

momentum in our relations with China was maintained with a continuing dialogue at the highest levels. Our efforts resulted in promoting good relations with all our neighbours in South Asia, with the sole exception of Pakistan. We urge the Government of Pakistan to eschew its path of confrontation with India and respond constructively to our repeated offer of a bilateral dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with the Shimla Agreement.

A landmark in SAARC's progress was achieved last year with the operationalisation of the South Asia Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) from December 7, 1995. The signing of a trilateral Memorandum of Understanding on transit by India, Iran and Turkmenistan, which seeks to establish a viable surface route between India and Central Asia for commercial and other links, was an important event in the development of our links with Central Asia. ASEAN has agreed to full dialogue partnership status for India. This reflects the growing, mutually beneficial relationship between India and ASEAN.

Our relations with the Russian Federation continued to be close. Further areas for cooperation in economic, cultural and other fields were identified. The India-United States relationship registered steady growth, in particular in the economic and commercial areas. Political and economic cooperation with countries in the African continent was promoted through high-level visits to and from Mali, Mauritius, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Egypt, Burkina Faso and Ghana.

India took the lead in articulating the political, economic, social and other concerns of the developing countries in international forums like the World Summit for Social Development in Denmark in March, 1995; the UN General Assembly's 50th anniversary Special Commemorative Meeting in October, 1995; and the 11th Non-aligned Summit in Colombia in the same month. Consistent with its commitment to the objective of complete nuclear disarmament within a specified time-frame, India is participating actively in the negotiations for a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. At the same time, we view the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as an obstacle to universal nuclear disarmament as it seeks to legitimise the nuclear arsenals of nuclear-weapon states.

As this Session will be a brief one, only essential legislation will be taken up during this Session. Some Ordinances promulgated since the last Session will be placed before Parliament. A Statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the Government of India for the financial year 1996-97 will be laid before you for the purpose of passing Vote on Account authorising expenditure for a part of that year. Vote on Account in respect of the States under the President's Rule would also need to be passed.

The policies of the Government have put the country on the path of growth enabling the people to realise their potential. The strength of the country lies in the strength of its economy and the unity of its people. During the last four and a half years, your dedication, wisdom and vision have left an imprint that will guide the nation into a brighter tomorrow.

I commend you to your tasks in this Session and wish you success.

JAI HIND

12.24½ hrs.

OBITUARY REFERENCES

[English]

Mr. Speaker : Hon. Members, I have to inform the House with profound sorrow of the passing away of two of our colleagues Sarvashri Surya Narayan Singh and Govind Chandra Munda and also six of our former colleagues namely Sarvashri Heera Bhai, Bakin Pertin, Amiya Nath Bose, Dev Kanta Borooah, T.S. Negi and P.C. Sethi and Shri N.T. Rama Rao, Ex-Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.

Shri Surya Narayan Singh was a sitting Member of Lok Sabha representing Balia Parliamentary Constituency of Bihar. He was also a Member of Seventh and Ninth Lok Sabha representing the same constituency during 1980-84 and 1989-91.

Earlier, he had been a Member of Bihar Legislative Assembly during 1977-79.

A veteran freedom fighter, Shri Singh participated in the independence movement. A multifaceted personality, Shri Singh was an active social worker, an educationist and a prominent trade union leader. He took initiative in opening schools, colleges and libraries. He was actively associated in the flood and earthquake relief works during 1987-88. Shri Singh was instrumental in the distribution of surplus land to the poor and the landless.

An active parliamentarian, Shri Singh served on various parliamentary and consultative committees of various Ministries.

Shri Surya Narayan Singh passed away on 8 February, 1996 at New Delhi at the age of 76 years.

Shri Govinda Chandra Munda was a sitting Member of Lok Sabha representing Keonjhar parliamentary constituency of Orissa. He was also a Member of Sixth and Ninth Lok Sabha representing the same constituency during 1977-79 and 1989-91.

Earlier, he had been a Member of Orissa Legislative Assembly from 1952-1977 and served as Deputy Minister in the State Council of Ministers during 1967-70.

During his membership of this House, he served as Member of various parliamentary and consultative committees.

