

[Shri Jagan Nath Kaushal]

abolished but the States did not agree. But now rationalisation is there. So, I will request Mr. Ashok Sen to take the first opportunity to get that report accepted.

Sir, there are a number of other matters on which I could have spoken but as I said, I got your message in the very beginning that I should not take more time. I will only say that this document indicates one thing. The President said, and he has reiterated, that a number of matters were recapitulated which were outlined during the last President's Address, and I am happy to read this: "The Government has fulfilled in substantial measure the tasks they had set for themselves for the past year". So, any government can feel legitimate pride if the promises which have been made have been substantially fulfilled and I must congratulate the hon the Prime Minister for seeing to it that whatever promises were made by him last year, were fulfilled, and I have every hope that the promises which will be made for the coming year will also be fulfilled.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Presidential Address is not a time to score debating points and I will not try and do that as some of my friends have done. It is a time to take stock of what we had said last year, the promises that we had made the fulfilment of these promises and to look towards what lies ahead. Last year, when Parliament opened, there were two major problems that were confronting the country—the question of what would happen in the Punjab and what was to happen in Assam.

Two agitations were continuing. We had committed during the election and in the Presidential Address that these two problems would be tackled first. We were very glad that last year we were able to come to a settlement in both the States. *(Interruption)* Although they don't seem so happy, I am glad to say that we have new Members from those two States with us in this session.

Sir, the progress with the Accord in Assam is going well. We have been in touch and the Ministries that are dealing

with it and are optimistic the way it is going. On the Punjab have been certain setbacks. One of the clauses of the Accord required a commission to be set up to look for villages which would be exchanged in lieu of Chandigarh. Unfortunately, the Report of the Commission was such that we could not take any action. Going by the original Accord which required us to refer to a Commission, logically we have to then refer to the Report of the Commission and we are going accordingly.

The question of mutual settlement between the two Chief Ministers as suggested by the Commission or of setting up another Commission to go into it is being looked into. There is a small question on the other Commission because we cannot give precisely the same terms of reference as might end up with precisely the same answer. So, that needs a little bit of sorting out between the two Chief Ministers but we are hopeful that we can do this and we will be able to move ahead. We are also seeing what can be done about the other aspects of that Accord, the SYL canal, the water allocation, the Capital for Haryana and the other clauses that are part of it.

Unfortunately, the extremists and terrorists in Punjab have once again become active. I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone and more especially the Government in Punjab, that the vote that the people of Punjab gave was the vote against terrorism. It was a vote which was shared in great majority between the Akali Dal and the Congress Party. Those that had asked for a boycott were rebuffed by the electorate because the electorate went and voted in very large numbers. What I would like to say is that it will be letting down the electorate if we do not respond to the terrorists as the electorate responded to the terrorists. The electorate, in spite of severe threats, came out in large numbers to confront terrorism and to push terrorisms back. This is what we have to do today. One other promise that we had made in the last Presidential Address was that of electoral reforms and a cleaner public life. We have taken a number of measures towards these ends. One of the first measures was that of an Anti-Defection Act which has been talked

about for a long time. But last year we passed it in this House. We cleared company donations for political parties.

Again, this has been a question which has been alive for many years and it was alleged that it was one of the prime reasons for causing corruption in elections. We have tackled corruption in every section and at all levels in the country. Wherever information has been available, action has been taken. There has been no partiality or bias applied either for or against any one.

In my address to the Party in Bombay and again when I met with some of the Opposition leaders at your Lunch, Sir, I had mentioned to them that there were certain other steps we would like to take and one of them was that we would like to bring our Party accounts into the open. I had suggested that we set up a group consisting of the Treasurers of our National Parties who could decide and give us some idea of how we could go about doing this, and with your agreement we can go ahead and do this.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI : Why are you leaving us, the regional parties ?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : We will involve you also. (*Interruptions*).

One other very major step that we have taken is that of removal of agents or dalals from almost every major contract, and this is a progressive measure, we will be going ahead and doing this almost from every Ministry and in every contract that we are doing.

