

16.00 hrs.

FELICITATIONS TO SOUTH AFRICAN
PEOPLE AND THEIR NEWLY ELECTED
PRESIDENT NELSON ROHILHLALA
MANDELA FOR THE FORMATION OF
MULTI-RACIAL ELECTED
GOVERNMENT

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: As agreed, now we would like to express our views on the historical events that have materialised in South Africa. May I request hon. Prime Minister?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO): Mr. Speaker, Sir, today is a special day for South Africa, and the whole world. A new Government elected on the basis of the first ever multi-racial elections assumed office in South Africa today, and Nelson Mandela has been elected as democratic South Africa's first President. As the people of South Africa celebrate the dawn of freedom, we the people of India convey our joy and happiness for what they have achieved and for what their achievement signifies for humanity.

The South African people have succeeded in over-throwing decades of domination and exploitation based on the dark aspects of the human mind—the belief that one man is superior to another because of the colour of his skin, because he can force his will on the majority. All this has been relegated to history.

The South African people have achieved what is rightfully theirs, a country that belongs to all who live in it, and a Government that they can claim as their own based on the will of the people. The South African struggle has shown that the

strength of the human spirit, the values of moral conviction, and the uncompromising struggle against domination and exploitation, are indeed formidable forces for change.

The achievements of the South African struggle are a homage to Mahatma Gandhi. It was in South Africa a hundred and one years ago that the Father of our Nation saw a link between the struggles for freedom in that country and our. Gandhi ji said, and I quote:

"Truly speaking, was after I went to South Africa that I became what I am now. My love for South Africa and my concern for her problems are no less than for India."

By history, circumstance or choice, about one million people of Indian origin now live in South Africa. Most of them have lived there for generations, have toiled with their South African compatriots, and contributed to the prosperity of that country. Many have also struggled shoulder to shoulder against the minority racist domination. Today they are a vibrant part of the family of the South African people. We will endeavour to reinforce the close cultural and social links with them and the people of all races in South Africa.

We welcome post-apartheid South Africa to the comity of nations:

In recognition of the evolution of the valiant struggle of the South African people, we have already established an Embassy, a Cultural Centre and a Consulate in that country, and established air links to promote bilateral trade and tourism. The ties we have forged in the long years of being in the forefront of the struggle against apartheid will stand us in good stead in developing mutual cooperation. India was in the van-

guard of the anti-apartheid struggle, the first to raise the issue in the United Nations, and we have done this because we felt it was our cause, not that of a distant neighbour.

On this very happy occasion, I would like to extend our congratulations and felicitations to the Father of the South African Nation Nelson Mandela, whom we honoured in 1979 with the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding and in 1990 with the Bharat Ratna, as he takes up his responsibilities as Head of State of South Africa. We pay tribute to his role as a great statesman and wish him success in leading South Africa towards a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, today is a happy day of gratification for the whole world. Emergence of independent, democratic and post-apartheid South Africa on the map of the world is a great occasion for the entire world. The citadel of colonialism and apartheid has been destroyed today. As has been said by the Prime Minister, the brute order of evaluation of humanity based on the colour of the skin has been defeated today.

Inhabitants of Africa were facing and suffering the bondage and racial discrimination since 1662. Thousands of persons sacrificed their lives and millions were tortured. Now their sacrifice and sufferings have borne fruits.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the peaceful transfer of power in South Africa and surrender of obnoxious practice of apartheid is a spectacular event. It also signifies the change in the attitude of the world. Decades ago, the seed of 'satyagraha' sown by Gandhiji in

South Africa has grown and flourished fully today and is conveying the message of affection and equality to the people of South Africa. People of South Africa deserve our congratulations and Dr. Nelson Mandela deserves our felicitations. His whole life is full of struggle for freedom and he spent his youth in jail but did not lose heart. He did not surrender before cruel rulers. He was a source of inspiration for the generations of South Africa. Today he has been elected President of South Africa. We felicitate him and express our good wishes on this occasion. We, ourselves have suffered bondage and discriminatory practices are still prevalent in our country and therefore, we can feel the agony of it. We wish that independent South Africa marches ahead on the path of prosperity. All the people of different breed including the large number of Indian origin people should contribute for a new South Africa.

