



CHITRAN SINGH

SELECTED SPEECHES

The Book presents the selected speeches of the Prime Minister Choudhary Charan Singh.

When Shri Charan Singh took over the reins of the Government, many economic and social problems were hovering over the country's scene, calling for immediate solution. He stood up to these challenges and strove to solve them.

He was a Messiah of Kisans and championed their cause and the downtrodden. He had faith in Gandhian philosophy and believed that country's public life can not be improved unless people at the top have personal integrity of a very high order. He endeavoured to generate a new atmosphere of hope and confidence amongst people in place of uncertainty, apprehension and despair.

On International scene, he viewed that the country's glorious heritage and tradition had a distinctive role in spreading the message of peace. He had unflinching belief in Non-alignment and non-interference in other's affairs.



Choudhary Charan Singh

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Contents

REVIVE AND REINFORCE PEOPLE'S FAITH Broadcast to the Nation, New Delhi, 28 July 1979	1
PLEDGE TO GO AHEAD Independence Day speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort, New Delhi, 15 August 1979	5
HEALTH—A TOP PRIORITY Speech at the inauguration of the National Conference on Medical and Health Education, New Delhi, 27 August 1979	12
FARM MODERNISATION Speech while inaugurating International Crop Research Institute for the Semi- Arid. Tropics at Patancheru, Hyderabad, 30 August 1979	16
OPERATION FLOOD PROGRAMME Speech at the inauguration of Operation Flood II and on the occasion of dedicating the Mother Dairy to milk Producers and Consumers, New Delhi, 2 September 1979	22
COMMITMENT TO THE NAM Letter to the Cuban President Fidel Castro on the occasion of the Sixth Non- Aligned Movement Summit, New Delhi, 3 September 1979	26
WEATHER BEHAVIOUR AND CROP PLANNING Valedictory address at ICAR Symposium, New Delhi, 6 September 1979	28
HEALTH FOR ALL Inaugural address on the occasion of South-East Asia Regional Conference of WHO, New Delhi, 18 September 1979	33
CURBS ON ECONOMIC OFFENDERS Speech while inaugurating Chief Ministers' Conference, New Delhi, 27 September 1979	38
CHILDREN ARE NATION'S TREASURE Message on the Children's Day, New Delhi, 14 November 1979	43
ATOMIC ENERGY FOR DEVELOPMENT Address at the 23rd Session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, New Delhi, 4 December 1979	45

MESSAGES AND TRIBUTES

GREETINGS TO PAKISTAN

Greetings to H.E. General Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the occasion of Pakistan's Independence Day, New Delhi, 13 August 1979.

53

SUCCOUR IN DISTRESS

Condolence Message on the loss of life and property in Gujarat Floods, New Delhi, 13 August 1979

54

MOUNTBATTEN—A GREAT FRIEND

Condolence Message to the British Prime Minister on the death of Lord Mountbatten, New Delhi, 27 August 1979

55

JP—THE CONSCIENCE OF THE NATION

Condolence Message on the death of Lok Nayak Jaya Prakash Narayan, New Delhi, 8 October 1979

56

MOTHER TERESA—A GREAT PHILANTHROPIST

Message on the occasion of conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize on Mother Teresa, New Delhi, 17 October 1979

58

CELEBRATION OF 1400TH HIJRI NEW YEAR

Message on the eve of the Hijri New Year, New Delhi, 20 November, 1979

59

THE HOCKEY WIZARD

Message on the passing away of Major Dhyan Chand, New Delhi, 3 December 1979

61

Preface

The Book includes important speeches, broadcasts, tributes and messages of Shri Charan Singh during his Prime Ministership in 1979. The speeches are arranged in chronological order.



Revive and reinforce people's faith

I AM SPEAKING to you tonight as your first public servant. Today, some of my colleagues and I assumed the sacred responsibility of managing the nation's affairs. It shall be our collective endeavour to discharge this trust with sincerity and devotion. We are deeply conscious of the goodwill and affection our people have chosen to bestow on us.

All of us are painfully aware of the fact that inspite of the best wishes of our leaders, our achievements in every sphere have fallen far short of the expectations of our people. Thirty years after Independence we are almost amongst the poorest countries in the world.

Our poverty has to be eliminated and the basic necessities of life made available to every single citizen. Political leadership of the country must remember that nothing mocks our values and dreams more than the desperate struggle of our people for existence. Nothing could, therefore be more poignant than the look of despair in the eyes of a starving child. Nothing could therefore, be a more patriotic objective for our political leaders than to ensure that no child will go to bed hungry, that no family will fear for its next day's bread and that the future and capacities of not a single Indian will be allowed to be stunted by mal-nutrition.

Unemployment is on the increase. There can not be a greater misery than those young men fully qualified and wanting gainful employment, find themselves idle. We have to find employment for all of them. Indeed, employment should be the principal instrument with which poverty has to be eliminated. Elimination of unemployment will, therefore, be accorded the highest priority in programmes and policies of my Government.

Disparities of income and wealth have widened over the years. There is a yawning economic and cultural gulf between our cities and villages. This dangerous trend has to be checked. My Government will initiate steps to prevent the growth of cities beyond certain limits.

For a country like ours with its endemic economic and social problems, there is no escape except to encourage by every possible means, the establishment of small economic units both in industry and in agriculture. This does not mean that my Government has any reservations about the role of big industries as a matter of principle. Whenever necessary, big industries will continue to be established and, wherever national interest so demands, they will be established in the public sector. Not only that, in special cases even existing private industry will be nationalised.

At the same time, this Government realizes that in as much as corruption starts at the top and, percolating down, corrupts the whole society. Unless there is a high degree of personal integrity at the top level, in the public life of our country, corruption in administration cannot possibly be stamped out or even substantially reduced. Although the ultimate solution lies in the hands of the people themselves who have the right to choose their leaders, the Government will take all necessary steps in this regard.

Interested parties have spread various rumours about me and my colleagues. These tend to create apprehensions about imposition of Hindi on unwilling sections of our people and justice not being meted out to minorities, and other weaker sections of our society. This propaganda is an unmitigated lie.

All backward classes, weaker sections and minorities, scheduled castes and tribes shall be ensured all protection and help to develop

themselves to the optimum so that they play a rightful role in society.

Government will ensure maximum opportunities to all minorities for development—economic, religious and cultural—and strive for their effective integration within the Indian society.

Every language shall be given the maximum opportunity for development. No language shall be imposed on any section of the society against its will, although it is this Government's fond hope that in time, an acceptable *lingua franca* will develop.

The country is today facing a grave crisis. It is not ordinary times that we are living in. Our people are fast getting disenchanted. At this critical moment, our first task is to revive and reinforce the people's faith in a bright future.

Increasing prices have made our people apprehend the approach of an economic crisis. I want to assure the people that Government will take every possible steps to meet the situation. We have a huge stock of food in Government warehouses and ample foreign reserves to meet any contingency. Inefficiency in production of coal, power, steel and cement, movement of railways, clearance of goods in the ports and deterioration of industrial relations will be dealt with a sympathetic but a stern hand.

The general law and order situation is showing signs of strain. The creeping sense of restlessness amongst the people for this score will be effectively checked.

Above all, we have to restore in the minds of our people, their confidence in the capacity and resilience of our democratic polity to solve our multifarious problems. A new atmosphere of hope has to be created in the country in place of the present state of uncertainty, apprehension and despair.

Ideological differences may be difficult to resolve overnight. But a unity based on values and national objectives is the imperative need of our time.

In the comity of nations, India with its glorious heritage and tradition has a distinctive role to play. It has to spread the message of peace and apply the healing touch at every sore spot.

I may add that in the sphere of foreign affairs, my Government will continue to follow a policy of non-alignment which will not lean on any super power.

India is a rich country, blessed by nature, and with people of great culture, traditions, skills and capacity for hard and sustained work. It would be my privilege and duty to serve all sections of the people of this country and to do whatever is possible to strengthen the moral and economic strength of the country and to improve the quality of life.

Pledge to go ahead

WE ARE TODAY celebrating the thirty second anniversary of our Independence. It was through the sacrifice and endeavour of Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders that the country won its Independence after 200 years of British rule. On this occasion, it is proper that we pay our homage to the Father of the Nation and other colleagues. However, just paying homage will not be enough.

The recent change in the Central Government was brought about in a peaceful and democratic manner. A variety of things are said by people in this regard. They say this is an SVD Government and ask how will it run? But I would like to tell you that the Janata Government also was an SVD Government. It had one label and yet it was an SVD Government with many constituents. I would not go into details but would only mention that some persons tried to discard the ladder with the help of which they had stepped up to the seat of power. I had publicly expressed my disagreement with my closest ally, Shri Raj Narain, on 24th of June. But the events that took place after that forced me and my colleagues to leave that SVD Government. Today, the Congress, the Janata (S) and our friends in the Socialist Party, the Peasants and Workers Party of Maharashtra and the Communist Party members, who had expressed themselves in favour of this Government in the last week of July, together have a strength of 200 and more; call it SVD or

what you like. The day, the other people or the parties or leaders are able to form a larger party and challenge us and the moment we feel that we are in a minority, we will not hesitate even for a minute to step down.

