

16.35 hrs

[English]

STATEMENT *RE* DEMANDS OF THE
GORKHA NATIONAL LIBERATION
FRONT

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS(S. BUTA SINGH): Sir, it gives me great pleasure to inform this august House that negotiations with the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) with regard to their demands have been successfully concluded with the signing of two Memoranda of Settlement. The first Memorandum was signed on 22nd August, 1988 at Calcutta by Shri Subash Ghising on behalf of the GNLF, Chief Secretary, Government of West Bengal on behalf of the State Government and the Union Home Secretary on behalf of the Government of India. The second Memorandum was signed in New Delhi this morning by Shri Subash Ghising on behalf of the GNLF and the Union Home Secretary on behalf of the Government of India. The signing of two Memoranda of Settlement became a necessity because certain demands put forth by the GNLF pertained exclusively to the Union government. I am placing a copy each of the two Memoranda of Settlement on the Table of this House. [Placed in library See No. LT 6447/88]

As the House would recall, the GNLF has been spearheading agitation in Darjeeling Hill areas since the early part of the year 1986, for acceptance of their demands. The main demands put forth but the GNLF were:-

- (i) A separate State of Gorkhaland within the Indian Union should be formed;
- (ii) The question of citizenship of the settled Gorkhas should be resolved on the basis of incorporation of territories (as provided for in Section 7 of the Indian Citizenship Act, 1955) and for this purpose a notification should be

issued by the Government of India;

- (iii) A separate Indian Gorkha regiment exclusively for the Indian Gorkhas should be created; and
- (iv) Inclusion of Gorkha language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

In keeping with the Government of India's declared policy to resolve all disputes and differences peacefully and bring into the mainstream various diverse groups, ethnic, social or cultural, talks were initiated with the GNLF from December, 1986 at the initiative of our Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi. Right at the outset, it was categorically made clear to the GNLF that the Government of India will not countenance any division of West Bengal. It was also made clear that the GNLF must abjure violence. Within this framework, we invited Shri Subash Ghising and the Government of West Bengal to initiate a dialogue so as to redress the genuine grievances of the Gorkhas of the Darjeeling Hills in the best possible manner as also to give them a sense of participation and a sense of belonging. Consultations between the Government of India and the Government of West Bengal on the one hand and Government of India and the GNLF leadership on the other, were held over a long period which eventually led to the first tripartite talks on 25.1.1988 followed by another tripartite talks on 29.6.1988 and the final one on 25.7.1988. It is a matter of great satisfaction that these discussions finally culminated in total agreement between all the parties concerned as set out in the two Memoranda of Settlement referred to above.

The Memorandum of Settlement signed in Calcutta on the 22nd August, 1988 to which the GNLF, the Government of West Bengal and the Union Government are parties, envisages setting up of an autonomous Hill Council covering three Hill subdivisions of Darjeeling district, viz. Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong plus thirteen Mouzas of

Siliguri subdivision contiguous to Kurseong subdivision. The Hill Council is to be set up through an Act of the State legislation. The salient features of the Hill Council are:-

- (i) The name of the Council will be "DARJEELING GORKHA HILL COUNCIL."
- (ii) The executive powers of the Council will cover 19 subjects including Agriculture, Education, tourism, transport, public health, small scale and cottage industries, etc.
- (iii) The Council shall exercise general powers of the supervision over Panchayat Samities, Gram Panchayats and Municipalities falling within the areas of the Council's jurisdiction.
- (iv) The General Council will have a total of 42 members out of which 28 will be elected and the rest nominated by the State Government.
- (v) There will be an Executive Council and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the General Council will be ex-officio members of the Executive Council with the Chairman of the General Council functioning as the Chief Executive Councillor. The Chief Executive Councillor will nominate 5 members to the Executive Council from out of the elected members of the Council and the State Government will nominate 2 members to the Executive Council from out of the non-official nominated members of the General Council.
- (vi) The Chairman of the General Council cum Chief Executive Councillor will have the ex-officio status and privileges of a Minister in the Council of Ministers in

the State.