An active social worker, Shri Munda worked hard for the betterment of the poor and the downtrodden people of his area and evinced keen interest in community development programmes.

He also authored 'Jagaran' and few other books on Oriya literature.

Shri Govinda Chandra Munda passed away on 19 February, 1996 at Keonjhar, Orissa at the age of 66 years.

Shri Heera Bhai was a Member of Sixth and Ninth Lok Sabha representing Banswara parliamentary constituency of Rajasthan during 1977-79 and 1989-91.

Earlier, he had been a Member of Rajasthan Legislative Assembly during 1957-72.

An agriculturist by profession, Shri Heera Bhai had participated in the freedom struggle. An active social worker, he was imprisoned several times for taking part in agitations for abolition of bonded labour and for enforcing prohibition. He fought relentlessly for promotion of Panchayat Raj.

Shri Heera Bhai passed away on 25 December, 1995 at Kakanwani near Banswara, Rajasthan at the age of 73 years.

Shri Bakin Pertin was a Member of Sixth Lok Sabha representing Arunachal East parliamentary constituency of Arunachal Pradesh during 1977-79.

He was also a Member of Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly.

Shri Pertin started his political career at a very young age when he was still a student. He served as Vice-President of Siang Zila Parishad during 1975-77. He also served his home State in various capacities. He worked hard for the upliftment of the downtrodden and promotion of adult education.

Shri Bakin Pertin passed away on 5 January, 1996 at Guwahati at the age of 53 years.

Shri Amiya Nath Bose was a Member of Fourth Lok Sabha representing Arambagh parliamentary constituency of West Bengal during 1967-70.

An advocate by profession, Shri Amiya Nath Bose, who was a close relative of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, was actively associated with the Indian National Army. He was Secretary of the Council for International Recognition of Independence in London during 1942-44 and General Secretary of the INA Committee of West Bengal during 1945-46. He was the founder Member of Netaji Research

Bureau and General Secretary of Netaji Hall Society, Calcutta.

A widely travelled person, Shri Bose had special interest in the fields of defence, foreign policy and economic planning.

Shri Amiya Nath Bose passed away on 26 January, 1996 at Calcutta at the age of 81 years.

Shri Dev Kanta Borooah was a member of the Constituent Assembly, Provisional Parliament, First and Sixth Lok Sabha representing Nowgong parliamentary constituency of Assam during 1949-50, 1950-52, 1952-57 and 1977-79 respectively. He had also been a member of Rajya Sabha during 1973-77 and served as a Cabinet Minister in the Union Council of Ministers during 1973-74. He was a member of Assam Legislative Assembly during 1957-72 and served as a Minister in the State Government.

He also served as Governor of Bihar from February, 1971 to February, 1974.

Shri Borooah who led an active political career suffered imprisonment several times while participating in India's freedom movement.

A journalist by profession, he was editor of two daily newspapers namely the *Dainik Assamiya* and the *Natun Assamiya*. He also authored a book of verses in Assamese.

A widely travelled person, Shri Barooah was one of the members of the Indian delegations to the U.N.O. in 1954, 1955 and 1974 and Commonwealth Conference held at New Zealand.

Shri Borooah was associated with various socio-cultural and educational institutions in Assam. He was the member of Courts of Guwahati and Viswabharati Universities and President of Assam Society of Cultural Studies during 1964-68 and Assam Publications Board.

Shri Dev Kant Borooah passed away on 28 January, 1996 at New Delhi at the age of 82 years.

Shri T.S. Negi was a member of sixth and seventh Lok Sabha representing Tehri Garhwal parliamentary constituency of Uttar Pradesh during 1977-79 and 1980-84.

Earlier, he had been a member of U.P Legislative Assembly for two terms during 1950-52 and 1962-67. He was also a member of Vidhan Sabha of erstwhile Tehri State.

An advocate by profession, Shri Negi was a well known social and political worker. He worked hard for ameliorating the lot of people of erstwhile Tehri State.

An active parliamentarian, Shri Negi was a member of various parliamentary committees. He also served on consultative committee of Ministry of Communications.

