PRESIDENT'S ADDRESSES

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Publisher's Note

Of late there has been a pressing demand for the presidential addresses of all our National Presidents hitherto.

Bowing to this request we have decided to bring out the speeches of all our presidents in Plenary sessions, National Council and National Executive meetings in separate volumes.

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was our founder president and continued to be the president till 1986. All the available speeches of his have been collected and published in this volume. We are sure this will greatly benefit readers.

We convey our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all those who rendered valuable service in bringing out this volume.

Bharatiya Janata Party
Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee. Brother and Sister Delegates and Friends.

We are meeting here today for the first National Convention of the Bharatiya Janata Party. I feel extremely grateful to you for the affection and confidence you have bestowed on me by electing me President of the Party. I am conscious how onerous a burden this is. In fact in this hour of crisis it is no easy matter to undertake the leadership of any political party. So far as Presidentship of the Bharatiya Janata Party is concerned, this is certainly not an ornamental decoration. It is really not a post; it is a responsibility. No doubt, it is an honour; but even more than that, it is a test. It is at once an opportunity and a challenge. May God give me strength and understanding to measure up to this trust.

I do not propose to go into the details of the circumstances in which the Bharatiya Janata Party was launched. But I would like to assert that it was not with any happiness that we parted company with the Janata Party. From beginning to end, we kept exerting in order to preserve the unity of the Party. We were conscious of the pledge we had taken at Rajghat in the presence of Lok Nayak Jaiprakash to maintain the unity of the party. But by converting the non-issue of dual membership into an issue, a situation was created in which it became impossible for us to continue in the party with any honour and self-respect.

There is no point in trying to unravel the intentions of those who created such a situation. But it is noteworthy that even among those who had nothing to do with the RSS, there were quite a few who regarded this dual membership issue as a bogey raised for ulterior ends. Many of these are among the founder members of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The enthusiastic support received by the Bharatiya Janata Party throughout the country during the past 9 months is in itself ample justification for our decision to launch a separate party. Today the Bharatiya Janata
Party has a membership of over 25 lakhs. A large section of these entrants were not connected with the former Jana Sangh. Nevertheless some of our opponents, prominent among them our Prime Minister, keep repeating that the Bharatiya Janata Party is only a new name for the former Jana Sangh. They feel disturbed over the growing popularity of the party in all parts of the country and all sections of society, and think that by saying so they can curb the immense potential that the party has for future growth.

Pursuing the Unfinished Task

The Janata Party formed because of the inspiration of Lok Nayak Jaiprakash has disintegrated. But his vision of a glorious India is still with us. We shall not allow it to be obliterated. His dreams, his labours, his struggles and his unflinching commitment to certain basic values are part of an invaluable legacy that we have inherited. The Bharatiya Janata Party is pledged to pursuing his unfinished task.

Multi-dimensional Crisis

Today our country is facing a multi-dimensional crisis. Mounting inflation, deteriorating law and order situation, scarcity of essential commodities, increase in the number and intensity of communal incidents, aggravation of social tensions and violence, oppression of Harijans, tribals, women and other weaker sections, the explosive situation in the north-east—these are some of the dimensions of this crisis.

A Moral Crisis

Those charged with the responsibility of finding a solution to these problems have no time for it. They are busy manipulating their pawns and planning their moves on the chessboard of politics. I believe that the country's crisis is essentially a moral crisis. The biggest curse of our public life is that moral values have given way to self-seeking and power-lust, and politics has become a pure power game.

Degeneration of Public Life

In its last phase this degeneration of public life can be traced to the year 1969 when the Prime Minister herself after filling the nomination papers of her party candidate, conspired to have him defeated by resorting to all kinds of unethical means. In the years that have followed this disregard of ethics and norms has only grown more acute. The emergency declared in 1975 had no relation to any threat to national security, internal or external; it was an unvarnished attempt to cling on to power. The disturbances created
in courts during the Janata regime. encouragement given to such serious
crimes as hijacking, the constant recourse to intimidation and coercion.
the plot to promote defections on a mass scale—all these are facets of the
same process. The present ruling party's naked collusion with anti-social
elements during the 1980 election and its shameless incitement of
communal, casteist and regional feelings in order to pander to vote banks
also should be understood in the same light.

DOUBLE STANDARDS Yet another evidence of this process of degeneration
is the double standards of morality maintained by
Government. There is one standard for those who are their proteges or
their relations and another standard for the rest. When prior to the Janata
regime allegations were made against relatives of the Prime Minister,
she dismissed them in utter disregard of the Santhanam Committee's
recommendations. In contrast, Prime Minister Shri Desai referred the
allegations against his son to judicial scrutiny. It is only during the 28
months of the Janata rule that some efforts were made to stem this rot of
moral decay.

It is not only the rulers or the political parties who are corroded by
this decay. It really affects the entire society, the bureaucracy, the industry
and the trade. Even the common man is afflicted by it. Self-seeking
becomes the order of the day. The nation thus suffers an erosion of moral
strength and loses its capacity to face difficulties.

RESTORATION OF MORAL VALUES It we want to overcome the present crisis, the first and
foremost condition is that moral values must be restored
their place in public life. To identify these values we
do not have to look outside the country. Irrespective of caste, creed,
language, region, an average Indian cherishes deep respect for values
like tolerance, contentment, simple living, hard work and brotherhood.
Let us strengthen these values and build a new society on that basis. Of
course, the modern context has to be kept in view. Pandit Nehru
emphasised the use of science and technology for development. The nation
has progressed on that account, but large sections of the population have
not been beneficiaries of the prosperity achieved. Inequalities have grown.
The chasm between the rich and the poor has widened. These distortions
have to be corrected. We can do this if we accept Indian cultural values
as the basis for progress, and regard the individual, particularly the
weakest individual, as the focal point of our developmental endeavours.
Gandhiji, Jaiprakash and Upadhyaya had all stressed this approach. It
was acceptance of this approach which during the Janata regime gave birth to schemes like Antyodaya and Food for Work.

Building a society of this kind free from exploitation and discrimination and based on certain values is a challenging task. Merely invoking Gandhiji's name or making pompous declarations is not going to help. An arduous struggle is called for. We have to consciously organise the poor peasantry, workers, the Harijans, the tribals and other exploited sections of the population to this end. It is the organised strength of these sections that can really bring about this new society. Mahatma Gandhi's struggle against the foreign government derived considerable strength from the success he achieved in mobilising these sections.

**PARTY WITH A DIFFERENCE**  We can organise the people only if we are able to establish our credibility in their minds. The people must feel convinced that here is a party different from the crowd of self-seekers who swamp the political stage, that its aim is not some how to sneak into office and that its politics is based on certain values and principles.

**GANDHIAN SOCIALISM**  The Bharatiya Janata Party has accepted the concept of Gandhian Socialism after due deliberation. Gandhiji did not propound any 'ism' as such. But his views revealed an integrated approach to life and even to modern problems.

Gandhiji did not regard man only as an economic being. like all our ancient seers, Gandhiji wanted man to strive for the fulfilment of not only his material but also his spiritual needs. Earlier, we had Swami Vivekananda speak in terms of a spiritual socialism. The Bhagwad Gita refers to Samya Yoga. When the Ishavasya Upanished remonstrates against casting covetous eyes on another's wealth, it is only commending a society based on aparigraha (non-accumulation). The adage, 'All land belongs to Gopal' (सबे भूमि गोपाल की) also reflects the same spirit. Every aahuti (offering) at the yajna is followed by the chant idannamama (This is not mine). Here too, it is the same non-accumulative idea that is stressed.

**EMPHASIS ON HUMAN VALUES**  There is a basic difference between Gandhian Socialism and Marxist Socialism. Gandhian Socialism starts with human values as historically evolved and tested and then attempts to reconstruct the economic and social systems on the basis of these values. In Marxist ideology, on the other hand, human values
are made subject to social relations, material conditions and conditions of production. Both Gandhism as well as Marxism claim to end exploitation of man by man. But Marxist Socialism cannot tell us why it wants to do so unless it gets out of itself, whereas the basic premise of Gandhi’s philosophy is that exploitation of man by man is a violation of human values.

EXPERIATION IS DUE TO LOSS OF VALUES

The exploitation of man by man has not come on account of evolution and progress in human values. It is instead the result of loss of values during some phase of the progress of the socio-economic systems and the material forces operating in that system. Gandhian socialism insists that if economic exploitation of man by man is to be ended it cannot be ended within any value-neutral and so-called scientific social system; it can be stopped only through a value system on which the changes in the social system are to be structured as well as tested.

Marxists are unable to tell us as to what will happen when Capitalism is abolished, except that they will establish a classless society. In practice, however, something far worse has been happening where they have succeeded as their system has turned out to be tyrannical, dictatorial and destructive of human values.

INTEGRATED WAY OF LOOKING AT REALITY

Marxists and many other so-called scientific socialists often describe Gandhiji as anti-science. This is an utter travesty of truth. Gandhiji’s whole life was nothing but a grand search for truth. And what is science if it is not a search for truth? But scientific methods cannot be applied to the search of man for his inner self or his quest for understanding spiritual reality or the reality of the mind. Gandhian socialism emphasises the reality of both the material and the spiritual, and it is only through this integrated way of looking at reality that human values can be discovered.

VIOLENCE IS SELF-DEFEATING

Another basic difference between Marxist socialism and Gandhian socialism is over violence. All communist revolutions have come through violence and tragically, they have survived by still greater use of violence against their own people. A Marxist revolution eats its own children. Gandhiji did not rule out the use of violence in certain situations but he had warned Indian politicians that to rely on violence as an instrument of social and political change or for resolution of class conflict would ultimately be self-defeating.
Yet another point of difference between Marxist views and Gandhian views is on the question of distribution of power, to which the problem of violence is related. Marxist socialism does not possess an independent theory of the state or of distribution of political power. That is why Marxists do not believe in democracy. Although Gandhiji, like Marx, believed in the ultimate withering away of the State, he warned against the danger of the immense concentration of power in the hands of the State without any countervailing checks. There is difference between Marxism and Gandhism also with regard to the path and process of this withering away. In communist countries the state has acquired more and more power and is now using it against its own working class and the proletariat in whose name it rules. Recent happenings in Poland provide a glaring example.

Gandhian Socialism regards decentralisation as the basis of its political system. In this there are two streams of political institutions and processes both running parallel to one another. On the one hand, there will be institutions of representative democracy and, on the other there will be institutions of participatory democracy. Today in India there is no democratic participation below the level of Parliament and State legislatures. All powers vest in the bureaucracy. Under this system, therefore, it is not possible to involve people in the efforts for national reconstruction and to make them feel responsible for shaping their own destinies. Panchayats and District Boards should be given real powers and adequate financial resources. Their autonomy should be guaranteed by the Constitution and should not be at the sufferance of the State Government.

These and other local bodies can be of service not only to their own members but also to one another and can be linked with the higher bodies. These institutions which Gandhiji used to describe as local republics can play a valuable role in curbing authoritarian tendencies and trends.

Gandhian socialism is totally against state monopoly of economic power while in communist countries socialism has become synonymous with such state monopoly. Concentration of political and economic power in the hands of the State have made communist regimes utterly repressive and antithetical to socialist humanism. In order to prevent concentration of economic power either in the hands of the State or in the hands of a few individuals we
have to accept a decentralised economy. Both communism as well as capitalism have generated a new kind of inequality, inhumanity, violence, selfishness, greed, unrestrained consumerism, and alienation. Gandhiji's idea of trusteeship points a third way to the world. It can imbibe good points of both capitalism and communism while rejecting their bad points. If society is to harmonise the interests of consumers, producers, the state, owners of property and labour, joining in a common endeavour, then there is no other alternative except trusteeship.

Gandhiji's concept of trusteeship does not depend simply on the good sense of those who are in power. Its real importance can be understood only in the context of institutional changes and organised people's power.

It is a pity that we in India never seriously tried to translate this idea into action whereas some other countries such as U.K. have started experimenting with it.

If in 1947 India had decided to pursue the Gandhian path we may perhaps have been spared the terrible crisis we are having to confront at the moment. Even after 33 years of development and planning, poverty continues to grow, inequalities have become sharper, and the unemployment problem has become explosive. If we had evolved an indigenous pattern of development in conformity with our genius and requirements and having regard to our human and material resources we would not have been in our present plight. As it is, today we are having to suffer the worst features of both western capitalism and Soviet planning.

A THIRD ALTERNATIVE Fact is that capitalism and communism are twin-brothers. One denies equality, the other freedom; and both deny fraternity. In spite of their spectacular achievements, both capitalism and communism are showing signs of decay. Communist countries are developing greater and greater inequalities. In capitalist countries on the other hand, attempts are on to abridge freedom. There is a ferment in the world in search of a third alternative. Protagonists of both capitalism as well as communism find themselves face to face with problems which cannot be answered within their own systems.

Outside national frontiers also, there does not seem to be any great difference between capitalist and Marxist attitudes. Marxist powers have proved no less expansionist than the capitalist countries.
The Bharatiya Janata Party will mobilise a national campaign to have Gandhian Socialism accepted as a Third Alternative.

**POSITIVE SECULARISM**

Since ancient times, the State in India has always been regarded as secular. The concept of theocratic State is alien to Indian traditions and Indian political thought. "Truth is one but wise men describe it in different ways" is a belief fundamental to our thinking. The State has never discriminated between followers of different faiths. A very natural outcome of our commitment to the concept of "Sarva Dharma Samabhava" was that in 1947, when we became independent, we resolved to set up a political system in which followers of all religions would have the same place. There would be no Class I citizens and Class II citizens. The fanaticism the tensions that prevailed at that time did not deter us from this resolve, because doing anything else would have been repugnant to our traditions and culture.

**COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY**

Democracy and secularism are inseparable. A state that discriminates between one citizen and another on grounds of their faith, which does not treat them equally, cannot claim to be truly democratic because one of the cardinal principles on which democracy is based is equality of all citizens. Our commitment to Secularism, therefore, is as fundamental as our commitment to Democracy.

Among those assembled at this convention, there are thousands who in 1975-76 put up a valiant fight in defence of democracy. They underwent all kinds of sufferings. Several colleagues of ours became martyrs in that struggle. Today, we can only offer them our respectful homage.

**DISTORTED SECULARISM**

It is a matter of regret that over the years Congress policies have distorted the concept of Secularism. It has come to be identified simply with protection of interests of religious minorities. Indeed, very often Secularism becomes only a respectable grab for appeasement of narrow communal or sectional interests.

**TRUE SECULARISM IS POSITIVE CONCEPT**

No doubt protection of minority interests is an important aspect of secularism. But in its totality, secularism is a much wider and a more positive concept.
As indicated earlier, it constitutes the bedrock of democracy. It is also a guarantee of nationalism and national integration.

It is this broad and positive concept of secularism that BJP subscribes to. In the Indian background, we can claim to have established a truly secular State only if we are able to instil in every citizen, irrespective of his religion, caste, region or language, a sense of Indian-ness, which I believe exists in all our countrymen and which needs to be assiduously nurtured and strengthened. This Indian-ness is based on a value-system developed out of a synthesis of divergent experiences of various sections of the population over the centuries. This process of synthesis and harmonisation must continue, and all religions in the country can contribute towards making our citizens better Indian’s and all Indians better human beings.

**TWELVE MONTHS OF FAILURE**

Twelve months have gone by. But in Delhi, the Government that works is still nowhere in sight.

There is a Parliament, of course. Its winter session has just ended. By putting its seal of approval to 10 Ordinances in 24 days, it has set up a new record. The Houses have been kept sitting till past mid-night in order to pass black Bills like the National Security Bill.

On the 14th August, 1947, Pandit Nehru had said in the Constituent Assembly: "At the stroke of the midnight hour when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom."

**NEW CHAINS OF SLAVERY**

On 22nd December, 1980, when the Rajya Sabha, deliberating till 1.00 A.M. passed the National Security Bill, someone could well have observed: "While all India is asleep, the elected representatives of the people, instead of devising ways to guarantee them two square meals, are engaged in forging new chains to enslave them."

The Supreme Court also is there in its place. In the Minerva Mills case, it once again reaffirmed that there are in our Constitution some basic features which may not be tinkered with by Parliament. But Government is all set to have this verdict scrapped. The Supreme Court is being depicted as a roadblock on the path of progress. Quite a few vacancies on the Bench remain unfilled.
The Press generally is alive to its responsibilities. The demoniac blinding of undertrials in Bhagalpur may not have come to light if The Indian Express and Sunday had not shown the enterprise and boldness to expose these misdeeds.

**GAGGING OF THE PRESS** However, the newspaper world is gripped by an unarticulated fear—the fear of consequerces that can follow non-conformist writing. The gherao of newspaper offices in Bangalore, and the mass rape. and murder of Chhabirani, wife of journalist Mahapatra of Orissa, convey an ominous significance that cannot be missed. If bizarre happenings such as these are not sufficient to keep the press in line. New Delhi is always willing to use its arm-twisting skills against press barons to fix the newspapers.

**ABUSE OF OFFICIAL MEDIA** Abuse of governmental media such as radio and television, has now transgressed all bounds of decency. The role of radio and television during the years has made utter nonsense of government's pretensions about democracy. Our shortsighted rulers do not seem to realise that once these media lose credibility with the people, they cannot be effective even as drum-beaters of the ruling party, a task they have shamelessly undertaken.

**ADMINISTRATIVE PARALYSIS** In New Delhi today, there is a Government; but there is no administration. There is a Prime Minister; but one who has lost her grip. The secretarist is there as always; but the services seem struck by paralysis as it were. No decisions are being taken. No one is willing to own responsibility. Ministers wear a permanant look of nervousness, always fearful of the hour when they too might be shown the boot like Kamalapati Tripathi. The bureaucracy is demoralised, and feels apprehensive lest for being upright in the performance of their duties they might have to suffer humiliation or even imprisonment as DIG, CBI Shri N.K. Singh had to suffer.

**LOYALISTS REWARDED** The rewarding of Ministers and officers who had debased and discredited themselves during the emergency has had a very unhealthy effect on the entire administration. Victory in elections, which naturally depends on many factors and circumstances, cannot wash away the categorically proved conclusions of the Shah Commission nor convert the stinking scandal of Maruti into a monument of good conduct.
DEFECTIONS ENCOURAGED During the last 12 months the immoral process of defections promoted by selfishness and lust for power has continued unabated. Instead of trying to halt this, the ruling party has been unabashedly engaged in trying to seduce and corrupt potential floor-crossers. As a result, the already soiled reputation of politicians has been further tranished. More distressing still, the party system itself has been seriously undermined.

When the Asam Assembly was placed under ‘suspended animation’ the Cong (I) had only 8 legislators. Now the party has 56. It may be noted that this accretion of strength has taken place during a period when the youth of Assam were immersed in a life and death struggle to save their State from foreign infiltration. Their struggle continues even today but the Centre is unable to provide any solution.

POLICE ATROCITIES A large section of the people in Moradabad feel convinced that they can receive no protection from P.A.C. The Bhagalpur police also seems to believe that by blinding undertrial prisoners they have only effectively discharged their duty of curbing crime. The stripping of a woman in Beghpat by the police and parading her naked in the streets was shameful, but even more disturbing is the fact that hundreds of people watched this outrage in mute helplessness. All these happenings are pointers not merely of administrative failure or of a decline in social consciousness: they indicate a virtual distinegration of our institutional framework. Some political analysts have described the situation as “a civilisational crisis”.

Whatever be the epithet used to describe this crisis, there is no doubt that this crisis is unprecedented. The fading charisma of one individual, the influence of a party cracking up with dissensions and the battered prestige of government are certainly in no position to surmount this crisis.

SINISTER MOVES TO INSTALL A “PRESIDENT FOR LIFE” People who advocate adoption of the presidential system in place of our present parliamentary democracy as a panacea for these ills are either fools or knaves. In most cases it is the latter description which would fit.

Talks about a “President for life” and an “elected judiciary” are not the fancies of an individual. The are indices of a deep conspiracy
which aims at perpetuating the hold on the State acquired by the present rulers with the help of negative votes. If these designs succeed, India would cease to be a republic. This conspiracy must be exposed and frustrated before it can materialise.

**ELECTORAL REFORM**

An analysis of the 1980 election results would show that once again a party that failed to secure the support of the majority of electors has succeeded in capturing power. In the last Lok Sabha elections, the Cong. (I) secured 351 seats out of 525, but in terms of votes the Cong (I) got only 42.56% of the votes cast.

Indeed, it is one of the major quirks of our election system that under this system, on the basis of minority votes a party is able to secure an overwhelming majority of seats. Right since 1952 there has been not a single election in which the winning party has been able to secure the support of a majority of the electorate. Even the Janata Party, when in won the elections in 1977 got only 43.06% votes

**ELECTION A BIG GAMBLE**

This system yields odd results. In 1977 the Janata Party secured 43.06% votes but on that basis got only 298 seats, whereas in 1971 with almost the same voting percentage the Cong (I) was able to get 350 seats. Then again in 1980, with 42.56% votes the Cong (I) managed to get 66.86% seats whereas in 1977 with a higher poll percentage of 43.06% the Janata could get only 56.80% seats in Parliament. Critics of this system in Britain have said that this system makes elections a big gamble.

