

BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY

**Elections to the 14th Lok Sabha
April-May 2004**

VISION DOCUMENT - 2004

Dear Countrymen,

Elections to the 14th Lok Sabha will take place in April-May 2004. The Bharatiya Janata Party, along with its partners in the National Democratic Alliance, has entered the electoral fray seeking a renewed mandate under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. On this occasion, I am pleased to present before you the 'Vision Document 2004', which sets forth our Party's core beliefs, basic commitments, and our priority agenda for the next five years and beyond.

India is an ancient civilisation with a rich cultural and spiritual heritage. We have perennial rivers, fertile land, hardworking kisans, industrious workers, skilled artisans, great intellectuals, a robust scientific and technological establishment, and capable entrepreneurs. Why, then, did India lag behind in development? The answer lay in the Congress party's wrong policies and long misrule.

The Congress era in Indian politics is over. The era of the BJP has begun. India has now embarked on a path of rapid progress and all-round development. India is more ambitious, more self-confident and more capable now than ever before.

For the BJP, our vision, our political journey and our distinctive identity have always been personified by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Since the inception of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, and the founding of the BJP, Shri Atalji has been our leader, guiding the Party throughout its steady march forward in the past five decades, inspiring countless Indians with his poetry, his thoughts, his tapasya, and his towering personality. Because Shri Atalji best personifies our Party's vision, we have decided to illustrate this document with pictures showing different facets of his political life.

I do hope that this Vision Document succeeds in persuading you to give an absolute majority to the BJP and a two-thirds majority to the NDA in the 14th Lok Sabha.

Vande Mataram!

M. Venkaiah Naidu
President
Bharatiya Janata Party

Highlights

- 1** Making India a Developed Nation and a Great Power by 2020, and creating an unshakeable national resolve to achieve this goal.
- 2** Further strengthening national security both external and internal -- to overcome present and future challenges.
- 3** Further broadening and deepening of economic reforms, based on a self-reliant approach, for sustained double-digit GDP growth rate to achieve complete eradication of poverty and unemployment; end of regional and social disparities; and bridging the urban-rural divide.
- 4** Achieving a quantum improvement in the quality of life of all Indians by fulfilling their basic needs in education, healthcare, nutrition, drinking water, housing, sanitation, and cultural development.
- 5** Launching the Second Green Revolution to unleash the tremendous growth potential in Indian agriculture and agro-based industries, eliminating waste in the food chain, and to ensure doubling of income of even a marginal farmer by 2010.
- 6** Bringing vibrancy to small-scale industries, cottage enterprises and activities of rural artisans; revitalization of traditional industries like textiles; and giving due recognition and full encouragement to the informal sector of the economy.
- 7** Giving India a world-class infrastructure in power, telecom and IT, roads, railways, air travel, ports, shipping and inland navigation, markets and the financial sector.
- 8** Making India a major exporting nation, a global manufacturing hub; a preferred service provider to the world; a preferred country for higher education and healthcare; a leading creator of R&D; putting India at the centre of the Knowledge Economy; and making India a major tourist destination in the world.
- 9** Preparing India for the momentous shift taking place in the world economy, in which low-cost economies can score a big march over high-cost economies by building competitive strengths in manufacturing and services; enriching our human resources and reforming our economy towards this end, and turning our young population into a huge opportunity in the era of globalisation.
- 10** Dealing with the challenge of water on a war-footing with a three-pronged approach: Launch of the River-Linking Project; Massive encouragement for micro initiatives such as watershed management, checkdams, rainwater harvesting, drip irrigation, etc; Cleaning up of rivers and traditional water bodies.
- 11** A massive rural development programme based on the concept of an Ideal Indian Village.
- 12** A massive urban renewal programme, based on the concept of an Ideal Indian City.
- 13** Comprehensive Good Governance Reforms, encompassing administrative reforms, judicial reforms, electoral reforms, devolution of powers to States and effective empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions and urban local bodies.

- 14** Commitment to construction of a magnificent Ram Mandir at Ayodhya; Amicable resolution of the issue through dialogue for starting a new chapter in Hindu-Muslim relations;
- 15** Educational development, economic upliftment, and empowerment of minorities; and ending the majority-minority distinction in politics.
- 16** Vigorous pursuit of the ideals of social justice, economic justice and empowerment of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Nomadic and Denotified Tribes, OBCs, and the poor among the Forward Classes.
- 17** Ban on religious conversions through fraudulent and coercive means.
- 18** Intensification of the peace and development process in Jammu & Kashmir and the North-East. Ensuring early return of Kashmiri Pandits and other displaced people to their native places.
- 19** Commitment to women's all-round empowerment; the BJP is ready to back any consensus formula to ensure early legislation for women's reservation in Parliament and State Legislatures.
- 20** Legislation to ensure that important offices of the Indian State can be occupied only by those who are India's natural citizens by their Indian origin.
- 21** Empowerment of the Civil Society to promote people's participation in development at all levels and for creating effective dispute resolution mechanisms outside the realm of the government and the judiciary.
- 22** Making population control a people's movement, with non-coercive disincentives for a two-child norm, and incentives for a girl child.
- 23** Preservation and propagation of India's rich cultural heritage.
- 24** Unleashing 'Yuva Shakti' and making India a major sports power in the world.
- 25** Intensifying dialogue with Pakistan to find a lasting solution to all bilateral issues; working for a multi-polar world, with India as one of the poles; further raising India's standing in the world; and securing for India a meaningful and steadily growing role in international affairs.