I and my colleagues do not want a mid-term poll which is very expensive and creates lot of problems. But I think, no party wants a mid-term poll. If, however, we have to go in for one, we will come to you to seek your vote and confidence. I have every hope that in that event, the Congress, the Janata(S) and other partners, I have mentioned, will be able to form a united party which will be able to secure majority throughout the country.

Among the number of problems facing this country, the most serious is poverty. Of the 125 nations of the world, our position is 111th which means that there are 110 countries which are more affluent than us. Three years ago, our position was 104th and during this period we have slid down to the 111th position. This speaks of the level of our poverty.

The second problem is of unemployment. From the time the Janata Party took up the reins of power, 25 lakh more young unemployed have registered their names with the Employment Exchanges. Unemployment thus is on the increase. In the rural areas, both the educated and uneducated are unemployed. In the cities too, the educated unemployed are on the streets. Therefore, we have to eradicate unemployment.

The third problem, we face in the economic field is the growing disparity between the poor and the affluent. This disparity existed even at the time of the British. In a small measure, this disparity exists everywhere and it will be impossible to erase it completely. But that Government alone will be considered good which minimises this disparity instead of letting it increase further. Since Independence, in our country the gap between the rich and the poor has increased and economic power is getting concentrated in the hands of a few people.

Besides, social tensions also persist. I would not like to go into the reasons for this. But the poor, the Harijans and the weaker sections are not feeling secure. The minorities, that is the followers

of religions other than Hindu, have also begun to sense similar tension. The reasons may be historic and need not be elaborated just now. It will be the endeavour of this Government to eliminate the root causes of these continuing tensions and establish peace and prosperity in the country. We will be deemed to have succeeded only if no communal riots are reported for one year or for the tenure of this Government.

Friends, one immediate problem before us is price rise. In the last two Five Year Plans, investment for cement, coal and power production was meagre and in the last six months of the Janata Government, that is from January to June 1979, these sectors were handled indifferently. Coal, power, rail movement are critical sectors which have an impact on the total economy. In addition, there have been strikes and ships held-up at ports unloaded for as long as one month and even 45 days. The result of all this has been the rise in price level. This Government and my colleagues in the Departments will make every effort to see that production increases. They will not be confining themselves to Delhi, they will go to the power plants and to the coal mines.

As long as production does not increase and the prices keep going up, this country will never be able to progress.

Another thing to be noted is that the prices of even such commodities as foodgrains etc., which are not in short supply are also increasing. In this connection I would appeal to the retail and wholesale traders that they should desist from being greedy and earning profits which will only hurt our people and our country. We are determined not to allow black-marketing and profiteering that has continued so far; we will not permit it to continue further.

Friends, all of us know which sections of our people deserve Government help most. But before I go into that, I would like to tell that despite the rise in prices of certain commodities, we are not short of foodgrains; our warehouses are full and for that, we should be grateful to the farmers. The farmers will continue to work hard, even if the rainfall is scanty or there is no rain. Therefore, so far as foodgrains are concerned, the country will not face any shortage. Another silver lining is that we have no shortage of foreign exchange and this can help us import things needed by the country.

I was referring to the sections which deserve greater attention from the Government—the harijans, the tribals, the landless, the unemployed or underemployed and 50 per cent of our farmers who have got an hectare or less of land. These poorer sections have so far been neglected and the Government will pay special attention to them. According to the latest estimates of the Planning Commission, 48 per cent of those living below the poverty line are in the villages and 41 per cent in the towns. These are the ones, who do not get even frugal meals to feed themselves. You can ask a question as to why there is hunger when our silos are full of foodgrains. The reason is that they do not have the purchasing power. Even if there is plenty of food around, a man will remain hungry if he does not have the money to buy it. Therefore, the Government will pay the utmost attention to the poor and the hungry, 41 per cent of whom live behind the big palaces and bungalows in the cities and 48 per cent of whom live in the villages. If we can not give them the attention they deserve, the Government will not be fit to remain in power.

It will be our endeavour that everyone in the country finds employment. For this, we have to pay special attention for increasing agricultural production and establishing cottage and village industries. When the Britisher's came here first, 25 per cent of our population was engaged in such industries. Today, despite big plants and factories, only 9 per cent of the population is engaged in industries. Therefore, despite lakhs of cars and large number of skyscrapers in Bombay and Delhi and the number of people who have televisions and radio sets, I feel that we are today, poorer and weaker than the time of Jahangir and Aurangzeb.

To my friends in the cities, I would say that I am not inclined to answer the criticism appearing in the newspapers or the comments that various people make. I would like to say only that trade, transport and industries can develop only when there is purchasing power with the people. If the villagers, the unemployed and the poor do not have the purchasing power, our industries will not be able to develop and the country will not be able to attain affluence. Only that country is considered affluent which has a larger percentage of people engaged in non-agricultural occupations. In

our country, however, only 10 per cent of the population was engaged in industries in 1951 and this percentage remained static in 1961 and again in 1971. Industry cannot grow unless agriculture also develops. There is no other way. We will, therefore, attempt to encourage cottage and village industries in the rural areas.

Our womenfolk today break stones on the roads. What were their forefathers engaged in? They were independently engaged in small industries or were craftsmen. These crafts were lost during the time of British and we too continue to be indifferent in this respect. Our emphasis, therefore, will be to establish cottage industries in the villages. We will also strive to increase farm production. It will also be our endeavour to assist the rural people to diversify to other occupations because prosperity cannot be achieved if majority of our people continue to depend on land.

I would like to draw your attention as well as the attention of my colleagues and public workers to the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. Mahatmaji used to say that "ends don't justify means". It is as though you can adopt any means to achieve your objectives, howsoever noble. To be able to achieve noble objectives, your means should also be equally noble. You, and especially the public workers and all of us should keep in mind this advice; otherwise we will not be able to root out corruption. Corruption knows no bounds. A country where people are corrupt, will never be able to progress whosoever may be the leader of the party or whatever be the sound programme he might follow.

Mahatmaji also used to say that for a public worker, there is no private life different from his public life. To him, life is one and there is no compartmentalisation. If man's public life is not clean, you can well imagine, his private life cannot be any better either and he cannot truly serve the country.

The third thing, Gandhiji always emphasised and which we have tended to forget, is that "rights flow out of duties well performed". All around, you will find people asserting their rights, their demands to secure better wages and allowances. This is all right. It is necessary that people should have their rights but their rights emerge from their duties and responsibilities. How do we get our

rights if we do not carry out our duties? There is need for hard work and enterprise. If you want to be prosperous, you will have to put in hard work. You will pardon me, if I say that we are not prepared to put in hard work. If you look at the other countries, you will find that people start working in their factories, schools and offices at 8 in the morning till 5 in the evening, getting a break of 40 minutes in between. There are very few strikes. The emphasis there on demands is much less. In Japan, if a worker is annoyed, he only bears a black band on his arm and does not think in terms of striking work.

If other countries have become prosperous, it is because they have shown greater endeavour and enterprise. We want to earn more, have all the comforts and enjoy life without having to pay the price for it, without which nothing really in this world can be obtained, either by a person or by a nation. If the West today is more affluent, if Japan and Israel where the cows living in arid land, still give the world's best milk yield, are prosperous, it is because of the hard work and enterprise of these countries. If our country is to progress, we will have to put in hard work and show enterprise and when I say that, I include myself and my ministers. Only through our ceaseless hard work will this country be able to advance.

Coming to the foreign policy, we continue to adhere to the old policy of not aligning ourselves with any particular bloc. This will continue to be our policy because we consider it to be beneficial to the country—we will not be particularly inclined towards any country however big it might be. We believe that in the world, peace can be achieved and people can find happiness only by following the preachings of Mahatma Gandhi. If not today, the world will reach same conclusion the day after tomorrow.

So far as the countries of South Asia are concerned, our relations with them have improved, barring some cases, where too, we hope, there will be improvement in our relations.

In this connection I would like to mention our neighbour, Pakistan whose people, till the other day, were part of us. Our information is that Pakistan is trying to manufacture nuclear

bomb. Against whom are they making this bomb? They are friends with China; and with Russia they have no disputes. As for Afghanistan, it is a small country and Pakistan has no disputes with it either. If, therefore, I and my colleagues as also my countrymen reach the conclusion that this bomb is aimed at us, is aimed at India, then our conclusion will not be far from the truth.

It has been our decision and it remains our decision so far that we do not want to manufacture nuclear bombs, or join the race for nuclear weapons. However, if Pakistan sticks to its decision and continues in its efforts to manufacture the bomb or stockpiling of these bombs, I and my colleagues will probably be forced to reconsider the entire question.

With these words, I would like to appeal all those democratic forces, who believe in secularism, to cast aside their petty differences, and come forward to help me and my colleagues and my Government.

Health: A Top Priority

I FEEL HONOURED that you have invited me today to inaugurate this important Conference. As I was listening to Shri Rabi Ray, it occurred to me that whereas man has today acquired the ability to walk in outer space, here on earth he has not been able to take care of himself. The modern doctor has got entangled in the web which he has himself created. Medical education, as we have inherited and developed it, is a part of this system. It is acquiring sophistication day by day taking man to new heights; it is simultaneously making the ground slippery under his feet.

The Indian situation in this regard is perhaps no different from the situation in some of the other developing countries. I am not against sophistication. Nor am I against expertise travelling from one place to another. The world is but one large family. But if this leads to neglect of the situation at home, if it does not lead to alleviation of misery for our people, we have to pause and think whether the direction in which we are going is the direction in which we ought to be going.

To my mind this direction has to be changed and changed drastically. The whole system has to be changed. My heart lives in villages because it is there that India lives. And I cannot contemplate with equanimity the spectacle of the widening gap

Speech at the inauguration of the National Conference on Medical and Health Education, New Delhi, 27 August 1979

between the village and the city, between man and man. A system that imparts medical education to boys and girls for cities alone, and for foreign lands, has to be modified. It has to take cognizance of the conditions existing in the country as a whole; it has to give greater importance to the positive aspects of health and prevention of disease as compared to cure or treatment of disease. It has to participate actively in the spread of health education and it has to become a part of the cultural ethos of the people from whose investment it has acquired a major part of its strength.

To me, health has got four components—physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual. It is my plea that it should be promoted as such. I do not understand why health education has not been included in the educational system so far. Whatever be the causes responsible for this situation, we have to tackle them, and remove them. For those who are denied the benefit of formal education through schools and colleges, health education through other media should be given considerably greater importance.

It is unfortunate that in our country, growth of the human personality has been divorced from economic progress. Somehow in the process of planning, man for whom planning is intended, has not been given a place in the front row. We have made huge investments in steel plants and heavy factories which produce machines to make more machines. We take pride in the fact that we have made rapid progress in industrialisation and from the point of view of technology, we are ahead of many other countries. I share this pride. I am all for the advancement of science and technology. But at the same time it is a matter of deep regret that programmes which can be construed as direct investment in man, programmes like education and health, have not been given their due importance. I share Shri Rabi Ray's view that health should occupy a higher place in the national order of priorities.

A little while ago, I talked of villages. I must pay my compliments to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for the new health scheme which they have introduced there. I am told that more than one lakh Community Health Volunteers are already functioning under the scheme in as many villages and all of them are non-officials. This is a measure of far-reaching importance. It is

an excellent example of community participation in a major development programme. It has given concrete shape to the concept of planning from below. I am all praise for the Health Ministry for what it has been trying to achieve. But I must say at the same time that much more needs to be done in the rural areas, not just in the sphere of health but in all other fields.

When there is a power break-down in Delhi or in Calcutta there are screaming headlines in the newspapers. Similarly, when there is a failure of water supply in the capital, tempers are aroused. This is as it should be. It is normal for people to feel agitated when they are denied the facilities to which they are entitled and accustomed to. But one might as well ask—how are people in villages living without these facilities? Why don't we think of them? There are lakhs of villages where there is no electricity and no clean drinking water even. It is wrong for anyone to assume that people living in villages will continue to rest content with their present lot. Their interest demands, and the national interest demands, that elementary facilities which are available in cities must be extended to all villages. In the field of health, the Community Health Volunteers must be backed by an adequate network of primary health centres and sub-centres. And these centres and sub-centres must be manned by people whose education is in tune with the needs of those whom they are paid to serve. If future planning ignores this vital aspect of our national life, it will be repugnant to all theories of democracy and welfare.

All of you hold high positions in your disciplines. I am not competent to advise you on the kind of modifications which should be brought about in the present system of medical education. But I reiterate my fervent plea that whatever decisions you take, must be related to our needs—the needs of our masses. If it means some scaling down of technology, if it means designing a new short-term course for medical personnel, we should not hesitate to take decisions to that effect.

Shri Rabi Ray has referred to the problem of population explosion. I agree with him that it is one of the principal problems facing India today. It is making a mockery of our efforts to make life better for ourselves and for our children. Of course, the

problem is largely linked with the problem of poverty. Both have to be tackled simultaneously. If we do not arrest the growth in our numbers, we cannot bring about any appreciable reduction in poverty. On the other hand, poverty is bound to increase further if there is no check on population growth. We have to bring this home to every family in the country. There has to be a massive programme to motivate the people to accept family planning as a way of life. Shri Rabi Ray's Ministry has launched such a programme and I wish it all success. To this conference, I would like to say that doctors who command greater respect in the community than others, including politicians like Shri Rabi Ray and myself, should take the lead in making the family planning movement more effective. They come in contact with millions of patients and their relatives every day. If, while administering medicines to them, they can also talk to them about family planning and induce them to accept it, they will be doing a great service to them as well as to the nation as a whole. The subject of family planning is already included in medical education. I do hope that it is taught keeping in view all its current dimensions, and its immediate relevance to national life. I am grateful to the Union Health Minister for giving me an opportunity to talk to you today. I am sure that sound and well-considered recommendations for the reorientation and re-structuring of medical and health education will emerge as a result of your deliberations.

Farm Modernisation

I HAVE GREAT pleasure in participating in this function which marks the completion of the construction of the laboratory and other essential facilities for the scientists working at this Institute. I would like to congratulate the ICRISAT Board, Director and Staff, the Andhra Pradesh Government and all others concerned on this accomplishment. I am sure that with such magnificent facilities, the scientists of ICRISAT will be able to fulfil the role that has been assigned to them viz. to generate technologies which can help to elevate and stabilise crop production in the Semi-Arid Tropics.

The crops you have chosen for your research as well the farming systems included in your mandate are important for the welfare of our rural population. Over 70 per cent of the cultivated area in India is dependent upon rainfall for raising crops. In fact, whenever rainfall failed in the past, there used to be no agriculture and hence there was also no employment. The result was widespread hunger and famine. After India became Independent, we have been able to successfully avoid famines and starvation deaths as was witnessed in Bengal during World War II. We now operate a "Food for Work" programme, which is unique in its kind.

Speech while inaugurating the International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics at Patancheru, Hyderabad, 30 August 1979



Broadcasting to the Nation, 28 July 1979



In conversation with Shri Raj Narain and Shri Biju Patnaik



*Senator Charles Percy of the United States calling on the Prime Minister,
New Delhi, 8 August 1979*



At work in office, August 1979



Inaugurating a self-employment Training Camp for Rural Youth organised by the Delhi Administration, 15 August 1979



*With the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, H.E. Dr. Boutros Ghali,
New Delhi, 17 August 1979*



*With Mr. P. Y. Strautmanis, Vice-President of USSR,
New Delhi, 18 August 1979*



Opening the National Medical and Health Conference, 29 August 1979



Delivering inaugural address at the International Crop Research Institute, Hyderabad, 30 August 1979



At the Govind Ballabh Pant Jayanti celebration New Delhi, 10 September 1979



Signing the Condolence Book for Earl Mountbatten at the British High Commission, New Delhi, 5 September 1979

New technology, which can help farmers to mitigate the adverse impact of aberrant weather on crop production, is an urgent need of the Semi-Arid Tropics. It is only after 1930 that experimental stations were started by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research to develop improved techniques of dry farming. These techniques did not have the desired impact since the improvements brought about were marginal and the risks were still high. However, during the last eight years, scientists of the Dry Land Farming Research Project of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research have been able to develop integrated techniques of soil and water conservation for short duration and drought-avoiding crop varieties, and methods for better plant protection and plant nutrition. These are now being tested in pilot development blocks.

In spite of these efforts, it is clear that we need a larger and more intensive inter-disciplinary attack on the complex problems of semi-arid and rainfed agriculture. It was, therefore, an act of vision on the part of FAO, UNDP, World Bank and other Members of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research that they decided in 1972 to establish this Institute here at Hyderabad. The results achieved by the scientists of this Institute within a span of seven years demonstrate the power of science to find solutions to complex problems. ICRISAT is an example of the value of international and inter-disciplinary collaboration in agricultural science. The crops you have chosen for investigation such as *jowar*, *bajra*, groundnut, gram and pigeon pea or *arhar* are important both to the economy of our country and the nutrition of our population. Dry farming areas contribute over 50 per cent of our food production and over 75 per cent of the production of cotton, groundnut and pulses. It is of interest that although these crops now occupy such an important place in Indian agriculture, they are all not native to India; they have come from other continents, and particularly from Africa. Thus, agriculturists have from time immemorial never recognised political and geographical boundaries. Man has domesticated and used all plants which are of value to him irrespective of their place of origin. I am glad that scientists have emulated this example and have come together from different parts of the world and established a working partnership at this Centre. Mahatma Gandhi advised us to keep our windows

and doors open so that fresh air and new ideas may come from all sides. The work of ICRISAT exemplifies the wisdom underlying this advice.

While India is making progress in improving the production of cereals like wheat and rice, we have not been able to make similar progress in increasing the production of pulses and oilseeds. We are, therefore, anxious to step up the pace of progress in increasing the production of groundnut, grams and *arhar* crops on which ICRISAT is doing research. Our Agriculture Ministry has been working on a strategy for popularising improved technological packages in major pulses and oilseeds through a National Minimum Yield Guarantee Programme in these crops. The aim is to achieve growth with stability and insulate farmers from risks beyond human control. In this context, I am happy to learn that the ICRISAT Board has set up a Special Committee to deal with problems of technology transfer. We shall welcome whatever help you can give us in improving the production of pulses and oilseeds. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research is setting up a National Research Centre for Groundnut at Junagarh in Gujarat State. I hope this Centre and ICRISAT can together develop high yielding varieties of groundnut soon.

I understand that your mandate covers the semi-arid areas of not only Asia but also Africa and Latin America. All these countries have farming systems which are several thousand years old. While modernising these systems, it should be remembered that not all the earlier practices have to be discarded. Some of them are particularly suited to local climatic and soil conditions. Therefore, instead of discarding such practices, it is important that they are improved in such a manner that the retention of moisture and growth of seedlings can be promoted.

Nor should modernisation of agriculture automatically imply mechanisation. In countries like India, where generation of opportunities for gainful employment is the most challenging task, whatever mechanisation or modernisation of agriculture is necessary, it should lead to labour diversification and reduction of drudgery rather than to labour displacement.

I would like to enumerate, particularly for the information of

those who have come from outside the country, some of the steps we have recently taken here in India to promote agricultural growth with stability of production in unirrigated areas. First of all, we have expanded our efforts in the area of irrigation and particularly minor irrigation. We have introduced liberal subsidies for ground water exploitation both through individual and community tubewells, and for water harvesting through individual and community farm ponds. We have made farmers owning upto 4 hectares eligible for subsidy for ground water utilisation. Secondly, we have introduced a National Programme for the construction of rural godowns to store and market farm produce. Farmers in the dry farming regions of India are poorer than those living in irrigated areas. Consequently, they have little capacity to hold on to farm produce after harvest. They tend to sell immediately after harvest, grains like *jowar*, *bajra* and pulses, at a low price—even lower than the support price announced by the Government. It is hoped the National Grid of Rural Grain Storage, which we are now promoting, would help to insulate poor farmers from exploitation and from distress sales. I consider that producer-oriented marketing is the key to stimulating scientific agriculture.

Thirdly, we have started from August 15, this year, a National Programme of Training Rural Youth for Self-Employment in various sectors of agriculture and agro-industries. Under this Training Programme, we wish to impart relevant skills to at least 200,000 rural boys and girls each year through the technique of "learning by doing". I hope ICRISAT can also lend a helping hand to this programme. Finally, through various programmes like the Small Farmers' Development Agency, Drought Prone Area Programme, Desert Area Development Programme and Integrated Rural Development Programme, we have introduced variety of services to farmers. I am, therefore, confident that, if economically viable technological packages become available, our farmers will convert unirrigated areas into productive farming ones.

The year 1972 when the Institute was established, was characterised by abnormal monsoon behaviour and drought. This year again, when the ICRISAT Centre is being inaugurated, the behaviour of South-West monsoon has been abnormal. Therefore,

you have a wonderful opportunity to assess critically during this season, the impact of your research, particularly since Andhra Pradesh is one of the States affected by severe drought.

Some parts of North India have been affected by floods as well as drought. We also had flash floods in the Luni River Basin of the arid areas of Rajasthan, and also more recently in the Morvi area of Gujarat. Floods and drought, cyclones, and hail-storms cause untold hardship to people as well as damage to crops and animal husbandry. We have streamlined procedures of disaster preparedness and introduced a three-pronged strategy for achieving stability of production at the national level. The major components of this strategy are: (i) the introduction of crop life-saving techniques, including water conservation and recycling; (ii) the introduction of alternative crops based on contingency plans to suit different weather conditions; and (iii) the initiation of compensatory production programmes in irrigated areas and in non-traditional seasons. For example, the area under jute in West Bengal and Assam went down this year due to lack of rains upto the middle of June. I am, however, happy that Andhra Pradesh has come to the rescue by increasing the area under mesta by over 30 per cent. This is one of the advantages of tropical and sub-tropical agriculture, where due to the abundance of sunlight throughout the year several crops can be grown. Scientists should help to perfect the crop yield stabilisation or strategy. From the side of Government, I can only assure you that as soon as you develop technologies which are economically stable and rewarding, we will take steps to pass on the benefits to our farmers through appropriate packages of services and public policies.

I offer my best wishes to the Director and Staff of ICRISAT for continued success in the work of this Institute. I am glad that you have chosen this occasion for organising an International Symposium on "The Development and Transfer of Technology for Rainfed Agriculture". Exchange of ideas among scientists from different countries should lead to fruitful results. I shall look forward to reading the recommendations of your Symposium. If regional imbalances in economic advancement are to be remedied in India, unirrigated agriculture must receive the greatest priority

in the attention of both scientists and extension workers. I hope, the establishment of ICRISAT in India leading to interaction among scientists of many different countries, will open up a new era of hope and progress for the rainfed farmer.

Operation Flood Programme

I AM VERY happy to know that the representatives of the international and Indian organisations which have helped to build up the Delhi Mother Dairy and put through the Operation Flood Programme, are gathered here today. It is a good augury that Mr. Vogel, Executive Director of the World Food Programme and a number of representatives of farmer-producer families should be here when the second phase of the Operation Flood is to commence formally.

The Operation Flood Programme has been able to build up a good link between the milk producer in the village and the urban consumer. In the process, it has captured a good share of the milk markets in four cities of Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras, developed transport between the cities and the areas from which milk is supplied, strengthened storage arrangements, provided technical assistance to farmers to improve yields and milch animals. It has helped to create an awareness among the farmers of the need to form co-operation to help each other and avoid exploitation by middlemen. It has definitely helped many consumers in the cities to get milk in good condition and at fair prices with regularity and in different forms to suit their preferences and needs.

Speech at the inauguration of the Operation Flood II and on the occasion of dedicating the Mother Dairy to milk Producers and Consumers, New Delhi, 2 September 1979

The objectives of Operation Flood in the first phase were quite laudable, and, as we can see, most of them have been satisfied in some measure. Over a million milk producers have come to the fore. Today, we have learnt more of the skills connected with procurement, transport and distribution of milk. The very process of commercialisation of the operation of milk producers, particularly the smaller producers, has forced them to devote more attention to better management of their livestock, its feed, upkeep and reproduction.

I had an opportunity to have a close look at the programme some months back. I was impressed by some of the developments that have taken place under the scheme; but I must confess I had my fair share of doubts. The doubts were not so much about the manner in which the programme was implemented as about the nature of the programme itself and how far it was designed to meet some of the problems in rural areas in livestock management or in upgradation of the real standards of living of the poor.

The problems of our livestock in villages, particularly the milch animals, are too well known to be repeated here at length. In short, we have too many cattle, producing too little. The phasing out of the low-yielding cattle consistent with the various local beliefs and the need to have a truly indigenous stock fully adaptable to all our conditions is truly a formidable problem. This is brought home to us in all its pathetic intensity in a year like this of severe drought. The farmer is at his wits' end in large parts of the country, not knowing what to do about finding adequate fodder and water for the cattle and balancing the requirements of feed between the productive and useless cattle.

The other major problem in rural areas contributing to our widespread poverty is the prevalence of very low nutritional standards. As the population grows in the countryside and there is no commensurate increase in productivity of protein rich crops or availability of nutritive products like milk, fish etc. the real standard of living gets further depressed. The competing claims of grazing lands and areas required for growing foodgrains and other crops affect the availability of natural feed for the cattle. This throws the farmers on to more and more artificially enriched feeds.

I wonder if the long range consequences of such practices on the costs of milk and other factors have been fully looked into.

I would agree with the experts that these are long range problems and in the short run we have to devise programmes which will give an impetus to increase the production of cattle and arrange for marketing of milk and thus increase the income of the milk producers. There is no doubt that the arrangements made so far, including the chain of milk collecting centres, chilling plants, dairies extending veterinary services and improved transport and storing facilities have produced beneficial effects. These are impressive achievements. But were all the objectives equally well achieved? For instance, was the programme for provision of technical inputs and development of improved milch animal fully successful? Did milk production go up in such a measure that the consumption of milk in rural areas, particularly the poor people also went up?

We shall have to find answers for these questions as we go along to the second phase of Operation Flood. Some more attention will have to be paid to the upgradation of stock and segregation of animals that are unable to contribute effectively to production. Research to evolve animals which produce more milk with less feed should be intensified. In any case, I would attach immediate importance to the need to ensure that the per capita consumption of milk in rural areas goes up. I hear a great deal about procurement of indigenously produced milk having gone up. I also hear that the landless and small size producers of milk are contributing over 70 per cent of their production to the marketed surplus. Putting two and two together, I can only worry about the effects these trends may have on nutritional standards of children in the poorer families in villages. By the same reckoning, I wonder about the upgradation of nutritional standards of the children of the urban poor. Is the per capita consumption of milk of such families going up? Are the mother dairies truly motherly, looking after all children alike? I understand some surveys are being made about these points and we should benefit by the findings.

I would urge to look into these aspects more carefully while drawing up such programmes for commercialisation of the process

of milk production and marketing. The emphasis should, however, be more on production than on marketing.

The pattern of working of the Kaira Co-operative Union in Anand has very many good features in this respect and will have to be studied carefully in drawing up such programmes. After all, these are costly programmes in the Indian situation. This is so, even allowing for the munificence of the foreign agencies like the European Economic Community, World Bank, FAO etc. which we gratefully acknowledge. We have to ensure that costs are kept down; and if there is subsidisation, it should be only in favour of the economically weak both in urban and rural areas. I shall leave these thoughts with you today while wishing all those who are associated with these programmes that their endeavours should continue to be rewarding.

Commitment to the NAM

AFTER ASSUMING OFFICE as Prime Minister, I was hoping to participate in the Sixth Non-Aligned Summit due to be held next week in Havana. I was also looking forward to making your personal acquaintance and visiting your great country. We were touched that you sent a Special Envoy to extend your personal invitation to me. In these circumstances, it was a considerable disappointment for me to have had to decide not to attend the Summit. My many pre-occupations here at the present moment, prevent me from going to Havana.

I am, however, extremely conscious of the momentous and historic nature of the Non-Aligned Summit over which you will be presiding with such distinction. The Non-Aligned Movement has gone far and achieved much since it was founded. Both Cuba and India are Founder Members of the Movement. We have co-operated to strengthen it. The principles and objectives of the Movement are now found attractive by an ever increasing number of nations and peoples. This very expansion and growth of the Movement has brought all of us great satisfaction, though it has also caused certain problems too. I have no doubt that, committed, as we are to the principles and objectives of Non-Alignment, which bind us together, we shall be able with your advice and guidance, and that of many collaborators within the Non-Aligned world, to

Letter to the Cuban President Fidel Castro on the occasion of the Sixth Non-Aligned Movement Summit, New Delhi, 3 September 1979

find ways to resolve these problems. The unity of the Movement must be maintained. The objectives of greater and more rapid economic development of the Non-Aligned nations through co-operation amongst themselves, as also by their co-operation as a group, with developed and industrialised societies must be taken forward. I know how deeply committed you and your country are to the concept that this should be achieved consistent with self-respect for all of us.

Let us hope that under your stewardship over the next three years, the Movement will get strengthened. Your own wisdom, dynamism, patience and leadership, I have no doubt, will help the Movement emerge stronger and more united in the pursuit of its objectives.

Our Foreign Minister, Shri S.N. Mishra, who in my absence is leading the Indian delegation, will co-operate fully with Your Excellency and your delegation, as indeed with all the other delegations, at the Summit, and I trust this co-operation will lead towards the achievement of our common goals.

Excellency, I wish you and through you the Non-Aligned Summit meeting in Havana, all success in your deliberations. May your labours enhance peace and stability for which all mankind yearns so much.

Weather behaviour and Crop Planning

I FEEL HONOURED to have been invited to this concluding plenary session of the International symposium on Agricultural Research systems. This has been organised by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research to coincide with its Golden Jubilee celebrations, which has attracted scientists from several parts of the world: Their presence here has also lent meaning and content to the Global Convention for Agricultural Research systems which is also being held here.

I feel honoured because I am, in essence, thought and taste, a farmer and the agricultural scientists devote a life-time of research in the cause of farmers. I can claim to have given some thought to the problems of Indian agriculture. Last year when I tried to set them down in a book, I said :-

...if we seek economic development of the country that is, want men to be released from agriculture for diversion to industry, commerce, transport and other non-agricultural occupations and in as much as they will be released only to the extent agricultural production goes up, with fewer and still fewer men on the soil, capital in land will have to be invested in a far greater measure and technological improvement in agriculture effected at a far greater rate than we imagine, and have planned for. In other words, it can be stated as a rule of thumb that the degree of

economic development of India turns on the extent of improvement in agricultural practices we are able to effect and the amount of capital we are able to invest in land.

Next to, or along with the need to invest more and more capital in irrigation and fertilisers, comes the need for research. The most decisive incentive to the farmer can come only for research—increased production as a result of new and newer technology in seeds, irrigation or water management, application of fertilizers etc.

I have quoted this at length to underline the vital importance of stepping up productivity by intensive cultivation in India. As the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi observed, real India lives in villages. And agriculture is the most important occupation in our villages and therefore, there is need for much greater attention to Indian agriculture and to raising productivity. Indeed, the role of agricultural research as an aid to productivity is extremely significant.

The symposium must have discussed at some length about agricultural research systems. I am sure that you must have borne in mind the problems of countries like ours and the difficulties that the scientists and extension workers face in reaching out to the mass of peasantry with their well-tested ideas, practices and projects. The widespread illiteracy, deep-seated traditions bordering on the superstitions, all-round poverty, breeding attitudes of apathy and lethargy—these are formidable adversaries of those who would reach the fruits of research and new technologies to the millions of small peasants in our country. But efforts in the near past have shown that the Indian peasant can adapt to new technologies. But the role of nature continues to be paramount.

You all know that India is passing through a period of widespread drought causing great hardship to people and to farm animals besides damage to crops. The abnormal behaviour of the monsoon underlines the urgency of efforts in the area of stabilising food production. It will of course not be possible to get the same production every year, but we can try to minimise fluctuation to

the extent possible. I am glad that during this year, a beginning has been made by several of our State Governments in the area of contingency planning. Planning for variations in weather behaviour should become an integral part of crop planning. It will not be adequate if we merely have theoretical plans. Just as grain reserve is essential for achieving food security, seed reserve is necessary for ensuring crop security. The seed reserve should relate to crops and varieties that could be sown in drought and flood-prone areas in case the normal crop and the usual variety is either killed or cannot be sown due to absence of rains. I would appeal to the members of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research as well as International Federation of Agricultural Research Systems for Development to assist in the task of speedy identification of varieties and crops which can help Government to develop and implement contingency plans.

I am glad that the Indian Council of Agricultural Research has chosen to commemorate its Golden Jubilee through three important activities. The first about which the Director General spoke this afternoon, relates to the transfer of technology from the laboratory to the field. If this activity is carried out with dedication and enthusiasm, many small and marginal farmers will be able to get more income from their farms or fish ponds. I would request the ICAR to take particular interest in the transfer of appropriate technology to landless labour families. Animal husbandry involving the raising of cow, buffalo, goat, sheep, pigs and poultry could help to supplement the income of landless labour families provided you are able to develop methods of assisting them in the areas of nutrition, health care, processing and marketing. All beneficiary-oriented programmes for small and marginal farmers and agricultural labour will have to be supported by appropriate beneficiary-oriented services.

The peasant anywhere in the world is an incorrigible individualist. Working with nature and mostly in solitude, he does not find the necessity of having to give orders to or take orders from anybody. Yet, these qualities do not hamper his receptivity to ideas if they are conveyed to him in a manner consistent with his independence of outlook. There must be an attitude of shared

wisdom while conveying the technologies to the peasantry; you cannot simply be 'holier than thou' with a person whose experiences and responses are drawn from close communion with nature itself. For these reasons, it is essential to have a very simple mechanism of extension and the research worker will also benefit by having as direct a contact with the farmers as possible. I, therefore, hope that all Agricultural Universities and Central Institutes and Co-ordinated Projects will do their best to have such contacts and also identify the precise constraints operating at the level of poor farmers and landless labour and help to remedy them.

Your second programme of launching a movement for the conservation of natural resources, particularly useful plants and animals, is an exceedingly important one. I am happy to learn that a detailed blueprint for the establishment of a "Gene Sanctuary" in the Garo hills of Meghalaya for preserving *citrus* material has been developed by ICAR scientists. This will help to protect the environment which has enabled considerable variability to occur in oranges along the north-eastern Himalayan region. I hope you will take up similar activity in other parts of the Himalayas. I would like to emphasize the need for conservation of soil which is after all our most important natural resource. I am sure, soil science research will continue to be important and measures to check soil run-off, erosion etc. will continue to be guided by the researchers.

Finally, I am happy that you have chosen as part of your Golden Jubilee activities, the medium of an International Symposium on Agricultural Research and Education System for Development. Fortunately, in our country there are now close linkages between research and educational institutions and development departments in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries and forestry. These, however, need to be strengthened further, so that the benefits from the work of our dedicated scientists can flow to farmers and fishermen with the minimum of delay. I would like to urge our Agricultural Universities to take the initiative in forging stronger linkages with the concerned State Department's as well as farmers' organisations and also other voluntary and non-official organisations because ultimately the aim of Government should only be to help people to help themselves.

The ICAR can look back with satisfaction on the work done during the last 50 years. The next 50 years will be more crucial in determining the future of our country. Without adequate scientific inputs, our desire to accelerate the pace of agricultural progress will not be fulfilled. The ICAR has, therefore, to play in the future even more important role in the national development than it has done in the past. I wish you all success in this challenging task and assure you of Government's full support in it.

To the scientists who have come from outside, may I say how much we value your assistance, advice and co-operation. I was happy to have had the opportunity of inaugurating the new laboratories of the International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics recently at Hyderabad. Such institutions promote greater international co-operation among agricultural scientists and hence we welcome them. I also give my best wishes to the International Federation of Agricultural Research Systems for Development in its work of promoting greater collaboration among the agricultural research organisations of developing countries.

Health for All

ON BEHALF OF the Government and the people of India, it is my privilege to welcome you to my country. You have taken the trouble to travel to New Delhi from distant places in order to participate in this Conference. It is a measure of the importance, all of us attach to the health needs of the people. We, the people inhabiting the various lands, are all limbs of one corporate body. If one limb of this body is weak, it is bound to affect the other parts. It is gratifying to note that there is greater awareness of this fact today than at any other time in recent history. It is necessary that this awareness should grow and spread further.

As I stand before you, I am reminded of a statement of Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest man of our times, who restored to us, the gospel of truth and non-violence in man's struggle for emancipation. Two weeks from now, on October 2, we will be celebrating the Mahatma's 110th birthday. With your permission, I recall the statement I have referred to:

"I will give you a Talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate, is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it

restore him a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj (freedom) for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away.”

I believe, this statement is appropriate to the Conference, we are holding today. Where does the poorest and the weakest man we saw last, live or exist? We have seen him in all the countries represented here. We see him every day. He lives in a village lane, in a dilapidated hut and in shattered health, unaware of what is happening around him. He has been enduring the pain of his existence for too long. He is conscious of this pain. He raises a subdued cry. People look at him and pass by. Some halt and pause and think. ‘Is this what freedom means? What is the crime that this man has committed that he should have been reduced to such a situation? Is there no remedy for it?’

I request you to keep this man in mind as you discuss the various items on your agenda. He epitomizes the mass of the people living in South-East Asia and other parts of the world whom we have to help urgently.

What are the reasons for the pathetic condition of this man? To my mind he is the victim of a conspiracy of circumstances, national as well as international. At the national level, poverty with all its accompanying ills, including bad health, has been his inheritance. Unfortunately, poverty is measured more in terms of price indices, per capita incomes, G.N.P., purchasing power and all that, than in terms of the principal ingredients of health—physical, mental and spiritual. We are more concerned about the national gains from the green and the industrial revolutions than about the health of the man who brings them about. The vast distance that separates the adequately developed areas from the villages, the slums in cosmopolitan towns and all other areas of neglect, wherever these may be, relegates this man to a situation in which the development of his personality is well nigh impossible.

At the international level, the mosaic is hardly different. Whatever you and I may claim to have done during the last 30 years and more, the harsh fact that continues to stare us in the face is that

the world is divided into the haves and the have-nots. There are vast islands of affluence and endless deserts of poverty. Some do not know what to do with their money; others do not know how and where to earn it. More resources go into a single nuclear device than may be needed to establish a hundred-thousand health care centres in the rural areas. The armament race continues unabated. I do not know whether those involved in it are aware of the fact that four-fifths of the world's population have no access to any organised form of health care and that half a million women in Asia and Africa die every year while delivering babies.

If we keep the poorest and the weakest man in mind in the course of our deliberations at this Conference and take even a few practical decisions to lift him from the morass in which he has been sinking, we will really be taking a historic step forward.

I take this occasion to pay tribute to the World Health Organisation for the magnificent work that it has been doing to promote health as a vital investment in man's development. It is largely due to the efforts of the WHO. that small pox has been eradicated from the globe. The success we have been achieving, even though gradually, in combating other diseases, has brought into sharp relief the very great importance of regional and international co-operation in health care programmes. Again, it is due to the sustained efforts of the WHO. that national planners and administrators have begun to recognise health as an input in the overall process of development. If the New International Economic Order is accepted as 'a state of international just redress of the present imbalances between developing and the affluent countries', it is imperative that, apart from other things, there should be greater collaboration and give-and-take amongst all the countries to liberate the man in the dilapidated hut from the tyranny of his present situation. He has to be made conscious of his basic health needs. He has to be encouraged to participate in programmes designed to meet these needs. And those responsible for administering nations have to give greater and urgent recognition to the fact that economic development without simultaneous health development is an infructuous activity.

In some countries infant mortality is as high as 122 per one

thousand live-births. In some others, it is 15. The maternal mortality rate per 10,000 live-births ranges between 0.5 and 177. Can there be a more devastating commentary on the imbalances that prevail in our universe in the field of health? The New International Economic Order must take cognizance of these imbalances. This cognizance should find reflection in the regional and global strategies for health care and these strategies must be implemented with greater speed and vigour through the joint efforts of the developed and the developing countries.

In this context, I welcome the Alma Ata Declaration of 1978 'Health for all by the year 2000 A.D.'—this is a very laudable goal. If this Declaration is given the same importance as has been given to the philosophy of the nuclear deterrence in recent years and if it is implemented sincerely and urgently, generations to come will look back at it as the Health Magna Carta. We are a signatory to the Declaration and on our own, we have taken several very important steps to organise health care services and bring them to the doorstep of every village in our country.

I trust that some of you may have heard of our Rural Health Scheme. We launched this Scheme in 1977, and its objectives harmonise with the aspirations of the Alma Ata Declaration. The basic ingredient of our Rural Health Scheme is to place people's health in people's hands. More than 100,000 community health volunteers and 200,000 traditional birth attendants have been trained in villages under this Scheme. This band of over 300,000 workers are not Government servants. They live in the villages in which they function. We are also simultaneously trying to integrate all health and family welfare services in order that those health officials who until the other day were responsible for administering just one programme, e.g., malaria, should be able to give attention to all the basic health care needs of the community. Consequently, a new force of multipurpose health workers has now come into being. Nearly 100,000 such workers have already been trained. Currently, we are engaged in perhaps the largest ever training programme of health workers organised anywhere in the world.

The larger significance of our Rural Health Programme is that it seeks to reduce the enormous imbalances that mark the health

scene in our country. Our Health Policy seeks to give importance to the indigenous systems of medicine which have their roots in villages but which had languished in the past because of the absence of adequate support from the Government. We are also planning to modify the system of medical education in order to make it more responsive to our needs.

In the expansion of our resources in manpower development and training, in enlarging our drug industry and strengthening our drug delivery system, in research and, in general, in the implementation of the Alma Ata Declaration, we wish to establish greater collaboration with all the countries within and outside our Region. We have always appreciated the help that we have been receiving from the WHO. From our side, we are most keen to render whatever assistance, we are capable of, to all the countries within and outside our Region. Our efforts should be to help each other and thus strengthen the WHO which must continue to play its pivotal role in the harmonious, healthy development of man. There are areas in which greater technical collaboration is called for. I am sure that as a result of this Conference, the role of mutual collaboration will increase, to the benefit of the common man. This collaboration should not however, lead to the strengthening of the existing multinational monopolies in the drugs and pharmaceuticals industry. It is necessary that the countries of our Region should be enabled to exploit their resources and establish their own drug industries. On our part, we shall be most willing to help in this venture.

Curbs On Economic Offenders

I SHOULD LIKE at the outset to welcome the Chief Ministers who have responded so readily to our invitation at relatively short notice to discuss at this Conference, matters of vital and immediate importance to the country as a whole. The economic situation through which the country is now passing is one which understandably causes all of us some anxiety. For some months now, there has been a substantial rise in prices, and while there is an abundance of food reserves, there have been reports of shortage of other commodities. This is a situation which calls for concerted efforts by all concerned irrespective of the party or the region to which one belongs. Both the Central and the State Governments are vitally concerned in taking measures for remedial action. The State Governments in particular have a crucial role to play in ensuring that the people, particularly the vulnerable sections of society, have access to adequate supplies of essential commodities at reasonable prices. It was in this context that I thought, we should get together early to have a quick and constructive discussion on what needs to be done to help the people of this country to tide over the present difficulties.

On this occasion, I do not propose to dwell on the circumstances that have led to the present situation. I had dealt with this aspect at

length in a recent press statement. Suffice it to say that successive budget deficits in the last three years resulting in rise in the money supply, delays in making adjustment in administered prices, deceleration in the production of vital commodities such as coal and steel, failures in transportation, port and power infrastructure and a deplorable worsening of attitude of industrial labour have all contributed to bring us to the pass in which we find ourselves today. Objective analysis brings out very clearly that the causes of the present phenomenon are not of recent origin, but are to be found in deficiencies that had occurred over the past several years. In recent weeks, the adverse features in the economy have been aggravated by failures of the monsoon over large parts of the country. This has fuelled inflationary tendencies as a result of expectations of lower *Kharif* output and higher prices.

However, we are today concerned not with probing into the past, but in dealing with the present and providing good for the future. While there is no room for complacency, there is equally no warrant for pessimism. The Nation is in a much better position today to tackle economic difficulties than it was ever before. We have massive stocks of foodgrains with which we can effectively overcome the ill-effects of any shortfall in *Kharif* production. However, the bad monsoon is bound to lead to scarcity of drinking water and fodder. The State Governments would have to take effective action to mitigate this hardship. It is essential that 'Food for Work' programmes should be stepped up and employment opportunities generated in rural areas to ensure that people do not leave villages for want of work. The works taken up for this purpose should be such as would lead to the creation of permanent assets in those areas.

Apart from foodgrains stocks, we have substantial foreign exchange reserves which are being utilised to import large quantities of essential commodities such as edible oils to supplement domestic production. With these advantages and the requisite political will, there should be no difficulty by the Central and State Governments taking effective action to curb any unjustified price rise and ensure adequate availability of essential goods for the common people.

In fact, several measures have already been taken on hand towards this end. Wheat procurement has touched an all time record of 8 million tons and a massive movement of foodgrains from the producing centres to shortage and consumption points, is being implemented. Import of edible oils has continued on a substantial scale and maximum stock limits have been set to prevent hoarding. Maximum ex-mill and retail prices have been fixed for sugar and monthly releases stepped up to an all time high of 6 lakh tons. Steps have also been taken to ensure greater availability of cheaper varieties of cloth and to roll back prices of cotton yarn. On the monetary side, severe credit controls have been imposed and bank lending rates raised to limit trading inventories and to curb speculation. The drive against tax evaders has been intensified and the States have been advised to enforce the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act vigorously. At the same time, action is being taken in the various Central Ministries to implement measures designed to improve performance in the vital sectors of railway transportation, steel, coal and power, but in the very nature of things, the effects of these steps will be felt only over a period of time.

There are indications that the measures taken by the Central and the State Governments have already started yielding results. While inflation has not been halted, the rate of inflation is showing signs of coming down. Nevertheless, I think we must all concede that much more needs to be done, if the present trends are to be arrested and a healthy outlook restored to the economy. Indeed, it is a matter of distress that inspite of an abundance of stocks of commodities such as foodgrains, sugar and edible oils, prices should have risen. This phenomenon is clearly a result of two factors, namely, the inadequacy of the present legitimate channels of distribution and secondly, the ability of anti-social elements to indulge in unscrupulous activities. It is the bounden duty of the Central and State Government's to tackle these problems speedily. I am happy that the State Governments have all accepted the need for the maintenance of a public distribution system with a view to checking tendencies that create artificial imbalances between supply and demand. It would seem, however, that the existing arrangements need to be further strengthened and expanded to

cover new items such as edible oils. I was very happy to know that the recent conference of Chief Secretaries and Inspectors General of Police has dealt with these matters in some detail. The suggestions made and the conclusions reached would have to be meticulously followed up and the administration geared up to ensure an effective and efficient distribution system so that essential commodities are supplied at reasonable prices and in adequate measure, particularly to the poorer sections of our society.

At the same time, action would have to be taken to put an end to hoarding, black-marketing and profiteering. There can be no condonation of those who indulge in these anti-social activities. These undesirable elements, who take advantage of the situation to cause sufferings to the people for their private gain, will have to be dealt with sternly and with no compunction. We have already advised the State Governments to enforce the Essential Commodities Act and the various control orders issued thereunder. To the extent that these punitive provisions are insufficient to deal effectively with those who resort to various subterfuges and devices to achieve only their own private advantage to the detriment of the people, other and more drastic measures may have to be thought of. I am sure you all agree that so long as we can eschew the taint of personal or political consideration, while taking action against such economic offenders, there would be ample justification at a time such as this to employ drastic measures to bring such persons to book.

I shall look forward to hearing from you, suggestions regarding the legislative and administrative actions that may be required in this sphere.

We have also proposed to discuss today, the law and order situation in the context of the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. We have had an excellent tradition of holding free and fair elections and I am sure that this will be maintained during the coming elections also. We have a collective responsibility in this area as much as in the economic management of our country and it should be our endeavour to work on the basis of a common consensus in all such matters.

I look forward to a business-like and fruitful discussion today with you on these subjects.

Children are Nation's Treasure

CHILDREN'S DAY IN this International Year of the Child should serve as a reminder to us of the neglect of the child. Large numbers of children in metropolitan towns are born on pavements. Larger numbers in villages are forced to work for a living, when they should be playing, singing, dancing and reading.

Unless we as a government and as a people feel for the poor, observance of Children's Day may become a ritual, an exercise in escapism and self-deception. There are more than 250 million children in our country below 14 years of age. Eighty per cent of them live in the villages. Infant mortality continues to be high.

Our constitutional commitment to children and our National Policy for Children have to be reflected in action here and now. The Revised Minimum Needs Programme should be sincerely implemented so that the people's basic needs like health care, education and communication are quickly met.

There can be no gradualism in these matters. Governments at the Centre and in the States, social organisations and individuals should work together for the quick ending of poverty, social and economic deprivation and unemployment. Schemes for immunisation against diseases, child care and welfare centres should be executed fast and sincerely.

Government's policy on education envisages special incentives like mid-day meals, free uniforms and free text books to poor children. Child labour can be abolished only when legislation is accompanied by such incentives and also by schemes for full employment of adults.

All those engaged in child welfare work should bring to these tasks, a touch of compassion. Only those who feel and care for child can serve the child. Otherwise our schemes will end in wasteful spending on frills.

I appeal to all, particularly the affluent, to contribute generously to the National Children's Fund.

Only if our children are happy and gay, healthy and educated, well-fed and well-clothed, can we prosper as a nation. To this end, we should dedicate ourselves every day and every year particularly on this day and in this year.

Atomic Energy for Development

WE ARE AT the cross-roads in the history of the development of atomic energy and, therefore, the deliberations of the present session are of special importance. We are all agreed that mankind today is confronted with an unprecedented threat of self-extinction arising from the massive and competitive accumulation of the most destructive weapons ever produced, particularly the nuclear weapons. The existing arsenals of nuclear weapons, which according to an authoritative estimate made ten years ago, represent about 15 tons of TNT per person on the globe, are more than sufficient to destroy all life on earth many times over. And yet the nuclear arms race continues unabated. At the same time, certain events such as the one commonly referred to as the Three Mile Island Accident which took place in the US early this year, have aroused public feelings, not only in the United States but also in other countries, against any form of nuclear energy. On the other hand, the energy crisis facing most of the world today and the fact that, at least for several decades to come, nuclear power will continue, and possibly even in an increasing proportion, to constitute a major component in the energy sources of many countries, will force countries, which today have no nuclear programmes, to turn to this source of energy. In this process, the International Atomic Energy Agency, which was established with

Address at the 23rd Session of the General Conference of The International Atomic Energy Agency, New Delhi, 4 December 1979

the objective, as clearly stated in its Statute, of accelerating and enlarging the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world, has an important role to perform. It is our fervent hope that in discharging this important role, the Agency will function in strict conformity with the letter and spirit of its Statute. We should always remember that the Agency was established primarily to help in strengthening international co-operation for the promotion of the transfer and utilisation of nuclear energy for economic and social development, especially in the developing countries. While it is true that the Agency also has regulatory functions, it cannot be contested that such regulatory functions can only be ancillary to the main promotional role of the Agency. I mention this because we are concerned to note that in recent years increasing stress is being placed on the regulatory rather than the promotional aspects of the Agency's functioning. Safeguards have become more important than technical assistance. Furthermore, what technical assistance continues to be provided by the Agency is being subjected to restrictive and preferential pre-conditions. This trend should be reversed in order to avoid the erosion of the credibility of this great Organisation which has in the past made very significant contributions to the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for the benefit of mankind.

During the past decade, much has been said and written on the question of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. India has always believed in the concept of genuine and comprehensive non-proliferation and we have consistently held that non-proliferation measures, in order to be truly effective, must be applied uniformly and universally to all nuclear activities in all States. It is not merely of historical interest to recall that the concept of 'non-proliferation of nuclear weapons' was for the first time introduced in India in 1964 when, by inscribing a new item under that agenda, we asked the United Nations to make a departure from earlier discussions which were based on the necessity to avoid the further spread or dissemination of nuclear weapons. This initiative was in line with the proposal made by India exactly a decade earlier in 1954 for a complete cessation of all nuclear weapon tests. Our approach then, as now, was based on the correct premise borne out of bitter

historical experience that both horizontal and vertical proliferation, being integral parts of the same problem, had to be dealt with as a whole, always together and simultaneously, if the problem of proliferation of nuclear weapons was to be really solved. In 1965, the United Nations urged the early conclusion of a Non-proliferation treaty which "should embody an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations of the nuclear and non-nuclear powers". The key word here was 'embody'. And yet the treaty, when it finally emerged, was almost totally silent on the problem of vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. The goal of nuclear non-proliferation, as the Final Document of the United Nations Special Session devoted to disarmament held last year clearly states, "is on the one hand to prevent the emergence of any additional nuclear-weapon States besides the existing five nuclear-weapon States and on the other progressively reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons altogether". The Final Document went on to say that "this involves obligations and responsibilities on the part of both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, the former undertaking to stop the nuclear arms race and to achieve nuclear disarmament...and all States undertaking to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons". And yet, in practice, we find that while various measures have been initiated to check the possible spread of nuclear weapons, we are yet to witness a single significant step to even slow down, let alone stop or reverse, the far more dangerous and absolutely irrational nuclear arms race that is actually going on. I am convinced that we cannot expect any progress in one without corresponding progress in the other. What is even more distressing is the fact that many of those, who preach the virtue of horizontal non-proliferation, claim in the same breath, their right, based on the theory of nuclear deterrence, not only to possess but even to use nuclear weapons to safeguard national security.

Non-proliferation is a much abused word. In the name of non-proliferation, efforts continue to be made to put obstacles in the way of developing countries who are trying, very often at considerable sacrifice, to develop indigenous facilities for the peaceful utilisation of atomic energy. In the name of non-proliferation, smaller nations are forced to accept restraints and

restrictions none of which the nuclear weapon powers are prepared to accept for themselves. In the name of non-proliferation, there are even moves towards institutional measures aimed at limiting certain nuclear fuel cycle activities to a so-called safe and secure locations, thereby introducing a regime where the vast majority of countries will be placed at a permanent economic and technological disadvantage. This is in spite of the clear injunction laid down in the unanimously adopted Final Document of the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament that "Non-proliferation measures should not jeopardise the full exercise of the inalienable rights of all States to apply and develop their programmes for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for economic and social development in conformity with their priorities, interests and needs". The document went on to say that "all States should also have access to, and be free to acquire technology, equipment and materials for peaceful uses of nuclear energy, taking into account the particular needs of the developing countries". These are important considerations which should constantly be kept in mind by the members of the International Atomic Energy Agency which has the primary role in the promotion of the peaceful utilisation of atomic energy.

I understand that in recent years, one of the major functions of the Agency has been the strengthening of international safeguards covering national nuclear installations. All are agreed that safeguards should be non-discriminatory. At the same time, the view is held, with which we cannot agree, that safeguards are relevant only in the case of horizontal proliferation. If international verification which is what is sought to be ensured through safeguards, is a non-proliferation measure, it must apply equally to the horizontal and vertical aspects of proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is contended that the jurisdiction of the International Atomic Energy Agency covers only the peaceful applications of atomic energy and, as such, it cannot consider the question of imposing safeguards on non-civilian nuclear establishments. I would submit that the time has come for the Agency to carefully reflect on this aspect of the problem. This is particularly important when we know that the only reported cases of large-scale diversions of weapons grade nuclear material, which



Being garlanded by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Sh. M.G. Ramachandran, New Delhi, 6 September 1979



Attending Urs of Nizamuddin Aulia, New Delhi, 10 September 1979



*Inaugurating the WHO Regional Conference for South-East Asia,
18 September 1979*



With the King of Nepal, New Delhi, 21 September 1979



Addressing the Chief Ministers Conference, New Delhi, 27 September 1979



Offering flowers at the Samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi



*Launching an English Weekly **Real India** and Hindi Weekly **Aslee Bharat**,
New Delhi, 2 October 1979*



Inaugurating Operation Flood-II (Mother Dairy) New Delhi, 2 October 1979



Paying Floral Tributes to Jaya Prakash Narayan, New Delhi, 9 October 1979



Releasing a stamp to mark the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, New Delhi, 7 December 1979



Presenting a gift to Mother Teresa, New Delhi, 7 November 1979



With President N. Sanjiva Reddy, 9 January 1980



At the Iftar Reception, New Delhi

is precisely what safeguards are meant to prevent, have taken place from the sanctuaries of the nuclear weapon States.

The international community has already declared the use of nuclear weapons as a violation of the UN Charter and a crime against humanity. The Geneva Protocol of 1925, which prohibits the use in war of chemical and biological weapons, has proved invaluable in current efforts towards the elimination of both these categories of weapons of mass destruction. A similar treaty or convention prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons could prove a precursor to nuclear disarmament, besides being useful in itself.

India has been in the field of nuclear energy for over three decades. At the end of the second world war, when most nations looked upon atomic energy as a force of destruction, India was already thinking in terms of harnessing atomic energy solely for economic development. The development and growth of nuclear science in India from the laboratory stage to the industrial stage, largely on its own, vindicates the hypothesis that developing countries need not follow the path traversed by advanced countries for the application of science to society but can, and must, jump certain stages of technological development through planned utilisation of advanced science and technology. Direct benefits of the Indian atomic energy programme are more profound and of immense significance. The knowledge and skills imparted to Indian industry has considerably enhanced their technological capability, quality consciousness and self-confidence. The contribution made by atomic energy has helped in the generation of a national scientific culture. At the same time, we have never deflected from our commitment to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

As I have already stated, the International Atomic Energy Agency has an important role to play in the development of the peaceful uses of atomic energy. I hope that the deliberations of this and succeeding conferences of the International Atomic Energy Agency will succeed in formulating a long term plan that would enable the developing countries in particular, to utilise the benefits of atomic energy for their national development. The Agency should also seek to establish the means to implement such a plan.

In this process, the Agency should look at the existing norms of international co-operation in this field. What we need is co-operation and not non-co-operation. In this area, as in many others, the task before us calls for wisdom and maturity coupled with a high degree of mutual trust and understanding.

MESSAGES/TRIBUTES

Greetings to Pakistan

ON THE OCCASION of the Independence Day anniversary of Pakistan, it gives me great pleasure to extend on behalf of the people and Government of India and on my own behalf, sincere greetings and felicitations to Your Excellency and to the Government and people of Pakistan.

Please also accept my best wishes for Your Excellency's health and for the progress and prosperity of the people of Pakistan.

Message of greetings to H.E. General Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the occasion of Pakistan's Independence Day, New Delhi, 13 August 1979

Succour in Distress

I AM DEEPLY shocked at the enormous loss of precious lives and destruction of property caused by the sudden floods in Morvi town and Lilapur village of Rajkot district in Gujarat. I am sure, the entire nation will assist the Gujarat Government in providing succour and relief to the affected people. Please convey my heartfelt condolences to the members of these families who have lost their near and dear ones. While nature's fury cannot altogether be prevented, we should ensure that the injuries caused by it are healed up quickly.

I assure you that the Government of India will spare no pains to assist the Gujarat Government in this hour of trial.

Mountbatten—A Great Friend

I AM DEEPLY grieved to learn of the death of Lord Mountbatten in tragic circumstances. His distinguished record of service for his motherland which took him to the highest ranks in the Royal Navy and the defence forces will find a place in the history of United Kingdom. Here in India, he will be remembered as a Viceroy and a Governor General who at the time of India's Independence gave us abundantly of his wisdom and goodwill. It was in recognition of our affection for him, respect for his impartiality and regard for his concern for India's freedom that the entire nation readily accepted Lord Mountbatten as the first Governor General of Independent India. His drive and vigour helped in the difficult period after our Independence. In his demise, India has lost a great friend. We are particularly sad that his projected visit to India at the end of this year cannot take place.

I would request you to convey our sincere condolences to the members of his family.

JP—The Conscience of the Nation

THE DEATH OF Lok Nayak Jaya Prakash Narayan has stilled the conscience of the nation. Since the death of Mahatma Gandhi, the mantle of moral and spiritual leadership of the nation had appropriately fallen on him. This onerous responsibility, he was discharging till almost the last moment of his life. His contributions to awaken the best in our people are too numerous to be recalled. Representing the spirit of youthful rebellion against foreign domination, J.P. in due course of time blossomed into a restless fighter for the poor, the depressed, the exploited. In the formative years of our Independence, J.P., while he scrupulously kept himself away from power, held aloft the torch of freedom and individual liberty. His total dedication to Gandhism came when he decided to leave active politics and devote his life to the Bhoodan Movement. But this did not deter him from coming back and assuming the leadership of the people at a time when the flames of democratic freedom were sought to be extinguished. His efforts set in motion a second liberation movement and India emerged once again in March 1977 as a torch-bearer of individual liberty and people's democracy. Even as he was waging this historic struggle, he fought valiantly against an illness which in the case of less courageous people would have been fatal. His loss is irreparable. But the message he has left, will always serve as a beacon reminding

Condolence message on the death of Lok Nayak Jaya Prakash Narayan, New Delhi, 8 October 1979

us of the higher purposes and dedications. May his soul rest in peace! The sun of integrity in public life has sunk but let us hope, no night will follow!

Mother Teresa—A Great Philanthropist

MY HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS to Mother Teresa for the singular honour conferred on her by the award of Nobel Peace Prize this year. Mother Teresa is an institution by herself. She has demonstrated the efficacy of the Gandhian approach of service to humanity. Her choice is well deserved and there cannot be any other person more deserving than Mother Teresa for this unique distinction. India is proud of the laurels she has brought to this country which she has adopted as hers. I am grateful for the honour done to India which stands fully committed towards establishing peace in the world.

Message on the occasion of conferment of the Nobel Peace Prize on Mother Teresa,
New Delhi, 17 October 1979

Celebration of 1400th Hijri New Year

THE WORLD IS commemorating the 1400th year of Hijra beginning tomorrow. An important historical occasion, such as this, is not only sacred for our Muslim brothers but for all mankind. We plan to celebrate the 1400th year of the Hijra in a befitting manner and I would call upon all Indians to participate and support these celebrations. For India, the celebration of the 1400th anniversary of Hijra, which has been declared the "Year of Jerusalem" is equally significant. We have witnessed in this century the displacement of thousands of people of Palestine and lately the usurpation of the holy city of Jerusalem.

In this period of harsh political antagonisms fuelled by narrow interests, we earnestly feel the need to place emphasis on an underlying and continuous thread of morality in relations among nation States. India's principled stand arises from this deep rooted belief. We protested against the actions of Israel from the time when areas were forcibly occupied and people driven from their ancestral hearths and homes. We have never wavered in demanding the vacation of Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights. Further, the holy city of Jerusalem ought to become a symbol of peace and harmony and not a bone of contention. It is our wish that Jerusalem should be open to people of all religions who can freely worship in the shrines of the holy

city. In this "Year of Jerusalem", the world community owes it to the disinherited residents and citizens of that city to work for the implementation of the resolutions of the U.N. Security Council and the U.N. General Assembly which have continuously reaffirmed the right of our Arab brothers to return to their homeland.

The Hockey Wizard

IN THE PASSING away of Major Dhyan Chand, we have lost one of the leading luminaries of the sports world. The genius, the artistry and the dignity that Major Dhyan Chand brought to the game of hockey, will be remembered as long as the game continues to be played in any part of the world.

I send my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.



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