

13.03 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Visit to Federal Republic of Germany

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO): I visited the Federal Republic of Germany from the 5th to 7th September 1991. This was essentially a goodwill visit, the main purpose of which was to inaugurate, alongwith Chancellor Helmut Kohl, the Festival of India in Germany. I took advantage of this occasion to exchange views with German leaders on a wide range of bilateral and international issues. During the visit, I called on President Richard Von Weizaecker and Chancellor Helmut Kohl with whom I had more than an hour - long meeting. I also met Dr. Spranger, Minister for Economic Cooperation and Dr. Juergen Moellemann, Minister for Economics, and had discussions with them on Indo-German economic and commercial relations.

The other import features of the visit were a meeting with the Senior Executive of leading members of the German business community, and a luncheon meeting with German idologists. I met Members of the Indian community in Germany at a reception arranged by our Ambassador in Germany.

I acquainted my German interlocutors with the changes we have recently brought about in our economic policies and emphasised that they constituted an important milestone in a natural evolution and derived from the logic of the present level and stage of our development. They were, therefore, irreversible. They also enjoyed the support of the people and Parliament of India.

There was full appreciation on the German side of the nature and significance of the changes and about Indias determination to press ahead with them. They recognised that these changes were of decisive importance for determining future cooperation

between India and Germany and that they deserved to be fully supported by the international community. I was told by the German Chancellor that despite the new burdens imposed upon Germany by the process of its unification and developments in Europe, particularly in the Soviet Union, Germany remained fully committed on its development cooperation with India.

The inauguration of the Festival of India in Germany was a major event in the cultural life of the German people. In his inaugural address, Chancellor Kohl described it "as the largest cultural presentation of a friendly country which has ever taken place in Germany". The festival is heading towards a resounding success and is bound to have a decisive impact on the hearts and minds of the German people.

I dedicated the Festival to the memory of Shri Rajiv Gandhi who had mooted the idea three years ago during his meeting with Chancellor Kohl. Rajivji had made an outstanding contribution to the furtherance of Indo-German cooperation. A reciprocal Festival of Germany in India is planned for the year 1993-94.

Hon'ble Members are aware of the German fascination, enthusiasm and pursuit of Indian culture and the importance of culture in the shaping of Indo-German relations, which came much before the development of political and economic interchanges between the two countries in recent times. My meeting with the German Indologists proved beyond doubt that German scholars and intellectuals still retained their deep interest in India's cultural, spiritual and philosophical heritage and in the contemporary scene in India. It is important for us to do everything possible to encourage the German Indologists, indeed Indologists everywhere, in their pursuit of knowledge about India. Cultural contacts and Inter-change are the fountainhead of better understanding between countries and societies. I may also add that it is time we organised an international conference of Indologists in Delhi or some other appropriate place in India. I

intend to sound out the State Chief Ministers for their cooperation I am also confident that the event will evoke unstinted cooperation from academic and cultural circles in India.

I am glad to inform the House that this first visit of mine to a foreign country after taking over as Prime Minister, went off very well and succeeded in achieving the objective I had in mind. I am confident that it would provide a fresh impetus to Indo-German cooperation. I am particularly happy to have had this opportunity of renewing my contact with Chancellor Kohl. Of particular significance is the desire expressed by him to me to draw India closer to the New Europe that is emerging.

MR. SPEAKER: Today we have decided to work after the Private Members Business over. I am going to adjourn the House after taking up the Matters under Rule 377 so that we have lunch time.

Now I call upon Shri Pala K.M. Mathew to raise the matter under Rule 377.

13.06 hrs

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

- (i) **Need to waive off the loans given to small cardamom growers and provide other tax exemptions to them**

[English]

SHRI PALA K.M. MATHEW (Idukki): The small cardamom growers are put to immense hardship. The spices Board is taking stringent steps to collect the loans taken by the farmers under Cardamom replanting loan schemes.

Because of previous year's cyclone and poor rains, the small farmers are not in a position to repay the loans. The loan waiver facility of the Government should be extended to these cardamom loans also.

The exemption under Agricultural In-

come Tax should be extended up to 4 hectares. The panchayat professional tax from Cardamom growers should be abolished. Pattas should be issued to Kuthagapattam land occupants. The auction sale of tax defaulters land under the Sales Tax Act, etc. should never be allowed to ruin cardamom farmers.

- (ii) **Need to set up special Development Board at Bolangir**

SHRI SARAT CHANDRA PATANAYAK (Bolangir): The three districts of Orissa, Bolangir, Kalahandi and Phulbani, are most backward regions of Orissa. There is no major industry in the area. Despite being rich in natural resources the rate of development in the field of education, industry, transport, irrigation and agriculture is very low in proportion to the State's average growth in these areas. The rate of economic growth is very low. The literacy rate is also marginal. As the tribal (SC & ST) population is higher in percentage, special efforts are needed to improve their living conditions. Though large chunk of revenue is collected from there the share of this region for departmental work is low. In order to fight the poverty, illiteracy, drought and to improve the living conditions, Special Development Board in the pattern of Saurashtra and Vidarbha should be established immediately at Bolangir.

- (iii) **Need to extend the benefits of abolition of 'Lease System' to the Cooperative Housing Societies**

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the decision of the Government to convert 'Lease System' into 'Free Hold' is quite praise worthy. Under the new land system a fixed amount will be charged in lumpsum. The new land system on the one hand, will definitely in the present circumstances make huge funds available to