About the promise for administrative reforms, again we have not sat quiet on what we had said. We have set up grievance redressal machinery in many Ministries. The feed-back from the banks specially has been very good. There is training at all levels for the administration cutting across all levels. There are two separate schemes, one a shorter term refresher type of course and one longer course, to bring about more knowledge, more interaction so that the problems that one has faced in one part of the

country could help solving problems in other parts of the country—mixing of the senior with the junior, really getting the new life into the Administration. The personnel policies are being reviewed. The efficiency of the Government—in sheer time taken for taking decisions, in the cost of certain actions—has been dramatically increased. The emphasis has been put on results and on accountability. Monitoring of all major projects is being done on a monthly basis to see that they are on schedule, the progress is correct and that allocations are not being diverted to other schemes.

We have made a new scheme to monitor all the anti-poverty programmes, and this reaches out randomly to blocks, to actually, physically go and check what work has been done. Each and every individual in that block who is listed by the State will be called upon and asked many things. I can just give you a few examples here. For example, how much time did it take him to get that loan from the first day he went to when he got it; how much did it cost him in expenses, in travel, to get that loan; how has the result of that loan or whatever was given to him worked out; is he getting a return on it; which banks are active and in which State. It is quite a complicated exercise but it comes out very simple and you can see it on charts very easily. We have had the first report from this and some very interesting feed-back. We will be using this, not just to see how well the programmes are functioning, but also to correct where we find deficiencies in implementation, correct where there may be deficiencies in a particular programme or in the way the programme is being applied to a particular area. So, as we get more feed-back, we will be correcting it.

We have promised a new education policy. We produced the Status Paper in August last year. A national debate has ensued and a lot of inputs have been received. These have been put together and the Minister for Human Resource Development will be ready with the paper in this Session to put before the House. We have broadened the basic concept of education to a much wider concept of

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human resource development which works in two ways. One is the actual development of the human being into a better human being, developing his character, his personality, his morality. The second aspect is to see what sort of human resources we will need for the future—how many doctors, how many agricultural scientists, how many nurses, how many engineers, how many scientists, what type of scientists, what type of engineers. This exercise has not been done before and unless we have some idea of what we need, we will not be able to produce what we need. This is part of the reason for many of our scientists going abroad. They study in spheres which are less relevant or not that necessary to us today and we cannot employ them, we cannot use their knowledge for our benefit.

The Human Resource Development Ministry has also taken charge of developing women, children and youth. We have initiated many programmes and many more are on the way. Last year, we celebrated the "Youth Year". We have re-organised the Nehru Yuvak Kendras, given them autonomy. We look forward to a much re-vitalised institution which will be able to reach out the youth of the country.

As promised, we have introduced a new textile policy. The textile policy envisages much more protection for the handloom weavers and it envisages cheaper cloth for our people. The speed of implementation of the policy has not been as fast as we would have liked. But we are looking into it and we will see that it comes in fast. Any problems that weavers or handlooms may have will get special attention and, if necessary, we will apply the requisite corrections.

We had promised a new look at the judicial system. Again, we have made tremendous progress. Sir, *Lok Adalats* were set up last year and the speed of disposal of cases has been greatly increased. Administrative Tribunals would further reduce the pressure on the courts and the Law Commission is now looking for further changes that are to be done.

We have also started tackling the problem of urbanisation in the largest sense of

the word. We have made a Group which is looking into the whole concept of urban development for India for the next 15 years. We have no such plan today. It is at random that people flock to cities. They make slums. They live in slums. We have to have a proper idea of what we want with our urbanisation. When I am talking of urbanisation, I am not talking of just Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras and may be a few other cities. I am talking of also smaller cities and a full picture, of how we are to develop our urban structure.

One other promise was that of cleaning the Ganga. The Central Ganga Authority has been formed. It has already started its work. Perhaps the first tangible visible work will be when the Kumbh Mela takes place next month in Haridwar when they will find the river much cleaner.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : There will be more pollution.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : We are coming out with a law for pollution also. Only one thing we forgot in that. We forgot to include noise pollution !

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : We do not mind. He can continue his speech.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Unfortunately they do not know the difference between laughter and noise ! Noise is what we hear from that side of the House !

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Laughter is noiseless !

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : One other promise we had made was that of tackling our waste lands. We have set up a Board and the programme has already started. The targets that we have set are very high. We know that. They may be difficult to achieve. We know that. But that is the minimum we need to do if this country is to survive. We do not have the choice. We have to find ways of achieving that and the Westland Development Board will look at every way of achieving that target. It will involve all our people, youngsters,

school-going children, housewives, farmers, land-less, every one.