Shri T.S. Negi passed away on 3 February, 1996 at Narendranagar, Tehri Garhwal at the age of 73 years.

Shri P.C. Sethi was a member of Fourth, Fifth, Seventh and Eighth Lok Sabha representing Indore parliamentary constituency of Madhya Pradesh during 1967-70, 1971-72, 1980-84 and 1984-89 respectively. He was also a member of Rajya Sabha for three terms during 1961-64, 1964-67 and 1976-80. He also served as Deputy Minister, Minister of State before serving as Cabinet Minister in the Union Council of Ministers and held several important portfolios such as Ministries of Petroleum, Chemicals and Fertilizers, Railways, Home Affairs and Planning to name a few.

He also served as Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh during 1972-75.

A veteran freedom fighter, he had plunged into Indian freedom movement after boycotting college in 1942.

An able parliamentarian and a seasoned politician, Shri Sethi had served the country with distinction in diverse fields of national reconstruction.

A widely travelled person, he represented India at various International conferences and organisations such as Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Conference at Barbados in September, 1969, meeting of Asian Development Bank at Seoul in April, 1970. He was leader of the Indian Delegation to Colombo Plan Conference held at Victoria, Vancouver Island, Canada. He was also nominated as India's Governor to Asian Development Bank, Manila and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Shri Sethi who had keen interest in the sports and cultural activities, served as a member of Madhya Bharat Kala Praishad and Madhya Pradesh Village and Khadi Board.

Shri P.C. Sethi passed away on 21 February, 1996 at Indore at the age of 76 years.

I also inform the House regarding the sad demise of Shri N.T. Rama Rao, who was the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.

Shri Rama Rao started his career as a film actor and later became a matinee idol. His unique acting talent made him an instant success. His career in films span nearly half a century and he acted in over 100 films contributing to making each one of them a remarkable one.

He started his political career in 1982, became the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in 1983 and later on rose to become one of the national leaders. Shri Rama Rao was popular among the masses of his State because of his secular ideas and for amelioration of poor and down trodden.

Shri Rama Rao passed away on 18 January, 1996 at Hyderabad at the age of 72 years.

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

The Prime Minister (Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is with a very heavy heart that I rise to pay my respectful homage to Shri Surya Narayan Singh, a sitting Member of this House. Shri Singh was deeply committed to the cause of the welfare of the poor and the down-trodden. He was a trade unionist who worked for the rights of the working class. We will all miss him in this House.

I am also grieved to note that another sitting Member Shri Govind Chandra Munda, who is no longer with us. He was a champion of the Scheduled Tribes and had published a number of books on Oriya literature. He took keen interest in the issues of tribal welfare.

Shri Heera Bhai was a freedom fighter and also fought for the eradication of bonded labour and suffered imprisonment a number of times for taking part in the agitations relating to bonded labour, prohibition and Panchayati Raj.

Shri Bakin Pertin started his career in the Government but soon left it to work for the welfare of the people in Arunachal Pradesh. He took keen interest in adult education and development of agriculture.

Shri Amiya Nath Bose was a distinguished barrister and organised Indian Congressmen in Great Britain. He was a nephew of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and was closely associated with the INA Committee. He was also the founder member of Netaji Research Bureau, Calcutta.

I also express my deep sense of loss and pay my condolences at the passing away of Shri Dev Kant Borooah. He was a distinguished freedom fighter and journalist. He was an intellectual who has a deep interest and love for books. He served with distinction in several capacities as Minister in Assam, Union Minister and Governor of Bihar. I had a particular attachment with him being General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee while he was the President.

I offer my condolences on the passing away of Shri T.S. Negi. He was devoted to the service of the people of the Tehri region and worked for their welfare.

I would also like to place on record my profound grief at the passing away of Shri Prakash Chand Sethi. Shri Sethi was a freedom fighter and a veteran leader. He was an able and experienced administrator who held charge of number of portfolios in the Central Government. He was also Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh from January 1972 to December 1975.

