

17.16 hrs.

Announcement by Speaker

CANCELLATION OF SITTING OF LOK SABHA AND CELEBRATION OF 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : There is an announcement from the hon. Speaker. As has been agreed to at the meeting of the leaders of the Parties and the Groups today, the sitting on Monday, the 9th August, 1993, may be cancelled to enable the hon. Members to participate in the concluding celebrations of the 50th Anniversary of the Quit India Movement and to pay homage to the martyrs of the freedom movement.

The hon. Speaker has also to inform the House that a meeting of Members of both the Houses to mark the occasion will be held in the Central Hall on that day, the 9th August 1993, at 11 a. m. The hon. Members are requested to make it convenient to grace the meeting.

17.17 hrs.

RESOLUTION RE : UNIFORM CIVIL CODE—Contd.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar may continue his speech now.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (Mayiladuturai) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I was saying that I did not need to be educated on the fact that this is a Private Member's Resolution. But a private Member does not... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

Shri Rajveer Singh please listen to me also because if you rise to comment, you must be prepared to listen to the other man's point of view also. (Interruptions)

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH (Aonla) : I do not want to comment in your manner. Because the comment you pass is meaningless.

AN HON. MEMBER : Please speak in Hindi.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : I will not speak in Hindi and I would like to speak in English.

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : You are least bothered about Hindi.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let us come to the subject now.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I seek your protection. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please do not make such a remark, which is not proper. (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA (Jadavpur) : Mr. Chairman, a Member has got every right to speak in any language that he wants.

RROF. PREM DHUMAL (Hamirpur) : Nobody has objected to that... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : No comments on that subject now.

[Translation]

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA (South Delhi) : At least now you should speak smilingly.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : I would not speak smilingly.

[English]

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I said that I oppose this Resolution because it is being moved at the wrong time. I regard this as a wrong time to move this Resolution because of an incident that took place at Ayodhya on the 6th December 1992. Just eight months ago, this country—its civilisation, its culture, its traditions—was subjected to the single most heinous assault known to us in the annals of modern India. The extent to which a section of our country feels that it has been sat upon has to be experienced, has to be understood. My suspicion is that the lady, who moved this Resolution has.... (Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER : She is an hon. Member.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : All right. My suspicion is that the hon. Member who moved this Resolution, who happens to be a lady, has a very little personal experience of the extent to which the Muslim community of India has had, as a result of the action of, possibly herself, certainly of her Party and without a shadow of doubt, the cohorts of her Party, resorted to in Ayodhya on the 6th December 1992. If the knowledge of the extent of this wound has still not dawned upon her and her colleagues, eight months after the event, then I do not believe that she and her colleagues have any right or any understanding, let me say. Therefore, they have a little right to say that they wish to raise the banner of unity and brotherhood in this country through bringing such a Resolution.

This brings me immediately to the second ground on which I am opposing this Motion, which is the reason for which it has been brought forward. In the text of the Motion itself, it is claimed that the Commission to frame a uniform civil code should be set up to promote feelings of unity and brotherhood. If in fact, there was a need to strengthen unity and brotherhood through this particular route, I would have had no difficulty whatsoever in going along with the hon. Member. But at this juncture, when a House, which is composed indubitably of a larger number of non-Muslims than is the proportion of non-Muslims in this country, attempts to move such a motion without deep and detailed consultation with the minority communities of this country, then I fear that far from promoting any sense of unity or any sense of brotherhood, we may be promoting a sense of alienation and a sense among the minorities of being imposed upon.

We were told by the mover of the Motion that a nation is not merely a geographic or political entity, it is a word, an expression which relates to a people as a whole, to the traditions of that people, to the culture of that people and to the inter-relationship between the different communities which constitute that people. I entirely agree with the hon. Member. Where I think I disagree with her perhaps is that I see our people as forging a unity out of their diversity of the traditions

of this country not being the preserve of any one community, nor the culture of this country has belonged only to the majority community of this country, and I see our nationhood in terms of a composite culture and in that composite culture while there is little doubt that the single broadest and perhaps the single strongest strength is what might broadly be called the Hindu culture. Certainly, the second broadest and the second strongest must be the Islamic culture and yet the manner in which this second and indivisible strength of our composite culture was portrayed by the hon. Member who moved this Resolution is in itself the most basic cause of the tremendous fear that comes upon our minorities when our minorities contemplate the party to which the hon. Member belongs. For example, here, in this House, about a few minutes ago she told us that women are a symbol of strength. I agree. But then she felt that this is a special characteristic of the Hindu religion. It implied and then it became explicit that in her view, women are not a symbol of strength in the Islamic tradition. I cannot think of a greater insult to hurl at one of our own people than to suggest that the concept of women as a symbol of strength is the preserve of one community in India and does not belong to the tradition of another community of India.