Introduction

India on the Move

The people of India will elect the 14th Lok Sabha in the elections to be held in April-May 2004. The Bharatiya Janata Party, as the leading constituent of the National Democratic Alliance, enters this electoral battle seeking a renewed and bigger mandate for the NDA, with a significantly larger representation for itself, in the next Lok Sabha. We do so on the basis of our Performance, Vision and Leadership the proud performance of our Government; our clear vision and programme for making India a strong, secure, and integrally Developed

Nation by 2020; and the inspiring leadership of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee which is the continuing link between our performance so far and our pledge for the future.

In 1999, the people voted for the National Democratic Alliance. The Bharatiya Janata Party was the largest constituent of the NDA and the single largest party in the Lok Sabha. Our promise to the people then was encapsulated in the assurance: "Able Leadership, Stable Government". On both counts, we have more than fulfilled our promise.

The Vajpayee Government's achievements in strengthening national security, countering cross-border terrorism, fortifying national unity, setting India on the path of high socio-economic growth, making development the national mantra, and raising India's image and standing in the international community have created a surge of hope and national pride.

The Pokharan-II blasts in May 1998 triggered a process of national resurgence. India successfully beat back post-Pokharan sanctions imposed by big powers. The same countries are now keen on strengthening comprehensive relations with India. There has been a significant reduction in cross-border terrorism. India has also played a widely acclaimed role in creating international awareness and solidarity on the issue of jihadi terrorism.

India's economic fundamentals are robust and its strengths envied. Today ours is one of the fastest growing economies in the world; India's GDP growth rate is estimated to be over 8 per cent this year. Our Government has heralded a Connectivity Revolution in India. Some of the largest and most ambitious projects are now underway for improving India's infrastructure with highway connectivity, rural roads connectivity, telecom and Internet connectivity, railway connectivity, port and airport connectivity. The past five years have seen the largest ever number of BPL families rising above the poverty line over a comparable period in independent India's history.

Major steps have been taken for addressing the long-neglected needs of agriculture. Agricultural credit has been nearly trebled and over 3.5 crore farmers have been given Kisan Credit Cards. Interest rates have been significantly lowered. Minimum Support Prices for over 25 crops have been raised every year. An innovative Farm Income Insurance Scheme has been introduced.

In a short time, India has emerged as a leading power in Information Technology. In a short time, our manufacturing sector has restructured itself and become globally competitive. Individual Indians have always scripted success stories in India and overseas; now India as a whole is big news. Today, India stands tall in the international community. Its voice is heard and respected. Our people are finding fresh recognition and new audiences.

There is a rapidly widening belief, both in our own country and all over the world, that India is poised for a great leap forward.

Ours is an ancient nation with a civilisation that is more than 5,000 years old. We have inherited a glorious cultural heritage, which the entire world marvels at. India has time and again shown unmatched resilience to overcome the vicissitudes of history, to emerge resurgent. The time of Indian Renaissance has arrived again. We have set the stage to reclaim our rightful inheritance as a Great Power contributing to humanity's all-round progress.

The Congress era in Indian politics is over

The BJP holds the Congress party, which ruled India for the longest period since Independence, principally guilty for the many problems that our Government inherited. Half a century is not too short a time for a country to be liberated from the curse of poverty and backwardness. India did make considerable progress during this period. But this progress fell woefully short of her potential as well as her needs.

This wide gap between promise and performance was the result of the wrong policies of successive Congress governments. They promoted corruption, weakened institutions of the State and failed to mobilise people's participation in the development process. The Congress party weakened the bonds of national unity and social harmony for partisan gains. Allowing itself to be reduced from a great party of the Freedom Movement to a tool in the hands of a family, it sought to reduce the world's largest democracy to dynastic rule.

The Congress era in Indian politics is now over. And the BJP's era -- the era of nationalist, democratic and development-oriented politics -- has begun.

India is today a nation once again on the move. We have recovered our bearings. After five decades of wasted opportunities, the Vajpayee Government has infused new life and vigour into the soul of India. From being a nation of unrealised potential, its policies and performance have helped unleash India's positive energies.