In the passing away of Shri Nandamun Taraka Rama Rao, we have lost one of the most colourful and forceful

personalities in the cultural and political firmament of the country. An entirely self-made person he strode the scene like a Titan and left his indelible mark

Personally, I knew him for more than 40 years and followed his meteoric rise with admiration. Despite politically having a strong diction which came to him quite naturally and spontaneously, he was very considerate and friendly. He built up a political party, every brick of it and put life into it and remained its life.

He then went on to head a broad Front at the national level. I would like to place on record my deepest respect for this remarkable person and leader and send my condolences to the family. May his soul rest in peace!

I wish to place on record, Sir, the deep sense of personal loss and grief felt by the nation and by all of us on the death of these illustrious Members.

[Translation]

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee (Lucknow) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I join you and the leader of the House in paying homage to those departed personalities on behalf of my party and myself.

Shri Surya Narayan Singh and Shri Govind Chandra Munda were here with us during the last session. Today, they are no longer with us. This cycle of life and death goes on like this. Shri Singh will be remembered as a dedicated Member and Shri Munda for his multifaceted personality.

I would like to make special mentions of Shri Dev Kant Barooah, Shri Prakash Chand Sethi and Shri Ram Rao. Generally speaking, I have had the occasion to work with all these departed members in this House or the other House. Their memories will last long in our hearts.

Shri Dev Kant Barooah was a versatile genius. Despite his sharp political ideas, his keen interest in the cultural, literary and fine arts activities, his sophisticated approach and deep understanding of these subjects, made him a distinctive face in the crowd.

Shri Prakash Chand Sethi was one of the great sons of Madhya Pradesh. Rising from the grassroot level, he touched celestial heights. A cultured, civilized and a reticent person with a habit of taking everybody along, Sethiji was called upon to shoulder diverse responsibilities which he discharged fully.

Shri Rama Rao emerged as the hero of Andhra 'Rashtra'. I am deliberately using the word 'Rashtra' because in Telugu it denotes a state. I should not be mistaken. During my visit to Andhra Pradesh, I found that he was introduced as Andhra Rashtra Nayakulu. In Andhra Pradesh Shri Rama Rao emerged not only as a hero but a super-hero. His departure from the world stage has been as

dramatic as his advent on the political stage. He left an indelible imprint on the hearts and minds of the people of Andhra Pradesh. I too had the opportunity to work in close association with him. We share the deep sense of anguish experienced by his family members and the people of Andhra Pradesh by his sudden demise.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I once again pay my respectful homage to all the deceased leaders and request you to convey our deep condolences to the bereaved families.

[English]

Shri Srikanta Jena (Cuttack) : Sir, I join you to express our deep condolences on the passing away of Sarvashri Surya Narayan Singh, Govind Chandra Munda, sitting Members of this House and others who were Members of this august House during the Fourth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Lok Sabha.

Sir, as you know, Govind Chandra Munda hailed from Orissa. I know him for the last 25 years. He was a Minister there, MLA and subsequently Member of Parliament. He was elected from Keonjhar Parliamentary constituency. All of us know Mr. Munda in a different form. But who are from Orissa know, he was a good soul. He was true tribal leader. He mingled with the tribal population. He had contributed a lot not only to his constituency but to the tribal population of Orissa also.

Sir, N.T. Rama Raoji was Chairman of National Front. His death is a great loss to the National Front, a great loss to the nation also. I, on behalf of my party, pay deepest condolences and request you to convey our deepest sympathy to the bereaved families. Thank you.

Shri Somnath Chatterjee (Bopur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of my party and myself, I associate with what has been said here by you and also the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition and Mr. Jena and express our deepest condolence on the passing away of so many of our colleagues in the present House and also in the earlier Lok Sabha.

Sir, Comrade Surya Narayan Singh had distinguished himself as a fighter for the cause of the downtrodden, working class and the peasantry. He was a man of the masses and his signal contribution for the amelioration of the condition of the downtrodden people of our country will always be remembered.

Sir, I have had the privilege of knowing the other distinguished former Members of this House. I cannot but refer to Mr. Amiya Nath Bose who was a distinguished Member of this House as also of the legal profession. He made signal contribution towards portraying or propagating the message of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in different capacities.

Mr. Dev Kanta Borooah was very dear to all of us with his amiability and his cultured presence impressed everybody.