We had from her a presentation of Islamic jurisprudence which bears no reality to what little Islamic jurisprudence I have learnt. Let us take, for example the question of marriage in Islam. There is a fundamental difference in the concept of marriage as between most other communities and the Islamic community. In most other communities—this is certainly true of the Hindu community, this is certainly true of the Christian community Marriage is regarded as the sacrament.

There, marriage is regarded as fundamentally indissoluble and it is only in recent times that the possibility of divorce has been introduced into the traditions of these communities. In Islam, on the other hand, the very right of marriage is not a sacrament, but a contract. It is a contract which—at the very moment of being entered into—

envisages the possibility of that marriage not-lasting for ever. The whole *Nikah* ceremony is built around that. Now, for us, to sit here and dismiss a 1,400 year old tradition—I am referring to the traditions of Islam since I saw the lady Member in question squinting just now: I am referring to the 1,400 year old tradition of Islam for us to turn to it and portray as anti-women; as designed only to oppress one gender at the expense of the other; as having no redeeming feature in it with regard to women as a symbol of strength is just the kind of denigration which is extremely detrimental to the processes of consolidating our nation.

When an hon. Member takes two personalities from our history—Babar and Khilji—and refer to them in terms that are less than complimentary, then it must mean that in her concept the Indian history is a history without a medieval period; the Indian culture is a culture without an Islamic component and that India's civilization is civilization that can wish away Islam.

We, Sir, are certainly the world's third largest Islamic nation and possibly the world's second largest Islamic nation. At the same time there are more Muslims who live in India than in the entire belt of something like 20 countries stretching from Iran to Morocco. That is why I have had occasion previously in this House to say that India without Islam is inconceivable as Islam without India is inconceivable. These are traditions that are woven into the wrap and the woof of our nation. And yet the party which the hon. Member represents is constantly engaged in an attempt to denigrate the noble contribution which Islam has made to the evolution of our composite culture, our composite tradition and our composite civilization for well over, 1000 years.

I, for one, find it impossible to think of India without the Taj Mahal and while I tend to think of the man who built the Taj Mahal as an Indian, I have no difficulty either in recognising that that Indian was a Muslim. I have no difficulty either—when I am not being needed by the Members of the Opposition—in attempting to speak the Hindi language. But I recognise that the

origin of the Hindi language, as we know it today, lies in the *Darga* of Nizamuddin Aulia where Hazrat Amir Khusro started the language of *Hindavi* which has evolved into the language that we know today.

I have no difficulty whatsoever in putting in an *Achkan* or like our former Prime Minister wearing a Jinnah cap because these are part and parcel of our traditions. I have no difficulty in regarding the hon. Member who moved this motion as a part and parcel of India's civilization. But, at the same time, I have no difficulty in regarding—for instance—Shri P. M. Sayeed who comes from a Union Territory which is one hundred per cent Muslim, as being equally an integral part of this country.

I, therefore, find it impossible to praise Hinduism by denigrating Islam. Yes, there is a great deal that needs to be reformed in Muslim society in India just as there is a great deal that needs to be reformed in Hindu society in India. When the Hindu Code Bill was being drawn, when reform in the Hindu system was being undertaken, it was not being undertaken at the instance of the Muslims, it was being undertaken at the instance of the Hindus. It is we who wanted to change our ways and therefore, when we changed our ways, we did it with considerable success, not entire success. I know that from my personal experience because my father had built a Ganesh Mandir next to the Revoli cinema here in Delhi and I thought that when I get married I would go to that temple and get the priests to conduct my wedding in a typical South Indian tradition, something that I had missed in my life by virtue of having lived in North as a South Indian for most of my life. I found that those priests whose living had been ensured by endowment given by my father refused to conduct my marriage, first on the ground that they wanted to know whether my wife was a Brahmin like me or not and second, on the ground that she did not belong to my Hindu religion, but belonged to another religion as they called it, which is the Sikh religion and, therefore, I was compelled to get married under the Special Marriages Act there being no alternative for me. Now, then I want to reform my family I do not go to Mr. Syeed and say, 'please have a word with my mother, the