The environment has been a problem. During the last Lok Sabha campaign, we had a very major disaster in Bhopal. It was followed by one or two other leaks. Fortunately, they were not as bad as the Bhopal disaster. We are ready with a very comprehensive legislation which we will bring in this Session to control all hazardous substances and for the first time, we are legislating in such a manner that an average citizen can take action. It will be a law that the people will be able to operate.

Our cultural heritage is something that each one of us is very proud of and we believe that our economic development, if it destroys our heritage, if it reduces our cultural heritage in any way, would not be true development and for this end, we are setting up seven Zonal Cultural Centres.

The idea is to develop each culture to its highest level, to expose that culture not to just its own regions and its people, but also to others around the country, also to take this culture right down, not to reserve it for the elite in the auditorium and in theatres but to take it down to the people in market places and in melas where our people are and make the best available to the average person. We have also decided that through these 7 centres and co-operating with other centres which are already in existence, we will have an annual cultural festival in Delhi which will be held in winter every year and which will project the cultures from all parts of the country so that they may mingle and inter-mix...
(Interruptions) What can I do, Sir? They are not cultured at all. ...

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : Joke No. 2 of the evening.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : At least I made you laugh. ... At least you laugh.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : I will laugh-at the proper time.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Very difficult.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : We have been laughing all through within our sleeves.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : There are so many laughing dolls on your side.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Science and technology as to be the key for our development. Our thrust is for the development of our people, on anti-poverty programme and for socially relevant areas. We are setting up a number of scientific missions and thrust areas to see that full funding, proper scientific management and all the resources that are required in these areas are available.

One of the areas that we have chosen is drinking water. This may sound simple. But it involves the highest level of scientific and technological input. Oil-seeds development, immunisation of children, eradication of illiteracy. We are setting up a new Bio-technology centre, a new Department of Bio-technology.

The Seventh Five Year Plan is based on a paper produced by Indiraji which put the thrust on food, work and productivity. The basic thoughts of our planning process, of our development process have not changed since 1947 when we got independence. The backbone of all our plan, of all our aspirations and our developments remains the same. It is for a united, independent, democratic, secular, socialist, non-aligned and self-reliant India. ...
(Interruptions) I can repeat it if you want. But it is better that you take it tomorrow from the transcript. The India we want, the India our freedom fighters fought for, the India that we here are all committed to.

The core of the problem in our development process is the gap between what India can do and what India is doing. It is this gap that we have to bridge. Our past achievements have been tremendous by any account. The structural transformation in agriculture, in industry and in the very lives of our people is there for every one to see. The question is: can we move faster to-day? How can we do more work for the poor, for the under-privileged

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the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes women and children, the minorities and backward classes. It is for them that we have framed our Plan. The Plan will require seva and tyaga. In the President's Address, the President has said "Nations are built by generations that sacrificed for a better tomorrow". That is what we are required to do to-day.

Panditji and Indiraji built basic framework. It is intact today; it will remain intact and we will build upon it. Our directions and our policies have not changed.

(*Interruptions*)

SOME HON'BLE MEMBERS : What about Shastriji ?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Also here is Moraji-ji !

SOME HON'BLE MEMBERS : We have not mentioned his name.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I was talking about the Plan. Shastriji was not involved in the production of any of our Plan as a Prime Minister. In case you did not know, I will remind you of the fact.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : You look enlightened. Our development...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Those are the rolling-plans, that you had started. If you remember. Is you remember, the rolling-plan has rolled certain people right across the room and what we are very lucky about is it did not roll the country down-hill and back to where we started. The people realised what the rolling-plan is and the ruling clan were doing and they rolled them across and keep you there.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Our development has been 93 per cent, for instance, by ourselves. This is the strength of our independence. If we are to maintain this

we must generate from within for our developments. There are easier ways out.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Anything more? Any question? Sir, this is precisely what I was saying. If we take their suggestion, we will not remain independent. We will lose our independence. That is precisely.... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI AMAL DATTA : We want you to come out with the truth exactly what you are doing. You are not doing any favour.