Mr. P.C. Sethi, of course, was a very dear friend of ours.

Mr. Rama Rao's contribution in the political life of this country has been rightly emphasised and it is a loss to the country as a whole.

Sir, I request you to kindly convey our sense of grief and sense of loss to the members of the bereaved families.

Shri Indrajit Gupta (Midnapore) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I join with my other colleagues and with the Leader of the House in expressing our deep sorrow at the passing away of so many of our earlier colleagues in this House as well as two of them who were Members of this House, sitting Members.

Mr. Surya Narayan Singh, rather I should have referred to him as Comrade Surya Narayan Singh, was one of the outstanding leaders of our Party in Bihar where he had built up a very strong and powerful base among the poorer sections of the people in the district of Begusarai and only last Monday, on the 19th I had the opportunity of attending a mammoth meeting which was called just adjacent to his village. It was a condolence meeting and the people who flocked to that meeting were evidence of the fact that he held a very special place in the hearts of the poor. He was the friend of the poorest of the poor, He was their champion and he fought all his life for them.

Sir, Mr. Munda was a man of very amiable and friendly disposition towards everybody. We remember him in this House always smiling, greeting everybody and I know that as a tribal leader, he had endeared himself to the tribal people in the State of Orissa. I am deeply grieved at his passing away.

Mr. Arnya Nath Bose happened to be a contemporary of mine when we were students in the Cambridge University, just before the War. He was a nephew of Netaji and perhaps because of that he was very much concerned with the freedom struggle and especially the role played by the Indian National Army. I think the Obituary Notice may have omitted to mention the fact that he was, for a shortwhile, appointed as our Ambassador to Burma. He also happened to be my opponent in the 1971 election. But he was a very friendly person and a very erudite lawyer.

Sir, Mr. Dev Kanta Borooah, I think, was an epitome of Indian culture. He was really a cultured man. He had a vast knowledge of literature. He used to have a huge library where his friends always had the liberty to help themselves to books, if they wanted to read. He was interested in music, in architecture and in so many fields of culture. He

was deeply versed in those fields. He was also very fond of cigars, foreign cigars. Some people who like smoking cigars-some years ago I was one of them, not now - took advantage of his generosity including me. He was a very friendly and cheerful person. He earned some notoriety for some political Statement he made. I do not know whether he was serious about it or not. But anyway, those things are all now forgotten in the presence of death.

Mr. P.C. Sethi served the Government in so many capacities.

He performed many ministerial functions here. I remember, he was a very competent Minister, whichever portfolio he happened to be holding, and he was very friendly to all Members, including those in the Opposition. He worked very hard and he had a long career, which was a rewarding one.

So, on behalf of my party and myself, I convey my deepest respects to all these friends' memories and pay homage to them, and request you to convey our condolences to their bereaved family members.

Shri N.T. Rama Rao, of course, was not a Member of Parliament, but he was a colossus in his own way. He was a colossus in his own State and, perhaps, he would have had a larger role to play in the national politics, if he had survived. But in a way, one cannot but admire his great versatility both as a politician, who fought doggedly for democratic rights and values, and as a film star who endeared himself to the millions of people, who took pleasure from watching his films.

I condole his passing away and request you to convey our deepest condolences to all the members of his family. Thank you.

Shri P.G. Narayanan (Gobichettipalayam) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I pay my tribute and homage for the departed Members. We have lost eight Members and one former Chief Minister, Shri N.T. Rama Rao. Out of the eight Members, Shri Surya Narayan Singh and Shri Govinda Chandra Munda were the sitting members of this House. They were senior and elderly Parliamentarians of this House. They had contributed a lot for the cause of underprivileged and poor people in the society. The services rendered by other Members are also remarkable. They took active part in the proceedings of this House.

Shri N.T. Rama Rao, during his tenure as the Chief Minister, had worked very hard for the welfare of the people in Andhra Pradesh.

I convey my condolences for the bereaved families on behalf of the All-India Anna DMK.

Shri Sobhanadreeswara Rao Vadde (Vijaywada) : Hon. Speaker, Sir, we express our sincere thanks to you for being kind enough in permitting us to pay tributes to one of the greatest sons of this country, Shri N.T. Rama Rao.