woman at my back', I speak to Amma myself, I try and reform myself from within. In the same way I am absolutely sure that the Muslims have got the sensitivity, the humanism, the conscience, the awareness, the intellectual ability and most important of all, the tradition to reform themselves as and when they wish to and at their own instance. The honourable lady Member who moved this motion was suggesting that we in our great Hindu tradition do not impose anything on anybody. I think the Muslims in their great tradition do not impose anything on anybody else. The Prophet Mohammed is repeatedly quoted in the Quran as asking his people, those of the Islamic faith, to treat those who do not belong to the Islamic faith in a decent manner. There is, I think, one of the most important documents in the evolution of the Indian tradition. It is the will and testament written by Emperor Babar to his son Humayun, which Humayun saw only after Babar's death, in which Babar urges Humayun to remember that this is a country largely composed of people who do not belong to the Islamic faith and that deep respect for their faith, their tradition and their culture is essential for the good governance of this country and yet, it is that hon. Member herself, perhaps not but certainly her cohorts, who have given currency to an expression which most Muslims, most Hindus, most Indians find utterly offensive—'*Babar ki aulad*'. Sir, it is this mind set that stands in the way of unity and brotherhood. It is not the absence of a uniform Civil Code that is standing in the way of unity and brotherhood, it is not the absence of a uniform Civil Code that prevents the integration of this country, but it is a mind set in which some Indians are regarded as more reformed, more advanced, more progressive and other Indians are looked upon as fatalistic, incapable of progress, incapable of self-improvement, incapable of marching forward unless they are told by the majority community what it is that they are required to do.

Sir, the hon. lady Member referred to a former Minister of a Congress Government.

Sir, I hope I have your permission to give his name, Shri Arif Mohammad Khan,

who, she said, had to resign from Government headed by Shri Rajiv Gandhi on the question of the Uniform Civil Code or alternatively, of maintenance being paid to Shrimati Shah Bano or the Supreme Court judgement, all of which I think, are inter-related. I would particularly draw her attention to that speech because there is a tendency on the part of those whose mindset is similar to her, to some how project Mr. Arif Mohammad Khan's speech here in this House as, somewhat, different to what he actually said. She should kindly look up the records as to what he had said. I would draw her attention to two statements of great importance. One, he said "The Quran is everything". True he is a very progressive Muslim, true he is a Muslim who is one of my closest personal friends despite our political differences. As a Muslim he was my Minister and I had been in a Delegation abroad with him. He had views which are different to that of the Islamic orthodoxy. But, as a Muslim, in this House he said : "The Quran is everything" and the burden of his speech was a different interpretation to the one that was in the discussion on that Bill which was given by Mr. Banatwala. If two Muslims can disagree in this House about what is the Quran while both of them agree that everything is the Quran, should we not leave it to them to resolve that issue? Are we going to help the process of ours by throwing the weight of the majority community behind the one or the other protagonist?

Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is true that in Islam there are a large number of social practices which are codified in the Shariat and in the interpretations of the Islamic Law as it exists. At the same time, there is also codified in Islamic jurisprudence the concept of *Istisnaad*. We have nothing similar in Hinduism, which, I do not think, is a good thing or a bad thing. I simply suggest that we do not, in Hinduism or indeed in Christianity, have a codified form of changing a religion based jurisprudence, because in the Islamic community there is a religion based jurisprudence and there is a codified form of changing it which is

called *Istahaad*. And *Istahaad* is the process of looking within and making reforms from within. It has been, for the last 1400 years, repeatedly used by Muslim theologians, by Muslim jurists, by Muslim Sultans and in modern times, by Muslim dominated Parliaments to change the Islamic Personal Law. It is here that I would rely upon Muslims to use devices that are part and parcel of their own traditions and their own culture which, surely, cannot be less important than, Madam, your traditions or your culture, to bring about such reforms as honest.