MR. SPEAKER : Order please.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : There are short-term solutions available. Some of them have been given by my friends from across the room. But they are short-term solutions and we will not use them. We have paid the price for our sovereignty in our independence struggle. We know what it is.

Sir, many of our friends are nodding their heads. I do not understand if they know what it is because the people who fought for freedom struggle are mostly on the other side of the House.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : At least we did not get together with the other side. Forgotten that Have you?

The other day one of the hon. Members was saying, "We have fought for our political freedom and now must fight for our economic freedom". And I felt like remarking that those who have not fought for their political freedom do not know how to fight for their economic freedom...

AN HON. MEMBER : How many are there on that side? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : It is not a question of individual freedom fighters. It is the *bhavana* that is in the Party,

that is built on the freedom struggle...
(*Interruptions*)

AN HON. MEMBER : A Party that is 17 years old.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Of course, you would not know of the type of *bhavana* that our freedom struggle built. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, the sovereignty that we have won through our freedom struggle will not be exchanged for cheap and easy methods of development. We will generate from within and we will see that India remains strong, independent and sovereign.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Nobody stops you from doing it.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, certain Parties whose Chief Ministers come to me for the most capitalistic projects take a leftist stand over here... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : No Sir, I am not yielding the floor.

MR. SPEAKER : Order, order.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir,...

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : He is the Prime Minister. Let him not forget that... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I have not named any political party or Chief Minister. Perhaps, you know the Chief Minister we are talking about. Which Chief Minister are you talking about?
(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I would like to ask my hon. friend one question.
(*Interruptions*)**

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing goes on record. Not allowed, Order, order.
(*Interruption*)**

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I did not name any Chief Minister, I did not name any State. Perhaps I did not name any Party. Perhaps my hon. friends have a certain idea of who this could be. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER : Somnathjee take your seat:

...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. SPEAKER : Everybody is doing his own work.

...(*Interruptions*)...

MR. SPEAKER : Why do you worry? You can have your say when your turn comes.

[*English*]

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : This is very odd when parties with leftist profession suddenly start getting together with parties with rightist profession.

BHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : May be on some issues like price rise.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : You are allied with Muslim League in Kerala.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : It is a sad day when our leftist friends let their ideologies blow in the wind and get together with the rightist forces, reactionary forces. I would request them to have a little bit of a rethink on where they are going and what they are doing. (*Interruptions*)...

Sir, our prime thrust for development must come from the public sectors. (*Interruptions*). The money can be available for public sectors if the conditions in the States are such that they get power, they get other facilities for the public sectors to work.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : We

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support public sector.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : We need a strong and vibrant public sector. We need a public sector that works for the public good, not the public sector that drains the wealth of our people. This is one basic point where we differ from some friends of ours.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : You created it by placing the private sector over the public sector.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : The public sector losses cannot continue to rise like this. The efficiency in the public sectors must be improved and will be improved.

Another area which is very critical to our development and growth at this time is the cost of basic inputs. Again it does link back to the public sector. We must see how we can go back from a high cost economy, how we can make our products much more competitive. The rate that we are going now, it will not be long before we price ourselves out of our own market. We cannot afford to do this. It will require a certain amount of efficiency in the public sector, it will require much better management in the public sector, it will also require much more output from the labour in the public sector. These are not decisions that we can delay. They have to be taken and they must be taken now.

During this past year, the public sector performance has improved, the losses have been reduced; but very much more has to be done.

We have not changed our policy on foreign investment. Our basic principles and our policies remain unchanged. In the 7th Plan the public sectors will remain the biggest investment in the Plan and it will be higher than it has been in any other Plan upto now.

Simultaneously we have to mobilise all the productive forces that are in India. We have taken certain decisions to bring all such productive forces out and into production.

Our economy has traditionally been a mixed economy and we do not intend to change that.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : In some States there are capitalists' projects and that is why they come to you. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : In petro chemicals you refuse to associate with us. Can you deny that? (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : Order. Order.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : It is nice to see how the mix in the economy is balancing with capitalists balancing the communists. It is only with a mixed economy that we can be truly independent economically...