Sir, he was the one person who really believed and tried to implement the wish of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi that the basic amenities such as food, shelter and cloth should be provided to every person in this country. He was undeterred and has implemented several welfare measures such as giving rice at Rs. 2 per k.g. to the poor people, construction of lakhs of permanent houses to the poor people and making clothes available at subsidised rates to the poor people. He was the one person, who had implemented total prohibition the moment he came to power, during his third tenure as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, consequent to the great movement against arrack and other alcohols. He was a true democrat who conducted the panchayati elections and cooperative elections on time, providing reservations to the backward class people and minorities.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, he was the first person who passed the model cooperative law in the whole country. During his tenure, the State of Andhra Pradesh was having absolute communal harmony.

As you have rightly said, Sir, he had acted in hundreds of films and, for all time to come, he will ever remain in the minds of millions of people, particularly in Andhra Pradesh and in the country in general.

In the passing away of Shri N.T. Rama Rao on 18th January, a real friend of the poor people of this country is lost. His Government had left a deep impression while trying its best in the process of development by not ignoring the interests and well-being of the poor people.

13.00 hrs.

I thank you once again. On behalf of Telugu Desam Party, I request you kindly to convey condolences, on behalf of our Party, to the family members of Shri N.T. Rama Rao and to the other former Members of this House.

Shri D. Venkateshara Rao (Bapatia) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, when Shri N.T. Rama Rao died on 18th January, the poor man's bowl in Andhra Pradesh got tilted. He was a man who practised his political philosophy after coming into power. Even though he earned a lot of money, he lived like a poor man in the sense that basically he belonged to a poor man's family. When he was in Madras, he used to walk miles and miles for a cup of tea. From such a background and from his experiences from cinema and also in real life, when he came to political field and to power, he practised his political philosophy which is food, shelter and clothing for the poor.

With his background, he started his political career and his own activities as well as the activities of his Party were directed towards the welfare of the poor.

Even after becoming Chief Minister, he led a simple life. If anybody goes and sees his house in the Banjara hills, he will find that it is a simple small house surrounded by poor huts. He even used to sleep on the floor many a time. This was his way of living. He preached us, his followers, to fight till the end. That is how he used to preach and practice.

With all his courage, when he introduced the housing scheme in the State and when he said that two lakh houses would be constructed every year, everybody laughed at it. But during his tenure of seven years when he constructed twelve lakh houses, that is, equivalent to the number of houses that have been constructed in the whole country, everybody appreciated it. This was the kind of his approach to politics. Even in real life, he practised it. During his cinema career also, he played the role of many characters of the poor. With all that experience, he took up the cause of the poor in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

When he died on 18th January, and we just gave a call in the State to perform poor feeding and every village and every street of the State responded to it and they performed the poor feeding everywhere in the State of Andhra Pradesh.

This is the atmosphere he created in the hearts of the poor. I will narrate a small incident of mine, that is, the experience of my family. My daughter is about 11 years old. A year back, she went on her birthday to him and then his mother, that is, my wife also took her to him and she asked her daughter to take his blessings by touching the feet of Shri N.T. Rama Rao. My daughter refused to touch his feet. In turn, she said "No, I do not practise touching of feet. Then, he said to his daughter : "Do not force her. You allow her to grow. She could express her feelings very boldly. You encourage this kind of nature so that she will grow and she will get on well in her life." Then, just for three days the grand-daughter did not go there. After that, the grand-daughter went to him on Pongal Day. The man was sitting in the chair. She gave a sweet-box to him. She went and touched his feet. Then she came back to her mother and told her mother : "Ma, I touched grand-father's feet today." Her mother asked : "Why did you do that? You never practised that. You never bowed and touched anybody's feet." Then, the daughter said : "He looks like a God to me." So, Sir, in this respect, he is a God to the poor man in the State of Andhra Pradesh. Whatever he believed, he practised. The poor man's bowl got tilted when his heart stopped.

With these few words, I pay respects to my leader and I also convey my deep condolences to all the colleagues like Shri Surya Narayan Singh, Shri Govinda Chandra Munda and others who have passed away. I request you to kindly send my condolences to the members of the bereaved families.

