

Plan. Steps are being taken to expedite certain preliminary arrangements in regard to them, and, in the case of the Kosi, to have discussions with the Government of Nepal, with a view to starting work on these new projects during the next financial year.

The Air Services of India have now been reorganised and two State Corporations, one dealing with internal airlines and the other with external services, have been formed. It is proposed to extend the external services to the Far East.

In the course of the past year, two land-marks have been celebrated, namely, the centenaries of the beginning of the Railway System and the Telegraphs in India. There has been steady progress on the railways and special attention is being paid to the manufacture of locomotives and rolling stock. Some major projects of rail construction will be taken up shortly. Postal and telegraph facilities have expanded, especially in the rural and backward areas.

My Government attach importance to the problem of housing. A total expenditure of Rs. 72 crores has been incurred on housing for displaced persons since the Partition and loans and subsidies have been given for the construction of houses for industrial workers. With a view to encouraging the building of inexpensive and attractive houses, an International Exhibition on Low Cost Housing has recently been held and has attracted much attention.

A statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the Government of India for the financial year 1954-55 will be laid before you.

After the last session of Parliament, it became necessary to promulgate seven Ordinances. Of these, two deal with matters in respect of which Bills are pending before you. You will be asked to consider and pass such of these as require permanent legislation.

There are 28 Bills pending before you. Some of these have been considered by Select Committees; some

others, which are still under the consideration of Select Committees, will be brought before you with their recommendations. Among these are the Bills dealing with reform of the Hindu Law to which my Government attach considerable importance. There are other legislative measures relating to matters of general public interest, which will be brought before you during the course of this session. My Government are anxious to proceed with certain reforms relating to judicial procedure with a view to expediting these processes and lessening the expenditure involved in them.

Early in this month, a tragedy took place at the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad where a vast and unprecedented gathering of pilgrims had collected. The Uttar Pradesh Government had taken great pains to make satisfactory arrangements for this great concourse of human beings. But on the Amavas day an accidental mishap led to a large number of persons being crushed to death by the uncontrollable passage of others over them. This grievous tragedy, which marred a happy occasion, has brought sorrow to many and, on your behalf and mine, I extend my deep sympathy to the relatives of those who have suffered.

The new year begins with hope and fear evenly balanced. There is promise of achievement and of progress towards peace. There is also apprehension at the trials we and the rest of the world might have to face. In this crisis of human destiny, we can serve both our own country and the larger causes of the world only by adhering to the principles that have guided us in the past and by remembering the message of peace, tolerance and self-reliance of the Father of the Nation. I trust that that message will guide you in your deliberations.

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#### KUMBH MELA TRAGEDY

**The Prime Minister and Leader of the House (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru):** I crave your leave to make a reference before this House starts its work for this session on this occasion. We have

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

just heard the President refer in his speech to the Kumbh Mela tragedy. I have no doubt that every Member of this House as well as elsewhere will associate himself with our deep sorrow and our sympathy and condolence with not only those who are bereaved, the families of those who have suffered in this tragedy, but with many others.

This is hardly the occasion for me to go into any facts of this terrible occurrence, partly because the matter is under enquiry by a distinguished committee, and partly because the State Government concerned is dealing with the matter. Some of us here were certainly present at the Kumbh Mela on this occasion, though they may not have been on the actual scene of this tragedy. I was in the Mela itself when this tragedy took place. In fact, I was in a rather high place—in the balcony of the Fort—having a distant view of the whole of that mighty concourse of human beings. I do not think that anyone who saw that enormous multitude—it is estimated that at least four million people had gathered together—can ever forget it. It came as a deep sorrow that, during this tremendous event when so many people had gathered together, there should have been this tragedy in which many suffered death.

As I said, I do not wish to go into the facts of this occurrence at this stage, but I think that it is right that we should begin our work today with our expression of sorrow and condolence.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Basirhat) rose—**

**Mr. Speaker:** There is no occasion for a speech now.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:** May I know what has happened to the adjournment motion?

**Mr. Speaker:** That will come in due course; not now.

I entirely associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the hon. the

Leader of the House. The tragedy was so sudden and so wide, in a sense affecting everyone in the whole of the Indian Union, that it has moved every heart to its depth. I think it is but proper that we should express our deep sorrow and our condolence to the families of the deceased and others who have suffered. We shall express our condolence and sympathy by standing in silence for two minutes.

*(The House stood in silence for two minutes.)*

#### DEATH OF SHRI NAMDHARI

**Mr. Speaker:** I regret to inform the House of the passing away of Shri Atma Singh Namdhari who was a sitting Member of the House, at the age of 53.

We mourn the loss of Shri Namdhari and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences to his family. The House may stand in silence for a minute to express its sorrow.

*(The House stood in silence for a minute.)*

#### DETENTION OF SHRI BHAJAHARI MAHATA

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to inform the House that I have received the following communication from the Magistrate, 1st Class, Purulia, Manbhum, Bihar:—

"22nd January, 1954.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I have found it my duty in exercise of my powers under section 502 Cr.P.C. 1898 to direct that Shri Bhajahari Mahata, Member of the House of the People, [a report against whom under section 9(5) of the Bihar Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1949, has been received by me] be detained for the reason that his bailor Shri Sahadeb Chakrabarty who stood surety for him on 21-1-54 when he appeared in my