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I said what we feel is that we can be independent only with the mixed economy. If you have a different idea you put it to the people just like as we put it to the people and the people put us here. You put your idea to the people and the people have put you there. Don't forget that.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I know just your very size has expanded. Would you like to say something on size, Mr. Unnikrishnan? I thought you were saying something on expanding.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, we believe that it is only with the mixed economy that we will have a truly independent self-reliant India.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : What is the mix like!

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : The type that we are running with truly indigenous science and technology development and full R & D support.

Dursng this year we have made tremendous progress in the Defence sector, in the R & D in our production and in our indigenous designs. I would like at this stage to remind our hon. friends who had a 'bandh' of sorts yesterday because it was not what they had projected...

SOME HON. MEMBRES : What?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : The people did not respond..

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: That is the report you have got.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : All right. I would not argue about that except for the States where Government officially said there will be 'bandh' most things ran. The trains ran. (*Interruptions*) Anyway that is not the point I was coming to. What I was saying...

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Intelligence reports can be corrected.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : What I was saying was that our GNP excluding agriculture is approximately Rs. 450 crores per day. Now, if we have lost let us not say one whole day—we will give you the credit and we will count only half a day—Rs. 225 crores you have burnt of the peoples' programmes.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : You can burn Rs, 1,000 Crores and the people should keep quiet? (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : This is his point of view. Your point of view may be different. Please sit down.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, I may be a little bit out in the number but in the recent price hike that has taken place, I believe, the Finance Minister collected approximately Rs. 500 crores — the number is subject to correction—and in one day you have burnt half of that.

18.00 hrs.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : That shows the people's wrath.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Please try to read the mind of the people.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : If this country is to progress, it cannot progress with 'bandhs' and closures.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : In Andhra Pradesh, what happened to these people? (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. Please take your seat.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, every time, a strike is called or a 'bundh' is called...

AN HON. MEMBER : By whom?

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : It is by Congress Party. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I am not saying by whom. Every single time, a 'bundh' is called or a strike is called, the country loses money. If it is Rs. 450 crores per day of a full 'bundh', it is Rs. 450 crores less for some development project in this one day. I accuse my friends across this room of costing the Indian people Rs. 225 crores.

(*Interruption*)

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : I accuse you and your Government of making the country lose Rs. 1000 crores:

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Sir, he should accuse Panditji and Mahatma Gandhi and other freedom fighters also.

MR. SPEAKER : Please sit down.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, is my knowledgeable friend comparing the

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'bundh' of yesterday with what Gandhiji did?

(Interruptions)

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Yes, in Ahmedabad, all the textile workers went on strike. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, perhaps he has forgotten that when Gandhiji was organising 'hartals' and 'bundhs' it was against the British Government.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Now, it is against the capitalism.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Are you anti-people or are we anti-people? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, the losses caused to the country today are the losses which are paid for by the poorest people of the country. If we lose hundred crores in a day, it is cutting the pockets of the weaker sections of the country. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : You are cutting the pockets of the people.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, it is not only a question of economics. My worthy friends do not think twice about wasting Rs. 200 crores, Rs 300 crores which could go into anti-poverty programmes and development. But more than that, much more than that, they get together with communal forces.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO : Who?

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : You are in league with the communal forces.

(Interruptions)

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN : Why did Arif Mohammad Khan resign?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I am coming to that also.

(Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER : No cross talking please.

SHRI AMAL DATTA : Prime Minister is unnecessarily provoking us.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I am not provoking you. I am expressing a viewpoint.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : So we are.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Communalism has been the traditional tool that has used historically to weaken our country.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Correct.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Thank you very much.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : For a change you make a correct statement.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : This late realisation this afternoon!

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : The colonial concept of divide and destroy has not changed even today.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : This part of the speech is very good. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sometimes it takes long to penetrate. *(Interruptions)*. I notice it has penetrated even further behind.

This attempt which carries not just in India, in other developing countries and other parts of the world did not end with the assassination of Indira; it has continued.

An hon. Member said that when we signed the accord in Punjab, everybody thought that everything was over and it was going to be rosy. We did not believe that. It was only a first step against

terrorism. It will take time to wipe out terrorism. It has taken time to wipe out terrorism from every other country... (Interruptions). Why are you feeling guilty as if you said it? Somebody from our side said it. For Heaven's sake, why do you feel as if I am attacking you? I am not attacking; somebody from our side mentioned it. Why do you feel so guilty about these things?

