1987 to 1989.

An Agriculturist by profession, Shri Alkha Ram worked for the uplift of poor and marginalized sections of the society and was actively involved in the cooperative movement. He also served as Sarpanch of the Panchayat Samiti Kotra Society in 1965 and later as its Secretary.

Shri Alkha Ram passed away on 5th December, 2007 at Udaipur at the age of 67.

Shri Trilok Chand was a Member of the Seventh Lok Sabha from 1980 to 1984, representing the Khurja Parliamentary Constituency of Uttar Pradesh.

Earlier, Shri Trilok Chand was a Member of the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha from 1969 to 1974, 1977 to 1980 and 1985 to 1989. Shri Trilok Chand also served as the Minister of Information from 1970 to 1971 and as the Minister of Public Works in the Government of Uttar Pradesh from 1979 to 1980. Shri Trilok Chand also adorned the Office of the Deputy Speaker of the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha from 1985 to 1989.

Shri Trilok Chand was a Member of the House Committee and the Rules Committee during the Seventh Lok Sabha.

A committed social and political worker, Shri Trilok Chand strove for the welfare of the poor, downtrodden and the deprived sections of the society.

Shri Trilok Chand passed away on 27th December, 2007 at New Delhi at the age of 72 after a prolonged illness.

Dr. Pratap Chandra Chunder was a Member of the Sixth Lok Sabha from 1977 to 1979, representing Kolkata North-East Parliamentary Constituency of West Bengal.

Earlier, Dr. Chunder was a Member of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly from 1962 to 1967 and from 1967 to 1968. He was the Minister of Finance, Judicial and Legislative Departments of the Government of West Bengal during 1968. During Sixth Lok Sabha, he served as Union Cabinet Minister of Education, Social Welfare and Culture from 1977 to 1979.

An advocate by profession, Dr. Chunder was an eminent educationist. He served as lecturer at Calcutta, Burdwan and Jadavpur Universities. He was Member, Senate of University of Calcutta from 1961 to 1967 and Member of the Executive Council of Rabindra Bharati University from 1962 to 1968.

A widely travelled person, he was bestowed with the Honorary Citizenship of New Orleans.

A man of letters, Dr. Chunder authored several novels, essays, short stories in English and Bengali.

In his demise the country has lost an eminent educationist and an able administrator.

Dr. Pratap Chandra Chunder passed away on 1st January, 2008 at Kolkata, at the age of 89.

Shri P. Ganga Reddy was a Member of the Fourth and Fifth Lok Sabhas from 1967 to 1977, representing the Adilabad Parliamentary Constituency of Andhra Pradesh.

Shri Reddy was also a Member of the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly from 1978 to 1983. During this period Shri Reddy served as the Minister for Agriculture and Civil Supplies in the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

During the Fifth Lok Sabha, Shri Reddy was a Member of the Committee on Estimates from 1973 to 1975. He was also a Member of the Joint Select Committee on Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy Bill and of the Consultative Committee of the Ministries of Irrigation, Power and Health.

A committed social and political worker, Shri Reddy was the President of the Panchayat Samiti, Nirmal in 1964 and the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad, Adilabad from 1964 to 1967. He strove for the welfare of the poor, downtrodden and the deprived sections of the society and worked for the amelioration of the people of the rural society.

Shri P. Ganga Reddy passed away on 3rd January, 2008 at Hyderabad at the age of 75.

Shri Mohammad Mahfooz Ali Khan was a Member of the Lighth Lok Sabha from 1984 to 1989, representing the Etah Parliamentary Constituency of Uttar Pradesh.

Shri Khan was a Member of the Committee on Papers Laid on the Table from 1986 to 1987 and also served as the Member of the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Parishad from 1994 to 2000.

An agriculturalist by profession, Shri Khan played a significant role in developmental activities of his constituency. He was the Chairman of the Town Area Committee, Aliganj from 1964 to 1971 and was the President, Nagar Palika, Aliganj from 1971 to 1977.

Shri Khan took special interest in the cooperative movement and served as the Director of the Kisan Sehkari Chini Mills, Kaimganj, Farrukhabad.

Shri Mohammad Mahfooz Ali Khan passed away after a brief illness on 4th January, 2008 at Agra, Uttar Pradesh at the age of 76.

Shri Manphool Singh Chaudhary was a member of the Seventh and Eighth Lok Sabhas from 1980 to 1989 and of the Tenth Lok Sabha from 1991 to 1996, representing the Bikaner Parliamentary Constituency of Rajasthan. Earlier, Shri Chaudhary was a member of the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha from 1952 to 1957 and 1962 to 1972. Shri Chaudhary also served as a Minister of State in the Government of Rajasthan from 1965 to 1972.

An able parliamentarian, Shri Manphool Singh Chaudhary was a member of the Committee on Absence of Members from the Sittings of the House during the Eighth Lok Sabha. During the Tenth Lok Sabha Shri Chaudhary was a member of the Committee on Government Assurances and the Committee on Transport and Tourism.

A committed social and political worker Shri Manphool Singh Chaudhary served as the Pradhan, Panchayat Samiti, Suratgarh; Pramukh, Zila Parishad, Ganganagar and the Convenor of the Zila Bharat Sevak Samaj, Ganganagar from 1956 to 1960 and of the Zila Khet Mazdoor Sangh, Ganganagar from 1977 to 1980. Shri Chaudhary was also the Executive Member, Agriculture College and Gramothan Vidyapeeth Committee, Sangaria. He was instrumental in the establishment of over 100 primary schools in Districts Ganganagar and Bikaner under the 'Maroo Bhumi Seva Karya' scheme.

Shri Manphool Singh Chaudhary passed away on 9th January, 2008 at Jaipur at the age of 80.

Hon. Members, as you are aware, renowned social reformer Murlidhar Devidas Amte popularly known as Baba Amte passed away on 9th February, 2008 at Chandrapur at the age of 94 after a prolonged illness. A Gandhian to the core he was among the most inspirational social activist of our times. He established 'Anandvan' commune for treatment and rehabilitation of leprosy patients in Warora in Chandrapur District of Maharashtra. He spent a major part of his life in serving them.

Baba Amte was a freedom fighter who dedicated his life to uphold the Gandhian philosophy. His selfless service was acknowledged the world over. He was honoured with Gandhi Peace Prize in 1999. He was also honoured with Damien-Dutton Award, Magsaysay Award, Templeton Prize and Right Livelihood Award. He was also nominated for Nobel Peace Prize. Baba Amte was recipient of Padma Shri and Padma Vibhushan awards. The University of Nagpur and University of Poona also conferred upon him honorary doctorates.

The void created by his demise would be difficult to fill. The values of love, compassion and social service imbibed by him in a generation of social activists would serve as a beacon light for the future generations.

Sir Edmund Hillary who, along with Tenzing Norgay, was the first climber to scale the world's highest peak, Mount Everest, passed away on the 11th January, 2008. The House would like to place on record its deep sorrow at the sad demise of the great mountaineer and friend of India. Sir Edmund is a household name in India respected for his mountaineering achievements, contributions to the welfare of the people of Himalayas and conservation in the Himalayas. His many friends and admirers in India recall with fondness his stint as High Commissioner of New Zealand in India from 1985 to 1989.

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

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

12.38¹/₂ hrs.

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

12.39 hrs.

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow at 11 a.m.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the
Clock on Tuesday, February 26, 2008/
Phalgun 7, 1929 (Saka).*

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Published under Rules 379 and 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha
(Twelfth Edition) and printed by Jainco Art India, New Delhi.