Atalji's Leadership: A Source of Pride

The BJP is proud that it has given India and the world a leader of the calibre of Shri Vajpayee. As Prime Minister, he has harnessed the national energy and transformed the national mood. With his fierce integrity, long tapasya, commitment to the ideals of democracy, indomitable patriotism and statesmanship, he has shown that he is an embodiment of India's best political traditions.

Shri Vajpayee has demolished the Congress party's self-serving myth that it alone, and a member of the Nehru family alone, can rule India. He has effected a mindset change in the country. In polity, his leadership has demonstrated that coalition governance can be stable and successful. In society, his personality has promoted the values of tolerance, understanding and partnership. In our neighbourhood and in the world, his statesmanship has championed the cause of peace and dispute resolution through dialogue, while resolutely guarding our national interest.

Under Shri Vajpayee's leadership, an atmosphere of distrust and disharmony has been replaced by a spirit of cooperation and consensus. The highhandedness and partisanship that marked the Centre's relations with the States have given way to a healthy Union. With a good blend of national outlook and legitimate regional aspirations, the NDA Government has brought the diverse sections of our society closer together.

The Prime Minister has shown unprecedented earnestness to resolve outstanding and inherited problems. Thus, Jammu & Kashmir is returning to peace, normalcy and development after what seemed to be an unending era of strife, terror and separatist activities fomented from across the border. The fulfilment of his promise to hold free and fair elections in the State in 2002 was a major milestone in this process.

Peace talks in the North-East are also making headway. No Central Government in the past paid as much attention to the developmental needs of this important region as the Vajpayee Government has. For the first time since Independence, a separate ministry has been established for this purpose.

The BJP considers the Joint Statement issued during the Prime Minister's January visit to Islamabad a historic foreign policy success for India. For the first time, through this joint statement, Pakistan has committed itself to preventing the use of any part of the territory under its control for terrorist activities aimed against India.

If Shri Vajpayee won the hearts of Indians and the admiration of the international community with his firm leadership during the Kargil War, he is repeating the feat now with his earnest pursuit of peace-through-dialogue with Pakistan. The whole world today recognizes him as a "Man of Peace".

Shri Vajpayee has boldly demolished the culture of cynicism and negativism that impaired the national character. He has inspired India to think big, implement big, and believe in itself. He has motivated the youth to nurture big dreams and to work hard to realize them. He is indeed "The Great Unifier", binding India's aspirations, energies and diversities.

The Context era in Indian Politics is Over

For the people of India the 2004 general election is an opportunity to reaffirm faith in the leadership of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and in the policies of the NDA Government. These have yielded initial results and, taken forward, will definitely produce big gains for India and all Indians.

The 2004 general election is also an opportunity for all Indians to reject the grim, feel-pain record of the Congress party and endorse the feel-good mood generated by the our Government.

Every election has a specific context. According to the BJP, the two main issues of Election 2004 are: good governance and accelerated, all-round development. There is a new type of hunger in India the tremendous hunger for development. It is especially acute in rural areas and among the urban poor. They want to free themselves from poverty, backwardness and underdevelopment. They want to see an end to regional and social imbalances in development. They want the rural-urban divide to be bridged. They want the best opportunities for themselves and their children. They want a standard of living that is fulfilling. They want dignity. They want security and prosperity.

India is now impatient to get to the top. India wants to be the best. One billion Indians want to show to themselves, and to the world, what they can do.

India has had enough of negativism. The BJP is committed to making India a Developed Nation and a Great Power on the global stage.

We have the leadership, we have the commitment and we have the vision to make India shine ever brighter.

In 2004, we seek a decisive mandate for India.

Our Basic Mission and Commitments

Politics as a means to serve the Nation: From modest beginnings, the BJP has grown steadily to emerge as a stable pole of Indian politics. Our growth is rooted in our distinctive ideology and the tireless dedication of millions of our karyakartas throughout the country. In Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, ably assisted by Shri Lal Krishna Advani, we have a leadership

that has guided and inspired our Party for decades. For the BJP and the fraternal organisations that constitute our extended Nationalist Parivar, politics and power have never been ends in themselves, but a means to serve the people and to contribute to India's attainment of Param Vaibhav (peaks of glory).

Strengthening India's Democracy: The BJP is deeply committed to strengthening India's democracy and to making its institutions more effective in fulfilling the aspirations of our people. We are proud that our Party has nurtured the best traditions of internal democracy in India's political class. In the years to come, we shall continue to broaden the interaction between the Party organization and the people, between the people and their elected representatives, and between the Party and the Government to make governance more dynamic, more responsive and more responsible.

Integral Humanism: The BJP is proud of its commitment to the philosophy of Integral Humanism, as enunciated by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya. We believe that development cannot be measured by economic indicators alone. Development must be holistic. It must fulfil the material and non-material needs of all individuals and promote a symbiotic relationship between the individual and society, in which the individual works for society, and society, in turn, cares for the individual. Development must also keep in mind environmental concerns, local and community traditions, and the quality of life.

