RAJYA SABHA

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***SUPPLEMENT**
TO
SYNOPSIS OF DEBATES

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(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

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Tuesday, March 4, 2008/ Phalguna 14, 1929 (Saka)

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MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS - CONTD.

PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA: I want to congratulate the Government for taking a revolutionary step in giving relief to crores of farmers of the country. I want to say that it is a historic time. It is also a historic Session of Parliament. All the women of the country feel proud of UPA Chairperson Shrimati Sonia Gandhi for taking such steps who herself is a women. I want to say that benefits of economic growth should reach to the common man of the country and our Government is committed in this regard. The Hon'ble President has mentioned in her address regarding Bharat Nirman, Sarva Shiksha Abhiayan and Mid-day Meal etc. for integrated development of cities and rural areas.

Social security Bill, 2007 is a good step for the labourers of unorganized sector. Pension scheme for old age person

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***This Synopsis is not an authoritative record of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.**

below the poverty line has been implemented. We have also planned for National Food Security Mission and National Agricultural Development. We have given thrust on strengthening the weaker people belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes. We have also tried to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institution in the Country.

I congratulate the Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh ji for all these things. All the Hon'ble Members, who spoke in the House on this discussion, have expressed their concern over the plight of the farmers in the country. I am myself running a Co-operative Bank and I know how the loan is repaid. We have come in power by giving a slogan of 'Common Man' and we are taking care of 'Common Man'. You are taking the name of 'Ram' and 'Ram Setu' time and again but you are not going to be benefited by the slogan.

SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: I support the President's Address from out side. The Hon'ble President has mentioned in the Address about inclusive growth but Sachchar Committee has made clear that how the uneven growth has been made in the country. Benefits of growth did not reach to all. At least, this Government should not talk of inclusive growth. You have deprived of many people of the country from the benefits of growth.

There are a large number of people even today who do not have foodgrains to eat and clothes to wear. They do not have even a small house to live in. I will raise the issue of minorities separately. You are running a number of schemes in the name of so many persons but I want to know that where is the share of minorities in the schemes. I do not doubt your intention. But these schemes are not being implemented properly and the problem is in their implementation. The

condition of Muslims did not improve even after sixty years of our Independence and it is also not going to improve further. I want to request to Hon'ble Prime Minister to take care of Muslims in the country.

Indian Muslims are being projected as terrorists in the country. You are working to defame the Muslims of the country collectively. You doubt our intensions. You should make a policy to improve the condition of Muslims. Indian Muslims are ready to fight terrorism any where in the world.

All the positive deeds made by the minorities are suppressed. If we issue any good and patriotic statement, no one turns his attention towards that but if an unknown figure gives any negative statements, he is made a hero. The evil face of Muslims are being reflected time and again.

I am very thankful that the Urdu Channel introduced for eight to ten hours in the beginning, has been made now a 24 hours channel. Urdu is a weapon for fighting against all types of communalism and terrorism. The power of Urdu language must be appreciated, this language unites entire India. This is unfortunate for Urdu that this is not a language of any state and the state and its budget doesn't support this language. Therefore, I request to accord due right to Urdu language and Urdu channel must be publicised so that it may reach to the people.

I want to say that Israel may be our friend but we cann't hand over security of our country to it. The Government are providing spy- satellite to it, which may be used for harming another countries. This is not in the interest of our country. The way Palestinians are being finished by Israel make Indian Muslims at great pain. The Government don't care for the Indian Muslims, they care more for the Jewish lobby. The Jewish lobby can influence our foreign policy but in case we happen to say

something, it is said that we are communalizing the foreign policy. We are saying this in interest of our country that the friendship with Israel and America is not in favour of our country.

SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Many important issues affecting the common people have not found any place in President's Address. It can not be denied that every year, approximately rupees one lakh crores are being accumulated as black money. Prosperity for the rich and affluent, and deprivations for the majority of people is the essence of today's exclusive growth. The entire country is reeling under unprecedented price rise of every essential commodity.

Farmers should get agricultural inputs at cheaper prices and they should get remunerative prices for their products. Land reforms are extremely necessary.