But, when we start denigrating the entire institution of Muslim marriage as consisting of nothing more significant than the capacity of some man to say '*Talaq, Talaq, Talaq*' to get rid of his wife, then we are denigrating an entire religion, an entire tradition, an entire culture and an entire jurisprudence. And I think, the mistake that the then Chief Justice Mr. Chandrachud did in delivering his judgement on the Shah Bano case was, not to limit himself to the issue which was before him, but to go beyond and to make comments upon the Islamic religion and the Islamic civilization, in turn, similar to what we have heard from the mover of this Resolution today. It is that which sparked the reaction among sections of our own people who do not feel totally interrelated with us. And how can they? We were just told by the hon. lady Member who moved this Resolution that there is a village in which as I understood, it was her own village—she said that all the Islamic women are told that they do not belong to this country, that they do not belong to this nation and that they belong to elsewhere.

I have not had the good fortune of visiting the hon. Member's village. I would be very happy to go there at her invitation. I hope she will kindly invite me to go there. But I am acquainted with the Muslims in India all the way from Kashmir to Lakshadweep. Something like 99.9 per cent of the Muslims of India are totally convinced that there is no nation for them other than the Indian nation; that there is no country for them other than India and that it is with this country that they are going to

live or die. For us to ignore this huge, overwhelming majority of Indian Muslims and portray in a stereo-type fashion some two or three people in the village to which the hon. member belongs as being typical of the community is to do precisely the same kind of injury to them. It will make them wonder whether they belong to us or not.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Member has time and again been stressing on this issue. I, therefore, would like to point out that all the Muslims in my town are made aware of it. They all live cordially. But are misinterpreting it. I have simply explained that how 14 families in my town were boycotted. I had referred to the mentality of the Muslim Community. There is no such feeling in my town. (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI P. C. CHACKO (Trichur) : She has not responded whether she is inviting you to Indore or not. Please get it cleared from her.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : Madam, I accept your thesis. I accept what you said. I will go to Indore on my own. (Interruptions)

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : Madam, I have heard you with rapt attention in the past. Because your Hindi is as good as my English, I was frightened that if I listened to you in original, I might miss the meaning of some words which you said. So, I was relying on the interpretation. There might have been an error there. But if you accept that the bulk of Muslims in India, the vast, overwhelming majority of them think of this as their nation and this country, then, I think the point you made about some Muslims having some doubts about this—or to use your own words, to opt to think otherwise—is not a matter of great relevance. There are any number of Hindus including the numerous people who support your party, who have fled from this country to go and live in California and are putting out advertisements on behalf of the Non-Resident Indians, who made all their money to

fund Hindutva in India but do not have the patriotism to come and live in this country. So, neither patriotism nor the absence of it is the preserve of any one to mean anything. It has nothing to do with the community.

[Translation]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer) : The statement made by Shri Aiyar hurts the sentiments of Indians living in other countries and it is not good to make such statements.

[English]

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : I also wish to draw attention to the second statement made by Shri Arif Mohammad Khan while he was speaking in this House here which, I think, is of high importance. Shri Arif Mohammad Khan said that he was completely clear in his mind that the application of Section 125 and 127 of the Criminal Procedure Code to the Muslims of India would not—I stress this—detract, in any manner, from the continued validity of the Muslim Personal Law. It was not his position that the Muslim Personal Law should either be abrogated or should incorporate the provisions of Sections 125 and 127. Shri Arif Mohammad Khan's position was that the two were compatible. This was the view of a Muslim. We should have left it to the Muslims to argue among themselves. Perhaps, they would have come to a conclusion. But, instead of that, there was an attempt to jump the matter; to start talking about the Muslim Personal Law in the kind of terms that we have had the misfortune of listening to this afternoon. It was made clear in this House not now but in 1973 by the then Minister of State for Home Affairs who happens to be the Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee which is happily not sitting this afternoon and therefore I am able to be with you.