The BJP believes that economic progress should not be at the cost of family values. The family constitutes the social unit of stability, welfare, and continuity of cultural traditions. Its importance can never be undermined. Integral Humanism teaches us that our nation too is a family and that India itself is a part of the larger human family.

Cultural Nationalism: The BJP draws its inspiration from the history and civilisation of India. We believe that Indian nationhood stems from a deep cultural bonding of the people that overrides differences of caste, region, religion and language. We believe that Cultural Nationalism for which Indianness, Bharatiyata and Hindutva are synonyms -- is the basis of our national identity.

Contrary to what its detractors say, and as the Supreme Court itself has decreed, Hindutva is not a religious or exclusivist concept. It is inclusive, integrative, and abhors any kind of discrimination against any section of the people of India on the basis of their faith. It rejects the idea of a theocratic or denominational state. It accepts the multi-faith character and other diversities of India, considering them to be a source of strength and not weakness. It firmly upholds secularism, understood as Sarva Pantha Samabhav (treating all faiths with respect).

However, the BJP unflinchingly holds that differences in faith cannot challenge the idea of India as One Nation or undermine our millennia-old identity as One People. This is why, we rejected the two-nation theory on the basis of which our Motherland was tragically partitioned in 1947. Thus, Cultural Nationalism is the most potent antidote to communalism, divisiveness, and separatism of every kind, and a guarantor of our national unity and national integration.

Ram Mandir in Ayodhya: The BJP reaffirms its commitment to the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya. As Maryada Purushottam, Ram is an inspiring cultural symbol of India. His birthplace in Ayodhya is also associated with the religious sentiments of crores of Hindus. The BJP remains committed to its stand that the judiciary's verdict in this matter should be accepted by all. However, we believe that dialogue, and a negotiated settlement

in an atmosphere of mutual trust and goodwill, are the best way of achieving this goal. The BJP appeals to the religious and social leaders of the Hindu and Muslim communities to speed up the process of dialogue and bring it to an amicable and early fruition. We hope that these efforts will succeed in heralding a new chapter of amity in Hindu-Muslim relations and fortify national integration.

Religious Freedom, our Core Value: Contrary to the propaganda of the Congress and our other political opponents, Shri Vajpayee's government has not discriminated against minorities, nor curtailed their religious freedoms in any manner. In statecraft, we will continue to be wedded to our founding ideal of "Justice for All, Appeasement of None". We envision the day when the distinction between "majority" and "minority" disappears in the political field, even while people practise their respective faiths unhindered.

The BJP gives a three-point assurance to minorities: Education, Economic upliftment, and Empowerment. At the same time, we appeal to them to change their old mindset vis-à-vis the BJP and strengthen the hands of Shri Vajpayee in the coming elections.

Consensus over Uniform Civil Code: The BJP believes that all laws, including personal laws, must be in accordance with the guarantees available to all citizens under the Indian Constitution. The Constitution calls for the enactment of a Uniform Civil Code. The Supreme Court has reiterated this need. Therefore, this cannot be seen as an issue of any single political party. The BJP views Uniform Civil Code primarily as an instrument to promote gender justice. We believe that social and political consensus has to be evolved before its enactment.

Swadeshi: The BJP believes that every civilisation has its own innate genius. We are committed to Swadeshi, the philosophy of India First, and to the path of self-reliance. Swadeshi means faith in indigenous institutions and a strong belief that the future of India must be secured by Indians themselves.

The BJP believes that India's goal of achieving a double-digit annual GDP growth rate on a sustainable basis can be achieved principally by mobilizing our own domestic resources. A strong, efficient and high-growth Indian economy, in which Indian products, services and entrepreneurs dominate the domestic and global markets, is our concept of Swadeshi. This can be achieved by making Indian products and services competitive on both cost and quality.

Globalisation: The BJP believes that, to reduce the risks and challenges of globalisation and to enhance its opportunities and gains, it is imperative to bridge the current divide between the developing and developed economies. This divide is enabling the developed nations to secure unfair advantages for itself in global trade, investments, agriculture and services. They give huge trade-distorting agricultural subsidies to their own farmers, but object to the legitimate pro-farmer measures by developing countries. The NDA Government has been at the forefront of defending the interests of Indian kisans by bringing about a coalition of developing countries against such unjust practices of developed countries. We did so successfully at the WTO meets in Doha and Cancun. Our Government has also successfully defended India's case in other matters such as patents. This approach shall continue.