As has been said by the Prime Minister, we have been giving support to the freedom struggle of South Africa and we are ready to contribute our might in the reconstruction of South Africa. I request you to convey our good wishes to the public of South Africa and their new President Dr. Nelson Mandela.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES (Muzaffarpur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, when we are felicitating the people of South Africa and particularly their leader Nelson Mandela, we are reminded of Mahatma Gandhi. Nelson Mandela himself has said that the views of Mahatma Gandhi have influenced him utmost for the last few decades. It is really very sad that Gandhiji is not being defamed in our own country whereas a person like Nelson Mandela, after struggling for the last fifty years and undergoing imprisonment of several years including underground life, experiencing several bit-

[Sh. George Fernandes]

ter incidents and humiliation is praising Gandhiji.

I am saying all this because self introspection is very essential at a time when we are greeting South Africa on its independence. After the release of Nelson Mandela from the prison, he was asked as to what change he has undergone before and after his imprisonment. His reply was [English]

"I am now a matured person".

[Translation]

Now I am mature in my thinking and attitude towards life. He has shown this maturity in the last 3-4 years of their freedom struggle when his country was on the verge of partition. At that time, white people were fighting and demanding a separate state for themselves and Julu and some other tribal groups were provoking civil war for a separate home. At such a juncture, his sentence that "I am now a matured person" was really significant. I think that he must have thought about the history of partition of India. He was greatly influenced by the ideals of non-violence of Gandhiji and his maturity lead the country to move towards a constructive path. In my heart, I feel that experiences of the last 45-47 years of India in this regard must have been at the back of his mind also.

The people of South Africa have several challenges before them. Their poverty is not less than ours. We cannot tell people the reality about the per capita income and standard of living of black people of South Africa. I got an opportunity to visit South Africa in July 1991 after the release of Nelson Mandela from the prison. I got an opportunity to see the actual condition of

black people, which originally belong to their country, living in villages and towns, there is no difference in their slums and ours slums. There is no arrangement for electricity, drinking water, housing and more than fifty percent people are illiterate and fifty percent people are unemployed there. Thus they have several big problems and challenges before them which are more grave and serious than the problems we had faced at the time of independence.

I would like to say that in the Cabinet of Nelson Mandela and his colleagues, five persons are the children of people of the Indian origin who have since settled there. While expressing our good wishes, we pray that they would be able to successfully meet all those challenges and the path shown by Gandhiji would guide them toward prosperity. With these words I once again convey my good wishes to them.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to convey on behalf of my Party and myself our revolutionary greetings to President Nelson Mandela on the assumption of his high office of the first democratically elected President of South Africa and also to the people of South Africa.

We hail today a great leader of this world. We hail the people of South Africa who today have become really free, as President Nelson Mandela himself said, after an epic battle.

We share their sense of achievement and their joy in achieving freedom from centuries of most brutal oppression and bondage.

Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore through his writings also expressed his an-

ger and opposition to imperialist oppression of the African nationalities and particularly the people of South Africa.

Apartheid has been the most pernicious and dehumanising system of torture and was used to subjugate the people of South Africa by a colonial and hated racist regime. But no oppression, no torture could kill the spirit and the yearning for freedom of our brothers and sisters of South Africa. Great sacrifices were made and many noble lives were lost. Communist leaders like Chris Hani Molloise and other leaders of South Africa's struggle for freedom were brutally murdered. Humanity was depraved but the fighting and the brave people of South Africa never surrendered to the forces of evil and racial discrimination and carried on struggle both armed and non-violent and today a new dawn has come when the human spirit has triumphed over oppression and imperialist domination.

We in this country have a special sense of joy because India and the people of India have always stood by the side of South African people and they contributed to their utmost ability in the fight against oppression and fight against apartheid.

We cannot forget that the special bond of fraternity has been developed because of the signal contribution made by our Father of the Nation, who first initiated *Satyagraha* in South Africa and whose leadership had been acknowledged, whose contribution has been acknowledged openly more than once by President, Nelson Mandela.

Sir, I cannot forget the great welcome and reception that Calcutta gave to the President, Nelson Mandela then and he openly admitted that he felt that he was in his own country.

Yesterday, I was happy when our Doordarshan telecast some portions of the reception that was given in Calcutta. We were very happy and extremely proud to have that opportunity to receive him in our midst.

