

including the three States Reorganisation Bills, that would create three more States out of the present States of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill 2000 seeking to check pollution on uncontrolled alterations of engines of the vehicle and the Cable Television Network Regulation (Amendment) Bill 2000 seeking to provide programme and broadcasting codes for all kinds of channels were also passed. Two Constitution (Amendment) Bills, the Constitution Eighty-Sixth (Amendment) Bill 1999 and the Constitution Eighty-Eighth (Amendment) Bill 1999 were passed by the Lok Sabha. While the former would exempt the State of Arunachal Pradesh from the application of the provision of the Constitution relating to the reservation of seats in Panchayats for the Scheduled Castes, the latter would provide concession to members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in promotion to services or posts under the Central or State Governments.

The House had fruitful debates on four important matters of public importance under Rule 193. These are: Resolution passed by the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly for Autonomy, Loss of lives and property due to floods in various parts of the country, Disinvestment of public sector undertakings and Atrocities on linguistic and religious minorities in the country.

Another issue regarding the killing of innocent persons, including pilgrims of Amarnath Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir, and need to appoint a commission of enquiry headed by a sitting Judge of High Court to inquire into the matter was discussed under Rule 184.

Two important matters were raised by Members by way of Calling Attention and the concerned Ministers made statements thereon. These were on difficulties faced by the jute growers and the situation arising out of the reported decline of rupee in the foreign exchange market. Fourteen other statements were also made by Minister on different issues.

As regards the Question Hour, out of 460 Starred Questions listed, 65 were orally answered in the House, while replies were given to 5142 Unstarred Questions, There were two Short-Notice Questions as well.

As regards the Private Members' Business, 45 Bills were introduced, of which two were discussed. Two Private Members' Resolutions were also discussed. Members raised 163 matters under Rule 377, while 349 matters of public importance were raised during the Zero Hour.

In this Session, the Departmentally Related Standing Committees presented 36 reports. The Lok Sabha sat late on several days to complete the listed business. This was made possible because of the wholehearted support and willing cooperation that I received from all sections of the House.

I am indeed thankful to each and every Member of the House. I am extremely grateful to the hon. Leader of the House, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the leaders of various parties and groups in the House as also the Chief Whips and Whips for their kind cooperation and courtesy extended to me and to my colleagues, the hon. Deputy-Speaker and members of the Panel of Chairmen.

During the Session, destiny made us to make Obituary References to two of our very distinguished sitting Members, Shri Rajesh Pilot and Shri P.R. Kumaramangalam.

The sudden and tragic death of these two youthful and dynamic leaders is a great loss to the whole nation. They will be missed inside as well as outside Parliament.

[Translation]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): Mr Speaker, Sir, Monsoon Session has come to the end. We feel satisfaction on the achievements of this Session. Parliament lags behind in the matter of legal proceedings since other issue taken up for discussion take more time. There used to be such complaints but now there should not be any complaint. Though, the House used to sit late in the evening to complete legislative business. By virtue of hon. Members cooperation that work also has been completed. We are successfully accomplishing the task of enactment of laws which includes two Constitution Amendment Bills also.

Sir, because of typical nature of party position in the House it was thought that it would be very difficult to mobilise two-third majority or more efforts will have to be made for this purpose. But, with the cooperation of all political parties, especially main opposition party, both Constitution Amendment Bills have been passed with good majority or you can say with consensus. It is very much necessary that such sort of environment should prevail in the House. Simultaneously, I feel, we should discuss our problems and solve them and we should keep maximum restraint while expressing our difference of opinion.

Sir, today, on last day of this session I would like to request you that, though I held the same opinion when

[Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee]

I was in opposition, the Question Hour should be permitted to be run as Question Hour only. Creating any type of obstruction during Question Hour is not good. If there is any sensitive issue, we can raise it after Question Hour is over in a more serious and efficient manner. But the importance of Question Hour should be maintained. I would like hon. Members of all parties to consider it. Once, earlier in last Lok Sabha it was decided that Question Hour will not be disturbed, but we have forgot that and obstructions have been created during Question Hour. Sir, today through your efficient handling you could minimise disturbances during Question Hour. Sir, several times you have managed it skillfully. Our hon. Members also should exercise some skill and introduce a new system and tradition.

Sir, as you have already mentioned, we have lost our two colleagues during this Session which is concluding today. They are Shri Rajesh Pilot and Shri P. Kumaramangalam. Both of them were marching firmly on the path of success. Their future was bright. Now they have become subject matter of our tribute. Though we miss them, yet we are going on with our business. Entire nation feels that House may be divided in divergent factions, but at the time of crisis, any sad event of external threat, entire House and whole country stand united.

Sir, lot of congratulations to your leadership and I hope that we would not only complete this Session but will complete even full term.

[English]

SHRIMATI SONIA GANDHI (Amethi) : Mr, Speaker, Sir we have come to the end of the Fourth Session of this House. During this one month, many important issues have been discussed, have been debated and a great deal of work has been done. I would like to congratulate you, Sir, for so deftly guiding this House.

One item stands out, and that is, the creation of the three new States—Uttaranchal, Chhatisgarh and Jharkhand. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to convey my good wishes as well as those of the Congress Party to all the people of the three new States and to their prospective Governments.

A number of significant Bills have been passed, approved by this House. Here again the Congress Party took a positive stand because it believed that these Bills

contained elements which were constructive and in the interest of the people.