The BJP is of the view that a big shift is taking place in the global economy, and India should be prepared to take advantage of it. This shift favours low-cost economies over high-cost economies in manufacturing and services, provided the former have sufficient

competitive strengths on the counts of cost, quality and technology. The Indian economy is rapidly acquiring these strengths. The BJP is committed to accelerating this process by further reforming our economy, modernizing our infrastructure, enriching India's human resources, and augmenting our capabilities in science and technology. This will place our predominantly young population in an advantageous position vis-à-vis many advanced nations in the world that are projected to have a demographic disadvantage in the coming decades. This is the Swadeshi approach to turning globalisation into an opportunity for India in the 21st century.

Underpinnings of Our Economic Vision: The BJP believes that India must greatly enhance her economic strength, in order to enhance her national strength and become a Great Power. Towards this strategic goal, the BJP is committed to ensuring faster economic growth with equity, employment, and social justice.

The underpinnings of our economic vision are: steady enhancement of the productivity of our human and natural resources with the best use of science, technology, management and HRD practices, both modern and traditional; removal of regional and social imbalances; bridging the urban-rural divide; minimizing the gap between the rich and poor; maximizing developmental opportunities for all citizens; and environmental protection.

The BJP believes that, as India moves from being a developing country to a developed one, our economic policy has to have a two-pronged approach: policies to achieve faster economic growth combined with effective welfare measures for the poor. Today the foremost national developmental objective is banishment of poverty by increasing our national wealth. The surest way to achieve this goal, as Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya had emphasized four decades ago, is: "Work for Every Hand and Water to Every Land". Agriculture continues to be the backbone of India's rural economy, sustaining the livelihood of a majority of our population. Government policies must, therefore, be geared to encourage domestic savings and directing them into productive, entrepreneurship-promoting and employment-generating investments, especially in agriculture and other areas of the rural economy.

The BJP believes that wealth creation should be applauded and encouraged. However, conspicuous consumption goes against the cultural ethos of India. We are not in favour of selfish advancement of the few. Rather, the BJP believes in the multiplication of universally accessible entitlements for the majority.

The BJP is committed to greater consumer choice. We believe that the creation of monopolies, both in the public and private sector, are undesirable, except when dictated by national security. We believe in a responsible fiscal regime marked by modest deficits, low inflation and a steadily strengthening rupee.

India's Cultural and Spiritual Heritage: The BJP considers India's priceless cultural and spiritual heritage to be our intangible national wealth. It has protected our family system, sustained our national life over the millennia and given India her unique identity in the world. We are proud that all the world's religions have their footprint in India. We believe that a proper use of our cultural and spiritual resources can greatly aid India's developmental endeavours because of their enormous power to mobilize people's energies. This cultural and spiritual heritage displays immense diversities, which should be cherished and celebrated by all Indians as our common endowment.

We consider it to be the bounden duty of the Government and citizens alike to preserve and further augment this wealth of a diverse heritage. In this context, the BJP applauds the NDA Government's decision to launch national missions for the preservation of manuscripts, monuments, and other facets of our cultural, artistic and spiritual heritage. However, a lot more needs to be done, considering the neglect of this crucial aspect of nation-building in the past.

Our Priority Agenda for the Next 5 Years

(The BJP has suggested specific measures under the following areas for inclusion in the NDA's Manifesto for Election 2004.)

Defence: The BJP has always attached the highest importance to national security. We are proud of the NDA Government's historic initiatives to strengthen India's defence capability and preparedness. We commit ourselves to carrying forward the work done in the past five years. Our priorities will be: speedy implementation of all the ongoing programmes for modernisation, acquisition and capability enhancement; minimizing delays and procedural bottlenecks, which push up costs and cause obsolescence; achieving greater efficiency in defence spending; giving a further boost to indigenisation of defence production and encouragement to private sector participation; and making defence exports a thrust area.

The BJP would also work for further augmentation of welfare measures for ex-servicemen and war widows, creating adequate opportunities for retired officers to contribute to development activities where they can put their skills and training to productive use; and making service in the Armed Forces an attractive career option for the educated Indian youth.

Internal Security: The BJP believes that creating a society free of fear, and ensuring safety and security to all citizens form the cornerstone of good governance. Our war on terrorism, which has shown encouraging results in the past five years, will continue with unflinching determination. Building on the significant reduction of communal and caste violence in the past five years, we shall work with redoubled zeal to realise our vision of a riot-free India.

The long misrule of the Congress party weakened India's internal security apparatus and reduced its capacity to counter jihadi terrorism, left-wing extremism, organised crime, and, in some States, even to maintain law and order. For the first time since Independence, the NDA Government conducted a comprehensive review of the internal security scenario, started to act on its recommendations and launched a massive programme to modernise our police and paramilitary forces. The BJP is concerned at the inadequate utilization of the police modernization fund in several States, even though the need for it is glaring. We will work with State Governments for time-bound implementation of this programme with utmost urgency.

We will continue our efforts to build political consensus to enact a Central law, and constitute a federal agency to deal with federal crimes like the Telgi scam, which encompass several States. We will also work with the States to urgently implement police reforms that would make the police and security forces more people-friendly, more sensitive towards the grievances of the poor, weaker sections of society, and women.