**MAJORITY WITH MINORITY OF VOTES**

It is evident that under this system the people's will is not fairly reflected in the legislatures. The 'massive mandate' bragged about by winning parties is generally illusory. These parties represent only a minority of the populace. Nonetheless, by virtue of their legislative majority, momentous decisions are taken in legislatures, laws are changed, the constitution is radically overhauled but majority sanction behind these changes is really missing.

**NEED TO ADOPT A DIFFERENT SYSTEM**

It is imperative that electoral reform is undertaken urgently. In place of the present majority system of elections that we have, we should adopt some variation
of the List System, a system that has been worked successfully by most European democracies. The biggest advantage of the List System is that it would politicise the electorate, make them think in terms of party policies and programmes and thus minimise, if not eliminate, the vitiating influence of caste and community that presently dominates the thinking of the average voter. Above all, the List System will stabilise the party system which under the present system remains in a state of perpetual flux. It will not make elections the kind of gamble they presently are. Parties would be represented in Parliament and the State Legislatures broadly in proportion to their actual support in the people. No doubt, the majority system has some advantages. One person representing one constituency can better attend to the developmental needs of that constituency. West Germany has tried to combine the plus points of both the majority system and the List system and has evolved what is known as the Mixed System. It would be of advantage perhaps if we adopt the List System for Lok Sabha elections and the Mixed System for State elections.

A Joint Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms constituted in 1973 had recommended that an experts body should be appointed to examine the feasibility of adopting the List system in India. It is a matter of regret that there has been no follow up to this recommendation yet. In this respect the Janata Government also cannot be absolved of blame. The Janata Government did, however, approve of several other far reaching electoral reforms, such as public financing of elections, and had decided to discuss its proposals with Opposition Parties before initiating necessary legislation in that regard. I demand that the Experts Committee suggested by the Parliamentary Committee earlier should be set up without delay, and that the proposals drawn up during the Janata regime be implemented.

**INFLUENCE OF MONEY POWER MUST BE CONTAINED**

The growing influence of money power in elections has always been a matter of concern but lately this problem has acquired dangerous dimensions. Money not only from indigenous sources but from foreign sources as well is reported to be playing havoc with our elections. In order to contain the corroding influence of money power at the polls the following measures should be seriously considered:
(i) Election expenses should be regarded as a legitimate charge on the public exchequer. Political parties should be given grants on the basis of votes secured by them in the preceding elections. Candidates who are able to save their security deposit should be entitled to reimbursement by the State up to the maximum limit of expenditure permitted.

(ii) The expenditure incurred by a party on any candidate's election should be added to the candidate's own expenses.

(iii) There should be a ceiling on the expenditure which political parties can legitimately incur.

(iv) There should be a limit also to the external props of publicity used by a party such as newspaper advertisements, posters, leaflets, etc.

(v) The accounts of political parties should be subject to statutory audit.

(vi) As recommended by the Tarkunde Committee, the Election Commission should be a multi-member body, and voting age must be reduced from 21 to 18 years.

The Janata Government had taken the historic step of allowing all recognised political parties the use of radio and television during the elections. There is need of further extension of the facility given. A scheme of political broadcasts also, apart from election broadcasts, should be drawn up.

**COMPULSORY VOTING**

I feel that there is a case for compulsory voting in India. We have had 7 General Elections till now but the number of such electors who have never voted or who have been generally indifferent to elections is still legion. The 1980 Lok Sabha elections, like the 1977 elections, were contested on some very crucial issues. But out of 35.40 crore voters only 20.13 crores exercised their right of franchise. This means that more than 15 crore voters did not go to the polling booth. In several democracies voting is compulsory.

**FOREIGN POLICY**

By making foreign policy a plaything in the game of politics, the present government has seriously undermined the national consensus that had developed on foreign policy during the last three decades.
In 1977 the Janata Party had fought the Lok Sabha elections almost entirely on domestic issues, and so, after winning the elections, emphasised the need for continuity in foreign policy. In 1980, however, the Congress (I) dragged foreign policy into the election arena and made it a major plank in these elections.

If India's relations with its immediate neighbours have suddenly turned sour, the roots of this development have to be traced to speeches delivered during the election campaign in which it was said, 'Even small neighbours of ours are behaving arrogantly with us.'

**BIG BROTHER ATTITUDE**

WORLD NOT SERVE OUR INTERESTS

By pursuing a policy of good neighbourliness and mutually beneficial bilateralism the Janata Government had for the first time in 30 years succeeded in creating a climate of trust and confidence in this region.

But now by reverting to the earlier Big Brother attitude towards these neighbouring countries the new government has in twelve months wiped off all the gains of the earlier period. The charge is baseless, even malicious, that the Janata Government, in order to win the goodwill of neighbouring countries, has sacrificed vital national interests. The Salal Agreement with Pakistan was entered into on exactly the same-terms as our predecessor government wanted to secure, but could not. On the question of division of Ganga waters, while in 1975 our treaty with Bangladesh gave India only 11000 to 16000 cusecs of water, the treaty finalised by the Janata Government ensured augmentation of water supply to 20500 cusecs.

**FAILURE TO STAND UP TO SOVIET INTERVENTION IN AFGHANISTAN**

By acquiescing in USRR's military intervention in Afghanistan, which now has become virtual occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet Russia, the Government of India has tranished the country's image the world over, and has isolated India completely from the neighbouring countries, the non-aligned nations and the Islamic world.

Freedom-loving Afghans who have always been our friends are never going to forgive us for our failure to stand up unequivocally against Soviet intervention.

The joint statement issued at the end of Soviet President Mr. Brezhnev's recent visit to India says not a word about Afghanistan. India's silence in this regard is even more eloquent than its earlier equivocation.
Government's decision to recognise the Kampuchean regime propped up by the Vietnamese army is without any principled justification. This decision also has created serious misgivings about the independence of India's foreign policy, particularly in the eyes of South East Asian countries.

It would not be out of place to mention here that even while pursuing efforts to normalise relations with China, the Janata Government never hesitated to condemn Chinese aggression on Vietnam. Aggression is aggression, irrespective of whether the victim is Kampuchea or Vietnam. India cannot afford to have double standards in such matters.

Independent observers cannot be blamed if they infer that Indo-Soviet friendship is getting transformed into Indo-Soviet alignment. The entire Indian people, all political parties in the country, appreciate the value of Moscow's friendship and would like to see it strengthened. During the Janata regime, despite misgivings in certain quarters, these ties of friendship did become deeper and maturer. But making Indo-Soviet ties meaningful and fruitful is one thing and allowing the impression to grow that in respect of world events, India has no strategic perception distinct from that of the USSR, is quite another.

Soviet Russia's armed intervention in Afghanistan and the reaction to this of America and its allies has precipitated in this part of the world a situation which would have prompted both India and Pakistan to forget the past and try to open a new chapter in Indo-Pakistan relations. It is a matter of regret that the leadership in both these countries has allowed a historic opportunity to slip by.

Pakistan ought to understand that the threat to its security posed by the presence of Soviet troops just beyond the Khyber Pass cannot be met simply by trying to grab arms and armaments from wherever it can.

India too must realise that it is in India's own interest that there should be a strong and stable Pakistan between India and USSR as a buffer. Any temptation to take advantage of Pakistan's present difficulties can in the long run prove very costly to India herself.
The Government of India should take an initiative to overcome the setback in our relations with Pakistan. When BJP Vice-president Shri Jethmalani visited Pakistan a few months back in connection with problems of Afghan refugees, President General Zia told him in the presence of the Indian Ambassador to Pakistan that Pakistan is agreeable to having a no-war pact with India. We should have pursued this matter from this point onwards. We should also take steps to resume talks with Peking at high level.

**INDIA MUST**

**ASSESS**

**MORAL STRENGTH**

In the fast deteriorating international situation, India can play a meaningful role only if it expressed itself clearly and unhesitatingly against any encroachment upon the freedom of nations, any violation of frontiers and any interference in the internal affairs of other peoples. India should show some moral strength even in international realtions.

**IN SEARCH OF EXCUSES**

To cover up its dismal failure on all fronts, the Government is resorting to ever new excuses. The first six months were whiled away with the refrain that the train of administration had been derailed and ploughed into earth during 28 months of the janata rule and that it will take time to put it back on the rails. The next six months are being passed with the alibi tha the Opposition with its disruptionist tactics, is not allowing the Government to function.

Those who raised a hue and cry at some stray incidents of chain-snatching in Delhi during the Janata days are now indulging in legal hair splitting to prove daylight dacoities as mere robberies. Those who hurled stones at me as a protest against delay in the arrest of Billa and Ranga, are now mum over the failure of the police to trace the murderers of Jaisinghani, uncover the mystery of Mrs. Purnima Singh’s death and haul up all the criminals responsible for the murder of the Nirankari Baba.

The incidents of Pipra and Parasbigha in Bihar were no less painful than that of Belchi. But the Prime Minister did not care to go there even in a helicopter whereas she went riding on an elephant to Belchi. She dismissed the UP Government on the issue of Naraipur but she refused to accept the resignation of her own Chief Minister whose Government had failed to prevent the killing of hundreds at Moradabad. Today she is
never tired of blaming the opposition for making political capital out of every incident. But she seems to have conveniently forgotten what she had herself said at Naraipur that, if the Government commits a mistake, why shouldn't the opposition exploit it.

**Kisan Struggle**

The present wave of mass agitations in various parts of the country is in fact a spontaneous phenomenon. The Assam agitation against infiltration of foreigners, which is more than a year old now, has surpassed even the independence struggle in point of its sweep and the mass support and cooperation that it enjoys. It is a national endeavour expressive of the determination of the youth force to protect the territorial integrity of India and the identity of Assam. It has nothing to do with political parties or partisan politics.

The movements being run by the Kisans in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh etc. to get their demands accepted, are also not inspired by political parties. Kisans belonging to all parties, including the ruling party, are participating in this fight.

**Soaring Prices**

In fact, the economic condition of the peasantry has deteriorated over the years. The costs of inputs like fertilizers, irrigation, electricity, diesel, seeds, etc. have gone up, but the income from the produce has not increased proportionately. The soaring prices of non-agricultural goods have also hit them badly because they are consumers also.

**Rural Indebtedness**

The figures of rural indebtedness are startling. Only a few years ago, the overdue debts amounted to Rs. 750 crores. Now they have risen to 6000 crores. Moreover, 85 percent of the agriculturists are in debt.

The Bharatiya Janata Party considers the farmer's demand of remunerative prices for agricultural commodities as completely justified and supports it fully.

As long as a proper ratio is not established between the prices of sugarcane and sugar, cotton and cotton textiles, groundnut and vanaspati oil, jute and jute manufactures, etc., the exploitation of producers of raw materials will continue and the manufacturers of industrial goods will go on making exorbitant profits.
The price of cotton cloth has trebled in the last few years, but the price of cotton has gone down. The famous 'Varlakshmi' cotton of Andhra which fetched Rs. 1200-1500 per quintal, has now slumped to Rs. 500. The cost of jute production is Rs. 192 per tonne whereas the officially fixed price is only Rs. 150 per tonne.

The Andhra Government had fixed the paddy support price at Rs. 105 per quintal but the farmers had to dispose it off at Rs. 75 per quintal for lack of proper purchase arrangements by government agencies. This situation holds good at other places and for other crops as well.

The Agricultural Prices Commission has failed in its purpose. It should be disbanded and a new body set up in its place to determine the cost of agricultural produce by taking into consideration the prices of industrial goods as well as the soaring cost of living of the Kisans and their needs.

The farmer has now risen from centuries of sloth and ignorance to claim his due. He should be given credit for making the country self-sufficient in foodgrains and saving foreign exchange worth billions. The attempt to create a rift in the Kisan movement on the basis of big and small farmers or between the rural producer and the urban consumer will not succeed. The awakening created by the movement in the countryside will also benefit the landless labourers.

The Government should take the farmers into confidence and chalk out a timebound programme to double the foodgrain production. The world is likely to suffer from food shortage for a long time. However, India has the capacity to become a leading exporter in this respect. This potential should be fully utilised.

Assam is burning. A conflagration has been raging there for the last one year. The people of Assam are becoming strangers in their own State because of large scale infiltration of foreign citizens. This process has been going on for decades. I recall having drawn the Government's attention to this matter in 1957 after being elected to the Lok Sabha for the first time. I had then warned that
the situation would take an explosive turn if no effective remedial steps were taken to prevent such infiltration. But the Government failed to realise the seriousness of the problem.

The magnitude of the foreigner's problem is not small, as the powers-that-be try to depict it. In 1978, during the Janata rule, in Mangaldai Lok Sabha constituency alone 47,600 names of foreigners were detected in the voters' list. Between 1957 and 1970, there has been an increase of 12 lakh names in the voters' list of Assam, but between 1970 and 1979, the increase has been of the order of 28 lakh new voters.

FUTURE OF FOREIGNERS

Due to the attitude of the Central Government during the last twelve months, the Assam problem has become more complicated. Sometimes the Government tries to give it the colour of Assamese versus non-Assamese and sometimes it resorts to the policy of bringing about a confrontatin between the Assamese and the Bengalis. Yet again, it tries to make it a Hindu-Mualim question. But it always refuses to see the foreigners' problem in the state in its real form.

Assam is a frontier province. It has its geographical importance and from the military point of view it is the gateway of India. Full of scenic charm, it is rich in oil, minerals, vegetation, water and springs. It has a rich cultural heritage. But today's Assam is poor, disregarded, exploited and cursed. Assamese people blame the Centre for their backwardness. They also complain of callous attitude towards their language and heritage.

As a result of several rounds of talks between the Central Government and leaders of the movement, differences have already narrowed and now the deadlock centres round the future of foreigners coming between 1961 and 1971. The Government is not ready to settle them outside the State, whereas the agitation leaders do not consider it feasible and desirable to put the entire burden on their State.

Both sides should soften their stiff stand and adopt or viamdia in relation to the identification and deletion of the names of those who entered the state between 1961 and 1971. The question whether such people should be allowed to live in Assam or settled in other States should be left to the new Government elected on the basis of a new voter's list.

DISCUSS PRESENT GOVT.

The present government in Assam has been formed to fulfill a constitutional obligation. But there is no constitutional and moral propriety of expediency in continuing it. Hence, it should be dismissed immediately.
The mass movement of Assam cannot be suppressed with bullets or arrests. It is suicidal to deal with a movement, with which almost every Assamese man, woman and child is emotionally linked, as a purely law and order issue. The path of repression is not the path of peace.

The responsibility for the present situation in Assam rests on those political leaders who, out of selfish motive, not only turned a blind eye to foreign infiltration, but were also guilty of encouraging it. The soul of Assam is already beset with many wounds. The rest of India, by its indifference and the central leadership, by its short-sightedness, should not commit the sin of its complete destruction.

The responsibility for the present economic crisis in the country lies squarely on the policies, or absence of policies, of the present Government. In China, they have a habit of naming their years. One is called the Year of the Moon, another the Year of the Lion, and so on. If we were to emulate their practice, Smt. Gandhi's first year in office would be remembered as the Year of the Snail. Nothing moved during the year. It was as if time had stood still. In contrast the Janata Government's two years were really years of the Galloping Horse!

The worst aspect of this economic stagnancy is that the Government did not even know that things had stopped moving. Finance Minister Venkataraman kept on changing his figures. He began by saying while presenting his disastrous budget—that industrial production would go up by 8 to 10 percent. He has now admitted that it may be no more than 4 percent. As usual he is wrong. In fact, industrial production may be just 2 percent more than last year.

One of the major election planks of this Government was: Curbing inflation. But the only two things that have gone up during the Congress regime are prices, and the share market. Everything else has been going down and down. During the Janata regime, national income went up by 6.2 per cent. This year the increase
may not be more than 3 per cent. Industrial production during the Janata regime was 5.5 per cent a year. This year it will be less than two per cent. Again during the Janata regime, prices were stabilised: the increase was only nominal. This year they have gone up by 20 percent and are still going up.

The Prime Minister says she had handed to the Janata Government a sound economy but that the Janata made a mess of it. She forgets that there was a drought in 1976-77, a year before a Janata came to power. Then, there was a drought last year. Even then we did very well and the economy expanded. Now it is the other way round.

**Falling Foreign Exchange Reserves**

A good economy almost always results in good foreign exchange reserves. During the Janata years, the reserves went up by Rs. 2350 crores and when we left the Government the reserves stood at Rs. 5200 crores. Since then they have been coming down by as much as Rs. 600 crores per year. The nation's wealth is being squandered.

We hear a great deal these days about the Sixth plan. The Planning Commission boasts of having drawn up the plan in a jiffy. Actually, all they have done is to chop and change the old plan prepared by the Janata and present it as a new plan. That is of course excusable. But what is going to happen now, and which can never be condoned, is that the Plan itself will be scrapped, because the way the prices are going up the Plan will be no more than a paper doll.

Let us not delude ourselves into thinking that India is among the top ten industrial countries of the world. Why should a big country like India be among the top ten, and not among the top five? The world is moving ahead much faster than we are. Even small countries like South Korea have left us far behind. A nation's economy is like a man on a bicycle: if you stop peddaling, you fall down. This Government stopped peddaling long ago, and is about to fall.

**At the Crossroads**

However, one need not be much concerned about the question whether this Government will fall or survive. In a democracy, Governments will come and Governments will go. The pertinent question really is; will India be able to face the present challenges successfully on the basis of its value-system and be able to build a new future for itself?
Friends, the situation is grave. The country is once again standing at the cross-roads of destiny. On one side, we can see clearly the threat of authoritarianism; on the other we can also perceive the dangers of anarchy. We have to prepare the people to face these twin dangers. The BJP does not favour the politics of confrontation, but at the same time we would never shy away from confrontation, if the situation so demands.

DEMOCRACY MUST BE DEFENDED
The soul of Indian democracy dwells in the intense desire of our 650 million people for equality and for freedom from exploitation. Those who keep thinking of devising ways to destroy or debilitate democracy can do so only at the risk of being swept away by the fury of the people.

CHANGE THE STATUS-QUO
In our struggle for the restoration of moral values and in defence of democracy. Let in involve the farmers, the workers, the rural poor, the artisans, the youth, the students and the women and create in them the realization that their conditions would improve only if they exert in a corporate manner to change the status-quo.

A CALL RECENTLESS STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
The BJP is resolved to devote itself to politics rooted in the soil. Only by that course can we restore the confidence of the people in politics, political parties and political leaders. The days of summit politics are over. Manipulative politics also has no future. There is no place in BJP for people madly in pursuit of post, position and pelf. Those who lack courage or self-respect may go and prostrate themselves at the Delhi Durbar. So far as we are concerned, we are determined to wage a relentless struggle against the dangers I have indicated. With the Constitution of India in one hand and the banner of equality in the other, let us get set for the struggle. Let us take inspiration from the life and struggle of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Let Mahatma Phule be our guide in our crusade for social justice.

THE LOTUS SHALL BLOOM
Standing on the shores of this ocean beneath the Western ghats, I can say this with confidence about the future: Darkness will be dispelled, the Sun will rise and the Lotus shall bloom!

✧ VANDE MATARAM ✧
Mr Chairman of the Reception Committee, Brother and Sister Delegates and friends.

The Majestic palm trees of Kerala have beckoned to travellers since times immemorial. It is always refreshing to visit this beautiful part of our country. Kerala’s life provides an exquisite specimen of unity in diversity, of cultural synthesis, of religious harmony and, above all, of intellectual excellence.

**KERALA-THE LAND OF GREAT SOULS**

Time and again this land has given birth to inspired souls who have strengthened and enriched national life in a multitude of ways.

**SHANKARA-CHARYA**

It was in Kerala here that twelve centuries back the great Jagadguru Shri Shankaracharya lit the torch of a cultural renaissance. Today, when the country is in the grips of a crisis of moral degeneration and drift, are we not justified in praying for a modern Shankaracharya?

**KUNJALI MARICARS**

Again, when the foreigners who came as traders turned into raiders and wished to stay on as rulers, Kunjali Maricars had the foresight to resist them—a vision which unfortunately the then rulers did not possess. Today, when as a result of super-power rivalries and strains the peace and security of this sub-continent has been gravely imperilled, how we yearn for another Kunjali!

**SHRI NARAYANA GURU**

Nearer to our own times Kerala produced a saint who achieved remarkable success in solving a problem which vexes the nation today. In Shri Narayana Guru this land gave birth to one of the rare social reformers who raised the status of the social outcastes by creating a spirit of self-confidence in them. He showed that the untouchables could achieve economic,
educational and social status by self-help. If the teachings of Shri Narayana Guru had been accepted by the rest of the country, and implemented, the country may have been spared the recent shameful manifestations of this problem which we have failed to solve even after three decades of independence.

MANNATH PADMANABHAN

With selfishness and greed pervading our community leadership, it is but natural that we recall Mannath Padmanabhan and remember with admiration how his selfless efforts served to stop the rot in the community.

DR. JUHANON MAR THOMA

Five years ago when our country was passing through the dark night of emergency there was a religious leader who boldly protested against the attack on human rights and civil liberties. It is with great feeling and reverence that I recall the name of His Grace Rev. Dr. Juhanon Mar Thoma, the late Metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church.

The entire country, specially Kerala, has today become saturated with intolerance. When a differing ideology is sought to be supposed by physical violence, when innocent young men are murdered only because of their belief, it is certainly a blot on the tradition of tolerance and harmony that has prevailed in this land for centuries.

RECALLING PANDIT DEENDAYAL UPADHYAYA

Here I cannot but refer to the foul murder of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya.