Shri Ram Niwas Mirdha who, moving the 1973 Integrated Criminal Procedure Code, was actually asked in this House whether sections 125 and 127 derogated from Muslim Personal Law. And on behalf of the Government, he gave a categorical assurance that sections 125 and 127 referred to the vagrancy provisions of the

Criminal Procedure Code which is applicable to all communities in India and does not in any way affect the Muslim Personal Law. The two, therefore, are not inter-related. The question is whether... (Interruptions).

SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA (Madhubani) : I was in the Joint Select Committee and I take the entire responsibility in personal terms for the enactment of section 125. That Shri Mirdha stated here is the first part of the sentence that you have stated that it applies to all Indians, not of a particular religion. The wording is, if any man of sufficient means and not any man of means. 'Any man of sufficient means' include children or parents or wife or destitutes. (Interruptions)

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR : I do not think there is any contradiction between us. I refer you to the record specifically in reply to a question from a Member of the opposition, Shri Mirdha gave the clarification that sections 125 and 127 did not in any way detract the Muslim Personal Law. But that is it. What does section 125 or section 127 point out? I am very said that this Resolution has come before the House before Shrimati Susela Gopalan's Private Members Bill has come because that I think, is a more relevant issue than the one that has been brought forward just now. What does she say? She points out that under the Indore Session's Judgement, the total amount of money that was to be paid to Shrimati Shah Bano for preventing her from falling into vagrancy was a sum below Rs. 30 and when the Jabalpur High Court reviewed this matter, they raised the payment due to her to Rs. 179.20 only. I cannot believe that they really thought that by giving her twenty paise, they would save her from vagrancy. The issue that should have been taken up in this House by those who espouse the cause of women and here I am no less behind the hon. lady, despite the fact that I am not a lady, I am absolutely behind her in saying that sections 125 and 127 in their application to all Indians of whatever community, are completely obsolete because the Supreme Court, over which the Chief Justice Chandrachud presided and which indulged in *obiter dicta* that Chief Justice Chandrachud did on the Shah Bano case, never

addressed itself to the question of how much money would save poor Shah Bano from vagrancy. Rs. 179.20 was decreed by the Jabalpur High Court and this much talking judge had nothing whatsoever to say about the quantum of money that should be given to the women who are suffering the danger of vagrancy. Mrs. Suseela Gopalani's Bill which has been pending before us now for several months, addresses itself to this question. It says that the minimum payment to be made should be Rs. 500 and the maximum limit should not be imposed so that if some Birlas or Tatas were to put aside his wife then instead of his being restricted to giving her pocket money of Rs. 179.20 per month, he would have to pay in accordance with his means. This is the real issue. We are not addressing ourselves to the real issue. Instead, we are addressing ourselves to a totally bogus Hindu Muslim issue. You cannot make a speech asking for the establishment of a commission to go into a uniform civil code in which every word of praise is reserved for one community, the Hindu community, and every word of condemnation is reserved for another community the Muslim community. I cannot believe, Sir, that the Madam, the hon. Member will be able to find one member of any minority community who, for the reasons that she has advanced, would wish to see a commission established to enquire into the matter.

This is a highly sensitive matter; it is a highly delicate matter. I plead with the lady, through you, Sir, that ours is not a policy of appeasement; ours is not a policy of vote banks.

On the Shah Bano case, my friend, my mentor, my leader, my then Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi explained once in a dramatic manner how the Muslim Personal Act that he brought in, could not be taken as an active appeasement of the Muslim community. He said that if the argument is right that the country is outraged, then, it means, automatically, that all the Hindus do not support us, so, I lose 85 per cent of my electorate. He said, then, if it is right that the women of Islam are outraged, I lose 7½ per cent of the rest which means I lose 92½ per cent and if it is right that several male members of the Islamic community are out-

raged, then, I lose another three or four per cent. So, I get down to securing the support of three per cent for this Act and I secure the opposition of 97 per cent of the Indians. How can it be called the politics of appeasement? He explained and I stand by that position that if you create a communal divide by taking a particular Supreme Court judgement and converting it into a Hindu-Muslim issue, then, any responsible Government of this country has to say that even if I lose the support of 97 per cent of the electorate, I must do the right thing to keep this country together and the country was kept together.