The BJP recognises the growing menace of left-wing extremism, which extends from the Nepal border to Andhra Pradesh, as one of the most serious challenges to India's internal security. Overcoming this menace, with the closest possible cooperation among the affected States and the Centre, will be our priority. Since the fight against Naxalite outfits can be successfully waged primarily by isolating them from local populations, our Government will take further steps to speed up development activities, encourage people's participation in them, and ensure that their benefits actually reach the poor.

Jammu & Kashmir: The unity of India is not only sacred to the BJP, but also a paramount commitment. We have always believed that Jammu & Kashmir, including the PoK, is an integral part of India. We hold that the age of redrawing national boundaries is over. While recognizing that the Constitution provides for certain transient and temporary provisions for Jammu & Kashmir, we believe that the immediate challenge before the Centre and the State is to involve all sections of society in eliminating terrorism, accelerating economic development and strengthening popular governance that can provide people-friendly administration. The imperative for security operations has to be balanced with respect for human rights. We are committed to ensuring early return of Kashmiri Pandits and other displaced people to their native places.

We believe in balanced development of all the three regions of the State Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh without any discrimination against any section of the State's population. To ensure this, the BJP is committed to a three-point programme:

- (a) Autonomous Regional Councils for Jammu and Ladakh with adequate financial and administrative powers;
- (b) Protection of the original demographic identity of the three regions.
- (c) Equitable distribution of funds from the Centre.

The BJP strongly condemns the recent move by the Government of J&K to introduce a law that discriminates against women marrying outside the State in matters of inheritance rights. We will do everything democratically possible to stop such anti-women moves.

North-East: The NDA Government has given unprecedented attention to the development of the North-Eastern States. Consolidating the gains already made, we are committed to achieving:

- (a) Restoration of peace and normalcy in all the disturbed regions by dialogue with all groups who are willing to give up the path of violence, and by firmly dealing with those who continue on this path.
- (b) Ensuring that the ethnic identities of all the people in the North-East are protected.
- (c) Putting an end to infiltration from Bangladesh and vigorously pursuing the 3-D formula-- Detect, Delete, and Deport.
- (d) Accelerating economic development that provides growth opportunities to all.
- (e) Development of the communication infrastructure to overcome the constraints of physical distance.

(f) Making all Indians more aware of the rich history and cultural heritage of our North-Eastern States, including Sikkim.

(g) Expanding regional economic cooperation with countries in our eastern neighbourhood and in SouthEast Asia.

The BJP is also committed to imparting further momentum to the activities of the Island Development Authority to attend to the needs of the people of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshdweep Islands.

Poverty Alleviation: The BJP stands committed to tackling dire poverty on a war footing. The persistence of abject poverty after more than 50 years of Independence is a result of both misrule and the faulty policies followed by the Congress. In the past six years, the number of Indians living below the poverty line has diminished significantly. However, an unacceptably large number of our citizens are so steeped in poverty that they are unable to reap the full benefits of India's march forward, or to contribute their fullest to it.

We shall wipe out the problems of poverty and backwardness by mounting a five-pronged attack:

- By policies aimed at fully harnessing India's productive potential and creating national wealth;
- By policies that ensure distributive justice by expanding the basket of opportunities for all;
- By policies that direct greater governmental investment and incentivise more private investment in backward and rural areas;
- By policies and programmes that bring vibrancy to the rural economy, expand and deepen rural markets, and thus create large-scale employment and self-employment opportunities locally.
- By continuing and further strengthening Antyodaya schemes targeted at BPL families and social security schemes aimed at the unorganized sector.
- By effecting time-bound distribution of surplus land and making the rural poor partners in the development of wasteland;
- By giving inalienable ownership rights to tribals who have been traditionally living on forest lands.

Second Green Revolution: The route to agricultural prosperity and rural regeneration lies in scientific management of water, land and bio resources, and better linkages with both domestic and export markets. Our vision has three objectives: (a) Indian agriculture should meet the growing domestic demand; (b) it should emerge as an important global player; and (c) agriculture should become remunerative even to small farmers with shrinking landholdings.

The first Green Revolution enabled India to achieve self-sufficiency in food. However, it did not address many critical problems in agriculture and food economy. The BJP believes that a Second Green Revolution is needed to increase farm productivity, achieve crop diversification, reduce waste and add value at every stage in the food chain linking the kisan to the consumer. Towards this end, we will continue to give a boost to dairy, poultry and other food-processing industries. We will promote horticulture, floriculture, sericulture, and cultivation of bio-fuels, medicinal plants and bamboo in a big way. We will take up crop insurance scheme and the newly launched farm income insurance scheme for effective and large-scale implementation. Comprehensive reform of agricultural markets; free movement

of agricultural goods throughout the country; setting up of cold storages, godowns and grain banks; intensification of technology transfer and agricultural extension services; and support to organic farming will be given priority in the Second Green Revolution.