It was here in Kerala that Upadhyayaji had presided over the fourteenth annual session of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. Only a few days after returning from Kerala, on 11th February, 1968, his mutilated body was discovered in the railway yard of Mughal Sarai.

His murderers destroyed his moral body, but they could not destroy his ideals and his thoughts.

Taking inspiration from Upadhyaya's dedicated life and supreme martyrdom thousands of young men are forging ahead day and night on the path of selfless service and would continue to do so in future.
What is happening in Kerala is not merely the outcome of instant passion; it seems to me a deliberate design to create terror. It is happening at the connivance, if not collusion, of the powers that be in the administration. Those who are behind this ought to understand that no ideology can ever be suppressed by violence. Also let them not forget that it is those who cannot convince the souls who start attacking the bodies.

I have mentioned some of the great sons of Kerala. The problems which they sought to solve confront the country even today though in a much more magnified and disturbing manner.

The nation is passing through a multi-dimensional crisis. The Frankenstein of casteism nurtured by power-hungry politicians to promote their own selfish ends is threatening to destroy the basic fabric of our national life.

Though the emergency has not been yet declared, harassment of judges has started, arbitrary arrests are being made, honest officers are being punished and the press is being subjected to various pressures.

Since July 1979 this country has had a Government either installed by the Congress (I) or manned by it. Therefore, for 22 months now all developments in the country are directly or indirectly due to the Congress (I). The present ruling party cannot be absolved of responsibility in that regard.

On the day we left Government the price index stood at 211. Today it is over 270. When Mrs. Gandhi assumed office the price index was 223. During the 16 months that this “Government which works” has been in the saddle the price index has shot up by 47 points!

When we left the Government our food stocks held over 18 million tonnes of grain. Today the holding is less than 10 million.

Our Government had chalked out and implemented a plan where foodgrains were distributed as part of wages in different areas. Now this programme has been scrapped.
DOWNSIZING PLAN TARGETS

We had prepared a Plan. It was called the Rolling Plan. The Congress (I) leaders made fun of it. They promised the country a bigger plan and they have now come out with such a 'big' Plan. But the Plan is big only in expenditure. It is small in results. In other words, the Congress (I) has promised the countrymen to tax more, to spend more, but to achieve less.

Our plan had envisaged 49 million man years of additional employment. The 'bigger' Plan puts at 34 million man years.

We wanted to irrigate 17 million additional hectares. The new plan target in 13 million.

A modest aim of our Plan was to take electricity to 50% of villages which are unelectrified. The present Plan is only for 40%.

We had proposed to give housing sites to 8 millions. The present Plan brings down this figure to 6.8 millions. You may well ask: is there anything for which we aimed at less and the present planners have looked higher? Well, yes, there is one aspect. The present plan has earmarked a sizable sum of money for motor cars, presumably Maruti: which certainly did not.

BANKRUPTCY OF ECONOMIC THINKING

The spiralling prices, the scaling down of Plan targets, and the lopsidedness of priorities—this is not the only distressing feature of our economy. An even more disquieting facet is the total bankruptcy of any fresh thinking about economic problems. In a country where 50% of the population subsists below the poverty line, G.N.P. cannot be the sole measuring rod for adjudging progress. In fact, in our country only that economic strategy can be regarded sound which is able to improve conditions of the poorest of the poor, and lift them from their present morass.

For the common man no explanation is needed to describe the state of the economy. He has only to compare what he used to pay 22 months back to what he pays today. What is the price of wheat? Or rice? Or sugar? Or cloth? What are the bus fares today? What are the train fares?

HIKE IN CORRUPTION

There is no point blaming the petroleum price hike for all this burden. There is another hike which is really responsible, the hike in corruption, and the hike in inefficiency.
Today there is a very wide gulf between what the agricultural producer gets and what the consumer pays. On the one hand the producer does not get a remunerative price for his produce and, on the other hand, the consumer is unable to get goods at a fair price.

Three months back I had asked the Government to make two declarations. Firstly, what is the minimum price a farmer should get and, secondly, what is the maximum price the consumer should pay. Till now there has been no answer.

Today’s inflation has not been caused because of the price being paid to the farmer for his produce. At the root of this inflation is corruption in which the ruling politicians and the big industrialists and businessmen are partners.

**EXPLOITATION OF THE FARMERS**

Some months back the sugar industry had conveyed to the Government that they were willing to sell sugar in the open market for Rs. 4.50 per kilo. But for reasons unknown, the Government did not accept the offer. What is the price of sugar today? It is quite likely that during Diwali this year the price of sugar may touch Rs. 15 a kilo. The producer of sugarcane hardly gets Rs. 2 for every kilo of sugar that is sold in the market.

This loot must end. We have to arouse public opinion and mobilise it against this kind of exploitation and injustice.

The BJP National Council has to draw up an effective programme for the coming months so that Government can be compelled to stop this profiteering and to ensure that while on the one hand the producer gets a remunerative prices for his produce, the consumer is able to secure necessary goods at a reasonable price.

An amusing claim being made by the Central Government is that in this year’s Budget no taxes have been imposed on the people. The claim is hollow. It should not deceive anyone. In the last two Central Budgets the people have been subjected to an additional tax burden of nearly Rs. 4,000 crores.

**ENCOURAGEMENT TO BLACK MONEY**

The most cruel form of economic mismanagement is the open encouragement given to black money. Indeed, ours, is the first country in world where a Budget is sought to be balanced with black money. Black money is sought to be unearthed not through the police, not through any enforcement agency.
not through courts of law, but with gilt invitation. The black money hoarder who has amassed wealth by dodging the law and exploiting the people is not only given immunity but even anonymity.

This year's budget is for the Black Money, of the Black Money and (I would not like to say. by the Black Money) certainly by friends of Black Money. Let us not forget that at this rate this Government of the people, by the people, cannot get along with the people.

So bad is the situation and so unsure is the leadership that they have to hire crowds and herd them together at a cost of many, many crores only to reassure themselves. All this may have been all right except for the fact that even this huge amount has to be paid for by the people, and so adds to the economic rot.

If the ruling party were to pay half the attention to the economy of the country as it does to the organisation of such rallies the economy would profit immensely.

INTERNAL SITUATION
Sixteen months ago Mrs. Gandhi was swept back to power with a huge parliamentary majority. In the Assembly elections held six months later the same pattern was repeated except in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

What followed, however, can be regarded as unprecedented. Never before has such a small span of time produced more negative results.

First and foremost, there is the crisis in leadership.

LEADERSHIP CRISSES
The Congress (I) leadership has proved its incapacity not only to administer the country but even to control its own party.

GROUP RIVALRIES
Group rivalries in the party have reached a stage that at several places police has had to be called to stop intra-party rioting, even in West Bengal where the ruling party is sought to be toppled by any means, fair or foul. many such physical clashes have been taking place resulting in the death of some Congressmen.

During these 16 months of Congress (I) rule two Central Ministers have been sacked. For quite some time, the post of Chief Minister of Andhra, and later on, the entire Cabinet remained virtually in animated suspension. In Gujarat the bitter feuding between the Chief Minister and
a Union Minister has created serious complications for the State. In Assam
there seems to be a perpetual ministerial crisis warranting a continuing
shuttling between New Delhi and Gauhati. An increasing campaign is
on against the Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya pradesh,
Rajasthan and Bihar and no one knows how long these Chief Ministers
can hold on. All these facts clearly point out that the ruling party today
is a badly divided house.

POWER LUST

Of course, no tears need be shed over the discomfiture being experienced by the Congress (I). Perhaps, this is a historical
inevitability. But Congress (I) leaders should not forget that they have
been elected to administer and not to flight for the fishes and loaves of
office. What is more, the internal fight has an adverse bearing on the
health of the nation also. The Janata men revelled in this kind of fighting
and the entire party paid for it. The people punished the Janata by
dislodging it. But looking at the scene today it would not be wrong to say
that the country itself as having to pay for the infighting of the Janata
Party. As a result of Congress (I)’s power-lust and its neglect of public
welfare, some problems have become particularly acute. Assam and
Gujarat are only two glaring examples.

ASSAM

The Assam problem is a legacy of Congress politics of
three decades. The desire to stick on to office somehow has only
aggravated this problem. The last elections to the Assam Assembly were
held in 1977. The Congress (I) got 8 seats. With defections they have
now 48. They have been defected in the house yet they want to continue.

The Assam agitation is aimed at ensuring that foreigners not
Indians from other states but the non-Indians from other countries go
out or at least they do not vote.

AGITATION
AGAINST
INFILTRATIONS
OF
FOREIGNERS

Every one admits that there are foreigners in Assam.
It is also conceded that the influx of foreigners is
continuing. There is no difference even on the point
that foreigners should go and that they should not be
allowed to vote.

Notwithstanding all this, there is no satisfactory solution to the
problem.
POLICY OF REPRESSION

If the Government thinks that its present policy of repression and terror has succeeded in stamping out the movement it is deluding itself. Spontaneous movements of this dimension and intensity, with which sentiments of millions are linked up, can never be crushed by brute force.

NATIONAL INTEREST IGNORED

Assam is a test for the Congress (I). Is the party concerned with national interest or is it concerned only with party interest? Is it worried only about retaining power or is it anxious to preserve the unity and integrity of the nation? It is self-evident that unless the present Government which has been actively promoting the influx of foreigners and which has been trying to malign the Assam movement by engineering incidents of sabotage is removed, a suitable climate for resolution of the Assam tangle through negotiations cannot be created.

Indeed, it is amazing that through the leaders of the movement have repeatedly affirmed their readiness to negotiate without any conditions and through almost all opposition parties have favoured early holding of tripartite talks on Assam, the Government continues to dilly-dally. The longer the delay in holding discussions the more complicated the problem will become.

IS CONGRESS INTERESTED CHECKING INFLUX

At long last the Government has decided to invite the leaders of the Assam agitation to open talks again. The agitators have always been ready to solve the foreigners’ issue through discussions. The question is whether the Government sincerely wants to check still-continuing influx of foreigners into Assam and take legal steps against those foreigners who were already there, or whether this new step is but a tactic of Government to keep the whole problem hanging. I would like to warn the Government that this may be the last opportunity to solve the Assam problem through discussions.

RESERVATION POLICIES NEEDS NATIONAL CONSENSUS

Now that the anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat has been withdrawn, it is necessary that there should be a dispassionate consideration of the anomalies and shortcomings in the implementation of the reservation policy which have come to light in so far as educational institutions and services are concerned. An attempt should be made to evolve a national consensus.
Some months back Parliament had unanimously extended for a period of another ten years reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Parliament and in the State Legislatures. There is already provision in the Constitution for reservations in education and services for socially and educationally backward sections. All political parties support this policy. The Lok Sabha has unanimously reiterated recently its commitment to this national resolve.

WIDESPREAD DIFFERENCES However, it cannot be denied that the agitation in Gujarat with respect to reservations and connected issues has precipitated differences of opinion in political parties, in trade unions, in student organisation and practically in all organised groups. Politics based on caste has created a vested interest in backwardness, and on the other hand has provoked the upper castes to try to grab as much as possible for themselves.

GUJARAT GOVT'S FAILURE Though a sustained effort has been going on to blame opposition parties, particularly the B.J.P., for the agitation in Gujarat, it is now a well-known fact than on both sides of the agitation, among the reservationists as well as the anti-reservations, it was Congressmen who were the most active. If the Gujarat Government had shown tact in its handling of the movement right at the outset it would not have assumed the dimensions that it did and the immense loss of life and property may have been saved.

P. M. SHOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE The Prime Minister ought to take the initiative in trying to find a solution to the problems raised by the Gujarat agitation. It is a question not merely of some jobs, or some seats in medical colleges. The issue is far more fundamental. This is a problem of national integrity and of social harmony. The resolution adopted by the Lok Sabha on this issue needs to be followed up. The responsibility in this regard rests with the Prime Minister.

SHORT COMINGS IN MERIT HAVE TO BE ACCEPTED To say that justice should be done to the weaker sections and then that merit should not be ignored does not lead us anywhere. The rationale of reservation is that sections that have been neglected and exploited for centuries must be treated in a manner so as to raise them to the level of the rest of society, and, therefore, that for some time and to some extent
shortcomings in respect of merit have to be overlooked. It would be a pity if the abatement of the agitation in Gujarat makes us indifferent to this very grave problem. Instead of rushing to dig a well only when a fire actually breaks out, let us apply ourselves to evolving a long term plan with respect to this question of national importance.

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

While talking about social discrimination and exploitation we cannot forget that the largest section of sufferers in this context is that of women. Physically, economically and socially, women have for centuries, had to suffer indignity, exploitation and dishonour. And they have suffered all this meekly and quietly. They are not only daughters, or wives, or mothers, they are responsible citizens of this democracy. Their potential in contributing towards the greatness of this nation has never been properly realised, nor has it been given an opportunity for full expression. There is need to create a constitutional Commission on the lines of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission and the Minority Commission. This body should constantly study and monitor problems relating to this neglected section of our society and make recommendations aimed at conferring on them equality of status so that they can contribute effectively to the nation's progress.

LAW AND ORDER

Before I conclude my observations about the internal situation, I would like to say something about the law and order situation in the country. Today, life has become absolutely insecure. Trains are being looted. Bus passengers are being attacked. Daylight dacotties have been taking place. At places, the police is supine and inert. At others, we are aghast to see them gouging out the eyes of under trial prisoners and pouring acid into them. In both kinds of cases, political interference has been playing part.

CONGRESSMEN AND MARXISTS INVOLVED IN VIOLENCE

In Delhi, the other day we had rioters enter a college and molest girl students. In Bhubneshwar there was the incident of girls being molested and dishonoured at a tourist spot by Congress (I) men. Policemen have been killing people. In Bagpat and Dhabwali women have been dishonoured. The ruling party has been openly inciting violence. The Marxist party also has been making its own contribution to this orgy of violence. It appears that both the Congress (I) as well as the C.P.I.(M)
believe that whatever the ruling party does is the law, and it is only what the other do that constitutes lawlessness.

In the international field there have been three major developments during the past 15 months.

RUSSIAN INTERVENTION IN AFGHANISTAN Firstly, Russian guns are now on the Khyber Pass—the traditional route to the Indian sub-continent for the Central Asian invader. This development has come as a handy excuse to the United States to arm Pakistan.

DETERIORATION OF RELATION WITH NEIGHBOUR Secondly, there has been a conspicuous deterioration in India’s relations with its immediate neighbours—not only with China and Pakistan, but also with Bangladesh, Shri Lanka, Nepal and even Bhutan. The warmth that had developed with these neighbours when the Janata was in office is no longer there.

INDIAN’S NON-ALIGNED STATUS QUESTIONED Thirdly, India has lost its position in the non-aligned world. We are reckoned as a “naturally” of a super-power.

Our ambivalence about Soviet presence in Afghanistan is neither morally correct, nor practically paying. Besides, it is against public opinion in our country. The military intervention in Afghanistan and its occupation ought to have been condemned unequivocally. No country, however big and powerful, has the right to attack and devour another. Russia has to get out of Afghanistan. Let the Afghans decide who should rule them.

Soviet presence in Afghanistan has a direct bearing on Indo-Pak relations. Pakistan should realise that an arsenal of sophisticate arms cannot keep the danger away. Islamabad must understand that the threat to its existence comes from some other direction and not from India. Countries of this Sub-continent can meet these dangers by mutual cooperation and not by accumulating arms against one another.

ONLY EXPANSIONISTS STAND TO GAIN FROM AN INDO-PAK CONFLICT In India also we should realise that only the expansionists, whether of the old variety or of the new, stand to gain from an Indo-Pakistan conflict. For too many times and for too long have been victims of such foreign intervention. We do not want a war with any
one, much less with Pakistan. How much armaments does Pakistan legitimately need for its defence is a matter than can be sorted out by mutual consultation between our two countries. Threats to our security should not be exaggerated nor should they be underplayed. We should be realistic in our assessments and always on the alert.

India and Pakistan, in fact the entire region, needs peace. Russian troops on the Khyber Pass and American warships in the India Ocean, both imperil this peace. The real clash of interests is between this region and the super powers, and not among nations of this region.

FORGING AHEAD

This is the second meeting of the BJP National Council. The first was held at Bombay. The Bombay session was a memorable one from all points of view—in terms of delegate turnout, of public support, and of the level of deliberations. The decisions taken at Bombay provoked keen political debate throughout the country. Indeed, the Bombay Convention gave a new turn to Indian politics.

FARMERS ATTRACTION TOWARDS BJP

During the last four months since Bombay there has been a very satisfactory growth in the party’s strength and influence. We have been able to make good headway in the southern States. In the north, as a result of the conscious attention party units have been paying to the countryside the peasantry has been drawn towards the BJP in a big way. Earlier this month a massive Kisan rally was organised by our U.P. unit at Lucknow. All observers agreed that for the State the rally was unprecedented. In Madhya Pradesh, a mass petition signed by 12 lakh farmers was presented to the Assembly Speaker. I have had occasion to participate in tribal conferences organised by our Maharashtra and MP branches and I was delighted to note the excellent rapport the BJP had been able to establish with the tribal population in many regions. In my tours of Bihar, Haryana and Punjab, I could easily discern how hopefully the people have been looking up to the BJP. Our Delhi unit, as expected, is doing exceedingly well.

DONATION FROM A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE

The response to the fund-collection drives undertaken by our units at various places has generally surpassed expectations. A special feature of these drives has been the involvement of a large number of cadres to collect small donations from a maximum number of people. The success achieved in this regard is in itself a measure of the increasing public support which the party has been drawing.
For us, politics is an instrument of national transformation and social service, and not just a means for attaining office. This makes our task somewhat more difficult than ordinary political work as understood in our country.

It is testimony to the growing strength of our party that while on the one hand hectic efforts are on to isolate us, on the other overturns are also being made to seek our co-operation.

I would like to declare very emphatically that our party does not believe in any clandestine deals. We believe in open politics.

On specific issues pertaining to defence of democracy or promotion of public interest we are willing to co-operate with all parties.

Very often a question is posed to us: who is our main enemy—Congress (I) or C.P.I. (M)? My answer is that neither is an enemy.

Both are opponents with whom we have genuine and strong differences. And we do not believe that whatever our opponents do is wrong. So our attitude towards them is determined by the merit of the issue, or our assessment of a situation at a given time.

If the Congress (I) Government at the centre encroaches into the autonomy of State Governments and tries to topple non-Congress (I) governments, we shall oppose it. But at the same time if the C.P.I. (M) interprets its electoral success in a State as license to liquidate its opponents we shall resist this effort with as much determination.

Ours is a principled approach. Public interest is the supreme consideration.

Brothers and sisters, circumstances have cast upon us a historical responsibility. Those who are in government have frittered away the faith that had brought them to power. No explanations are any more need to prove their utter incompetence. What the people really need is a confidence that the BJP has the capacity to deliver goods.

What we have seen, heard and experienced during our countrywise tours has convinced me and my colleagues that the people have very high expectations of us. They
recognise our sincerity, our idealism and our sense of discipline. Our role in JP's movement for a Total Revolution, our contribution to the glorious struggle against the emergency and our dispassionate and constructive endeavours to maintain the unity of the Janata Party are widely appreciated. With great humility, but with pardonable pride, we can also claim that when the people bestowed responsibility on us, and put us in Government our performance was second to that of none. We have shown how to wield power for public good.

It is up to us to so equip ourselves and strengthen ourselves so as to be able to measure up to the high expectations of the people.

**BJP MUST BE READY FOR THE STRUGGLE AHEAD**

We must gird up our loins for a peaceful struggle against injustice, exploitation and backwardness. In this struggle we have to involve all sections of the population. Successful mobilisation of the people and an ability to utilise their collective strength, is necessary for the success of any peaceful movement. In this struggle, we have to be ready to make all kinds of sacrifices.

We do not believe in a class war or in a caste war. A democratic social system cannot be based on class or caste confrontation. The success of democracy lies in harmonising the interests of various groups and sections. It is on the foundations of such harmony and synthesis that a Gandhian society can be firmly established. The basis of this harmony must be justice.

No doubt, this is an onerous task. But our objectives are clear. I am sure God is with us. Our cause is just. The future is bright.

✧ **VANDE MATARAM** ✧
Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee
Delegate Brothers and Sisters,

Twenty eight months ago we met at Bombay. Today we are in Delhi. For a moment I could not suppress my feeling that we should have been in this national capital in another sense as well. But that was a momentary thought. I take heart from the fact that our party knows how to make the stumbling block on the path into stepping stones to success.

**SECOND TERM AS PRESIDENT**

Today I comence my second term as President of the Bharatiya Janata Party. I had made it clear that I would not serve as President of our party for more than one term. My resolve was based on good reason.

I believe that by staying beyond a length of time in the same office an individual’s creativity gets spent. Very often, the individual himself remains unaware that he has become a victim of stale thought and tired reflex, unable to offer his best to the party. Thus the seeds of stagnation are sown in an organisation.

We must for ever guard against this. Normally I would not have relented on this. But my colleagues insisted. They argued that our country was passing through most abnormal times. They said that the party should not have a change of leadership at this particular juncture. The argument given by me that there is no dearth of good men in our party capable of providing leadership at all levels was turned against me when it was pointed out that I should accept the advice of persons whom I consider good and capable. I am conscious of the great honour and affection that you have bestowed on me. In fact, I feel overwhelmed. I express my heartfelt gratitude to you.