The fight against communal forces must be fought unitedly. We are heirs to Gandhiji's traditions, heritage, communal harmony; Panditji's scientific outlook and Indiraji's struggle against the forces of destabilisation, terrorists, separatists and communalists. We cannot fail them. Communalism must not be used as a political tool. If I may read a sentence from the secret will of Babar to his son Humayun:

"It is incumbent on the to wipe all religious prejudices off the tablet of their heart."

That we must do today.

One of the basics of independent India has been of giving full rights to all the minority communities including the women. I will talk to you about women and it is about time somebody explained to you what you have not read. The Supreme Court has passed a judgment in the 'Shah Bano case' which caused certain uncertainties in the minds of certain minorities. Whether the uncertainties were founded on something concrete or not is not for us to judge. But the fact is that certain minorities were afraid that certain guarantees that have been given to them at the time of Independence were being diluted.

We are a secular country. But how do we define that secularism? Do we define it as 'no religion'? We define it as the right of every religion to coexist with the other religions. We acknowledge that right of co-existence by allowing religions to have their own Personal Laws. It does not reduce our secularism. It is, in fact, a strong constituent of our secularism. It is the basic strength of India that every religion has its own free-

dom of functioning within our framework and we do not try to suppress or change any religion.

SHRI EBRAHM SULEMAN SAIT : For that, our community stands grateful to you, Mr. Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I will come to the next point. I will answer all your points because you have not read about what you are talking, about.

(Interruptions)

SHRI AMAL DATTA : His support shows how far you are secular!

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : The second question that was whether by bringing a Bill to this House on Tuesday, we have reduced the rights of women under Sections 125 and 127 of the G.P.C. Let me try and explain to you as to what Sections 125 and 127 give and what they do not give to our women.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I do not think that you know about it. That is why I want to tell you.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : When that particular section was passed, you were not in the House and that is the only difference. I happened to be involved in it. You must be enlightened about certain things.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Firstly, Sections 125 does not come in if the divorcee has been paid her full dues as per her personal law. Am I correct?

SOME HON. MEMBRES : Yes.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Now, if one divorcee has the advantage of having her own personal law, should we deprive a Muslim divorcee of the advantage of her personal law....

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : No.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Hindu Law, Christian Law, Parsee Law, all these laws are available codified to the courts. The Muslim Law was not available in that manner to our courts. Why should we deprive one religious group of the right to have their law if they desire to have that law?

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : What about the law of the land, which is interpreted by the Supreme Court?

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : In no way has Section 125 or 127 been diluted by this law. What the Muslim women are getting in this is much beyond what Sections 125 and 127 give.

SHRI SURESH KURUP : Why did that woman go to the Court? Shah Bano went to the Supreme Court and got that decision.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Some things do take longer to permeate. Some things take longer to permeate if you listen, you might understand.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I am trying to explain to you why we have brought this law forward. Section 125 is not applicable, if the woman has means of her own. It is only if she is indigent that it comes into force. It does not apply to every woman. Section 125 is limited to the extent of going to the particular personal law. Once you go to the personal law, Section 125 is not operative anymore.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE :
Your mind is closed

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Section 127 limits Section 125 to the extent that if the lady gets what is due to her under her personal law Section 125 and Section 127 do not apply. This is what I am saying.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : That is why we say Section 127 should be withdrawn.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : That is his point of view. This is your point of view. You can have your point of view. You listen to him.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY : Instead of going forward, you are going backward.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : We are not going backwards.

MR. SPEAKER : It is your point of view.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Section 125 and Section 127 do not look after the dower, or property of lady in any way. Section 125 and Section 127—I will repeat, do not look after or give to the lady in question her dower or *mehnr* in any way.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Section 125 and Section 127 do not give the women any right to her property. All the rights to her property, her dower come under her personal law.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : This is all right. This is no debate.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : No, Sir. I

do not want to yield. Sir, I do not wish to yield.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : It is his point of view. You can have yours.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : There is no point in discussing this Bill now.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : We are not discussing this Bill.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : It seems that the Bill has already been taken for consideration!