Agricultural workers, many of whom are marginal farmers themselves, form a large section of the rural poor. The BJP is committed to lifting them above BPL levels, ensuring sustainable year-long employment with minimum wages, enhancing their labour productivity, expanding the social security net for them, and improving their overall quality of life.

The BJP is fully committed to preserving India's animal wealth especially, to protection of Gau Mata (Cow) and her progeny. We shall evolve a consensus to bring a Central legislation in this regard.

Support to Cottage Industries: Revitalization of India's cottage industries, arts and handicrafts forms the pivot of the BJP's vision of faster economic growth with equity and employment. Towards this end, we will intensify our efforts to ensure that the banking sector and government departments are receptive to their special needs. We will improve linkages with domestic and export markets for their products. Activities of the Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and its affiliate bodies, which have done remarkable work in the past five years, will be given greater support.

Making India a Global Manufacturing Hub: The BJP believes that India can become the manufacturing hub for the world. India's capability to achieve this goal is evident from the highly encouraging initial successes in pharmaceuticals, automobiles, auto-components, engineering goods and some other products. We aim to provide the conditions for a broad manufacturing base that can export its products all over the world, and can compete not only on cost but also on quality and technology. In the process, we aim to actively facilitate the creation of global Indian brands and Indian MNCs. Our small and medium enterprises (SMEs), the KVIC sector, and traditional industries such as textiles, gems and jewellery and leather, have a huge potential to contribute to this endeavour. This potential will be unleashed through suitable policy and institutional measures. We will take necessary steps to realize similar growth potential in our food-processing, telecom and IT hardware, and other industries.

A competitive manufacturing sector requires the simultaneous fulfillment of various conditions. They include a network of good roads and railways, efficient ports and airports, low-cost and reliable power, cutting-edge communication and IT infrastructure, strengthening of India's core sector oil and natural gas, steel, coal, minerals, metals --, quality educational institutions that provide a skilled workforce, a sophisticated financial sector which can meet low-cost capital needs of businesses, modern trading environment, and, above all, maximum government facilitation with minimum government interference. Specifically, firm and quick steps will be taken to put an end to the tyranny of the Red Tape and the Inspector Raj, which breeds, corruption, drains the growth potential and demotivates Indian entrepreneurs.

We are proud that India has successfully embarked on this growth-oriented path. Unlike during the Congress years, the "Made in India" brand is making waves in global markets. We envision a future when it will dominate world markets in a wide range of products, creating large-scale prosperity and employment at home. The BJP will actively work for the realization of this vision.

Putting India at the Centre of the Knowledge Economy: The BJP is proud of the spectacular achievements of India's software professionals and entrepreneurs both at home and abroad. They have not only given India a new stream of wealth-creation and employment generation, but also brightened our country's image globally. The BJP believes that this is just the beginning, and the best of India in the emerging Knowledge Economy is yet to come.

To achieve this, we have to consolidate India's leadership in software exports and strengthen our IT hardware industry. We also have to expand our share in employment-intensive IT-enabled services across the value spectrum through enterprises like call centers and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) centres. The BJP sees India emerging as a preferred service provider to the world in an ever-widening range of services, including high-paying professional services of teachers, doctors, lawyers, managers, accountants, and scientists. We will fully support our bio-technology sector, which is making rapid strides. India has acquired impressive self-reliant strengths in space research, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and civilian applications of defence research. These strengths will be further augmented and commercialised appropriately. We will also strive to develop Indian businesses in other frontier areas of technology, such as micro-electronics, nano-technology, new materials, etc.

To achieve these ends, we have to make India a front-ranking nation in scientific and technological R&D. Partnership between Indian businesses and CSIR, DRDO, ICAR, ICMR, ISRO, BARC, IITs, universities and other government-supported research institutions will be vastly expanded. We will actively encourage more foreign companies to set up their R&D centers in India or start joint R&D activities with Indian entities. Our NRI and PIO professionals and entrepreneurs would be encouraged to participate in this partnership.

Our Vision for an Ideal Indian Village: A majority of India's population continues to live in villages. However, the neglect of the development needs of villages is one of the particularly damning parts of the legacy left behind by the long Congress misrule. This is clear from two stark facts: even after five decades of Independence, as many as 1.86 lakh villages one-third of all villages in the country were deprived of good roads; and as many as 60% of our rural households have no toilets.