Shri Syed Shahabuddin (Kishanganj) Mr Speaker, Sir, I associate myself with the tributes that you have paid the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition have paid to our colleagues who have departed, to the former Members of the House and the great Leader Shri N T Rama Rao. Sir, we shall in this House, miss the seriousness and sobriety of Shri Surya Narayan Singh and the amiable disposition of Shri Govinda Chandra Munda. Sir, I had the good fortune of having some brief association with some of the leaders who have passed away. I come to know Shri Amiya Nath Bose as the Ambassador to Burma and in his despatches, which I had the occasion to see while I was serving in the Ministry, I was impressed by his deep concern for the national security and for his interest in developing our relations with the friendly people of Burma.

Sir, I knew Shri Dev Kanta Borooah in many ways and I would like to mention in the House that his loss is a great loss to the field of Islamic scholarship because very few people know that while he built up a great collection of books, he was a great scholar of Islamic philosophy and Islamic culture. To my mind, he was the very personification of our secularism.

Sir, I came to know Shri P C Sethi when he was the Home Minister in the dark days of the Nelli massacre and I was very much impressed by his humane approach, by his sympathetic attitude and by his concern for the people who had suffered.

Shri N T Rama Rao was a great leader of ours and he was destined to play a great role in our country. With him, a chapter has been closed. He did his best not only as a leader of Andhra Pradesh but also as a leader of the nation. He showed us the path of national unity, of struggling together for the common cause as the Chairman of the National Front. A great void has been created by his death which is not likely to be filled.

Sir, with these words, I pay my personal tributes and request you to convey my condolences and the condolences of our Party to the bereaved families.

Shri Yajna Singh Yumnam (Inner Manipur) Sir, on behalf of my Party, and myself, I would like to say that I shall consider myself ungrateful if I do not express a few words on the passing away of Shri Govinda Chandra Munda and Shri Surya Narayan Singh who were so dear to

us while they were sitting here with us. So on behalf of my Party and myself, I join the others in expressing the deep condolences on their passing away and also on the passing away of those who were Members of this august House, on the passing away of Shri Dev Kanta Borooah, who belonged to the North-Eastern Region. We were very proud of him. I also convey my deep condolences on the passing away of Shri N T Rama Rao who was our great hope. So with these few words, I would request you to convey our deep condolences to the bereaved families.

Shri Chitta Basu (Barasat) Mr Speaker, Sir, I join you, the Leader of the House and other distinguished leaders of the opposition to express my shock and dismay on the former Members of this House who have left us.

Sir, of them, I want in particular to mention the name of Shri Surya Narayan Singh with whom I had the privilege of working together. He was a great mobiliser of the people, a great organiser of the toiling masses and a great democrat in the sense that he led the toiling masses to the true path of emancipation.

Sir, particularly I also feel obliged to mention the name of Shri Amit Nath Bose. He was a Member of this House and he was one of those in his young days who helped Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in his great escape. I am told and the country knows about it he had a very important role to play in organising Netaji's escape at Naini and also subsequently he worked tirelessly in the direction of popularising the thoughts and works of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. Therefore, they have also made particular contribution for the freedom movement of our country.

Lastly, I also want to express my condolence to the family of late Shri N T Rama Rao who was a great personality in Andhra Pradesh. He won the hearts of millions in Andhra Pradesh. With his passing away, a void has been created in Andhra Pradesh and it is very much difficult to fill up that void. I hope and believe that the people of that State will take initiative and take proper steps to see that the memory and the activities of Shri N T Rama Rao would be remembered by all.

[Translation]

Shri Plus Tirkey (Alipurduars) Mr Speaker, Sir, I join the Hon Prime Minister and the leaders of the Opposition in paying my respectful homage to the departed leaders, particularly Shri Govinda Chandra Munda who used to sit beside me and Shri Surya Narayan Singh who was a sitting Member. They are no more with us. A renowned leader, Shri Dev Kant Borooah who had once given the slogan of 'Indira is India and India is Indira' is no more with us today. I was also acquainted with Shri P C Sethi. N T R was a leader of a national stature who yearned to

see a unified India. On behalf of my party, RSP and myself, I pay respectful homage to these departed leaders and request you to convey our deep condolences to the members of the bereaved families.