The country has not been kept together by destroying the Babri Masjid; the country has not been kept together by pretending that it was a disputed structure; the country, I submit, is not even being kept together by allowing that temporary disputed structure, the so-called temple, to continue to be at that site. This country has been grossly divided since 1989 by the politics of the *rath*. We were told by Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee that when he fought the elections from Balrampur, many many decades ago, that all he had was two jeeps. Now what has he got? He has got two *raths*. The jeeps were all right; he could do with two or three Jan Sangh members. But that *rath* and everything that has happened since then has so destroyed this country that in our hearts, there is an ache. It is that ache which, if the Bharatiya Janata Party were to understand, we may begin to move towards some understanding among ourselves because I have no difficulty with your being a Hindu. In my own fashion, I too am a Hindu and fortunately my Hindu religion permits me to be a Hindu, even if I do not believe in God. So, I have no great difficulty in moving to an accommodation with the B.J.P. on the grounds of being a Hindu. But, if, in order to assert my Hindu nature, if, in order to assert the Hindu character of my civilisation, if, in order to assert the Hindu majority in my nation, I am going to look at my Muslim brothers and sisters with the kind of eyes with which the Mover of this Motion has looked at them, during the course of her half an hour intervention, then, I am afraid, I will never be able to win them over to my side. You may be able to

get some of those who are unfaithful to their own community, from the Muslim community, to join hands with the B.J.P. But, this country is going to be able to survive only if you can reinterpret the *Hindutva* to mean that it is as integral to the Muslim traditions of this country as you pretend it is integral to the Hindu tradition of this country. If you do that, of course, you end up having the same point of view as I have, but I cannot believe that you will do it. You will stick to your own point of view, which is a narrow point of view, which is a destructive point of view, which has caused untold harm to this country already, which holds within its womb the possibility of totally destroying the India that we have built after so much struggle and so much sacrifice.

I oppose this Resolution, now if I may say so in the reverse order, first and foremost because the mover of this Resolution belongs to the party of destruction; secondly because the reasons given by her are all the wrong reasons; and thirdly because this is the worst possible time of all to inflict the insult of a commission to look into this issue to the injury that was caused to this nation and to our Muslim brethren by the actions of the hon. Member's party, the associated organisations and all those gonads and lampoons who broke the Babri Masjid on the 6th of December 1992.

Thank you.

SHRI BHOGEN德拉 JHA. Mr. Aiyar has to be thanked for having spoken against destruction of the Babri Masjid; but not on this Resolution.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA (Jadavpur) : Mr. Chairman Sir, I rise to oppose this Resolution not because I oppose the idea of a uniform Civil Code as such, which in fact is a Directive Principle of our Constitution; nor because I do not think that unity and brotherhood among the people of India is not an important issue; but because of the way in which the wording of the Resolution has been made. In the wording of the Resolution, unity and brotherhood among the citizens of the country has been made dependent on the imposition or the introduction of a uniform Civil Code.

SHRI BHOGEN德拉 JHA : Shall we sit beyond 6 o'clock also Sir ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : No.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA : If I am allowed to continue next time, I will resume my seat now.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Yes, you may continue next time.

Now Statement by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Shri K. P. Singh Deo.

17.58 hrs.

[English]

STATEMENT OF MINISTER

SATELLITE TELEVISION CHANNEL FOR REGIONAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. P. SINGH DEO) :

Hon'ble Members would recall the statement made by me in this house on 24th March, 1993 regarding the starting of satellite channels, using the spare time on the transponders on the satellites of the INSAT system, the programmes of which could be received in all parts of the country through an appropriate dish antenna.

2. Pursuant to my statement, a scheme for allotment of time slots on the Entertainment (Metro) channel, Sports channel, Business News and Current Affairs channel, Enrichment channel and Music channel was formulated by my Ministry. The satellite channels will be introduced from 15th August, 1993.

3. The successful launch of the INSAT 2B, which is a matter of national pride, has encouraged us to provide additional satellite channels to our countrymen for telecasting regional language programmes which could be received in all parts of the country through an appropriate dish antenna.

4. Doordarshan would start from 2nd October, 1993, a pilot satellite service in ten regional languages for two and a half hours to three hours primarily during the afternoon from Monday to Friday. The