Employment in the public sector has declined. Unorganised Sector Social Security Bill, 2007 does not clearly define funding obligation and a time frame. The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector, set up by the UPA Government itself.

Unfortunately, not a single word on this serious issue, involving mothers and children, has found a place in the President's Address. The Hon'ble President, in her speech, has expressed high satisfaction on the issue of Special Economic zone. It should be borne in mind that the workers and employees working inside the Special Economic Zones are deprived of almost all labour rights, including Trade Union rights. The president's speech has failed to address the important issues of continuous downsizing in Railways and outsourcing perennial nature of jobs in the name of public-private participation.

The Communal Violence Bill is still pending. I demand that this Bill should come up for discussion in the House immediately.

The Government should make an introspection of its performances, accept the realities and take corrective steps.

SHRI ARJUN KUMAR SENGUPTA: The most important finding that we have is that if we want to have inclusive growth, then the growth and the policies related to growth must be targeted to the poorest of the poor. For that, we have to identify the small and marginal farmers, the unorganized workers. If we want that inclusive growth, the policy should orient towards them. The most important policy has to be to give them jobs. It so happens that almost 80 per cent of our unorganized and informal workers work only because they want to avoid starvation. There is no job security, there is no light or sanitation if their working place. So, it is an issue of giving jobs to these people in real sense. The poor, small and marginal farmer do not get credit, despite all the provisions made for them.

We have seen that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has actually worked out where there are proper mechanisms of accountability. In Andhra Pradesh, they have tried the Social Audit System which has been enormously successful and that has to be universalized for the country as a whole.

I must say that debt waiver not the ideal way of dealing with small and marginal farmers. But this is the first essential step to recongnise that these small and marginal farmers are the distressed people and I am very happy to say that our Government has announced that they recongnise this. But this is

not enough. We have to have progrmmes so that small and marginal farmers can actually get benefit.

Up till now, statistics show that the commercial banks do not want to give loans to small and marginal farmers. We have to create a particular system by which the banks are actually given incentives to provide loans. There is similarly the question of small units and micro units. Fifty-eight million such units are there in India. For this purpose, in the Common Minimum Programme, we talked about a national fund for the unorganized sector. You have to create an institution focused solely to this particular sector and then monitor them as to how they function and provide them money.

SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: According to the estimates, almost 63 per cent of the population in India is the working population. This figure is likely to increase to almost 67 per cent by the year 2025. However, to capitalize on this demographic advantage, a lot needs to be done in terms of investing in India's social infrastructure, namely, much more in education and healthcare.

Three policy projects of the Government deserve special mention and these are extremely noteworthy in the areas of employment, education and rural infrastructure, namely, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Bharat Nirman progarmme. Though the schemes are very noteworthy, I am afraid, there have been several lacunae, and, if these gaps are not addressed immediately, the growth of rest of India will lag behind.

The education sector needs to be revamped, making it much more job-oriented so that it can contribute productively to the growth story of our nation. According to UNESCO, the pupil-teacher ratio is 40:1 in India and 21:1 in China. With such

few teachers available, how do we expect to have quality talent that we produce for this country? There is also a lack of basic resources such as pucca buildings, sanitation, hygiene or drinking water. The quality of Indian teachers at the primary level needs to be upgraded.

In addition to the basic education, if we can consider imparting knowledge about technological advancements in agriculture, about Government incentives for agriculture and the basics of supply chain, that will enable them to get a better price for their produce. They could also be diverted to other agro-allied industries, such as sericulture, fisheries, handicrafts, etc.

The people who drop out of this sector can be gainfully employed also in the manufacturing sector, but, once again, they need to be provided with proper industry-oriented training, for which we need to have many more institutions like ITIs. Mobile telephony has taken off in a big way, but, our ITIs still don't offer you courses in terms of either servicing the network or repairing mobile phones. India has 8,000 public and private vocational training institutes. China has 8,00,000. That is the yawning gap. Very few people now want to turn to the teaching profession. This is actually having its toll in the tertiary education sector where you do not see quality teachers.