Today, in this House, we who are representing 900 million people rejoice and join in the celebration to heartily welcome the emergence of a new South Africa.

Sir, we extend our good wishes to President Nelson Mandela and to the people of South Africa. He spent 27 ½ years in jail. But what is most remarkable that after coming out of This torture chamber, he does not have any feeling of rancour or any hatred against those who tortured. When we find the composition of his Cabinet it shows how he has been able to get the willing support of different sections of the people of South Africa, who have struggled with him for the emancipation of the people of South Africa. We, in India, rejoice particularly because a very large number of the people of Indian origin are today citizens of South Africa and they have contributed, have been contributing and, I am sure will continue to contribute for the development and prosperity of South Africa and its people.

We are very happy to see that a lady of Indian origin has been elected as the Speaker of the first duly elected Parliament of South Africa. That shows the special bond of friendship, fraternity, love and respect that we have for each other.

I extend my good wishes to the President Nelson Mandela, and to the people of South Africa. They have a very heavy task before them. They have to rebuild the country over the ashes of apartheid. They have now to obtain the fruits of their freedom. It is not easy to do so. But, I am sure, the people

[Sh. Somanath Chatterjee (Bolpur)]

of India, as one, will rise to come to the help of South Africa in whatever manner we can and, I am sure, this House will pledge its willing support to the Government and the people of south Africa, who will, I am sure, march to prosperity and greater and greater achievement under the great leadership of a very great man, namely, President Nelson Mandela.

I convey our tributes to him.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA
(Madhubani): Mr. Speaker, Sir, today is a very auspicious day not only for South Africa and the whole world but also for India and its tradition. We are sure that after assuming office of the President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela will emerge as a symbol of a great well-wisher of South Africa, the whole continent of Africa and their people belonging to various races and colours.

Sir, it is the richness of the soil of South Africa which produces diamond. It has large deposits of diamond. This soil has also transformed the man into a diamond. Shri Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had gone to South Africa as an advocate, it was the soil of South Africa which transformed him to Mahatma Gandhi. He led the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. He was the harbinger of peace, non-violence and freedom for humanity. The people and the Government of India have preserved that historical tradition of special bond with South Africa even after martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have been closely associated with the movement in South Africa. Besides Dr. Nelson Mandela,

there was another leading revolutionary and unparalleled leader, Dr. Yusuf Dadu among other revolutionaries of Africa Congress. Unfortunately, he is now no more amongst us. Being an Indian origin, his sacrifice and successful leadership of Communist movement in South Africa will always be remembered by the people of that country. Last year when Dr. Mani was assassinated, the people of South Africa were shocked. It was Dr. Dadu, who after the martyrdom of Dr. Mani inspired the people of South Africa under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. Today, South Africa, under the leadership of Nelson Mandela is a close friend of India and it is hoped that this friendship will continue to grow in future.

As has been said by our colleagues and the hon. Prime Minister, I think our relations with South Africa will continue to strengthen from physical, moral and political point of view. We hope that our backwardness will not come in the way of our cooperation with South Africa and we would cooperate with them as far as possible. When Mahatma Gandhi was in South Africa, the people of Indian origin extended maximum cooperation to him in the freedom struggle of that country and we are confident that the Government of India would continue to help in building a new South Africa on the lines of our age-old tradition of unity in diversity. One typical example of our traditional bond with South Africa is that a leader of the Indian origin has been elected as the Speaker of Parliament of that country. We believe that the people of Indian origin there will serve that country with the spirit of patriotism and our relations with the people of that country will always remain friendly.

On this historical occasion, I on behalf of my party, Communist Party of India and my own behalf express happiness and

hope that 90 crore Indians would continue to cooperate in the future development of South Africa and both the countries will jointly fight the menace of neocolonialism with more cautiousness and vigilance. I conclude with the hope that we would succeed in this mission.

[English]

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat) : Sir, I join the Prime Minister and other distinguished leaders of this House to express our joy and happiness in welcoming the post-apartheid South Africa into the comity of nations.

Sir, it is a great international event as it heralds the end of colonialism, colour war and colour hatred and it ushers in a new era of basic human rights and values. We believe that the new Government, led by Dr. Mandela, will work and make all out efforts to re-build and re-construct the South Africa in the interest of the toiling millions of South Africans and for the stability and unity of the non-racial, united South Africa.