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : We have tabled something in this Session and I would like to make our position clear on that because questions have been raised.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, let us see the case of Mrs. Shah Bano herself. She had to fight for six years under Section 125 and Section 127. After six years of court cases, she was given Rs. 500/- or Rs. 200/- or something.

(Interruptions)

SHRI EBRAHM SULEMAN SAIT : I will tell you the position. She was given Rs. 179.25 paise.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I stand corrected, Sir.

(Interruptions)

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA : It looks like the price of a Bata Shoe!

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, after six years of struggling under Section 125, a woman is given Rs. 179/- a month! Are we trying to say that Section 125 is giving

protection to the women? It is not giving the women adequate protection.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : There is only one question and that is whether the Bill that we have brought is within the purview of Muslim Personal Law or not?

That question is a technical question. The political question, and the question whether a woman should have her rights, are questions which we can tackle. And after addressing ourselves to this, after deciding that the Bill that we have brought is a secular Bill, as defined... *(Interruptions)* Yes; bringing a personal law of a particular religion does not reduce our secularism in any way. *(Interruptions)*

As far as the operative part of the Bill is concerned, I have already made our position clear in the House, that if any substantive issues are raised, which are causing problems and which, we are convinced, are not as per Muslim Law, then we are willing to re-look at that.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : Tomorrow you are having a meeting of your party.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Today I had a meeting, this morning. Don't worry. I had a meeting with a part of your party also.

What are we looking for? When we look at the country, are we looking to divide and to cause problems?

We were told that Opposition was not consulted, and papers were not given on this particular Bill. For ten months, was it not of an adequate interest to draw your attention to it?

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN : Then your promise has no meaning.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : You forget that we called you, and you did not come. You forget that you were called, and you did not arrive.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : You were also replied to.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Let me beg to state that one of the reasons they might not have come was because they did not want to take a stand on this Bill... *(Interruptions)*

PROF. MADHU DANDAVAVE : I wish to go on record that this is not a correct statement. Next day, though early in the morning at 2.30 a.m. we received a letter from the Prime Minister's office giving a specific accede, that day at 10 o'clock we remained present in the meeting. So, it is wrong to say that on this issue, we were not prepared to discuss the matter with him. Don't try to induct politics into it.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : One of the issues—because you knew that issues that were to be discussed. This was to be discussed. *(Interruptions)* They were left-over issues.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Prof. Madhu Dandavate has made a statement. I would like to remind him that he did not participate when this question came up at the introduction stage. *(Interruptions)* The question is that no group or minority in the country should feel as if some basic rights that it had got are being taken away from that group.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : It is exactly what a section is feeling. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Unfortunately today, the Opposition is also in a minority. *(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : There should be no cross-section talk. *(Interruptions)* No, debate, there...

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : What we need is national cohesion at this time. We need to see that issues that divide communities are not raised to levels where they cannot be brought down from. We have to see that such issues are not used for

political ends. It is only with tolerance, with harmony and with concord that we can really move ahead.

Only then can we get India of our dream.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : We believe in a politics of consensus and conciliation, but consensus and conciliation is not to be mistaken for weakness or indecision. During this year, India's standing in the world has gone up even further with our participation at various world forums, with our relations with the U.S.S.R. improving, with our relations with the Soviet Union who is our old, reliable and proven friend.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : They do not like some of our friends. What can we do? Our relations with no other country can change this relationship between the Soviet Union and India—Thank you for call clapping.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN : Whenever you say anything sensible, we all agree with you.

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Whenever you say anything sensible, we all support you.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : During this year, we have also improved our relations with the United States.

(Interruptions)

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : Neither they clap nor we clap. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : What can I say? During the NDC meeting...

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Why bring NDC here?

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I was bringing it because you mentioned the USSR and the USA. I wanted to relate it to this.

You took up what I said. You started saying something when I said that. Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member was not present in the NDC meeting. So, I can tell him about that.

MR. SPEAKER : He is already feeling shy.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : During the NDC meeting, one Chief Minister—I am not naming him—one Chief Minister who was complaining about the whole Plan, he did not like the idea and he was generally a little upset and he said as the meeting was closing, “What am I to do if you do not give me the funds? Am I to look towards England and the USA?” I won't tell you who he was...(Interruptions) What can we do if a Chief Minister from the East looks to the West?