I believe that those who drop out at the primary stage, should be encouraged into the agricultural sector; those who drop out at the secondary stage, should be imparted with training so that they can be absorbed by the manufacturing sector; and eventually, the education system has to be revamped to support a GDP growth.

SHRI RAM JETHMALANI: It is so heartwarming that 4,000 ulemmas from all over the country and, perhaps, some from outside, met in a conference and issued a fatwa against the

scourge of terrorism. This great fatwa should be acknowledged as a part of the President's Address. This message must now circulate to all schools, colleges, centres of knowledge, holy places of religions-Temples, Mosques, Gurudwaras and Churches. I hope the Minister of Human Resource Development will make it a part of the curriculum which should be taught in every school so that the young should know what the true Islam stands for.

I must compliment the Government on its economic successes; I must compliment the Government for its various schemes. Despite the economic successes which this country has doubtless registered, the poor in this country have grown in numbers. Why is it that no Congress politician or not even any Opposition politician today talks of the control of numbers in this country? This so-called economic growth will never be a real inclusive growth unless you have managed to control numbers. I am very happy that you have talked about friendship with our neighbours. I am very happy that you desire to assist Afghanistan, the West-Asian countries and to help everybody.

In other words, we shall wish the well-being and the progress of every body. We shall not be enemies of anyone. It is this great Gandhian truth that we have departed from in the pursuit of our foreign policy and that has cost us dear. Let me only point to a feature of our Constitution which does not exist in any other constitution of the world. All the four clauses of article 51 of our Directive Principle were Gandhian principle; respect for international law and human rights, respect for treaty obligations, honourable relations, peace and tranquility throughout the world. Dr. Ambedkar accepted the fourth clause in article 51 that India shall strive to settle all international disputes by arbitration. We have forgotten Gandhiji in our international disputes. We never offered it to China when the

Chinese dispute was simmering away. We have never offered it to Pakistan, though Gandhiji had offered it to Pakistan when he was alive. China represents one of the greatest civilizations of the world, like the Indian civilization.

But let us not forget, however much some people will want us to forget, that you have on the records of this Parliament a Resolution passed in 1962. I remember every word of it by heart, but I do not wish to repeat it. It says that India has been the victim of a wanton aggression which has been the ungrateful return of friendship and our solicitude for the good of that country. Even more, it contains a Declaration that they are in possession of 93,000 square kilometers of our territory and no Indian citizen shall rest until the last square inch is taken back. A border dispute is a justiciable dispute. Boundaries of these two great provinces and the third smaller one were settled. Nobody has ever quarreled.

You will not do the obvious because you don't read article51. You have forgotten Gandhiji. I feel dishonoured, feel humiliated, that Prime Minister after Prime Minster visits China, but achieves nothing. Those who are in occupation of 93,000 square miles of our territory will want the status quo should continue. They don't want any disturbance from the victims of aggression. So, this Treaty, that you have brought, is an abject surrender and humiliation for India. For 40 or 50 years, you have not been able to settle even the principles. I want India to beat the Chinese in the peaceful pursuit of economic development. This cannot be done unless India is self-sufficient in electricity and energy. We are buying power from Bhutan. Aren't we ashamed? Second, we are now importing coal. We have started importing coal but we would not import nuclear know-how and nuclear stuff and nuclear material for the purpose of producing those 78,000 MW. I wish to say this and declare it

that those who in desperation have become Muslims, who have become Christians, will and must get the rights of Dalits because even in the new society which they have entered, Dalit humiliation has not gone. The Christians and Muslims must get into the beneficiary circle of these Dalit rights. In the morning, I heard a very interesting speech from my friend, Arun Jaitley. He talked of meritocracy in democracy. This merit argument, which Mr. Arun Jaitley pronounced this morning with great, great aplomb, I don't accept. The Dalits, some of them may get a few marks less, but they are entitled to the concession. After all, who was Dr. Ambedkar? He was one of the greatest constitutional lawyers of the country.