**CREEPING ROT**

My colleagues were not wrong in describing the situation in the country as abnormal. Our nation has weathered many crises. But the crisis that grips us today is unique. Never
has the nation been threatened by an enemy more dangerous. The enemy does not sit across our borders. The enemy is within our very hearts and minds. It is the cancer of doubt and despair which is overtaking our people. It is the loss of faith in our system, in the very future of our beloved motherland. This creeping rot must end. I am sure that very soon, by the grace of God and the inherent good sense of the Indian people, it will end. But that calls for a great national effort.

DEEP AND TRAGIC WOUNDS ON THE SYSTEM

Why are the Indian people going through such agony of doubt and despair? If their faith in the system is shaken, there is good reason for it. We all know the old saying: "As the ruler, so the ruled." If the Government does not have faith in the system, how can we expect the people to continue having faith? The last three years of Congress (I) misrule have inflicted deep and tragic wounds on the system. This was done in two ways: by the Government's loud thoughts, and by the Government's silent actions. The first led to a confusion of purpose, the second to the collapse of institutions. I cannot recall a precedent in history where a government enjoying such an overwhelming majority deliberately set out to wreck a working system from within. This is an attempt by a government to destroy the nation.

PROFESSION AND PRACTICE

People are baffled. In the name of democracy this Government imposes an election on Assam electing 109 MLAs and killing 50 persons for every MLA elected. In the name of stability this Government encourages defection—in Kerala, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland and now in Meghalaya. In the name of secularism, they enter into a coalition with the Muslim League. They talk of ecology but their Chief Ministers smuggle out forest wealth. They talk about housing for the poor but their Chief Ministers sell cement at a premium, called donations to trusts. The twenty-point programme speaks against smuggling but sons of their Chief Ministers are caught selling smuggled goods.

But the most inhuman heartlessness is shown when this Government and the ruling party talk about drinking water. In Rajasthan in the name of providing drinking water unworkable pumps have been installed. This is not just corruption, it is a crime against humanity. It is not the amount of money involved by no means a small sum, but the way it was siphoned off that makes this crime unparalleled. To add insult to injury our Prime
Minister has the temerity to tell the thirsty people of Tamil Nadu that "water is a State subject". We have a Government which cannot give even water to the people.

A little after being returned to office, a little after having taken oath in Parliament to uphold the Constitution, the Prime Minister and her minions openly questioned the sanctity of the Constitution. They talked about a change of system. They toyed with versions of a presidential system. A former Chief Minister of Maharashtra, now fallen on less fortunate days, took the initiative in this exercise with the active encouragement of the Prime Minister. Temporarily at least, that phase of adventurism seems to be over. We do not know what precise concept the main votary of a new system had in mind. But we do not know that his mental exertions were cut short by the discovery of a new trail in corruption that he was blazing. I wonder what the Prime Minister now thinks of her most trust-worthy man. He still has the trusts though he may not be worthy of trust.

ASSAULT ON INSTITUTIONS

Though the ruling party’s opposition to the system has quietened to a murmer, it has not ended. Those who are too incompetent to rule, still seek a new system which might even provide them with the right to determine their successors for generations to come.

While the Government's thinking has been dangerous, its actions have been destructive. There has been a systematic effort to weaken and destroy each institution which acts as pillar of democracy. Judiciary is brow-beaten. Judges are not confirmed, those confirmed are transferred. The Bihar Press Bill was to be the rehearsal for a nation-wide strangulation of a free and fearless press. Honest officers face punishments— as Chatterjee of Bihar, Appu of Mussorie, or Jaspal Singh of Baroda would testify. Even Parliament, our most august institution, I regret to say, does not receive the respect that it deserves from the Government. Does anyone honestly believe today that the debates in Parliament exert their influence on policy-making as they should? When even a breach of parliamentary privilege fails to attract censure, we can understand how deep the decay is.

Fortunately, the Government has not succeeded in its designs to the degree that it hoped. This is largely due to those valiant members of the judiciary and the press who have fearlessly refused to compromise. We salute them.
Beyond the judiciary, beyond the press and Parliament the rot has spread to the entire administration. The pressure by corrupt politicians is providing irresistible. Worst of all, the Government’s open liaison with criminal elements, and the ruling party’s induction of such elements into politics and positions of power has delivered an almost fatal blow to the credibility of the system. How can people continue to have faith in the system and the administration when Government openly shields crime and corruption?

I am referring to the well-known cases of Antulay, Jagannath Mishra, Gundu Rao or Ram Lal. I am referring to the mini-Antulays and mini-Lalls that abound in the country. Gone are the days when the criminal sought the protection of the rulers. The Congress has evolved a culture where the rulers are at the mercy of the criminals. Legislators face criminal charges and ministers are convicted by courts. Women are found dead at the houses of Members of Parliament and guards killed at the residences of Ministers.

I do not want to get lost in details. What is noteworthy is not extent of crime or corruption but the Government’s attitude towards it. Is it any wonder then that the administration in vast tracts of the country-side has virtually disappeared? Is it any wonder then that a trail of death and destruction continues to stretch through the Harijan settlements of Parasbigha, Pipra, Sarhupur, Deoli, Induveli and beyond, since the present Government took office? Is it any wonder then that communal killings continue to stain Meerut, Baroda, Hyderabad and other places? Today people have become prisoners of the Government’s misrule. And the Government has become a prisoner of criminals and anti-social elements.

This Government is helpless because it is corrupt. This system has become so vicious and powerful that it even determines our policies and distorts our planning. Huge Government contracts, even in defence and other sensitive areas, are entered into not by merit but by the lure of a commission. Almost always there is a scandal in our midst. Right now there is the case of Ferranti deal, involving sensitive electronic equipment. Then there is the case of that mysterious company that gave us Kuo Oil and now promises to supply shells for our guns. Even today this company is growing wheat where they are supposed to forge the shells.
The nation is not only being robbed. Its security is being jeopardised. A mockery is being made of all our plans and projection. One may or may not agree with the decision to accept a huge IMF loan. We ourselves have criticised it. But the IMF loan has a logic of its own. It provides one model of development. Even the limited advantages that we might have derived from that model are destroyed by the reckless corruption prevailing in the Government.

Just look at the Government's approach to Asiad. While the Janata Government had planned for less than fifty crores, the expenditure on it rose to over 1,500 crores. We have spent more on five star hotels than on stadia. Was this being done for sport? No, this was being done for contracts and commissions. We want sports to thrive in our country. But gold medals in sports do not sprout in five star hotels. They are earned by athletes. Athletes are created out of the large masses of the people, even those poor people who live in villages. When they are denied nutrition and the most rudimentary facilities for sport, how can champion athletes develop? From where will they come? Not merely from the few affluent areas of big cities? India performed more poorly in this Asiad than it did in the First Asian Games hosted by our country in 1951. At that time China had not even entered the world of sport. Today it is champion of Asia. It has laid claim to become champion of the world by 1992. And please remember China has never hosted an Asiad.

I urge the intelligentsia and the country's elite to reflect on this.

The Prime Minister may claim that corruption is a global phenomenon. She might have gained this insight after her Government's dealings with Hong Kong (Kuo Oil), Italy (Thal Vaishist) and last but not least Israel (via Hindustan Monark). We do not know.

But what we do know is that corruption in this country hits the poor. Corruption in a rich country may affect only the rich, but in India it squeezes the poorest.

Every Indian—man, women or child—has as much as Rs. 2,000 invested in the plan in the last 30 years. This colossal amount—1.40,000 crores— is what we have invested in development. What is the return? Half the population in the country is below the poverty line. In fact, the number of these destitutes have gone up from 177 million in 1957 to 311 million in 1983.
We have spent thousands of crores in irrigation. On paper the money spent is enough to irrigate 30 million hectares. But in actual practice it is less than half. **Result:** We still have to import food grains.

**CORRUPTION EATS AWAY HALF THE AMOUNT**

All this leads to one conclusion: Whether it is drinking water or water for irrigation, industry or agriculture, corruption eats away half the amount the nation spends. Any wonder poverty is increasing?

Worse, the value of the rupee toady has come down. It has still 100 paise. But compared to 1960 those 100 are worth just 20. Yet the Government says per capita income has increased. Strange logic.

**LIES ABOUT ASSAM**

Inevitably the threat to the system has snowballed into threat to national integrity. New Delhi sits in a vacuum. The ruling party at the centre has not won a majority on its own in any Assembly elections after June 1980—except in Assam and the Union Territory of Delhi. In its mad lust for power this Government in New Delhi has staked the unity of the country in Assam and also in Punjab.

**WRONG TIME TO HOLD ELECTION**

I do not want to enter into the history of the Assam problem. That is a long story by itself. But there were clear indications that a national consensus was emerging. The differences with the Assam agitation leaders were narrowing. It was at this promising and delicate juncture that the Government insisted on holding elections.

The democratic opposition parties offered the Government every cooperation for postponing the election. When the Government denies this, it shamelessly lies. The Government’s lies have already been exposed. But the question arises, why did the Government insist on an election when alternative options were open?

**GOVT. ALIENATES ASSAM**

Results are there for all to see. Not all the waters of Brahmaputra can wash off the stains of blood of Assam from the open palm of the Congress (I). The Government has fractured and alienated Assam, which remains our only gateway to the six other states of our sensitive north-east. Does the Government realise that it is playing with the destiny of our nation?
SITUATION: If Assam is burning on one strategic front, Punjab is simmering on another. The seeds of the Khalistan movement, and of the violence indulged in by certain Dal Khalsa elements, were sown by the Congress (I) when it was in the opposition. At that time the Congress (I) was determined to destabilise the Government even if in the process the country got dismembered. We are reaping the bitter fruits of that folly. In Punjab too, as in the case of Assam, the Government seems to be itching for a battle on the streets. Negotiations were showing happy signs when suddenly the Government has backed out. The Congress Party is interested only in dividing the people and reaping electoral advantage. The Government was quick to meet all the Akali religious demands. It refuses to entertain more serious issues of Centre-State relations, the river waters dispute and the future of Chandigarh. These are issues which affect the future of several States.

However, when it suited the Government, after the southern Chief Ministers had conferred, it suddenly announced the appointment of the Sarakaria Commission to look into Centre-State relations. The decision to appoint the Commission was taken first, its terms of reference will be decided later! Rulers in Delhi should realise that days of gimmicks are over. If you are serious about corruption, why not get rid of the known criminals among you? If you are serious about democracy, why not honestly go in for electoral reforms? If you are serious about cooperation from the Opposition, why not stop the efforts to topple Non-Congress Governments? If you are serious about the good of common man why not stop putting up five star hotels and buying aircrafts for Chief Ministers and instead provide drinking water to every citizen?

No, the situation in India is far from normal. The crisis we face is unique. The system is under assault, national unity is under threat, the administration everywhere is crumbling and a panic-stricken ruling class in Delhi can think of only yet another gimmick solution—a mid-term poll.

But I have to warn the nation about an inherent danger in this last gamble of the ruling party. Rulers of New Delhi believe that fanning passions in linguistic, caste and religious fields will help them win the polls. They have done it before.

The British imperialists had a motto: Divide and rule. It is unfortunate that our current rulers follow the same creed. Unscrupulous politicians for whom end justifies the means have divided this country in more ways than
one. They have set the village against the town, labour against the management, citizen against the administration, Hindu against Muslim, Bengali against Assamiya.

We should not forget that the diversities are necessary and complimentary forces—villages are needed as much as towns, labour is no inferior to management and citizen should not find the administration his enemy.

This nation has a history of different languages and different religions constituting its cultural ethos. They do not compete with each other they complement one another.

BJP STANDS FOR UNITY OF THE PEOPLE

Our Party’s aims and efforts have always been to unite the people and not divide them. This is true during elections and also when there are no elections.

WANTED: A NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT

Power-hungry politicians have created a chasm in the society. The Congress believes in divide and rule. We believe in another creed: unite and win. Our effort should be to bridge the gap.

We are committed to bridge to gap between the city and the village.

We are committed to bridge the gap between the capital and the labour.

We are committed to bridge the gap between the citizen and the administration.

We are committed to bridge the gap between the Centre and the States.

We are committed to bridge the gap between linguistic, religious and caste groups.

LET US MAKE NATIONAL CONSENSUS A REALITY

We believe that a national consensus for these five unities is the need of the hour. We believe that a national democratic front committed to preserve national unity has become a historical necessity. The Bharatiya Janata Party will strive to make such a national consensus a reality. The Bharatiya Janata Party appeals to all the nationalist democratic forces in the country to heed to call of the hour. On behalf of all of us gathered here today, I appeal to them to accept our hand of friendship extended for the pursuit of a united national effort.

veledardarm
BOTH LOST

The State Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka were followed by elections to the Metropolitan Council and Municipal Corporation of Delhi. Congress (I) had thought it was strong in those two southern States. It lost in both. We had thought we were strong in Delhi. We lost here.

COMPLACENCY LED TO PARTY'S DEFEAT IN DELHI

At the time itself the party discussed at length the factors which led to BJP’s defeat in Delhi polls. I am of the definite view that the principal reason for this defeat was the attitude of complacency which overtook us after Congress (I)’s debacle in the south. We just assumed that Congress (I) had at last fallen on evil days and that a party which had lost in such strongholds as Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka could hardly look forward to victory in Delhi. An election can well be compared to a battle field where eternal vigilence is the price one must pay for victory. We contested the Delhi elections in a spirit of complacency, not alertness. We did not put in the hard work this occasion called for.

LEADERSHIP TO BLAME

It will not be fair to throw the blame for this defeat on the party workers. BJP workers are known for their devotion to duty. Their application, when at work, is phenomenal. Once a clear goal has been set, even the most adverse circumstances imaginable cannot deter them from marching resolutely to achieve it. These qualities of our workers are the pride and glory of our party. If the election machinery of the BJP remained complacent at the time of Delhi polls, it was not the workers who were at fault: it was all those of us who are at this moment sitting on this dais.

We should have realised that the defeat of Congress (I) in the south can have an adverse effect on us in the sense of lowering our guards. We should also have realised that after that defeat, the outcome of the elections in Delhi became tremendously important for Congress (I) which would,
consequently, go all out to win in these polls. A defeat in Delhi in the wake of defeat in the south would have led to a situation in which Mrs Gandhi's hold on her own party would have suffered a setback. It would also have an adverse effect on her image and standing in and outside the country. The prestigious Non-Aligned Summit was due to meet in Delhi only a month after the elections. The two main contenders in Delhi election—Congress (I) and BJP—thus approached the contest in two wholly different frames of mind. That being so, it was rather natural that the BJP should lose: its being victorious would really have been a matter for surprise. But it must also be borne in mind that, all this notwithstanding, BJP not only won many seats in the Metropolitan Council and the Municipal Corporation but of the seats which we lost, the defeat was quite marginal in many cases. The only conclusion which can be drawn from this is that the people of Delhi continue to have a soft corner for BJP. Had we not become complacent, we would have won this election instead of losing it. There is no doubt about it.

**APPROPRIATE LESSONS SHOULD BE DRAWN**

As with individuals, so with parties: success and failure are all in the game. No success, just as no failure, is ever the last word. One may suffer a reverse, but if the causes of it are analysed and remedial action taken, it can be turned into victory at the next trial of strength. But nobody has any right to aspire to success if, having failed, his attitude continues to be one of complacency and he does not draw lessons from that reserve and does not make necessary changes in his style of functioning.

**RESIGNATION SUBMITTAL**

You know that as soon as the results of Delhi polls became known, I submitted my resignation from the office of the Presidentship of BJP. I would not have done so if our defeat had sprung from any cause other than our attitude of complacency. I held, and even at this moment hold, that as President it was my responsibility to see to it that the party organisation did not fall prey to complacency or sloth, and that it was launched on a programme and set on a course which kept it active and fit and ready at all times to take on any challenges. Had this been done, the image of the party in the eyes of the people would have become brighter with each passing day and when the moment of decision came, BJP would have had an edge over parties with a lot more monetary resources than itself. All this was not done or else the party would not have lost in Delhi. I consider, and consider, myself mainly responsible for this lapse. That was why I resigned.
ACTION PROGRAMME

It is true that at the meeting of the National Executive of the party at Jaipur, I allowed myself to be persuaded to withdraw my resignation. It is also true that, in deference to your wishes, I have agreed to continue as President for the second term. But, at the very moment at which I decided to bow to your wishes, I also decided that at this meeting of the National Council, I will place before you a concrete action programme for the party and urge you to give it your most serious consideration. The programme is unfolded in this paper. If you feel that it is a good and useful programme, the party should duly adopt it, create the necessary organisational structure for it and the implementation of the programme should start.

A WARNING TO THE PARTY

The National Council is the highest policy-making body of the party. Our defeat in the Delhi polls is trying to convey a message or warning to us. It is my plea to you that we should listen to and heed that message and recorganise our functioning so that the party may hereafter move on steadily towards the achievement of its cherished goal.

POVERTY AND MISERY IN RURAL AREAS

You know that 80% of the people of this country live in the villages. A majority of the rural population lives below the poverty line. For them, there is no such thing as two square meals a day; indeed, for many even one square meal a day is a luxury. Often bare-backed except for some tattered clothes, having no money for medical help in the event of sickness, having no means to educate their children and thus equip them to make a break from this vicious circle of misery and want, reduced by poverty and ignorance to a state in which the will or the courage to protest against exploitation or injustice stands sapped: the bulk of the rural masses in India is leading a sub-standard life, its gloom unrelieved by any cheer or any ray of hopes even three and half decades after Independence. There is nobody within their reach, in their necessarily limited world, who can understand what ails them stand up for them and get them their due. Political parties customarily appear on the scene only at election time with their plethora of promises. Their next visit to the place comes only when next election is round the corner.

INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

You know also that quite a few programmes are under implementation for the past many years for enabling the rural poor to improve their lot. The most important single scheme in this lot is the integrated rural
development programme, IRDP for short. Under this programme the small and marginal farmers, the landless labourers and rural artisans are given financial assistance in the form of loans at low rates of interest by the nationalised banks. This is supplemented by grants from Central and State governments. Side by side with this, the administration at the block level has been given the responsibility of providing the IRDP beneficiaries with the necessary inputs and technical know-how for utilising the above resources for increasing their productivity, improving their earnings and thus coming above the poverty line. There are 5,011 development blocks in the country. IRDP is under implementation in all of them. One block on an average consists of a hundred villages. Six hundred of the poorest families have to be selected every year by the block level administration from these 100 villages for receiving the IRDP benefits.

**ANTODAYA AND THE CONGRESS ATTITUDE TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Janata Governments in its day had launched an anti-poverty scheme known as Antyodaya. Its implementation, notably in Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh, won wide acclaim at that time. The Congress Government which replaced the Janata in 1980 somehow did not like that word and changed the name of the scheme from Antyodaya to IRDP. I have not been able to this day understand why the Congress should have felt offended by the word Antyodaya. After all, literally translated, it only means 'upliftment of the poorest of the poor'. Any way, the name was changed but that was not only change that came. No sooner that the Janata was out of power, the trimness and the efficiency characterising the implementation of this scheme was also gone. Its place was taken by incredible laxity and corruption—laxity in higher echelons of administration in the Central and State Governments, corruption among bank employees and government officials at the block level. The facts and figures given below speak for themselves.

The sixth five-year plan provides that during the plan period, namely between April 1, 1980, and March 31, 1985, Central and State Governments together would make available a sum of Rs. 1500 crores for being given as grants to IRDP beneficiaries. The expenditure is to be shared by the Central and State Governments on a 50:50 basis.

**FUNDS ALLOCATED ONLY PARTIALLY**

The sixth plan is now in its fourth year. In three years that have already passed, three-fifths of this amount of Rs. 1500 crores, that is to say Rs. 900 crores, should
already have reached the beneficiaries. The amount that has actually reached them is a mere Rs. 597.82 crores. This means that the allotment of the grant money has lagged behind to the extent of about 33%.

In like manner, this plan provides that the banks would advance Rs. 3,000 crores as loans in five years for the IRDP. In the past three years, Rs. 1800 crores. should thus have reached the target groups. Actually, only Rs. 538.5 crores have been advanced as IRDP loan in these three years. Loan advancement has, thus, lagged behind to the extent of about 70%.

LAXITY IN IMPLEMENTATION

The total of grants and loans advanced under IRDP in three years after Mrs Gandhi coming to power should have been Rs. 2,700 crores. The actual amount is Rs. 597.82 crores. + Rs. 538.5 crores = Rs. 1,136.32 crores. What other conclusion can one draw from this except what I have said above, namely, the implementation of this scheme now is marked by laxity of the worst kind. Misleading unknowing or unsuspecting people through slogans like 20-point or new 20-point programme is a different thing altogether.

CORRUPTION

This kind of laxity at the higher level in administration is matched only by a combination of laxity and corruption at the block administrative level. Of the six hundred poorest families which have to be selected for IRDP benefit every year, hardly 150 to 200 are selected in the first 10 or 11 months of the year. When the end of the financial year draws close, the remaining number is hasty selected so as to complete the quota. As a result, many families find a place in the IRDP list of beneficiaries which are relatively well off and should not have figured in the list at all. A bribe of 10%, at some place higher, has now become a common practice for getting loans from the banks. Those not willing to fall in line are harassed in many ways, they are made to run to the bank again and again or their applications are declared grossly defective.

COLLUSION AND MISAPPROPRIATION

Collusion between bank employees, block development officials and the firms dealing in equipments or inputs by IRDP beneficiaries has many a time resulted in the situation that while a small portion of the grant or the loan money is given to the families concerned, most of the money is
misappropriated. Full facts come to light only when the time for repayment comes and the concerned families have to face hardships and action on that account. On paper, the IRDP beneficiary is shown as having been given an irrigation pump of a good brand; actually he has been given an inferior pump which means more headache than relief to him. On paper, the beneficiary may have got high yielding crossbred cow; the cow actually supplied is an old, local one with low milk yield.

Instances of such corruption can be listed ad nauseam. What is true of IRDP is also true of the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), the special component plan, the tribal sub-plan, in sum, of practically every single development programme being implemented in the rural area. Only the other day, Mr. Prinjpe of our own party said in the Lok Sabha that after a 25-year-old tribal woman of Mandla district in Madhya Pradesh had died of starvation, her mother-in-law got two kgs of rice from the government. Intrigued, he probed deep into the matter and found that the government had allotted 100 kgs for that woman, but she got only two.

Some months back, a marginal farmer of Bihar met me in Delhi and told me his tale of woe about his exploitation by persons connected with the administration of IRDP. I have to admit with the deepest regret that I could do nothing to extricate that man from the mess in which he had been landed by a corrupt officialdom. Let us not make the mistake of looking upon that person as an individual. His case merely illustrates how helpless the rural poor are when they fall into the clutches of the corrupt officials who are having a field day in the rural area in the name of development programmes.

The fact that this man came all the way from Bihar to Delhi to put his problem before me only goes to show that there is a great craving among the people in rural areas that somebody should stand up for them. This being the situation, it is hardly necessary to spell out the impact the BJP will make on the hearts and minds of the rural people if BJP goes to the villages and declares that now that we are here, we would like to see which corrupt officials dares to exploit these helpless people or harass them if they do not pay the demanded bribe. Any party, which takes up such a programme and
honestly implements it, will surely win the goodwill and trust of the rural masses and they will identify themselves with it. It will not then be easy for any other party to win elections by appearing on the scene only at the election time and spending tonnes of money. From the point of view of the society, such programme is bound to bring many direct and indirect benefits in its wake. It will mark the beginning of a new phase, for the first time since independence, in which the political parties go to the doorstep of the people and make them aware of their rights.

**COMPTITION IS A SERIOUS THREAT TO OUR SOCIETY**

The attitude of accepting and tolerating corruption as a way of life, which is now on the increase and which poses a serious threat to the health and well being of the society, will receive a check. The development programmes will be properly implemented, leading to increased production and prosperity.

It certainly is not my contention that all bank employees or all officials at the block or any other level are corrupt. Even in such notorious departments as police and the PWD, I have come across individuals whose stark honesty as public servants fills one's heart with faith in the future of our society. But it is true that, as of now, it is the corrupt elements which are having the upper hand everywhere. Good workers are feeling discouraged and despondent. I think it is relevant to point out at this stage that a party, having set out to protect the beneficiaries of IRDP from exploitation by corrupt officials, will have to take good care that irresponsible elements among such beneficiaries do not get any protection from it. In other words, it should be a pre-condition of such a party that the beneficiaries should show the same promptness in repaying the bank loan as the party showed in saving them from exploitation.

**THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME**

This is the situation and this is the context in which I wish to place before you the following programme:

**SPECIAL BJP CELLS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS FOR RURAL WORK.**

The programme is that BJP should activate its organisational network in every development block. The responsibility for doing the work in the villages should be entrusted to workers who have an aptitude for working amongst the villagers. In the beginning, only a few villages in a block should be selected and contact should be established with the families which have been identified for IRDP benefits.
If the employees of the banks or the block officials have acted in relation to them in any manner which is not above board, full and correct facts should be found out. The matter should then be taken up with the block development officer. If he is indifferent to the demand for rectifying the irregularity, the party should hold meetings and demonstrations at the block level. MLAs, MLCs and MPs of the party should bring these complaints to light at the respective forum. If at any place IRDP is not under implementation, the above line of action should be taken in regard to the implementation of the special component plans for scheduled castes or tribal sub-plans for the scheduled tribes or the National Rural Employment Programme and the like. There should be special cells at the Mandal, District and State level for effective implementation and supervision of this programme. This should be the whole job of these cells. It is necessary to provide for a system of fixing personal responsibility for the success or failure of the programme at successive levels. At the central level, I will like to keep myself apprised of the progress of this programme and I will make the necessary organisational arrangement to that end.

**CONSTANT MONITORING**

Every body connected with the implementation of this programme will have to conduct himself in such a manner as to win the trust of the rural people and, what is more, show that the trust is well placed. The implementation of the programme will have to be so organised that there is constant monitoring and it is possible at any time to know without any special effort whether or not the work is progressing satisfactorily at any given place.

I suggest that this programme be started on a modest scale. We can extend it to more areas as our awareness of the different facets if the problem grows and the strength of rural workers of BJP increases. It would be counter-productive of the work is started on a large scale all at once but has to be slowed down later. Hence, the emphasis on starting modestly but ensuring that what ever is done, is done well. It is clear that this programme is for the rural areas only and we should for the time being focus our attention on this programme in these areas. In the urban areas, a number of programmes including slums improvement and jhuggi-jhopri welfare promotion have already been taken in hand in different states. Those programmes should be pursued with added vigour.
You know that BJP has always raised its voice against corruption at the level of ministers and in administration. There is no doubt that it has made an impact. But corruption has now spread and reached the lowest rungs of the ladder. It is necessary, therefore, that we carry our crusade against corruption to the ultimate unit, the village. May be we did not succeed to the desired extent in combating corruption at the top level. However, in the great and glorious task of effectively protecting the rural people against harassment and exploitation by corrupt officials, we can with our organisational strength, and through a programme of this kind, show hundred per cent result.

At the Bombay session of the party, we gave to ourselves a guideline symbolised by the slogan of Organisation, Struggle and Constructive Activity. In my view, these three aspects of that guidelines merge, coalesce and conciliate in this programme more beautifully and harmoniously than in any other programme I can think of. In the rural areas, where 80% of the people of India live, this programme will be the messenger of a new consciousness. For hundreds of millions of people, it will be the harbinger of a new era of hope. It will help BJP to be established and accepted as the exploited and poor people's own party. I commend this programme to the National Council and I urge that the Council adopt it as the party's new programme.
Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee, brother and sister delegates, and friends:

I am happy that after our National Council's session at Cochin last April, we are meeting for this three-day session here at this historic city of Surat.

When it was announced that the venue of this session would be Surat, some political commentators reacted: "Surat? Surat is remembered in Indian politics for the split in the Congress!"

Indeed, it was in Surat 75 years ago, in the year 1907 that the Indian National Congress at its 25th session broke up into two. The so-called Moderates had thrown out the so-called Nationalists.

So far as the Bharatiya Janata Party is concerned we have come here not to repeat history, but to change history. Our most precious treasure is our resolve to work together. We have to reinvigorate this resolve, and impart it a new meaning a new dimension.

CAUSE OF INDIAN POLITICS INCAPACITY TO WORK TOGETHER

The greatest curse not merely of Indian politics, but of national life as a whole, is the general incapacity to work together. Let's learn to unite instead of dividing, to create harmony where disharmony exists, and to keep our self-interest and ego in leash. If only we can subordinate our narrow loyalties to our larger commitments and instead of stressing minor differences, if we let our agreement on fundamentals inspire us to march forward in step, nothing can halt India's progress as a nation. or for that matter, the Bharatiya Janata Party's as a party.

Today, when most political parties in the country are passing through a phase of serious internal strains and crises, it would not be out of place to look back on the reasons behind the Congress split at Surat.

It is known that even before the Surat Congress, differences between the 'Moderates' and the 'Nationalists' had come to the surface. In fact, the venue for the session was shifted from Nagpur to Surat because it
was felt that at Surat the moderates would be stronger and the nationalists would not be able to dominate. But notwithstanding all this, it appears in retrospect, that if at the Surat Congress Lokmanya Tilak's voice had not been stifled and he had been allowed to speak, the split may have been averted.

**Honest Differences Between Moderates and Nationalists**

When one compares the 1907 happenings at Surat with the 1979-80 developments in the Janata, one would easily see how very different the nature of the two splits was. Between the 'moderates' and the 'nationalists' there were deep but honest differences with regard to the approach that the Congress should have towards the Britishers. But within the Janata Party, not once during those three years of its existence did we witness any serious debate on a principle or a policy issue. Fact is that those regarded as stalwarts of the Janata Party became so immersed in power-lust and in their self-centred cocoons that they failed to realise that in breaking up the Janata Party not only were they betraying the people's confidence, but they were committing political harakiri as well.

**Clean Politics Is Our Aim**

Brother and sister delegates, in this hallowed, age-worn city situated on the banks of Tapti let us reaffirm our commitment to value-based politics and vow to conduct ourselves accordingly. Clean politics is our aim. Power is a golden urn containing the nectar of public service; but those who seek to hold this urn must use it as an instrument of service or otherwise politics would become a weapon of oppression.

**Power At Any Cost**

The Assembly elections and Lok Sabha bye-elections held last month, the poll-campaign, the results of these elections and the aftermath—all this is important from many angles. The first point that emerges clearly is that to win power, the Congress (I) entertains no qualms of any kind and has no hesitation in subverting the democratic process and institutions connected with it. The stratagems devised to delay elections in Garhwal for two years, the legal wrangles precipitated in order to scuttle elections in West Bengal, the disrespect shown to the judiciary, the Prime Minister herself expressing doubts with regard to the fairness of elections, thus casting indirect aspersions on the Election Commission itself—all these provide clear evidence of this mentality.
P.M.'s Threats

During the election campaign the Prime Minister said at several places that as her part was in office at the Centre, the States also should return the same party to power. Anyone could perceive in the P.M.'s statement an implied threat to the non-Congress (I) Governments and an allurement extended to the people of States who voted Congress (I).

Centre-State Relations Are Not Saas-Bahu Relations

I would like to put a straight question to the Prime Minister. Does she regard Centre-State relationship as a saas-bahu relationship where the mother-in-law may shower affection to the daughter-in-law when it pleases her, and if it doesn't, peremptorily turn her out of the house? The Prime Minister is surely aware that under our federal Constitution the jurisdiction and powers of the Centre and States are clearly delineated. The Central Government as well as the State Governments are elected by the people and derive power from them. It is only by their mutual cooperation that the federal set up functions successfully.

Violating the Spirit of the Constitution

In a large, federal country, it is quite possible that there may be some one party in office at the Centre, another party in office in a State and yet another party in a second State. This should in no way affect the relations between Centre and States. If this difference in political complexion does affect relations it can only mean that there is some serious flaw in the working of the Constitution and that this calls for rectification. By these statements the Prime Minister has lowered the dignity of her office, violated the spirit of the Constitution and insulted the political intelligence of the people.

The post-election events too, particularly in Haryana, are a matter of concern. They have caused great damage to the democratic system. There is no doubt that the Congress (I) and the Governor of Haryana are primarily to blame for this. But the behaviour of opposition Party MLAs and independents has been no less reprehensible.

People Have Asserted Themselves

This election has once again shown that democracy has struck deep roots in the minds of the Indian people. Notwithstanding all the legal hurdles raised by the
Congress (I) and despite the above referred to speeches of the Prime Minister the people went to the polls in large numbers, and exercise their votes fearlessly. In Haryana and Himachal Pradesh the people gave vent to their anger against the Congress (I). In Kerala, the people have registered their protest against the politics of violence indulged in by the Marxists. The much talked of charisma of Mrs. Gandhi proved ineffective against the dynamics of democracy.

In its choice of means to attain power, the Congress (I) has been inhibited by no scruples of any kind, either before the polls or during the campaign, or after the polls. But despite this not even in a single state has it been able to get a majority by itself. Of the seven Lok Sabha bye-elections, it has lost four. A few clear conclusions can be drawn from these results.

Firstly, Mrs. Gandhi's ability to ensure the victory of any candidate, deserving or undeserving sheerly on the strength of her personal image is now seriously in doubt.

Secondly, the foci of power are now shifting from Mrs. Gandhi to persons like Bhajan Lal for whom politics is a pure commercial game of buying and selling.

The third conclusion that emerges is that the Congress (I) as an organisation is in shambles. In this party today, there is no such thing as commitment. Never before has the Congress (I) thrown up such a large number of candidates contesting as rebels. It was after much fumbling and faltering that action was taken against them. Again, never before have so many rebel won. The fact that immediately after their victory the party High Command has turned to them and actually rewarded them with Ministerial posts is sure to promote indiscipline. When a party names as Ministers persons whom it regarded unfit to be made candidates, it is only preparing the ground for its own destruction.

The disruption and disarray in the Congress (I) has a lesson for opposition parties also. A party that wilfully encourages this retrace for power cannot hope to survive for long. They who compromise so readily with indiscipline can never be expected to create a sturdy organisation.

The setback received by the Congress (I) in these elections can well cause a sense of nervousness and panic in Mrs. Gandhi's mind. This in turn can lead to a repetition of the events of 1969 or 1975!
CONSPIRACY TO INITIATE DICTATORSHIP

In the course of this election campaign, Mrs. Gandhi has once again referred to the merits of the Presidential system as compared to the Parliamentary system. In today's situation, a Presidential system for India would mean autocratic rule by one person. I appeal to all democratic parties and elements to actconcertedly in order to defeat this conspiracy aimed at conversion of Indian democracy into a dictatorship and that too a dynastic dictatorship.

From the point of view of opposition parties also the recent elections point to some important conclusions: There were three kinds of contests in these elections:

SOME CONCLUSION FOR THE OPPOSITION

(1) Congress (I) alliance versus Left alliance;
(2) Congress (I) versus Lok Dal-BJP alliance;
(3) Congress (I) versus divided Opposition.

In Kerala and West Bengal it was a trial of strength of the first category. In West Bengal the Marxist front succeeded in strengthening its hold, but in Kerala it failed to do so. Of course, Congress (I)'s claim that it has improved its position does not hold. Never before in Kerala has a winning alliance had such a slender majority. So far as the Congress (I) itself is concerned, it has just 20 seats out of 140.

In Haryana the Lok Dal-BJP alliance could score only partial success, to the extent that it secured more seats than the Congress (I), and that it prevented the Congress (I) from getting a majority. Shortcomings with regard to cooperation and joint campaigning, deprived the alliance of clear victory.

In Himachal Pradesh and in almost all the Lok Sabha bye-elections, the Opposition was completely divided. But what do the results indicate? Inspite of the conflict of Opposition parties interse in Himachal, the BJP was able not only to give battle to the Congress (I) as an equal adversary, but scored matching victories as well. In Jabalpur and Thane, it triumphed decisively. The votes it secured in Udaipur and Lohardaga also make it evident that if any one could defeat the Congress (I) in these constituencies it was BJP.

DIVIDED OPPOSITION NOT A HANDICAP FOR BJP

A lesson to be learnt from all these contests is that unity of democratic opposition parties is no panacea for the situation, and that a divided opposition is not necessarily a handicap. In the Lok Sabha bye-elections
a fair apportioning of seats may well have ensured Congress (I) defeat in all the seats.

BJP's failure to secure even a single seat in Kerala and West Bengal must have certainly caused sore disappointment to our cadres. But it must be realised that it is not easy to effect a break through in a situation where political power keeps oscillating pendulum-like between two powerful fronts. We should be satisfied that face to face with a Devil-and Deep-Sea dilemma, the BJP managed to steer clear of both fronts and did not compromise its principled opposition to the two for expedient considerations of short-term gains.

In the context of these elections I would like to address a word to opposition parties. The attitude of some of them seemed to suggest that they were fighting not against the Congress (I), but against the BJP. Let them review their attitude in the light of the election results if for no other reason, for the sake of their own party interests.

KUDOS FOR CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER

The mini General Elections have been held at a time when the country is passing through a multi-dimensional crisis. These elections have once again shown that people's thinking is essentially sound and that their faith in democracy unflinching.

On this occasion I would like to congratulate the Election Commission and particularly the Chief Election Commissioner, Shri Shakdher, who has discharged with distinction his constitutional duties of conducting free and fair polls in very trying circumstances. Amidst pressures and counter-pressures from the ruling party and the opposition, maintaining an impartial and objective role calls for great moral strength. It is imperative that the person who succeeds Shri Shakdher also should be one who can play this difficult role of poll arbiter without fear or favour. In the appointment of the new Chief Election Commissioner, Government must adopt a procedure in which the opinion of Opposition parties finds a fair reflection, a really worthy person is selected.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION SHOULD BE UNANIMOUS

President Dr. Sanjiva Reddy is due to retire shortly. His tenure has witnessed many controversies. He has had to face at one stage trenchant criticism from the Janata Party. Today he finds himself facing angry brickbats from the Congress (I). It is obvious that the office of President is not ornamental,
it is crown of thorns. The President has been charged with protection of the Constitution, but the Constitution itself obligates him to act in accordance with the advice of the Council of Ministers. This obligation is in conformity with the requirements of a parliamentary polity. But the issue that arises is as to how the President in a federal structure can hold the scales even between the Centre and the States particularly in situation where the ruling party at the Centre is determined to transgress the limits imposed on its powers, and deny its opponents their legitimate right.

Search for a new incumbent of this office is on. We are of the opinion that, as in 1997, this election should be unanimous. This can only happen on the basis of a national consensus. The ruling party ought to take an initiative in the matter. The opposition is willing to play its role.

INTERNAL SITUATION:

WARNING BELL FOR THE NATION

During the one year between Cochin and Surat, the internal situation in the country has rapidly deteriorated. Some of the problems that have surfaced during the period are so grave that without fear of exaggeration they can be described as a warning bell for the nation.

Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura in the Eastern Zone had been even earlier engulfed in the politics of violence and murder. Lately, the border state of Punjab also has been in flames because of the disruptive activities of extremist elements. The situation there is a matter of deep concern for all patriots.

The disturbances that broke out between Hindus and Christians in Kanya Kumari, the sharp increase in incidents of atrocities on Harijans, the growing discontent in Jammu and Kashmir which has been erupting violently in sensitive areas like Ladakh and Kishtwar—all these are pointers to the rapidly worsening internal situation, pointers that we can ignore only at the peril of the national unity.

National unity can be preserved only if the ruling party scrupulously abandons its divide-and-rule approach, an approach that it has inherited from the foreign rulers. Opposition parties, on the other hand, will have to resist the temptation of compromising with religious and communal fanaticism, compromises entered into simply to get power. Only to the extent that
we are able to insulate administration, politics and elections from the corrosive influence of caste, community and creed will be able to strengthen national unity. The BJP, in its enunciation of five commitments has given top place to national unity. For the sake of the country's oneness, no sacrifice is too great for us.

PUNJAB:

A national level convention of any political party cannot but be concerned about the happenings in Punjab. Religion-based politics resulted in the partition of this country and led to brutal carnage and destruction. It is unfortunate that even after the formation of the Indian Republic, and declaration of India as a secular State, religion-based politics continues to thrive. Elections held on the basis of adult franchise have given a new shape to this politics. For the sake of votes and political power there has been a readiness to appease communal elements particularly the religious minorities and to forge alliances with their organisation. The prime responsibility of giving Indian politics this turn rests with the Congress Party.

The serious, nay separatist shape religion-based politics has taken in Punjab needs to be viewed from two aspects. The first aspect is administrative: lack of courage and determination to deal with criminals as criminals has made the administration a laughing stock for all. The culprits feel secure by taking refuge in places of worship and the police is able to do nothing. No religion can permit its holy institutions to be used as asylums to harbour criminals and murderers. To prevent crime and to punish criminals is the first and foremost duty of the State. A Government that fails in the discharge of this duty forfeits its right to continue. No words can be too strong to condemn such a Government whatsoever be the reason of its failure—whether it is lack of courage, or fear of alienating votes, or feuds among ruling party leaders.

We also are a political party. For a political party, votes naturally matter. But we do not want such votes for which we have to compromise with the fundamental interest and ideals of our nation. The ruling party also must try and draw a line somewhere. They must not allow so-called religious considerations to deflect it from its primary duties in the matter of law and order.
SEPARATIST TENDENCIES MUST BE CURBED

The second aspect of the matter is the mentality which lies at the root of religion-based politics, and these separatist tendencies. This mentality cannot be combated only at the level of government. Powerful public opinion has to be built up against this mentality so that the misleading propaganda of these anti-national and separatist elements can be countered. The masses must be made conscious of the fact that in this vast country if any one casteist or religious group seeks a separate abode on the basis of his caste or religion, where is it all going to lead to?

PLACES OF WORSHIP MUST NOT BE MISUSED

It is a matter of satisfaction that the anti-national demand for Khalistan does not have the support of the Sikh masses. The Sikhs have tasted the bitter fruits of one partition. They would not allow themselves to be entrapped into yet another such holocaust. I appeal to the intellectuals and the intelligentsia of the Sikh community to help build up a strong public opinion against those who are sowing the seeds of discord in the minds of the common man. Let the religious leaders also come forward and declare publicly that they will not allow any misuse of places of worship.