We also believe and I am confident that the people of South Africa would enjoy the freedom of choice for the path of their prosperity of their own, without any interference and without intervention from the outside world who were particularly interested to maintain or perpetuate their neo-colonialist economy policy, loot and exploitation.

India and the new Republic of South Africa-I believe and I am confident - would join their efforts in making a better world for the human kind today.

Sir, on this occasion we express our solidarity and fraternity with the people of South Africa and I hope that we shall be able to march together for the attainment of our goal of having a world with better values and

with better opportunities and better prospects of prosperity.

SHRI A. ASOKARAJ (Perambalur) : Sir, Dr. Nelson Rohlhlala Mandela was chosen South Africa's first black President today by a multi-racial Parliament to complete the country's remarkable transition from white rule to democracy.

It is achieved after a great struggle and sacrifice. He was in jail for 27 long years. Today, he was elected and after that South Africa is entering a new era. It is the end of apartheid after a long struggle and it is the end of colonialism also. It is achieved without bloodshed. He was attracted by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhiji and led his struggle by observing Ahimsa. His respect for India and its traditions is translated into action by choosing Dr. Freni Ginwala as the Speaker of multi-racial Parliament of South Africa.

Sir, on behalf of my party AIADMK and on my own behalf I felicitate and extend my warmest congratulations to Dr. Nelson Mandela and also we wish prosperity for his country.

SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH (Eluru) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I join the Prime Minister and rest of the Leaders of various parties in congratulating Dr. Nelson Mandela for achieving real democracy for South Africa. We are particularly very happy because they have followed the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi and we also fought very much in support of South Africa in the United Nations, in the Commonwealth and in the NAM to see that real democracy is given to South Africa without employing trade embargo and other things. We have given full support to them at every stage and we are the most happiest people today to congratulate them on the achievement of real democracy in South Africa and specially to Dr. Nelson Mandela for his success.

SHRI EBRAHIM SULAIMAN SAIT (Ponnani) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, today is the greatest day in the history of mankind. I feel today justice and truth have triumphed over colonialism, racialism, fascism and everything that was bad. Today, we must congratulate not only Dr. Nelson Mandela, but all the people of South Africa for the success in all their efforts to see that they attain freedom. Today, by defeating all the forces of colonialism and racialism, Mr. Nelson Mandela has been elected as the President of the Republic of South Africa.

Sir, we know fully well that today is a great day and therefore, everyone will realise that Africans have fought for centuries and Dr. Nelson Mandela has suffered for decades together. And today, success has come to them. We pay our tributes to the greatest personality and the tallest personality of the world today and wish them all success in the coming years.

[Translation]

SHRI RABI RAY (Kendrapara) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, today is an auspicious day for the people of the whole world because apartheid has come to an end in South Africa after a very long struggle. Dr. Nelson Mandela had visited India in 1990 to receive "Bharat Ratna". While receiving the honour, he had expressed his views on Indian and Mahatma Gandhi, in particular. I would like to quote these lines as follows:-

[English]

"India is the single largest source of inspiration to the movement of South Africa. Starting from the foundation of Indian National Con-

gress by Mahatma Gandhi in 1894, the principles of non-violent and passive resistance has been engrained, in the psyche of South Africans."

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, Sir, today Nelson Mandela has become a duly elected President of South Africa. He led the national movement in South Africa and remained in prison for 27 years. He not only appreciated Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi and his non-violent *satyagraha* movement the actually ended apartheid in his country by using that very weapon of non-violence.

Though Martin Luther King is no more amongst us, yet we must also remember this great leader of the world. He had also used this very weapon for Mahatma Gandhi and achieved success in ending apartheid in America. Further, he also used this weapon to fight against colonialism. It was this very weapon which made Africa and America free of racial discrimination. Dr. Mandela was inspired by non-violent movement of Gandhiji and thus, he not only fought for South Africans but also for poor and downtrodden people of the world. Therefore, we should make ourselves more assiduous by using and honouring this weapon of non-violence.

Today, on this auspicious occasion, we extend our felicitations to the leader and President of South Africa, Dr. Nelson Mandela and the people of South Africa. In his swearing-in ceremony, our Vice-President is leading the Indian delegation. He would also convey our affection and love to the people of South Africa on our behalf.