However, on certain matters, we were not fully satisfied with the response of the Government. The massacre of Amamath pilgrims and similar incidents in Jammu and Kashmir have shocked the entire nation. The reply of the Home Minister to our demand for a Judicial Inquiry was far from convincing. To our mind, it betrayed a sense of insecurity and defensiveness. We, as a responsible political Party, as a responsible Opposition, supported the Government opening a dialogue in Kashmir in an effort to bring about peace in this troubled State. But we are concerned at the seemingly confused manner in which this delicate and most important exercise was undertaken. There seems to be no clear policy, no well thought out strategy. While we reiterate our full support to the peace initiative in Jammu and Kashmir, we urge the Government to act in a more co-ordinated and effective manner.

We strongly condemn the role of Pakistan in continuing to foment and encourage trans-border terrorism and violent acts as also their ongoing attempts to sabotage the peace process in Jammu and Kashmir. In spite of this Session being a busy one, several vital items, several vital subjects were not discussed in the House.

Sir, yet another Session has gone by but the Government has not found the consensus it promised to seek on the Women's Reservation Bill. We believe we must take this matter up. We have waited. The women of our country have waited long enough. Therefore, we would like a commitment from the Government that this Bill will be brought before this House for a final verdict during the Winter Session.

With great difficulty, we had also managed to plan for a discussion on the Kargil Report. But yet we could not do so. Of course, because of the passing away of Shri Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, this debate had to be postponed. But our party considers this to be a matter of great importance. It is a subject which we believe must take precedence over many other issues. We hope that it will be taken up right at the beginning of the Winter Session.

The Prime Minister had also given an assurance to this House as well as to the country on the CTBT. He had assured us that he would strive to evolve a consensus on the CTBT. We do trust that he will stand by his commitment.

Many of the Members in the House have expressed their concern on the disinvestment policy. We have requested you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to set up a Standing Committee on Disinvestment so that our Members can get an opportunity to express their views, so that their concerns are adequately addressed and a clear and transparent policy is laid down.

Before I conclude, I would like to say that we are most concerned about the loss of life and property due to floods in Arunachal Pradesh, in Himachal Pradesh, in Bihar and in Andhra Pradesh. This morning many Members of Parliament from Andhra Pradesh have brought this issue up. We do sincerely hope that all relief measures, which are due, will be speedily taken up.

I trust that the Government will strive to find solutions, not only in words but also in action, to the various issues which we, in the Congress Party as well as others in the Opposition Parties, have taken up. On our part, I assure you of our support to all those policies which we believe to be in the interests of the people of our country.

In the end, I would like to extend to you our thanks and our good wishes and through you our good wishes to the Prime Minister, to his Government, to our colleagues in the Opposition Parties and to all Members of this House.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to sincerely thank you for the accommodation that you have always shown, particularly to the Opposition. Knowing as I do, your commitment to parliamentary democracy and realising the role of the Opposition which is, in any event, quite divided in the sense of so many parties in the Opposition, but with your able guidance and your unflinching courtesy shown to all the Members, we have been able to do substantially, what we had decided to perform.

Of course, I must concede that precious time of this House had not been utilised in a manner that it should have been. And I am not blaming anybody, but jointly we have to consider about it, how to avoid it in future, not only the Question Hour but others. I know about our Prime Minister's commitment. Of course, I can assure him that, that commitment is not of his alone, All of us believe in that. But situations develop, in spite of our wishes, things happen. But, not only the Question Hour, we must see to ourselves that this time is utilised. Many many important issues could not be discussed. Several important economic aspects, not only the question of disinvestment, the serious

situation now faced by the workers in these public sector undertakings could not be discussed. So many of them are closed down.

They are losing jobs, and salaries are not being paid. I can understand even if there is an inexorable trend of privatisation. But how can it be done with a least damage to the fabric of our society, with a least damage or least problem to the working class of this country? These are very serious matters, which are required to be discussed more deeply on the floor of the House.

I know that many hon. Ministers – I do not want to point them out because I do not know how the hon. Prime Minister will feel – also feel unhappy. They express privately, but they cannot do it openly. But even that opportunity could be there. Shri Ananth Kumar, please do not look at anybody. . . . (Interruptions)

Sir, we have not found time to discuss the foreign policy, the CTBT and so many other issues. This is a forum to which the whole country is looking at. I know that this should not be a mere talking shop, apart from important legislations – good, bad or indifferent – that the Government brings and gets passed with our cooperation, with the sweet words of the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. I do not know as to why he gets angry sometimes. Probably, he gets some thrashing from the hon. Prime Minister and he gets it on us! But we have a good working arrangement. I must thank the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs also. He has been accommodating. That is needed.

Sir, yesterday I said that "Ranga" was the successful Minister of Parliamentary Affairs because of the total understanding between him and the Opposition. His unflinching not only courtesy, but his spirit of accommodation, his attitude of friendliness and his attitude of the spirit of cooperation, all these things make one a successful Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. Now, we have also one good Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, but for his weakness for Mumbai.

Sir, there are many other issues which we wanted to discuss. I hope we shall find time for them during the next Session. Let us also decide to bring a little less number of Bills and do some other business here. Of course, we are passing all the important Bills.

Sir, we end this Session with the hope and belief that not only in the maintenance of parliamentary democracy in a better form but in a more effective functioning and