THE ASSAM PROBLEM:

CONGRES IS (I)’ VOTE POLITICS

The problem of Assam also is the result of Congress (I)’s vote politics. It was for the sake of the votes of this foreign nationals that the Assam rulers were willing to turn a blind eye to their illegal influx and enrolment in the electoral rolls. In fact, for the sake of votes they have been actually encouraging this process. Therefore, the responsibility of solving this problem of foreign nationals in Assam lies mainly on the Congress ruling party. In Assam, the Assembly has been dissolve. Soon elections will have to be held. The problem of foreign nationals, therefore, has to be settled without delay. If it is not solved before the elections the situation can become complicated with difficult. Government must immediately resume its negotiations with the leaders of the movement.

IMPLEMENTATION MUST BE CHECKED

Government should have no difficulty in implementing matters agreed upon in the talks that have taken place in new Delhi between Government, movement leaders and the Opposition. All the three are agreed that the border should be sealed and that foreign nationals who have come after 1971 should be
evicted. Government must take firm steps in pursuance of these decisions. This will help create a favourable atmosphere for the next round of negotiations and, besides, allay suspicions that have arisen in the masses about Government's intentions. Apart from Assam, large scale infiltration has been going on in Bihar and West Bengal also. Official sources also have confirmed this. If stern steps are not taken to stop this illegal influx we would have as difficult a problem on our hands in Bihar and West Bengal as we have in Assam.

**ECONOMIC CRISIS**

**SELF-RELIANCE CONCEPT ABANDONED**

Since centuries, Surat has been an important centre of commerce and trade. Standing here, when I survey the economic scene, my mind is filled with grave apprehensions for the future. All our economic policies and five-year plans till now have been aimed at making the country self-reliant. But the policies adopted of late suggest that Government has bid good-bye to this concept of self-reliance. The economic future of the country is being mortgaged to foreign creditors. Under pressure of the International Monetary Fund, policy changes are being effected in the industrial sphere, and in the field of exports-imports, as can only augment centralisation of economic power, and enable monopoly houses to grow at the cost of small and medium scale units.

**MULTI-NATIONAL IN SENSITIVE AREAS**

Furthermore, multi-nationals are now being permitted to enter areas which till now had been regarded very sensitive, and so were reserved for development with the help of indigenous enterprise. Day in and day out the ruling party had been talking about securing for the public sector "commanding heights" of the economy but even the public sector is now being opened up not only to Indian monopoly, but also for foreign companies.

The BJP itself has had misgivings about the functioning of the public sector. We have been favouring long-range changes in its scope and structure. But changes in economic approach and strategy should be with a view to increase production and curb disparities, and not at the bidding of foreign creditors.

How bad this situation has become can be gauged from the fact that several Indian companies belonging both to the public as well as private sectors have complained to the Government of India that foreign
entrepreneurs are being invited to India for projects which abroad are being carried out by Indian companies!

DEPENDENCE ON OTHER COUNTRIES IS THE FIELD OF NATIONAL SECURITY

Even in the field of national security our dependence on other countries is assuming a disturbing shape. It is now two decades that we had decided to go in for the manufacture of advanced aeronautical engines. What has happened to the proposal? Why has our decision to produce an anti-tank missile been put in cold storage? What has become of our programme to produce the main battle tank as a successor to Vijayanta? What about our continued dependence on foreign sources for missiles, strategic metals and defence electronics?

It seems that both in the economic as well as in the defence fields there are some powerful interest who do not wish to see India become self-reliant in the real sense of the word. These elements need to be identified and exposed. Our set up which is becoming more and more dependent on foreign powers has to be emancipated from the influence of these interests.

HYPOCRISY MUST END

If the Congress Government honestly feels that the path of economic development which the country has been pursuing till now is wrong and that there is no option before India except to adopt the capitalist approach, let it say so frankly and clearly. To keep talking about self-reliance as it is mantram to be chanted, and at the same time to open wider our doors to foreign capital, foreign loans, foreign goods and foreign technology—this kind of hypocrisy must end.

DANGEROUS INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN INTEREST

The BJP is entirely in favour of importing foreign technology in fields where Indian capability is not quite developed. But it cannot approve of foreign companies being inducted into the sphere of consumer goods.

As a result of the policies pursued during these two years, while prices have risen, unemployment has grown, disparities have widened, and the rate of black money generation has accelerated. Because of inflation and scarcity of essential goods, the condition of the common man has worsened. Capitalist countries advocating a free economy, have, however, heaved a sigh of relief. In a report published in May 1982, commenting on economic trends in India, the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi has observed:
"Most heartening in this context is a slowly changing attitude towards business within the government; more officials now are seeking ways to reduce bureaucratic road blocks, are increasingly receptive to foreign business proposals, and are now more alert to the needs to the private sector. All of these measures are enhancing business confidence and opening the door to American product a bit wider."

The above excerpt clearly indicates how in the formulation of our economic policy we are being influenced by foreign interest. This is a dangerous situation which must not be allowed to go out of hand. The Indian economy must be brought back to Swadeshi and self-reliance.

**REMIVING POVERTY MUST BE MAIN OBJECTIVE**

During the last two years Government has been giving various concessions and facilities, sometimes in the name of increasing productivity, sometimes in the name of promoting exports or on the plea of liberalising licensing or import policy. Even if productivity increases on this account, unless the purchasing power of the common man increases, all declarations about removing poverty would be meaningless.

The economic strategy that we adopt must lead to rapid development but it must also ensure an equitable distribution of the fruits of development.

Government has declared 1982 as Productivity Year but there are hurdles in the way of increasing production. At places labour is being forced to go on strike, at others employers have been arbitrarily declaring lockouts. Despite official claims of 11 per cent increase in power production, in at least 10 States industrial and agricultural production is stagnating because of power crises.

**CHAOTIC CONDITIONS ON COAL INDUSTRY**

In the matter of production, transport, distribution of coal, conditions are chaotic at all levels. Whenever the Railway Ministry may claim precious diesel is being spent to transport coal to other places. In fact, if trucks were not used to transport coal, industry in States like Punjab and Haryana would be in serious trouble. The U.P. Government itself has engaged a private transport concern to fetch coal to the State. The hands of many a senior politician in Government are soiled in the matter of coal smuggling. The coal industry today is badly in need of expansion and modernisation. As it is a sick industry seriously afflicted with problems of mismanagement, political and bureaucratic interference, and exploitation.
by a labour Mafia. In order to cover up the losses suffered because of its own incompetence, Government has raised the price of coal once again and thus made the common man's kitchen costlier than ever. The atomic power plants are in a still worse shape.

**GROSS MISMANAGEMENT**

The Government raises slogans of increased production but the decisions it takes relate to increasing imports. This is what is happening in the field of basic goods like cement, steel, fertiliser etc. Our import bill, therefore, keeps mounting. Our balance of payments position keeps worsening. No doubt there are compulsions but these compulsions should not become an alibi for gross mismanagement.

The Centre and State governments spend between themselves a total of 10% of the National Product on non-Plan items. These items of expenditure have become ends in themselves. The result is shortfalls in production targets. The emphasis in the plan should be on achievement of actual production targets rather than on the quantum of money spent. But the administrative machinery aims only at utilising the budgeted amounts and gets busy in preparing the next Budget without bothering to go into the results of the earlier spendings.

**INCREASING TAX BURDEN**

As is usual with the Congress (I), there was a good deal of tommomming about reliefs in this year’s budget also. It was conveniently concealed, however, that a burden of Rs. 600 crores had been cast on the people through higher railway rates even before the General Budget. The post and Telegraph Department added another burden of Rs. 135 crores. The Finance Minister imposed taxes totalling Rs. 590 crores. The total relief compared to this overall load of Rs. 1,300 crores was a mere Rs. 13.77 crores. The additional taxes were just a hundred times more than the relief given. The consequences are there for any one to see. Post and Telegraph, railway travel and other essential services are becoming increasingly more costly. There is substantial increase in retail prices. That the Central Government employees had become entitled to another instalment of D.A. is a proof of this fact.

**ALL AROUND INCREASE IN PRICES**

Inflation has made life a veritable ordeal for people with fixed incomes and those below the poverty line. Fact is that Government is directly responsible for
increasing prices of essential goods and services. Inflation is also the direct consequence of the collusion between big industrialists and traders on the one hand and the people in power. For a long time Government used oil prices as an excuse for the rising price level but this can by no means be stretched to explain the all round increase in prices. A part of the rise is because of Government’s own actions. Part is the result of political corruption and only in part is it caused by blackmarketeers.

This burden can be borne by only 5% of the population whose annual income is above Rs. 50,000. The 5% population in the next lower income slab of Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000 per annum is also hard hit by the lash of rising prices. The 50% of the people with an annual income of less than Rs. 3,500 are hardly able to make both ends meet.

Eight per cent of our workers today are unemployed and 20% are semi-employed. Government has only lip sympathy for them. All schemes run in the name of rural employment and employment generation add up to a little more than a drop in a bucket. Policies of the Janata Government were a significant beginning in the proper direction for tackling this Herculean problem. But the present government discontinued such employment-oriented programmes as ‘Food for Work.’ The new liberalism towards big industries in place of small and medium industries is regressive from the point of employment generation. I wish to warn Government that if this trend continues, unemployment will give rise to social and political problems which will have extremely dangerous consequences.

The increasing disparity between the village and the city, and rural unemployment, have added to the rush from rural to urban areas. In the villages 55% farmers have less than one acre of land. Poverty is gradually making them sell off their land and join the ranks of landless labourers. Handicraft also is becoming an un-economic proposition. These products are unable to compete with urban products. The total benefit of governmental schemes is pocketed by a handful of politically influential people.

**DEVELOPMENT VILLAGES BJP’S TOP PRIORITY**

Rural people have all along been losers because of the unequal race between the price of agricultural produce and that of industrial goods. Government’s agricultural price fixation policy is basically anti-rural. Official schemes have been parroting terms like ‘landless labourers’ and ‘small farmers and artisans’
but in the situation prevalent hitherto, the rural poor have had little to do with schemes supposed to be for the rural poor. This is the large area of poverty which economic development has failed even to touch. Without full employment centres and antyodaya schemes, the malady of the village will remain absolutely unrelieved. The BJP wants the plan to give highest priority to time-bound and phase-bound development of villages by application of Gandhian techniques. The industrial and agricultural labourer is today a victim of low wages and wage freeze. The government has failed to act as a model employer in public sector undertakings. Even as the administrative or third party, it has not evinced a sympathetic attitude of minimum facilities. The people in power have linked themselves up with the employers.

**PROLONGED STRIKE:** There is a prolonged strike in the textile mills of Bombay. National output and the interests of workers are both suffering heavily. The government, managements and the trade unions have all made it a question of prestige. The poor workers are the worst sufferers. Last year, in the case of the Bangalore strike, Government had adopted a policy of making the workers yield by tiring them out. On the one hand, Government has let inflation go on a runaway course and, on the other, Government has imposed on the workers what is in effect a wage freeze. The workers is being crushed between these two milestones. The new philosophy of industrial peace evolved by the Government has two facets: wage of industrial peace evolved by the Government has two facets: wage freeze is one, and Essential Services (Maintenance ) Act or National Security Act is the other. The BJP has opposed these black laws tooth and nail.

I wish to appeal to Government, textile mill owners and labour leaders to take into account the tremendous sufferings of the workers and not make this issue a question of prestige. Let them sit round the negotiating table and sort out the problem with sympathetic concern for the welfare of workers so that there is no further loss of production and the interests of workers are not adversely affected.

**MINIMUM WAGE MUST BE ENHANCED** Landless labour comprise the weakest section of society. They do not get even the minimum legal wage fixed in many States. Disputes over wages have recently
increased in several States. So has repression of labour. I demand that State Governments discharge their responsibility in the matter of enabling agricultural workers to get a legal minimum wage, and that they end all repression. The minimum wage also needs to be enhanced to corresponding to rising prices.

The current Plan was framed on the basis of 1980 prices. Since then prices of many raw materials and services—iron, cement, coal and energy, railway freight, postal freight, wage cost etc. have increased substantially. On the one hand, mobilisation of resources is becoming difficult and, on the other, Plan targets are being brought down because of reduced value in real terms of resources mobilised. The trend threatens to continue. In view of this, there is an apprehension that there will be a serious gulf between Plan targets and achievements. I demand that Government appoint an independent committee of economists to evaluate the revised, actual and realisable targets, resources and the progress made till date. The country has a right to have a mid-term appraisal made of Plan achievements and its shortfalls.

INCREASING ATROCITIES ON HARIJANS

In January last, I had undertaken a padayatra from Deoli to Sadhupur in U.P. The accounts of the Harijan carnage at these places that we heard were really heart-rending. Any sensitive person would feel shaken; so did I.

According to official statistics, every year more than 10,000 cases of anti-Harijans incidents are recorded at police stations. Many, many more remain unrecorded, but leave their scars behind.

After Sadhupur and Deoli there has been the massacre of Harijans at Khastara in Madhya Pradesh. The blood of Harijans was shed again at Bellabeera in Bihar. Those responsible for these dark deeds continue to roam about freely. They enjoy the patronage and protection of the rulers. For centuries, this oppression and repression of our Harijan brothers and sisters has been going on. How much longer is society going to allow it—that is the question?

EFFACE UNTOUCHABILITY

We should appreciate that the practice of untouchability is worse than apartheid. The colour of our skin is one, our blood is one, our ancestry is one, our religion is one and court culture is one. How then can one person be a touchable and another an untouchable, one high and another low? Until we are
able to efface untouchability from our country, our voice against apartheid in world forums cannot be very effective.

RESOLVE

During my trek through the Deoli-Sadhupur region I had occasion to talk to both sections—Harijans and the so-called savarnas. These discussions convinced me that all is not lost. There is still in society the strength to rise above inter-caste conflicts and violence and recreate a new social order. In the rural areas there still subsists in various castes a vast reservoir of amity and goodwill. This needs to be tapped so that society can be changed without having to pass through any traumatic upheaval. In the countryside it is the duty of savarnas, and those who are better off, to create the necessary climate, and discharge their duty with courage.

I appeal to my Dalit brethren, particularly, the youth among them, to continue their struggle for justice. But at the same time, let not the delay in removing a centuries old curse provoke them into taking any step which would create problems worse than the malady itself. The attempts at mass conversions that have taken place in various parts of the country have deeply hurt the Hindu mind. If only this sense of hurt can be transformed into a resolve to change society, decades long journey can be completed in months. I call upon the country’s youth to set out into the villages holding aloft the banner of social equality. For the BJP youth wing this is a big challenge.

I am aware that during the last one and a half year conscious efforts have been made to associate the downtrodden sections with the BJP. We have had some measure of success in this. Even so, we as a party are not as vigilant about this issue as we ought to be. We do not need a Deoli or a Sadhupur to goad us into activity in such matters. Every workers of the BJP should be constantly alert and function as a sentinel of social equality. Let us chalk out a programme in this regard keeping in mind local conditions and problems, and not to worry about the political losses and gains that may result because of this activity.

During the first two years of Congress rule the number of excesses committed on tribals also increased. Their
economic exploitation continues unchecked. They are vanavasis—forest dwellers—but they have been deprived of their right to the grass in the forest. Corrupt politicians, dishonest contractors and selfish bureaucrats have conspired to push tribal men into living as bonded serfs and hapless tribal women into a life of dishonour and shame. In the course of my tours of tribal Madhya Pradesh I was surprised to hear that government officials, who earlier used to resist posting in these tribal belts, once they come here are reluctant to leave. The simple but sorry explanation is that avenues for extra-legal income in these areas are immense.

Government has drawn up several costly schemes for the welfare of these tribals but hardly a fraction of the funds allocated reaches the ground.

I urge upon BJP workers to undertake two-fold activity for the welfare of the tribals. On the one hand, let us engage in constructive activity for the amelioration of their lot and, on the other, let us mobilise them to struggle for their rights.

WOMEN—DISHONoured AND EXPLOITED

Not with standing high-sounding principles propounded, old time superstitions and perverse modernism have combined to put today's women in a much more difficult position than she was in yesterday. Many kinds of shackles encage their minds. Circumstances reduce them to the level of second grade human beings. Instances of dowry deaths, rape, kidnapping, economic discrimination, mental torture, suicides etc. are on the increase.

EDUCATION WILL MAKE A LOTS OF DIFFERENCE

Education can make a major contribution towards redeeming women from this lot. But even today, as compared to men, female literacy is just half. In the first decade after independence the number of literate women grew by 52%. During the period 1961-71 the rate of female literacy came down to 46%. In 1971-81 it fell still further to 32%. The result is that today as compared to 46.7% literacy among men, literacy among women is 24.9%. This country cannot progress unless women is assured an equal place in society. Without social equality there can be no economic equality. Nor can woman contribute fully to national reconstruction or human progress. Let us not forget that injustice, exploitation, discrimination, poverty,
ignorance, insecurity, unemployment, all these affect woman more deeply than man. All such concepts rules, practices, traditions etc. that promote exploitation and knowingly or unknowingly accentuate injustice to woman must be vigorously opposed.

**COMPREHENSIVE SCHEME FOR IMPROVEMENT OF WOMEN CONDITIONS**

A liberal and comprehensive scheme needs to be drawn up which can assure women equal opportunities of employment and education, emancipation from exploitation, injustice and discrimination, and equal civil, economic and social rights.

To draw up such a scheme, the BJP will set up a committee which would consult thinkers, women organisations, jurists, economists, social scientists etc. and submit its report by the end of December.

**INDIAN UNABLE TO PURSUE AN INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY**

India's growing dependence on the two super powers has distorted our economy and paralysed our diplomacy. Today our country depends on the West for economic loans and on the East for its defence requirements. In such a situation is it possible for us to stay aloof from the growing rivalry of the super-powers and pursue an independent policy?

Whether it is the question of the Iran-Iraq war or withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchia. India has been unable to take a diplomatic initiative in matters where the process of detente has suffered a setback. The same indecisiveness has been the reason why India has failed to come out clearly with Argentina on the issue of Falkland Islands. Even while disagreeing with Argentina's decision to use force, India should have clearly opposed Britain's decision to invade Falkland.

In fact, the manner in which foreign and domestic policies have been formulated and executed during the last two years have landed India in a very unenviable position. Today the Government of India is unable to muster courage to deplore the wrong acts either of the U.S.S.R. or of the U.S. Even in the matter of external relations the Prime Minister vents her fury invariably on the Janata Party.
It is a matter of regret that the Prime Minister has dragged foreign policy also particularly the question of India's relations with our neighbours, into the election arena. This issue had nothings to do with Assembly elections. If the Janata's agreement with Bangladesh on Farakka was not correct. what has prevented the present Government from negotiating a more favourable deal with them?

Late Mr. Zia-ul-Rahman who had been elected President of Bangladesh by a democratic process, used to be treated with indifference by the present Government. Zia was ousted by General Ershad in a military coup. For India's Foreign Minister to visit Dacca with a message of support and goodwill from India for this military ruler is in itself a sad comment on the conduct of India's foreign policy. According to General Ershad, India was among the countries which had been given prior intimation of the impending coup in Bangladesh. It would be interesting to know about New Delhi's reaction to this revelation about advance intimation.

India and Pakistan are both agreeable to a no-war pact. The longer the delay in resuming talks on this matter the deeper would suspicions and misgivings become that have developed during the last three decades between the two countries.

It would be wrong to think that the only hurdle in the way of normalisation of relations between the two countries is the question of Jammu and Kashmir.

If at Simla in 1972 Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi had withstood foreign pressures and, besides, resisted the temptation of being hailed as a peace-maker. the question of Jammu and Kashmir could have been resolved once and for all.

As it is, under the Simla Agreement, India has committed itself to resolving the issue through bilateral talks. It should not allow the impression to go round that it is avoiding a discussion. There is no reason why the mere mention of Kashmir by Pakistan should upset us.

Gilgit, Kargil, Hunza etc. are regions of strategic importance and till 1947 were part and parcel of Jammu and Kashmir. By amalgamating these with Pakistan, the Government of Pakistan has once again challenged India's sovereignty. It is surprising that for quite some time
Government remained unaware of this. Even when it did come to know about the development it did not care to apprise the Indian Parliament about it.

Government's callous indifference in the matter and its keeping Parliament and the people in the dark is reminiscent of 1962 when Government tried to cover up Chinese aggression in Ladakh. The country has a right to know why Government has failed in this matter which relates to national integrity and India's claim to the whole of Jammu and Kashmir State.

The Indian army is fully capable of meeting any foreign aggression. The people of India would spare no sacrifice in defence of their priceless freedom and the country's territorial integrity. But if only with a view to divert public attention from the manifold problems people are having to face because of its own impolicies and failures. Government keeps talking day in and day out about the threat of foreign aggression, it would be doing great injustice to the people.

I would urge upon the Prime Minister first and foremost to set her own house in order, attend to the disintegration that has set in within the Congress Party, shake up the administration from its present state of paralysis and instead of tampering with the present system try to utilise it to give national affairs a definite direction. If at home the situation continues to worsen, as is happening, not all the tomtomming about the success of her foreign trips can help redeem India's image in the international field, which has been sinking lower and lower.

Friends, instead of dealing at length with all the national problems, I have touched upon the more outstanding ones. I hope that at this three-day session we shall be able to discuss some of these in depth.

The ruling party's conduct over the last two years, the gulf between profession and practice and its abysmal failure in dealing with the situation has proved clearly that the Congress (I) is incapable of giving to the people a clear and firm
leadership. The party's organisation is disintegrating and a vacuum is fast growing in the political field.