SHRI TARLOCHAN SINGH: The Prime Minister has congratulated members of our cricket team. We are all included in this. But what is being discussed is President's Address and I have to say that Common Wealth Games have been mentioned in President's Address. Government of India is doing much for making Common Wealth a success. I am related to sports federation. Today a situation is such that Indian Olympic federation is own one side and Sports Ministry of India is on another side.

I want to say through Deputy Chairman that Common Wealth Games are prestige of India and we will not support with any ego problem, any individual problem and whatever Olympic Committee and Federations are there, all should be given instruction so that we can get maximum success.

Secondly, Shri Ram Jethmalani has said a very good thing that it has been mentioned in President's Address that we should behave properly with our neighbouring countries. From 1947 till 2008, you should announce that whosoever has gone to Pakistan from India and he is born before 1947, he should be

given special permit so that he can see his house there. If you take this step it will be a very nice step. Everybody wants, if you take this step then it will be a very big step in Indo-Pak friendship.

Jain community may get their rights through a simple amendment in Section 25. Also, the status of five communities viz. Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Budhdhists and Persians should remain intact as National Minorities. 'Dalit' belonging to any religion should be treated as 'Dalit' only and his rights should be the same throughout the country. Minorities should not be divided. Their languages should also be duly respected. Why Kashmiri migrants are refugees in their own country? It should also be considered.

DR. K. KESHAVA RAO : I hope we understand that the Address before us is a very sacred Address. Today, the economic philosophy of this country, the new era of politics is based on Gandhism, and nothing else at all. It is percolating down to every corner of the country, every section of the people so that the economic fruits, the promise of social justice, the promise of equality and freedom reaches every section. We are entering into new era of politics. The Address before us is one where you can evaluate. Everybody has a complaint. It has to be revisited. In a country of our size; perhaps, the largest democracy in the world, today is ruled by a handful few, although we talk of decentralization of administration and governance, I do not think much progress has been made as we cherished it to be.

Somebody was challenging our track record. He was trying to say that economy has come to a standstill. But, I have to tell him that our country is the second fastest growing economy in the world. We are going to be the third greatest

economy of the world, next to Japan. Our growth rate has reached from 3.5 per cent to 9.1 per cent. Everybody wants to invest in India today. I admit that as far as agriculture is concerned, something needs to be done. As far as prices are concerned. We have done better than many other people. Regarding terrorism or naxalism, today we need to evolve a policy, a strategy where we can start a political dialogue and at the same time, we have to be stern as far as the law and order is concerned. We should try to understand this socio-economic problem. Only after that we will be able to solve this problem.

DR. BARUN MUKHERJEE : I support the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address, of course, with serious reservations on some important issues. The growing economic disparity between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' of the society cannot be covered up under the rosy publicizing of about nine per cent GDP growth. About 35 per cent of our population are still living below the poverty line. The other serious aspects like price-rise, growing inflation and unemployment are missing from the President's Address.

There is no mention about weakening of the public distribution system, jobless growth of industry and declining agricultural sector in the President's Address. But the Address has enthusiastically mentioned about the Special Economic Zones promoted by the government. The SEZs are actually creating a privileged class and a country within the country, threatening the livelihood of millions of poor farmers. It threatens our food security, compelling the country to depend more and more on the import of wheat and other foodgrains. The Government has now come out with a debt-waiver scheme amounting to Rs. 60,000 crores. But it will not be able to solve the problem at all. Because about 40 per cent of the farmers who take loans from private money lenders will be left out of

the purview of this scheme. The Government has failed to move the Women's Reservation Bill even in four years. Hon'ble President has expressed hope that the Civil Nuclear Cooperation with the USA will become possible. As the majority of Members of both Houses of Parliament are opposed to it, we hope the Government will desist from proceeding further in the matter.

SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ: We have done a lot in the last four years. But I am not satisfied with that. Arjun Sengupta's Report said that 70 per cent people in unorganized sector live on Rs. 20 a day. We have to take care of 300 or 400 million Indians. Out of Rs. 100, as Rajiv Gandhiji said, only Rs. 60 reaches the intended beneficiaries because of the administration cost, salary cost, inefficiency and corruption. We want more public private partnership. Because wherever you brought in the private sector, the cost went down, faster growth and better services to the citizens of India. I request the Government to bring in more and more areas in private sector. I believe that due to the coalition dharma the opportunity for reforms has been missed. For four years, some reform has taken place. We have done well in the last ten years. But the momentum which was built up carrying us forward should not lull us into a false sense of security. Industrial growth rate has fallen considerably. How will you give jobs or self-employment to three hundred million people. Employment has to be created because where will the agriculturist go? Because he is in serious problem. The rate of growth has gone down. Look at China, Today it is not a market economy and not WTO compliant, its cost structure opaque and we are going to enter into free trade agreement with it. I think that free trade agreement with China would not be beneficiary for India. I think growth rate will further slow down in the year 2008-09 and inflation can be increased. We should make

friendship with China keeping our own interest in mind. Our political parties have given up good governance for the sake of votes. We need votes, but not at the cost of integrity, not at the cost of honesty, not at the cost of good governance. If you lose good governance, you are not taking care of the *aam aadmi.* I would only say that in spite of all this, in spite of poor governance, because of the innate strength, wisdom and integrity of the Indian people, our nation will continue to march ahead.

KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: We have a long way to go to make the growth really inclusive. The President has referred to two threats, that is, terrorism and left extremism which are trying to create a serious problem for India. For solving these two problems, the bullet has failed. So, why can't we explore some other method, that is , dialogue? Have we ever thought of trying the method of non-violence in solving these serious problems? Let's go to the root of the cause. There is lot of injustice in our society. The poor have to suffer on every front. So, unless these causes are removed, these problems can never be tackled. I would also like to refer to our noble resolve of having good relations with both Pakistan and China. We had recently been to China. In every meeting, we met top leaders. They said our friendship is of two thousand years old. Yes, there were some aberrations like 1962 but the friendship is 2000 years-old. The leader, who was hosting dinner for us, referred Bodh Gaya as their Mecca. Every Chinese wants to visit Bodh Gaya. Have you ever given any attention to this plus point? Have we done anything worthwhile to develop Bodh Gaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, the whole Buddhist area to promote tourism? If we can plan our policy on 2000 years' friendship and develop the Buddhist places, then other problems that we are facing, will slowly get solved. I would also like to refer to Pakistan that we

in India have lost a golden opportunity to resolve the Kashmir issue. Let us again start the peace process. Whosoever may be the Government, the people of Pakistan want peace, good relations with India. There is a reference to SAARC in the President's speech. Can we not think of making SAARC something like South Asian Union as we find the European Union?

People say India is becoming a super power. Let us work for the welfare of all. That is India's philosophy. We do not want to dominate any country. Let us forget about becoming a super power. The world is changing. Our vision has always been the welfare of all. Indian saints have always prayed for the welfare of the whole world.

SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA : There is no mention about population control in the President's Address. This is the fact that unless population is controlled, there is no possibility of progress. Secondly, there is the issue of farmers. Loan of Sixty thousand crore rupees has been waived. In Punjab, not more than 1200 crore rupees have been waived. There are many reasons for this. Many farmers in Punjab have taken loans from money lenders about which no provision has been made. I want to stress this point that unless we solve basic problem, the farmers of Punjab are not going to be benefitted very much by this loan waiver.

The basic problem is that unless we attach cost with the price, with the MSP, they are not going to be benefitted. The small farmers are facing big problems. It is necessary that stress is given on cooperative farming for the welfare of small farmers. They are not able to subsist on farming. There is the need of diversification – Floriculture, Horticulture. Before that fix their prices and also subsidize them. They should be assisted by new

techniques to be provided by Government. Side business should also be encouraged. Only then their economic condition can improve.

There are other problems faced by Punjab. Lands of some farmers fall on the side of Pakistan. Because of this, they face numerous problems. Before, farmers were given compensation of four thousand rupees per acre for their loss but now that compensation has been stopped by Central Government. We are facing other problem also. Sarhind Feeder and Rajasthan Canal Feeder are two big canals. Their linings have not been repaired for a long time. As a result land of Punjab is becoming useless due to seepage. The Centre should provide assistance in this regard.