- (viii) The State government agrees to lease to the Council after it is formed, or acquire for it, the use of such land as may be required and necessary for administrative and developmental purposes, anywhere in the State and in particular in or around "Darjeeling More' in Siliguri subdivision.

The Bill for setting up of the Hill council will be introduced and passed in a special session of the State Legislature which has been summoned towards the end of this month. The elections to the Council are to be held by 15th December, 1988.

By virtue of this agreement the GNLFF have agreed to deep the demand for a separate State of Gorkhaland and withdraw all agitational activities and also to extend full cooperation to the State Administration for the maintenance of peace and the normalisation of the political process in the Darjeeling area. The State Government on its part will review all cases registered during the course of the agitation and take action to withdraw the same. This, however, will not cover cases involving murder. Similarly, disciplinary cases against Government employees will also be withdrawn.

The second Memorandum between the GNLFF and the Government of India clarifies the position in respect of the three demands which were the exclusive concern of the Government of India. viz. the citizenship issue, formation of a separate Indian Gorkha Regiment and inclusion of Gorkha language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. It has been decided to issue a Gazette Notification clarifying the citizenship status of Gorkhas who have settled in India.

With regard to raising of separate Indian Gorkha Regiment, the policy of the Government of India of not raising any new regiment on class composition was acknowledged. It is not obligatory for Gorkhas settled in India to join only specified Gorkha Regiments and

[S. Buta Singh]
they have the option to join the regiments of their choice. To this extent, suitable instructions will be issued by the Army Headquarters.

The GNLF has accepted the Government of India's position in respect of non-inclusion of more languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution as this would create repercussion and reactions. It is the endeavour of the Government to develop the cultural and literary heritage of all languages irrespective of their inclusion in the Eighth Schedule.

The settlement has been welcomed by all sections of the people in Darjeeling area as well as in the country as a whole. It has generated a new wave of enthusiasm for peace and development of this area. It has once again demonstrated the strength of the democratic process as envisaged in our Constitution. This settlement brings to an end the disturbed conditions in the strife torn Darjeeling Hill areas and opens up a new era of peace and progress for the brave people of this beautiful Hill District. The valour of the Gorkhas in the defence of our country is well known and I fervently hope that these brave people will make their own unique contribution towards development of the Darjeeling Hill areas and be equal participants in the progress of our country.

I would like to express through this House the Government of India's appreciation of the understanding, patience and cooperation extended by the people of West Bengal in general and the people of Darjeeling in particular to enable us to arrive at an acceptable solution. I would like to express my gratitude towards the Hon'ble Prime Minister whose sagacity and timely guidance kept us on the rails and saw us through to a happy and peaceful negotiated settlement. My special thanks are due to Shri Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister of West Bengal and Shri Subash Ghising, the leader of the GNLF whose forbearance, patriotism and national outlook made this agreement possible. Last but not the least I would thank the

Hon'ble Members of this House for the cooperation and understanding shown during the long course of negotiations.

I have a word for Shri Inderjit, who has been helping us in the process as a guide and as a friend. Last but not the least, I would thank the hon. Members of this House for the cooperation and understanding shown during the long course of negotiations.

16.48 hrs.

SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (GENERAL) 1988-89

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI MANORAMA SINGH (Banka) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heartily support the Supplementary Demands for Grants sought for by the Government. I want to draw your attention only to the two or four points. My first point is regarding irrigation which is very essential for the development of a country. Seventy five per cent population of our country still depends on agriculture. The Government allots funds for major schemes but, the schemes are not completed within scheduled time. In six legislative Assembly segments of my Parliamentary Constituency the Schemes involving crores of rupees were formulated but no Scheme has been completed within scheduled time. When so much amounts are allotted by the Central Government for a scheme, at least a committee should be formed to see as to why these schemes are not being completed in time. A scheme regarding construction of a Dam in my constituency was formulated but no officer ever visits at its sites for inspection. A scheme so formulated is required to be completed within its scheduled time and estimated costs but when it is not completed within its scheduled time, several difficulties arise in its execution. The same was also happened in our area. When there are terrible floods and heavy rains, the villagers apprehend the collapse of the Dam under construction.