Can the Bharatiya Janata Party measure up to the situation and surmount the serious challenges that face us?

BJP SHOULD FILL THAT VACUUM

In our journey from Bombay to Surat via Cochin and Vrindaban, we have left behind many milestones. During this period death has snatched away from us very close and valuable colleagues like Prof. Haripada Bharati and Shri Rambhau Mhalgi. The party's credibility with the people has been rapidly growing and millions in the country see in our party a bright ray of hope.

With a sense of dedication to the country and the people, a determination to triumph against all odds, and dynamism in our approach let us build ourselves up in a manner and measure as to be able to fill the developing vacuum. May God give us strength to fulfil the people's expectations from our party!

✧ VANDE MATARAM ✧
Madam Chairperson of the Reception Committee, Delegates, Brothers and Sisters.

**FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE**

We met nine months ago in Delhi where we had our last National Council meeting. These have been eventful nine months, even productive nine months. In Delhi I had given you an appraisal. I had also offered you a concept. In my appraisal I had painted a dark picture of the country's drift and of the wrong direction in which the Government was heading. In my concept, I saw immediate hope of meeting this challenge through the formation of a national democratic alliance. I shared with you the vision of a new and strong India based on five unities—between city and village, between labour and capital, between citizen and administration, between centre and states, and between all the castes and communities of the nation.

Events during the last nine months have fully vindicated my appraisal and even gone beyond its worst fears about this Government's perversity. However, at the same time, our efforts during the last nine months have also resulted in the formation of the National Democratic Alliance. This has redoubled our resolve to preserve the unity of our nation and the integrity of its democratic system.

**GOVT. ON A SUICIDAL COURSE**

The conduct of this Government passes comprehension. It defies logic. The Government seems to be haunted by a death-wish. It has lost its will, or capacity, to govern. It continues to lurch from one crisis to another, and persists on a suicidal course. The tragedy is that it threatens to drag the rest of society along with it.

Many of them again went down the poverty line and also the number of those who joined them afresh.
GRIM REALITY These examples merely provide live evidence of the dry statistics of the Sixth Five Year Plan which affirm that still there are 35 crore people in India who live on less than Rs. 2.30 per day, that one-third villages in the country lack clean drinking water, that fifty percent of the housing in rural India is unfit for human habitation. These are the official figures. It is in this grim and fearful context that the Government concerns itself with extravagant jamborees like the Commonwealth Conference.

ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT ROLLS HAYWISE During the last four years the cumulative increase in wholesale prices of articles consumed by the common man has been approximately 51 percent. Our foreign exchange reserves have dipped to an alarming 1554 crores from the 5430 crores that this Government inherited in 1980.

And the spectre of the IMF loan repayment to the tune of 5000 crores requiring an additional 3000 crores as interest is haunting the country like a nemesis. I cannot recall a single instance of such criminal waste during the tenure of the previous Janata Government. The nation's resolve to achieve self-reliance has been destroyed by this Government.

BLACK RECORD SCANDALS GALORE And while the economy reaches a flashpoint, the ship of state seems to have been abandoned by the Government, left to the tender mercies of the winds of fortune. Mrs. Gandhi's Government is rudderless. Never in the history of our Republic has a government's reputation been tarnished by so many scandals. Every time we meet, we are confronted by the visage of the Government blackened by new blots, even while the stains of previous scandals have not been wiped clean. This Government has reached a new height in scandals. Just consider the record. The Antulay affair, the Bhagalpur bindings, the Harijan massacres in Deoli, Sadhupur and elsewhere, Jagannath's corruption cases, Bhajan Lal's engineered defections, the unsolved death of the police guard in the house of a Congress(I) minister, the police rape of Maya Tyagi, the bearer bonds scheme to protect black money, the scandals of the Thal Vasishist, Hindustan Monark, Kuo Oil and the Feranti deals—one can go on and on. It seems as if the crimes and scandals of a century have been compressed within three years.
We have to forget these scandals. The Government leaves us with no choice. Each time the Government creates such sensational new scandals that we are compelled to forget the previous scandals. Since we met last, the Government has been exceptionally creative. It has created three new scandals which are exceptionally colourful and sensational.

**LATEST THREE SCANDALS**

First, there was the tallow scandal. Something heinous has been done. For the sake of profit, businessmen, colluding with the Government, deceived millions of people who were made to violate their most sacred religious beliefs, unknowingly. But this is only one aspect of the scandal. There is another aspect which is more shameful. Instead of swift action to stop the rot and punish the guilty, the Government first tried to deny the allegations. It did everything to soften the punishment of the guilty. When the denials did not succeed, the present Government tried to twist facts and involve the previous Janata Government for crimes which were being committed under the former's nose. Ministers spoke in contradiction to each other. The Prime Minister tried to minimise the whole affair. Why should the Government have behaved thus? The dark suspicion naturally arises that the Government has something to hide.

**GOVT.'S COLLUSION**

Tallow was being imported since 1964 for the manufacture of soap and grease. During the Janta Government's tenure the price of tallow was so much higher than that of vanspati that the question of adulteration did not arise. It was only after Mrs. Gandhi assumed office that this unholy crime against the religious sentiments of the people began. Any normal administration would have reacted swiftly in such an event. But this Government is not normal. The Government itself is the culprit in most crimes being committed in the country. The Government is refusing to hold an inquiry into the matter. It is for the people to reflect on how debased our society has become when even the most sacred religious beliefs are violated for the lure of profit in collusion with the Government itself.

**THE TAINED TAPES**

Moily was merely carrying orders from the centre. The Government is unmoved by scandals and exposures. It is unconcerned with disorder and violence. It is obsessed with a single point. It seeks to occupy every chair of office. The Government has arrogated to itself the divine right to topple every other government by fair means or foul. One general secretary
of the ruling party proudly announced this. He stated this in response to the second sensational exposure within these past few months. I refer to the Moilyy tapes in Karnataka. This scandal is reminiscent of the Watergate scandal. Once again, the trail of guilt leads back to New Delhi. The banknotes amounting to Rupees two lakhs which the Karnataka Congress(1) leader offered as a bribe to obtain the defection of another MLA, carried the mark of a Delhi bank. This is a new dimension in scandals. The tape recording and the banknotes are there for the world to see. Mr. Bhajan Lal, let it be said to his credit, never allowed himself to be tape-recorded by anyone while transacting his business. However, the Government at the centre has not expressed shock or regret over the incident. It has not disowned the guilty Karnataka leader. How can it, when that leader was merely carrying out orders?

And thirdly, of course, we had to witness the juicy episode involving the colourful Dhirendra Brahmachari. It was an extraordinary exposure. This gentleman, who for years has had access to the Prime Minister, is accused of smuggling guns into this country under a bogus licence. Where are the guns sold? Does the Government have any record? Do they reach extremists in the sensitive border states? The Government remains tongue-tied. It is extraordinary that the Government fails to perceive this as a grave national security risk, under the Prime Minister’s own nose, as it were. Nor though foreign guns are being smuggled into the country. It does not suit the Government to highlight this scandal.

If these scandals reflect the character of the Government, the mounting disorder and terrorism reflect the condition of the country. The rot in Assam after spreading all over the region has crossed our borders to strain our relations with Bangladesh. The Government remains silent and helpless. But even Assam is getting rapidly overshadowed by the crisis in the Punjab.

Punjab has fully exposed this Government’s collusion with a section of the extremists, and its desire to fan hatred between different communities in order to reap electoral advantage. Now it seems that matters have got out of control. The Government has discovered that it has been nursing the Frankenstein. The Government did not hesitate to
send in the police into the Sisganj Gurudwara in order to help one section of Sikhs against another. But the Government looks the other way when a self-styled saint from within a gurudwara calls for the bloodshed of Hindus. In an extraordinary statement to a Bombay weekly, the Prime Minister openly defended Bhindranwale. She said he is not alone in committing or encouraging violence. She went on to describe the violence in Punjab as resulting from ‘individual terrorism’. Now the Prime Minister, it seems does not even bother to hide her party’s collusion with Bhindranwale’s extremism. The Punjab is now being administered directly by the centre. Yet it is helpless when Hindus are selectively killed by the extremists. Some cynics have suggested that when the Government finally will enter the Golden Temple to effect an arrest, that will be the signal which will herald the general election. So low is the Government’s credibility that each move by it is viewed only in the context of electoral gain, regardless of the fact that the country is going towards ruin.

**SEARCH FOR SCAPEGOATS**

But in all these matters the Government has its own answer, it blames the Opposition. When that charge is received with disbelief, the Government finds another answer. It blames the foreign hand. Which foreign hand is it? Is it Pakistan? The Governor of Punjab, Shri B.D. Pandey, has categorically denied that there is any evidence of Pakistani interference in Punjab. But the Prime Minister persists in speaking differently. The Prime Minister is credited with the remark that it is very difficult to find evidence without sophisticated equipment. Perhaps the Prime Minister should seek the help of Karnataka Chief Minister. The Karnataka Government managed to find concrete evidence of a hand attempting defections and seeking destabilisation. But that was not a foreign hand, it was only the Congress(I) hand that was discovered in Karnataka.

**POLICY OF FOREIGN HAND**

The Prime Minister’s constant reference to a foreign hand is doing enormous damage to the country’s morale. This damage should not be missed. The Prime Minister repeatedly says that there is a foreign hand trying to destroy the unity of the country. Whom does she repeatedly say this? The public should see through this Government’s diabolical game. The Government itself has a vested interest in creating a crisis atmosphere, in generating a
sense of insecurity, in order to emerge before the people as their saviour and protector. No foreign hand is breaking up our country. It is only the Prime Minister herself who by her reckless policies and actions is endangering the unity and harmony of our nation.

**INTERNATIONAL SCENE**

Nobody can deny the fact that the national security environment has deteriorated. Detente has been replaced by cold war. The dialogue between USSR and USA for arms limitation has been deadlocked. The arms race between the superpowers has assumed dangerous dimensions due to the installation of Cruise Missiles and Pershing-II in western Europe by USA.

**INTEMPERATED OF COLD WAR**

Nearer home, in our own sub-continent also, the situation has become alarming. The concentration of Soviet troops near the khyber pass and supply of American weapons to Pakistan have produced a qualitative change in the security perspective of this region. The mounting superpower rivalry in the Indian Ocean region is a matter of concern to all the littoral nations.

**ALARMIN SITUATION IN THE SUB-CONTINENT**

It is regrettable that Indian diplomacy has failed to pay any effective role in reducing international tensions. The chairing of the NAM and hosting of the CHOGM had offered opportunities, which the Government of India failed to utilise for taking initiative towards declaration of the mad arms race or curbing superpower arbitrariness. Afghanistan and Geneada are in fact two Acts of the same tragic drama. How long would smaller nations continue to be unfortunate victims of the expansionist designs of their neighbours? How long would weaker countries continue to face foreign pressures, foreign interference, foreign aggression and finally foreign occupation?

One expected from Mrs. Gandhi that she would take up the chairpersonship of NAM as a serious responsibility and would step forward for creating a better understanding in international affairs. Neither the Indian Government was able to make any purposeful move for the cessation of Iran-Iraq war and for resolving the mutual conflict between Palestinians, nor could it obtain universal endorsement for the proposal of holding an International Conference on declaring Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.
MISTRUST AMONG NEIGHBOURS

India had succeeded in establishing far more stronger ties with her neighbours during Janata regime. During those days a new climate of mutual confidence and cooperation was pervading all through this sub-continent. But during the past years mutual trust has been replaced by mistrust and co-operation by confrontation. The Tamil problem in Sri Lanka remains unresolved. Even the appropriate Indian decision to fence her borders with barbed wires has been considered as an unfriendly act by Bangladesh. Instead of strengthening the special ties with India, Nepal is equating us with other countries. A close neighbour like Bhutan is slowly drifting away from us due to the style of functioning at New Delhi.

PROMOTING IMAGE OF AN INDIVIDUAL

The aims and objects of our foreign policy should not be to promote the image of an individual but to preserve and to protect the interest of the nation. Nobody denies the usefulness and relvance of the non-alignment policy, but we do differ in the manner of its implementation.

DONOT ADOPTS DOUBLE STANDARDS

Questions of foreign invasion and interference are deeply related with world peace and international security. If instead of pursuing a uniform policy with regard to these issues India adopts double standards, it will neither enhance its prestige, nor would it be able to serve the cause of peace, disarmament and new international economic order.

The foreign pressures are bound to increase if we fail to keep our house in order. First things first, and therefore, it is imperative to do so. The present Government has miserably failed in discharging this primary obligation. The international conferences organised in New Delhi do offer us an opportunity to show how hospitable we are, but they are no solutions to our problems. For that, we will have to struggle on our own.

NATIONAL COALITION PEOPLE LOOKING FOR ALTERNATIVE

But the question arise : how are we to meet the challenge created by Congress(I) misrule and steer the country and its system back to health? I have stated this before, and I repeat it today, there seems to be no escape from a national coalition government after the next general election. The Congress(I) has been weakened in the South, in Bengal and the Northeast, in Punjab and Kashmir. The real battle, therefore, is for the heartland of India. I believe that the nationalist
democratic forces can provide a challenge to the Congress(I) in the heartland of India. In the recent bye-elections, despite triangular contests, the Congress(I) lost the Lok Sabha seat and 3 out of 5 assembly seats in U.P. Clearly, the people are disenchanted with the present Government. They seek an alternative.

**LET'S CONSOLIDATE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE WITH LOK DAL**

In Delhi I had sought and obtained your consent to attempt forging a national democratic alliance. Since then we have not remained idle. We communicated with all the like-minded opposition parties. The response from the Lok Dal was positive. From some parties it was lukewarm. From others it was positively cold. We had agreed in Delhi that a national democratic alliance was a historical necessity at this juncture of our nation's affairs. And we believe that history waits for nobody. Therefore, we decided to go ahead. Along with the Lok Dal we formed the National Democratic Alliance. We believe that it is a step in the right direction. We would like the consolidation of all the nationalist and democratic forces in the country. The Lok Dal and the Bharatiya Janata Party are working like a team. We will continue to strengthen our bonds and work like a team. We believe that ultimate victory will be ours, because we best represent the needs and aspirations of India today.

Our opponents ask us: who will be your Prime Minister? I can assure them that we will have no problem on that score.

But I ask our opponents: what will be your programme? They cannot even recall the twenty point of that ill-fated programme hastily scribbled by their leader during the Emergency in an effort to lend respectability to her dictatorial steps.

**STRONGS CENTRE BUT WITH STRONG STATES**

We ourselves are clear about what must be done to unite and integrate our nation. We want a strong Centre helped by strong States. The Government is committed to maintaining the status quo. We believe that Centre States relations require political, financial and administrative reforms. The Inter-States Council must be set up. The Governor's role must be defined. The Centre's power to dismiss a state government should be restrained and made subject to proper norms. A greater share of plan expenditure and
revenue must be given to the states. We want real harmony between the Centre and the States.

JUSTICE FOR RURAL INDIA We want revised priorities permitting much greater investment for rural development and welfare. To obtain justice for rural India we want price parity between industrially manufactured goods and agricultural produce on the basis of cost inputs. To help the small and cottage sectors of industry we want the spheres of production between them to be clearly demarcated by law.

GRASS-ROOT DEMOCRACY CHARACTER OF POLICE FORCE MUST CHANGE We want to make it as statutory obligation for the Government to hold civic and Panchayat elections periodically all over the country. Certain financial powers must also be given to these local bodies. We also believe that it is desirable and feasible to make the police, at the lower level, accountable to these elected local bodies. If this system can work well in Britain, there is no reason why it should not work as well in our country. As a colonial power, the British created a police force which acted like an occupation army. That system has been allowed to continue. We are determined to bring the police into the mainstream of the community in which it operate.

NEED FOR GENUINE INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY To rejuvenate industry and establish sound relations between management and labour, we want a thorough implementation of labour laws. We also favour a workers' Sector of industry in the large corporate sector in which workers will have a share in the ownership, management and profits of industry. The Government was put on the defensive by our demand made in the National Executive in Lucknow that workers should be given a share of the management, profit and ownership of the textile mills nationalised in Bombay. The Government has announced that the workers will get a share in the management in some of these mills. We are unimpressed by such half-measures and gimmicks. We want genuine industrial democracy to revolutionise and modernise our industrial sector. If private textile mills are mismanaged, the state of the public sector National Textiles Corporation is no better. Clearly, there is need to think afresh and Chart a new course for industry to streamline management, reduce strikes and increase production.
A SENSE OF INDIANNESS MUST BE CREATED

We want to truly integrate the nation. A proper education policy for the nation must be formulated in conformity with employment need. A sense of oneness, a sense of Indianness requires to be created among our youth to halt the mad rush towards an imported five star video culture.

We believe that through dedication and perseverance we will realise national unity and create a new India of our dreams. In Delhi I had given you a slogan: Unite and win. Today we are achieving unity. Tomorrow we will achieve victory.
Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee, Brother and Sister Delegates and Friends,

OUR HOUR OF TRIAL IS APPROACHING

We are meeting at a very critical time in the affairs of our nation. Barring any unforeseen development, this will be the last meeting of our National Council before the next general election. Over four years have passed since we came together to form the Bharatiya Janata Party. It is almost five years since Mrs. Gandhi’s Government assumed office. These have been the worst five consecutive years since our country attained independence. In the coming elections, the Government will face its moment of truth. We will face our hour of trial. All the ideals, efforts, courage and integrity to which we had committed ourselves these past four years will be tested as never before. The time for words has passed. The time for deeds has come. Therefore, I will be brief, and to the point.

In its insatiable lust for power, one single family has jeopardised the unity of an entire nation. Punjab, which provides the backbone of our nation's defence and a granary for its people, has had to pay heaviest price for the vicious treatment by this Government. In the search for electoral gains, the Government did not hesitate to collude with extremism and violence, to frustrate efforts for a reasonable settlement and to deliberately divide one community from another. It has brought the State to the brink of a total disaster. It has brought the State to the brink of a total disaster. It has endangered the future security of our country.

More than four months have elapsed once the Army Action in Punjab but as yet all the facts connected with it have not been made public.

The country has a right to know the total number of people who were killed during the Army Action in Punjab. Among those who were killed, how many were jawans, how many were terrorists and how many were innocent persons who had come to the Gurudwaras on the occasion of Shri Guru Arjun Devji's Martyrdom Day?

A general secretary of the ruling Congress Party has given the figure of the jawans killed in the Golden Temple Complex as 700. This is six times more than the figure given in the White Paper published by the Government. Are the figures given in the White Paper incorrect? We know that many pleasant facts have not been mentioned in the White Paper. For instance the White Paper is completely silent on the relations of the ruling Party with the terrorists. Nothing has been said in the White Paper about the secret meetings that were held between the Government and the Akali leaders. But has there been deliberate mis-statement of facts also in the White Paper?

A satisfactory solution of the Punjab problem does not appear to be in sight. Army is deployed in the whole of Punjab. Being a 'disturbed area' even ordinary police officers there have got extra-ordinary powers. Special Courts have been set up and they can have their proceedings in camera. Press censorship continues. Section 144 is promulgated in the entire State. Akali leaders are under detention. Some workers of the BJP have also been imprisoned without trial.
But even then peace is not there in Punjab. Theorists have again stepped up their activities. Innocent people are being killed. The way in which only members of a certain community travelling by a State bus were picked out and killed on 12th September, 1984 in Sekhwan village of Gurdaspur district, has refreshed the memory of the brutal killing near Dhilwan village in Kapurthala district on 5th October, 1983. However, the difference is that on the very next day of that massacre, the Chief Minister had tendered resignation of his Government, but this time neither the Prime Minister nor the Home Minister thought it necessary even to express regret at the failure of their Government.

Instead of resuming the process of exchange of views with all the concerned parties in order to find a lasting and effective solution, the ruling party is getting impatient to grab power in Punjab again. The Government has neither the capacity to put an end to terrorism, nor does it have the will to find a political solution by bringing about an adjustment of conflicting interests. It is evident that so long as this Government in which effective steps can be taken to bring normalcy in Punjab.

If in recent times, due to the events in Punjab, the rest of the country has forgotten Assam, the people of that unfortunate State are not so lucky. They cannot forget the problems created by the Central Government which continues to crush them. The blood of the innocent five thousand who lost their lives in the riots sparked by the farcical election continues to be mingled with the tears of millions denied of their basic constitutional right to preserve the identity of their culture and save their State from an influx by foreign nationals. Here again, in its search for votes, the Government has not hesitated to trample upon the constitutional rights of the people, to jeopardise the security of the nation and to foster hatred between one section of the people and another. A terrible crisis in Assam can erupt again. No solution is in sight for that tragic State unless the present Central Government is thrown out of office.

Inspite of the high sounding proclamations and attractive plans on paper of the Government, there has been no improvement in the condition of people
belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Most of those who have been forced into the condition of moving from pillar to post because of lack of will to implement land reforms with firmness and because of the continuous dying out of small handicrafts and cottage industries, are Harijans and Girijans. Of late incidents of firing on agricultural labourers—most of whom are Harijans—even for demanding the minimum wages as determined by law, are increasing. In many States, feudal elements, with the force of their lathis and guns, have reduced the laws against forced labour to nothing. And these elements enjoy the patronage of the Congress Governments there. So long as the present rotten system is not changed and we do not move forward towards a new social system based on equality and a new economic system based on labour, the condition of Harijans and Girijans will continue to deteriorate.