Rate of interest on loans taken by farmers should not exceed more than four per cent. If the farmer of India is saved from hardships, India will also progress. Today Punjab provide 50 per cent cereals in Central Pool. Even then, farmers of Punjab are committing suicides. Wheat is imported from other countries at the rate of rupees 1600. If you give farmers 1500 rupees, I guarantee that only Punjab will fill up your storages. Six per cent commission is taken from the farmers of Punjab which is very high rate. I want to mention about industry. Industry of Punjab is being shifted to other states because these states are provided with economic assistance. The industrial corridor should be extended from Mumbai via Delhi upto Ludhiana.

This is a matter of concern that officers are not being recruited in Army. The Army is suffering from 30 per cent shortage. Good Jawan is taking premature retirement. Para-35 mentions about Civil Aviation. Punjab is facing a problem in this regard. There is airforce based Airport in Adampur. Civil

aviation flights should be allowed from there. There is also the issue of internal security. What has happened in Mumbai is a dangerous situation. Our Punjab is facing no such problem. Central Government should enact a legistration which may allow every citizen to own property in any State.

SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: It is most unfortunate that the Samajwadi Party leader should attack the first woman President of India saying "The Address was very weak". I protest the initial insinuation made against the President of India by the hon'ble Member of the House. We need to use the latest technology in order to take governance to the doors of the people. E-governance is one of the methods that has to be used by the Government effectively. All replies, even major decision, must be communicated through electronic means. All notifications of the Government, even Government gazettes, must be posted on the website. If we could get replies to Unstarred Questions through electronic data on the website simultaneously, it will be appreciated. Therefore, the functioning of the House can also improve.

The concept of Gram Nyayalaya, as referred to by the President, is a laudable one. We have to see to it that, if decisions have been given with malafide intentions, then those Panchayat members are punished. In the field of communication, Goa, despite being a State, is being treated as a district by the Department of Communications. The Department does not consider it a Circle. I urge upon the Ministry of Communications to declare Goa as an independent Postal Circle. As far as economic zones are concerned, State of Goa has taken effective steps. They have said that they would get even the SEZs which have been notified cancelled in the interests of people.

Secondly, there is an important lacuna in the SEZ Act. The SEZ Act does not provide that compulsorily employment will be given to the people of the State where the SEZ industries are started. That is why we urged upon the Government of India to cancel these SEZs. I would like to talk about the official languages. I would like to say that the Eighth Schedule has been totally neglected. But, there is no proper policy for the development of these languages. Therefore, the Government of India has to take care of the Eight Schedule. There is no Interpreter for my language, i.e. Konkani, in the House. These aspects have to be taken care of. The hon'ble President has mentioned about the national highways. The national highways have to be improved throughout the country. We have to see that the elements of corruptions are not involved in the expansion and upgradation of national highways. I urge upon the Government of India to upgrade N.H.- 17 in the fastest manner.

I would like to refer to the point relating to Scheduled Tribes. We have completed the process of delimitation in 22 States. In Goa, when delimitation came, three communities were notified as Scheduled Tribes, but their figures were not available in the Census because these three communities were not declared as Scheduled Tribes. We urged upon the Delimitation Commission, kindly order the Registrar of Census to give you a short Census special figures and reserve for them six-seven seats to which they would have been entitled. The political parties are not represented in the Delimitation Commission. This is a major lacuna which is there. I would like to submit one more relevant point. Letter we send as representatives of the people are answered in negative in 90 per cent cases.

A committee should be appointed to scrutinize those letters. The Ministers feel that the approach of the bureaucracy is negative. The projects announced by them, are rejected due to technical reasons.