Shri Ebrahim Sulaiman Salt (Ponnani) Mr Speaker, Sir, you and the leaders of different parties of this House have expressed your profound grief on the passing away of many of our friends. I also rise to associate myself with the feelings expressed by you. Two of these departed souls were with us during the last Session but today they are not with us. Vajpayeeji has rightly said that the world is governed by the cycle of life and death. Both these sitting Members rendered a great service to the nation. Several of our friends, who were not Members of this House have also departed. They too served the nation in different fields. Today, we remember them with a deep sense of anguish.

Shri Borooah was a great, talented and generous personality and I have always enjoyed his close association. As Shri Shahabuddin has said, he evinced keen interest in Islamic history and culture. He was the member of the Constituent Assembly and also served as a Minister here. I would also like to make a mention of Shri N T Rama Rao here. He was an illustrious personality. He was a politician, and an actor. I was closely acquainted with him. Prior to elections, I had been to Hyderabad. A great rally, a Simhagarjana rally ... (interruptions) ... prajagarjana rally was held there. Lakhs of people participated in that. This is an evidence of his affection for the poor. He lived for the poor and downtrodden who in turn loved him a lot. He was an artist, a politician, a leader and the Chief Minister. His death is a great national loss. I place on record my profound sorrow on his demise and request that our feelings be conveyed to the bereaved families.

[English]

Shri Arjun Singh (Satna) Sir, with your kind permission I would like to place on record our deep condolences for the family members of all those who have left us, and join you in your references to these colleagues of the past who now are beyond the reach - as happens and will happen to everyone in this world.

I would particularly like to say something, Sir, about Shri Dev Kanta Borooahji. I do not think there is much to add to what had already been said. Each one of us in his own way came into his contact and had one's own memories. If I were to sum up everything I would say that he was the quintessence of an Indian. When an Indian thinks, believes and acts in the broad sense of our cultural, political, religious heritage then a unique personality emerges and Borooahji had such a unique personality.

About Shri P C Sethi, Sir, I had the unique privilege to work with him both as a colleague in the Party and also as a Minister in his Cabinet when he was the Chief

Minister, and subsequently, I would also say that there were views, occasions on which there were sharp differences of opinion between him and me. But I would like to say that he had the capacity to maintain the balance - the human balance that a person who achieves fame, power between what is proper and what is not proper. Shri Sethiji had a disarming personality. Even a person who had the worst of fears about him, very critical of him, was angry with him, could not remain so after five or ten minutes being with him. For the State of Madhya Pradesh, I would like to say, he was a path-breaker in many fields and that State would remember him not only as the Chief Minister of the State but also as a person who imbued all that he tried to do with a sense of humanism and a sense of performance, which percolated down to the most lowest rung of society so that they could feel that something is being done for them.

Sir, I have never had the good fortune to be acquainted with Shri N T Rama Rao, personally, though I met him once or twice. But no Indian can ignore the fact that he rose sphinx-like on his own merit on his own capacity to strike the political arena, first in Andhra Pradesh and then subsequently, in the country. He has left a legacy which is rich, varied and which can be of great inspiration to all those who want to serve the people, especially the down-trodden people in their quest for whatever they are supposed to do as public workers.

I would, Sir, like to convey through your honourable self, our deepest condolences to the members of the families of all those whom you have mentioned in your obituary references.

13-20½ hrs.

(The Members then stood in silence for a short while.)

REFERENCE TO DABWALI TRAGEDY

13.21 hrs.

[English]

Mr. Speaker : Hon Members might also recall that on the afternoon of 23rd December, 1995 a tragedy struck the people of Dabwali town in Sirsa District of Haryana, where in a devastating fire at school function more than 350 people, majority of them being school children, met their tragic end.

We share the grief of the bereaved families.

The House would join me in expressing our deep sorrow and sympathies to the affected families.

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

13.21½ hrs.

(The Members then stood in silence for a short while.)