COMMUNAL RIOTS ON THE INCREASE

During the last four years the number, frequency and intensity of communal riots as also the number of people killed in these riots, have been continuously on the increase. In 1981, in the entire country there were 162 communal riots. In 1982 this figure went up to 474. In 1983 the number of people killed in communal riots was 202. In 1984, in the riots of Bhiwandi, Thane and Bombay alone, 263 people lost their lives. Now these riots have been spreading to new areas and almost at all places, the State police is blamed for inaction or partiality in their behaviour. If the increase in communal riots is to be checked, the present set-up which is the root-cause of politicalization of police and criminals' influence in politics, will have to be changed. Strengthening the feeling of Indian nationalism in order to defeat communalism, will also be possible only then.

STATE POLICE BLAMED FOR INACTION OR PARTIALITY

GROWING ATROCITIES ON WOMEN

Women in India continue to be the victims of exploitation and cruelty which no civilised society should tolerate. It is ironical that though the Government is headed by a woman, the atrocities against women have not been checked but continue to mount. In the capital of India itself in one year, on an average, one bride is burnt to death or commits suicide for reasons connected with dowry. In our manifesto we will propose concrete measures by which the dignity and self-respect of Indian womanhood may be maintained. If women are to be given a new deal and liberated from the shackles of social tyranny, this Government must be thrown out of office.
Sometime back there was an outcry against the practice of bonded labour in our country. The Government assured Parliament that steps would be taken speedily to end this evil. There are laws in the land to prevent the exploitation of bonded labour. The Government of Indira Gandhi does not have the will to implement those laws. Not only are private contractors exploiting bonded labour, the Government itself, in the very capital of India, encouraged and permitted this pernicious practice in public sector works under its own authority during work for the Asiad. Everywhere the Government itself colludes with private contractors to exploit unorganised and bonded labour. Despite the Government's brave claims, this year between April and July, only 13.7 per cent of the target was achieved in rehabilitating bonded labour. If bonded labour is to be wiped out from our country, this Government must be thrown out of office.

The ranks of the millions below the poverty line continue to swell as prices continue to soar. Never has the gulf between the rich and the poor been so dangerously wide as it is today. The Government does not have the courage or the character to face this problem honestly. So it has resorted to the cheap device of playing with statistics in an effort to prove that fewer people exist below the poverty line than the actual number. But the poor masses do not want statistics. They want food, shelter and clothing. They want clean water to drink. They want an education and a future for their children. The greatest wealth of our nation is being neglected and destroyed by this Government. That wealth is the people of our nation. Given the chance to live, a chance to contribute their might to the nation's welfare, the people of India can make our country really great.

What can people do when their very survival is at stake, posing a challenge to their wits and their will to live? In the first four years of this Government's tenure, the consumer price index in the Capital itself shot up from 396 points to 560 points. This represents an increase of 164 points, an annual increase of 41 points! And while prices soar, the rupee shrinks. Today the rupee in real value is worth only 17.89 Paise.

In such impossible times the Government has thought fit to offer relief to the affluent sector using cars, colour televisions, refrigerators and electrical appliances by reducing excise to the tune of 200 crores. But the Government made no effort to check the rise in price of milk, cement, tea, coal and rationed articles.
Nor did the Government make effort to reverse the trend to exploit the agricultural sector on which 70 per cent of our population depends for its existence. The farmers continue to be deprived of a remunerative price for their produce, while similar products imported from America, Canada and Australia are gladly purchased by the Government at prices 30 per cent higher. The continuous rise in prices of farm inputs make them out of reach for the vast majority of small farmers.

No wonder disparity continues to grow even within the rural sector. No wonder unemployment in the country has grown to five crore jobless people. All the employment generation schemes of the Government prepared in the sixth five year plan have been ruined by the Government’s inefficiency and corruption. If a real beginning is to be made to end poverty in our country, this Government must be thrown out of office.

While 70 per cent of our population continues to be crushed under an intolerable economic burden, the Government wounds the feelings of the nation by the most conspicuous and vulgar display of wasteful expenditure witnessed in free India. CHOGM, NAM and ASIAD were all signposts of unbelievable waste and extravagance in this Government’s drunken, lurching journey over the past four years. The dismal performance of our team in the recent World Olympics shows to what effect the Government invested 2000 crores in the Asiad! The Government seems to be intoxicated with power, blinded by greed and fattened to the point to paralysis by corruption. How does the Government manage to ruin the economy of the country’s millions and at the same time wallow in luxury itself? By a simple device.

The Government has created for our country a foreign debt of over 22,000 crores by adding 10,000 crores in less than five years. These include 5,000 crores of commercial loans from abroad at higher interest rates. During the last five years the exchange rate of the rupee has shrunk from 7.94 for a dollar to 12 for a dollar. The internal debt is even more staggering. In March 1978 it stood at Rs. 19,025 crores. Today it is over Rs. 50,000 crores.

How does the Government hope to resolve these problems? By printing new currency notes at home, and by mortgaging the freedom of
future generations abroad? If we are to end the highest disparity, if we are to avoid losing our economic independence, this Government must be thrown out of office.

**INDIA'S IMAGE SUFFERS**

Never has the credibility of our nation been so low as it is today among the World's comity of nations. The Prime Minister is the Chairperson of the Non-aligned Movement. When this title was conferred, it was an honour for the country and an opportunity for our Government. But what did the Government achieve? What initiative did we take to exploit this opportunity? On the other hand our relations with almost all our neighbouring countries are so strained today as they have never been. I put this down to the incompetence of our Government, to the lack of perception of a clear direction in the Prime Minister herself. If we are to resume a constructive and creative role in world affairs, if we are to repair our relations with our neighbouring countries, this Government must be thrown out of office.

**NO INITIATIVE ON THE FOODGRAIN FRONT**

If the Prime Minister, instead of getting personal praise for herself by organising one Summit meeting after another of the Non-aligned countries, had taken initiative for setting up a World Foodgrain Bank, then a concrete programme of the much talked of North-South cooperation would have come up and there would have been hope of a new life for the millions of people of poor countries who are on the brink of death due to starvation. Today, while on the one hand, in prosperous countries, lacks of tonnes of foodgrain is either being burnt or dumped into the sea, on the other hand, about two crores of people in the world die of starvation every year. Two-thirds of these are children. One third of those who die for want of foodgrain or lack of nutritive elements, are in India. Many African Countries of the Common wealth are these days in the grip of a terrible famine. Neither the Governments of those countries nor any international organization are taking any concrete steps to save the affected people from the jaws of death. India should work for the development of a foodgrain system in the world in which neither there is destruction of foodgrains nor does any one die for want of foodgrain. But his is not possible so long as a complete change is not brought about in the ways of a diplomacy which revolves round one person and which is busy collecting testimonials praising that person from all over the world.
The Government is fully aware that it is incapable of resolving any of the vast problems it has created. The Government knows that it is in the grip of the worst corruption and maladministration witnessed in India in a hundred years. I do not want to repeat all the scandals of this Government which have erupted in the last five years. I had described them at some length in an earlier meeting of the National Council. I draw attention to them now only to offer a possible explanation of why the Government is so desperate as to venture into adventurist policies in Sikkim, Kashmir and Andhra, where without regard to constitutional provisions it toppled State governments. Was the Government experimenting, testing people’s reactions, while planning for a bigger adventure at the national level?

Is that why the Prime Minister recently acknowledged what was first denied, that Mr. Vasant Sathe had advocated a basic change in the constitution with her consent?

It is astonishing that the Prime Minister should glibly tell the world that there is no harm in having a national debate on the desirability of a Presidential system. But the Government has never bothered to actually spell out its proposals with regard to a change in system. One wonders if the Prime Minister has any clear concept apart from perpetuating her family in power? It seems that this question erupts only when the polls are imminent, or when the burden of running a government under a democratic system seems to be beyond the Prime Minister’s capacity. Some time back a confidant of the Prime Minister proposed a kind of presidential system that would best be described as weird and not even remotely connected to democracy. If this irresponsible talk is to end, if confidence in the system and the constitution is to be restored, this Government must be thrown out of office.

What the Government is doing to subvert the system in Punjab is even more sinister. It is politicising the army. It is sharing power with the army. There is no martial law declared in Punjab. Yet senior army officers, without relinquishing their commands in the army, are appointed security advisors to the Governor holding power and responsibility equal to that of ministers. If an army officer is computed for such whole-time work, why should he continue to hold his original command in the army? Is a precedent being created? Can we have in the
future army commanders appointed advisors to the Government at the Centre, holding ministerial responsibility even as they continue with their commands in the army? The Prime Minister is playing a dangerous game by politicising the army in this fashion. She is inviting trouble by sharing political power with senior army officers holding command. One does not know what dark designs are inspiring the decisions of a Government which never ceases to publicly speculate about the desirability of changing the present parliamentary system. I say this so that the nation should remain on guard. The malafide intentions of this Government were exposed mercilessly by the recent events in Andhra. All pretence to truth, decency and law was discarded by the Government in its insane attempt to grab power by fair means or foul. If the nation is to be spared the annihilation of democracy and the subversion of the system, this Government must be thrown out of office.

**THE WAY OUT**  The question is: *How is this to be accomplished?*

In the immediate future I see no alternative to the formation of a Coalition Government at the Centre after the next election. We must go through that phase, and at the same time we must preserve the identity and character of a proper political party. Today, the most urgent need in the country is not that of a single party. It is that of a single programme to save the nation and its system, to rescue it from economic and political chaos. That can be done if all the right-thinking groups and individuals in the country pool their efforts for this common cause.

That is how democracy triumphed in Andhra. Shri N.T. Ramarao was betrayed by some of his own partymen, even though his party appeared to be in an invincibly strong position. But he was helped by other Opposition parties. He was saved by the people of Andhra who responded in lakhs to the call for concerted action to save democracy.

**HOUR OF TRIAL**  That should be the pattern for the whole country. Andhra has shown the way. As in Andhra, democracy in India will be saved by the joint and concerted action of all the Opposition parties. We must be ready for coalition based on a common programme. That is the immediate task for our party. I am confident that all of us will measure up to the challenge of saving our country and its system. History will judge our efforts.

✧ **VANDE MATARAM** ✧

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When we met at Pune last month, we thought that there may be no need for the National Executive to meet again before the general elections. But tragic events intervened which made this meeting imperative. Just on the eve of this meeting, the schedule for the Lok Sabha elections has been formally announced. This invests our meeting with special importance.

Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi is no more. The cruel hand of the assassin has removed her from the scene. As Prime Minister and as leader of her party she had to move about the whole country. She visited the Golden Temple at a time when there was intense tension. But this tragedy has occurred in her own house, and at the hands of those who were charged with her protection. Evidently, despite all the claims being made about foolproof security, there is something rotten with the set up. Indeed, what an indictment it is of Government, that it could not protect even its Prime Minister!

During the past few years the country has been watching with anguish the rise of intolerance, fanaticism and violence. Punjab has been the worst victim. Last year there was a holocaust in Assam. But the country had reason to be satisfied that barring a few stray incidents in Haryana, the violence in Punjab provoked no reaction the rest of the country. It is singularly unfortunate, therefore, that in the wake of Mrs. Gandhi’s assassination a kind of communal frenzy should have been let loose in Delhi and several other parts of the country. I am convinced that much of this violence has been engineered violence. If the law and other machinery had not remained as paralysed and supine as it was, and if at some level in the ruling party this feeling had not been there that the community to which the killers belonged should be taught a lesson, these recent disturbances would not have assumed the dimensions they did.
Mrs. Gandhi's death has been a shock for all. But it is a matter of regret that this occasion of national sorrow also is being sought to be turned to partisan advantage. I would particularly like to mention the blatantly partisan manner in which T.V. has been functioning throughout this fortnight. I have been receiving calls and letters asking whether the opposition parties had decided to boycott Mrs. Gandhi's funeral. Fact is that many prominent Opposition leaders including my colleague, Shri L.K. Advani, Janata President, Shri Chandra Shekhar, Shri Madhu Dandavate and others were there at the funeral, but the T.V. completely blacked out this fact.

It seems that the new leadership of the ruling part has not learnt anything from the past and has resolved to pursue the path of confrontationist, divisive and partisan politics which have become the hallmark of Congress rule during the past years.

† VANDE MATARAM †
Eighth Lok Sabha elections have been unusual in many way. Never before was a General Election held in an atmosphere so much surcharged with emotion resulting from Operation Blue Star, the ghastly assassination of Mrs. Gandhi and the bloody riots following the assassination.

The ruling party made clever use of this situation in its election campaign and succeeded in diverting people's attention from problems like rising prices, deteriorating law and order situation, all pervasive corruption, even the mishandling by it of the Punjab problem. With the help an unlimited resources at its disposal, gross misuse of Government media and a no holds barred relentless propaganda, the ruling party projected national unity as the only election issue and itself as the only saviour of this unity. Electoral malpractices were on a scale larger than ever before. A divided opposition losing credibility with the people particularly because of prolonged and intermittent talks about merger, alliance, adjustment of seats and so on, also helped the ruling party.

As a result, the Congress (I) secured an unprecedented majority of seats, winning with a huge margin in many areas. All the national opposition parties fared very badly and the Bharatiya Janata Party secured only two seats.

But all this should not lead to despair, though it does call for self-analysis and learning lessons for the future from a careful study of all the factors that led to the debacle. From the figures available so far it will be found that in as many as 101 constituencies Bharatiya Janata Party candidates were next to the winners. This shows that the party continues to enjoy considerable public support.
The forthcoming Assembly elections will soon give us another opportunity to go to the people and regain and augment their confidence in us. The main issue in the Assembly elections will be the performance of the respective State governments. There will be other local issues. We have to gear up the party machinery for contesting the Assembly elections, particularly in the light of the new style of aggressive campaigning by the Congress (I).

Our party workers did a splendid job in the Lok Sabha elections inspite of serious limitations of resources and partisan attitude of the Administration. I am sure they will prove equal to the task in the Assembly elections.

★ VANDE MATARAM ★
CONG (I) SUFFERS HEAVY LOSSES IN ASSEMBLY ELECTION

In the Assembly elections, Congress (I) has lost Andhra, Karnataka and Sikkim, and in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar its performance is considerably below the mark it had reached in 1980.

This has confirmed our conclusion that in the Lok Sabha elections in December, 1984 the massive electoral support to the Congress (I) was the result of the brutal murder of Smt. Indira Gandhi which generated a wave of sympathy and also a fear of what might happen in future.

This support cannot be considered as a support for the policies of Congress (I) Government and its performance.

DISCRIMINATING INDIAN VOTER

The fact that within 67 days there was such a great change in the attitude of the people, is a proof that the ordinary voter who exercises his or her franchise is intelligent and can make a distinction between All-India elections and State elections, and between the issues involved in the two. The imbalance that had developed in the Indian Democracy, has been removed to a considerable extent by the electorate by using its franchise in the right way.

REJECTION OF ONE PARTY AND ONE PERSON RULE

The electorate has rejected the designs of the ruling party to impose one party and one person rule on the country and has reiterated its faith in multi-party democracy. The electorate has also rejected the pernicious doctrine that for development in the States, it is necessary that there too should be Governments of the same party which is in power at the Centre.

Had there been adjustment of seats between opposition parties, as it was done in Maharashtra and Rajasthan the election results would have been more favourable for the opposition.
In Himachal Pradesh the BJP was in a position to field its candidates on all seats, but in order to ensure success, we took the initiative in having adjustment of seats with the Janata Party and the DMKP. If inspite of this the Himachal election results have been completely against our expectations, the causes of this should be looked into separately.

**ENCOURAGING SIGN FOR BJP**

After receiving a drubbing in the Lok Sabha elections, for the BJP to have a representation for the first time in Orissa and improving its strength in the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha, should be considered encouraging.

**GUJARAT**

We have been able to more or less maintain our position of 1980 in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. This in itself cannot be considered as a big achievement. Nor can we rejoice at it. But taking into account the wave after the Lok Sabha elections, the morale of our State level workers and lack of resources, it appeared difficult even to maintain our earlier strength. It is the result of the courage and hard-work of our workers in general that inspite of so many adverse circumstances, they succeeded in maintaining their position. If more care had been taken in choosing the candidates, our party could have got some more seats in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

**KARNATAKA AND ANDHRA PRADESH**

For our failure in Karnataka, both the ungratefulness of Janata Party and our inability to estimate correctly our own strength are responsible. We had asked for 32 seats from the Janata Party, 18 of our sitting M.L.A.s and 14 those in which our candidates were at the second place. The Janata Party very reluctantly and arbitrarily proposed to give us 28 seats which we could not accept. It is clear from the election results that our friends from Karnataka made a mistake in assessing the 'mood' of the people there. We have now to start afresh in Karnataka. In Andhra Pradesh the result of contesting elections on the basis of adjustment to Telugu Desam, has been good for BJP. We have doubled our strength.

**FUTURE OF BJP**

As the President of the Party I take full moral responsibility on myself for the failure of our party in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, and I shall be gladly willing to undergo any punishment that the party decides.
But I would like that the party should make up its mind fully on fundamental questions.

Firstly, is the party's defeat because our decisions to merge Jana Sangh with Janata Party in 1977 and to withdraw from the Janata Party in 1980, were wrong?

Secondly, should BJP go back and revive the Bharatiya Jana Sangh?

**THE MIDDLE PATH**

BJP has chosen the middle path between the two extremes of merger and going alone. We have adopted the curse of co-operation with democratic and nationalist parties, while maintaining our separate identity. Has the policy been proved to be wrong and it is necessary to change it?

We should also decide whether there is a contradiction between continuing to widen the base of the party and making the party organization stronger, disciplined and dynamic.

**NEED TO MAKE A THOROUGH REAPPRAISAL**

In the BJP session held in 1980 at Bombay, it was felt that BJP should be developed as an alternative to the Congress (I). But, today after five years, we find ourselves miles away from that objective. From the point of view of Parliament our party has reached its 1952 position. In respect of the Assemblies, our position is not much better than that of 1980. Even if it is accepted that the elections in 1984-85 were held in extra-ordinary circumstances which were beyond any one's control, this does not explain all the causes of our defeat. It is true that as compared to other opposition parties, our party does not have a base in any particular caste, religion or region. Our base is the entire country and the Indian society. When the Congress (I) made national unity and integrity the only issue of the election, naturally we were the greatest losers. But even then we should make an indepth study of the causes of our failure and should adopt effective ways of removing our shortcomings and drawbacks.

**A WORKING GROUP TO BE SET UP**

I am thinking to set up a working group which may prepare a report after a detailed study and widespread mass contact, on the party organization, its programmes, its strategy etc. for the next five years.
The present situation is a challenge to us. Let us face this challenge with courage and determination. Time moves on, With renewed self-confidence we have to overcome all obstacles. In the words of Arjuna, our motto should be:

"No feeling of helplessness, no running away from the battlefield."

✧ VANDE MATARAM ✧
The resounding defeat of the Congress (I), first in Punjab and now in Assam, is proof of the fact that even while Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi may be receiving compliments for the Punjab and Assam Accords from rest of the country, the people of these two states hold the Congress Party squarely responsible for the tragic developments in these States during the past few years, and so deemed it their duty to penalise the party for its doings.

Not only in the Punjab and Assam elections, but in most of the Lok Sabha and Assembly bye-elections also, the Congress (I) has been badly mauled. These results only confirm that the extraordinary success scored by the Congress (I) in the 1984 Lok Sabha elections was the outcome of the extraordinary situation which was precipitated by Mrs. Gandhi's assassination, and which was very cleverly exploited by the ruling party. Two months later when the Assembly elections were held, the sympathy wave had considerably subsided. By now, deep disillusionment has set in regard to the Congress (I) government. Indeed, even the much-maligned Janata Government had not lost public confidence as rapidly as this one.

The victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party in both the bye-elections in Punjab has once again demonstrated that the principled approach of the party towards the Punjab problem has wide popular endorsement. The two main ingredients of Bharatiya Janata Party's Punjab policy have been: firstly, no quarter to terrorism and secessionism, and secondly, uncompromising insistence on Hindu-Sikh amity. The party will continue to pursue this Path steadfastly in the future. We are proud that all through these last few years we have not allowed considerations of electoral advantages to dilute our commitment to national unity and integrity.
HOLLOWNESS OF THE CONGRESS PARTY

It is noteworthy that out of 22 states in the country, the Congress (I) is in power only in 13. Poll results during 1985 indicate that in these 13 states also, the Congress (I) is fast losing ground. Governmental media are being grossly abused to project the Prime Minister’s image. But this image cannot deceive the people with regard to the reality that the Congress organisation is today an empty shell. The multi-crore Party extravaganza held in Bombay last week at governmental expenditures served only to highlight the hollowness of the party. Loud-mouthed declarations about moving into the 21st century cannot conceal the fact that regionalism is on the rise disparities are growing, and communal intolerance is ruling the roost.

INTEGRAL HUMANISM IS BJP’S BASIC PHILOSOPHY

As its Gandhinagar conclave three months back, the Bharatiya Janata Party accepted Integral Humanism as its basic philosophy, and reiterated its commitment to five principles including Gandhian Socialism. The decisions taken then satisfactorily answered all the questions raised about the party’s ideology, and the Bharatiya Janata Party is today all set to face the challenges of the future.

✧ VANDE MATARAM ✧
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