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY : What a joke!

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : But seriously, Sir, what does worry us is...(Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER : He has said it in a lighter vein.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I would suggest you expunge the Chief Minister from the record, Sir.

It will not be a good thing.

MR. SPEAKER : He has said it in a lighter vein.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : The Prime Minister referring to a Chief Minister! If it is with a sense of humour, it is all right.

MR. SPEAKER - It is a joke, and that is all.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : But, seriously Sir...(Interruption)

MR. SPEAKER : A man standing in the East cannot see East. He has to look West.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Sir, but seriously, what does worry us, is when our friends from the left start looking to the right. That does worry us.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : That is, the friends who have left.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Our friends from the left.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : I thought you said, friends who have left.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : They only leave on some days, not every day. (Interruptions) Sir, during this year India took a major role in the Non-Aligned Movement, we have strengthened the movement, we have raised the issues of South Africa, Palestine; we have discussed the new International Economic Order; we have taken a stand on various issues in the world; the Non-Aligned Movement stands strengthened by India's participation.

In CHOGM again India took a major role in the stand to uphold the multinational organisations and in the action against South Africa.

In the Six-Nation...(Interruption) The hon. friend does not understand the effect of what transpired in the Bahamas, and what its effect was on the Great Britain and in the U.S. If you see the effect of that meeting, now you will see how many banks and institutions have pulled out of the South Africa because of the stand we took.

Unfortunately, the role of the Six Nations again has brought about a tremendous awareness of nuclear disarmament. In such matters it is not right to try to take credit. But what is of vital interest to us in India and the world is total nuclear disarmament and we must work towards that. The Six Nations have built an awareness in all the countries, more especially in those countries which are opposing nuclear disarmament and where there was a problem. This awareness has brought about a change in the attitude of their Governments. Public opinion has

[Shri Rajiv Gandhi]

changed those attitudes. India has played a role.

Closer to us in our own region, we have had a major advance in South Asia with the formation of SAARC. With SAARC we take a first step in bringing all our countries closer together.

Earlier this year—last year—President Zia of Pakistan visited India. We have been discussing at various stages the steps that we could take to normalise the relations between our two countries, and we had worked out a certain time-schedule on which steps could be taken. Unfortunately, the result of all that dialogue has not been completely like we would have liked: The speed has been slow.

I would like to reiterate that the steps will be absolutely mutual. In trade and in other areas, opening up must be simultaneous. We have been discussing our border issues. But we have not made much progress. We are very firm in our view of what we feel is the right position there and we will not be easily swayed from that.

In Sri Lanka, there has been a spurt of violence recently. Unfortunately, the ceasefire between the Government and the Tamil groups could not be maintained. We have been in touch with the Sri Lankan Government. We have recently been given a new paper which is slightly beyond what their last paper was. We are studying that. We hope that it will be a sufficient move forward.

One Member, I believe, said that the Congress must wind itself up. What a wishful thinking!

SHRI AMAL DATTA : Gandhiji had also said that.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I am not talking of Gandhiji. I am talking of one Member whose only chance of changing benches is when the Congress winds itself up.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Congress of Gandhiji has wound up. Another Gandhi has come.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :
After all, all Gandhis do not think alike.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Perhaps, that is his last hope and if only wishes were horses!

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE :
You are living on hopes.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : I would like to remind you that we have the people's mandate and we have the people's trust. We have a historical destiny and we will build a new India.

One other friend talked about a prince charming.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : That is aesthetic appreciation.

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI : Let me remind you that there is no prince charming and there is no magic wand even if there are some hobgoblins at the bottom of the garden. The Congress Party is the party of the masses. We would not be shaken by Cassandras. The nation is not despondent; it is not disenchanted. The nation is confident; it is optimistic and the nation is proud to be Indian.

MR. SPEAKER : A number of amendments have been moved by Members to the Motion of Thanks. Shall I put all the amendments to the vote of the House together or does any hon. Member want any particular amendment to be put separately?—I find nobody is pressing. I shall now put all the amendments together to the vote of the house.

All the amendments were put and negatived.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

“That an Address be presented to the President in the following terms :—

“That the Members of Lok Sabha assembled in this Session are deeply grateful to the President for the Address which he has been pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament