

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES OFFICIAL REPORT IN THE HUNDRED
AND EIGHTY THIRD SESSION OF THE

RAJYA SABHA

Commencing on the 25th March, 1998/4th Chaitra, 1920 (Saka)

RAJYA SABHA

*Wednesday, the 25th March, 1998/4th
Chaitra, 1920 (Saka)*

The House met at sixteen minutes past
twelve of the clock Mr. Chairman *in the
Chair.*

(The National Anthem was played.)

**ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING THE
LEADER OF THE HOUSE**

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to inform
Members that the Prime Minister has
nominated Shri Sikander Bakht as the Leader
of the House in the Rajya Sabha.

**ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING THE
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION**

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to inform
Members that I have recognised the Indian
National Congress [Congress (I)] Party in the
Rajya Sabha as the Opposition party and its
leader Dr. Manmohan Singh as the Leader of
the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Laid on the Table

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I beg to
lay on the table a copy (in English and Hindi)
of the President's Address to both the Houses
of Parliament assembled together on the 25th
March, 1998. [Placed in Library, See No.
LT-2/98] *[Text of the Address delivered by
the President (Shri K.R. Naryanan) in
English.]* Hon'ble Members,

I have great pleasure in addressing
this first session of both Houses of
Parliament after the 12th General Election to
the Lok Sabha. I extend my warm
felicitations to the members of the new Lok
Sabha.

I thank the Election Commission of India
for conducting the General Election with
despatch and efficiency.

The just concluded mid-term election

reflected the firm conviction of our people in
democratic processes of change. Contrary to
forecasts that the turnout would be low, in
fact, nearly 62 per cent of the electorate
exercised their franchise. The results are
indicative of regional aspirations seeking a
place in the national perspective. My
Government will ensure the fulfilment of
these aspirations even while looking after
national interests.

Parliamentary arithmetic alone cannot
provide the key to good governance. That
key lies in the willingness of all to rise above
notions of parliamentary majority and
minority and work in a spirit of* cooperation,
conciliation and consensus. My Government,
imbued with this spirit, will chart a new
course in governance that seeks to unify and
not divide: dialogue, debate and discussion
will replace the narrow antagonisms of the
past.

After the mid-term election, the nation
now looks forward to a Government that will
get down to business. This is precisely what
the Government proposes to do: The most
immediate tasks include the passage of the
Supplementary Demands for 1997-98 and
the Vote on Account for 1998-99. Thereafter,
pending matters, including legislative
business, will be taken up in right earnest.

Starting now, all our efforts will be
directed at building a New India—an India
free from the triple-curse of insecurity,
hunger and corruption; an India free from
illiteracy and disease; an India where more
and more people are gainfully employed; an
India where every citizen, irrespective of his
caste, creed or faith, feels proud to be an
Indian.

Secularism is integral to India's traditions.
My Government is unequivocally
committed to upholding