SHRI T.S. BAJWA: I support the Address of Hon'ble President of India. The problem of Kashmir should be solved by means of negotiations. In this direction Shri Atal Bihari Bajpayee had already taken initiatives and he had expressed desire to have friendly relations with Pakistan. The same had good results. Many passages have been opened between Kashmir and Pakistan for the divided families. A new passage between Suchetgarh and Sialkot should also be opened. This would strengthen our relations.

Several battles have been fought between India and Pakistan. As a result thereof, the farmers living along the borders have been affected. They have also to migrate therefrom frequently. The lands confiscated from the farmers on account of fencing on the borders, have not been compensated in their case.

I welcome the programmes related to health, education and employment in the rural areas as specified in the Address. I urge to get the recommendations of Round Table Conference with some groups of Jammu and Kashmir, implemented. I want that, like the minimum support price fixed for wheat, the same should also be extended far paddy.

SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: I congratulate the Hon'ble President of India for her impressive address. As stated by her, 9% growth rate achieved during the last four years, has made us optimistic. The special attention being paid to the depressed people and farmers, is appreciable. The National Common Minimum Programme, Rural Employment Guarantee

Scheme, Sarva Siksha Abhiayan, National Rural Health Mission, Jawahar Lal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission are such initiatives of the UPA Government as have boosted the developmental process. I congratulate the Prime Minister therefor. The initiatives like the poverty alleviation, health, education, employment, National Literacy Mission and women empowerment have been underlined. The Hon'ble President has emphasized the development of women by means of women literacy. According to her, the Government has highlighted to promote an environment of peace, accelerate the socio-economic development and strengthen relations with the foreign countries.

SHRI R. SHUNMUGASUNDARAM: I support the Motion moved by my colleague thanking for the Address of the Hon'ble President. I congratulate her as the first woman President of India. My DMK Party would support the efforts to materialize the 33% reservations for women in Parliament and Legislatures. The National Common Minimum Programme of UPA Government includes the policies of all of us who are coalition partners. I am pleased with the implementation thereof. The earlier policies are being continued for the well being of the people.

The UPA Government withdrew POTA because the same was misused. The Central Review Committees found it unfit. I plead for the reservation for the converts mentioned in the Address. As far as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is concerned, there should be a proper machinery to monitor the same. We want to see the expansion of National Highways in the country as announced, to be implemented.

SHRI RAJNITI PRASAD: I appreciate that the Central Government has performed praise-worthy activities, as regards rural employment scheme and rural health scheme. We are talking of reservation for women only in Parliament; but, they are being elected for the Panchayats and Corporations. I am of the opinion that the tribals should not be displaced and they should be allowed to live in the forests. We are pleased with the courts being set up in the villages.

SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: The Hon'ble President of India has not made any mention regarding the situations in Maharashtra. Mumbai is the economic centre of the country where the film industry has created a lot of employments. But the North Indians are being assailed there. The Government is committed to develop an atmosphere of communal harmony. But the Muslims are not being provided with proper rights. The Muslims had participated in the battle for freedom. I assure that the Muslims cannot be terrorists. I am sorry to say that no advocate wants to take up the case of any Muslim entangled in the terrorist case, because all the Muslims are regarded as terrorists. They are forcefully arrested and their scripture is called a terrorist book. I request to let their life be safe. Even in Maharashtra they are being ill-treated. All the communities should necessarily be harmonized for the progress of the country.

CONGRATULATING INDIAN CRICKET TEAMS ON WINNING U-19 CRICKET WORLD CUP AND COMMONWEALTH BANK SERIES 2008 AUSTRALIAN TRI-SERIES

SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: It is a matter of pride for the country that not only we have one Tri-series final on the soil of Australia but India has also won World Cup in Under-19 match. I want to put a proposal before the House regarding these two events that whether Indian team is Under-19 junior team or senior team, because they have defeated world champion Australia House should congratulate both of them. The Hon'ble Prime Minister is present here. I will request him to give massage in this regard and congratulate that team.

THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH) Mr. Vice-Chairman, I am sure, all Members of this august House will join me in sending our warmest congratulations to all those cricket players who have done our country immensely proud.

V.K. AGNIHOTRI,
Secretary-General.

rssynop@sansad.nic.in