In line with what Mahatma Gandhi had said, the BJP believes that India cannot rise to her full potential without the revitalization of rural India. Our vision of an ideal Indian village is one that has the following attributes: (a) self-reliant society and dynamic economy that makes best use of local human and natural resources and has linkages to the national and global economy; (b) modern infrastructure and basic amenities -- bijlee, sadak, paani, education, quality healthcare at the nearest place, and sanitation -- that are needed to ensure a high quality of life for all inhabitants; (c) full employment to all able-bodied persons; (d) free of social and economic exploitation; (e) a harmonious, cooperative and caring environment; (f) Antyodaya or concern for the development of the last man; (g) effective functioning of Panchayat bodies with people's participation and involvement of voluntary organisations; and (h) a vibrant cultural life that displays both modernity and pride in Indian traditions.

The BJP is committed to taking all our villages towards this ideal. We have taken several important steps in this direction, the most notable among them being the blueprint of a new comprehensive rural development initiative called PURA (Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas). PURA aims at providing four types of connectivity to every Indian village: Physical Connectivity, Digital Connectivity, Knowledge Connectivity, and Market Connectivity

to every rural cluster in the country. Speedy implementation of this programme will be our priority.

Our Vision for an Ideal Indian City: India is rapidly urbanizing. At the same time, Indian cities and towns are groaning under unplanned and unaesthetic growth, made evident by their overstretched infrastructure, severe shortage of basic amenities, proliferation of slums, and unhygienic environment. This has affected the quality of life of all sections of the urban population most of all the urban poor. The continuance of this reality is incompatible with our vision of India as a Developed Nation.

No previous government paid as much attention to urban renewal as the Vajpayee Government has done since its inception. HUDCO's loans for urban infrastructure rose by 550% during the past six years, compared to the previous 28 years.

Our vision of an ideal Indian city is one in which our cities (a) provide a high quality of material and cultural life to all their inhabitants, with strong human bonds that is the hallmark of Indian society; (b) have good infrastructure, civic amenities, and pollution-free environment; (c) are free of slums and illegal encroachments, and display aesthetic city planning; (d) preserve their unique tangible and intangible heritage; (e) are engaged in promotion knowledge and diverse creative pursuits; (f) Have good municipal governance with strong community participation and, above all, (g) serve as engines of India's rapid economic growth, providing adequate employment opportunities and ideal conditions for entrepreneurs and professionals to flourish in the era of globalisation.

The BJP is committed to working towards this ideal by introducing major urban governance reforms and massively expanding the programme for urban renewal in the coming years.

Dealing with the Challenge of Water: The BJP recognises that scarcity of water in both rural and urban areas has assumed serious proportions in many parts of the country. There is an urgent need for a people's movement, supplementing government efforts, for conservation, management and rational use of this scarce resource for drinking, agriculture, industry and domestic purposes. The problem needs a multi-pronged strategy that combines both mega and micro initiatives. We remain fully committed to starting work on the inter-linking of rivers, with due consideration for environmental protection and rehabilitation of displaced people.

However, we attach greater importance to millions of local initiatives for desilting of tanks, lakes and reservoirs, restoration of wells, recharging of natural aquifers, building check dams, promotion of drip irrigation, desalination of sea water, rainwater harvesting, recycling of water, and other means of water conservation and efficient water management. Cleaning of all polluted rivers and traditional water bodies, with people's participation of the kind that was evident in olden times, should be taken up in a mission mode.

Dealing with the Challenge of Employment: The BJP recognizes that unemployment is a major problem faced by a significant section of the Indian youth. At the same time, we confidently state that no other government in the past paid as much attention to dealing with this problem, and achieved so much success, as did the NDA Government. It is our Government, which, for the first time, promised to facilitate creation of one crore additional employment and self-employment opportunities each year. We have substantially succeeded in fulfilling this promise. Between 1999-2002, for which official figures are available, 84 lakh employment and self-employment opportunities were created on average, per year.

The nature of employment generation has altered with the changing nature of the economy. Government jobs and jobs in the organized industry are shrinking not only in India and this is true of Congress and Communist-ruled States too but all over the world. At the same time, large-scale employment and self-employment opportunities have come up in services and the unorganized sector (whose preponderance in the Indian economy has been steadily growing), housing and road construction, telecom and IT, tourism, etc.

In the coming years, our strategy to deal with the challenge of employment will be four-pronged:

- Sustaining a high rate of annual GDP growth 8% going up to double digits and broadbasing the growth in employment-generating sectors of the economy.
- Higher allocation to, and better implementation of, the Government's employment and self-employment generation schemes such as the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana, which is the biggest food-for-work programme since Independence launched by our Government, self-help groups, etc.
- Evaluating every development policy and programme from the point of view of its potential to create employment and self-employment opportunities. Policies and programmes that promise to deliver this goal will be given special thrust. Thus, agri-processing, support services for agriculture, textiles, handicrafts, wasteland development, social forestry, housing and construction activities, renewal of urban infrastructure and amenities, retail trade, tourism, transportation, etc. will be given priority in terms of investment and facilitation.
- Providing special thrust to vocational education and training to match the needs of the economy. In rural areas our focus will be mainly on skill upgradation of people engaged in traditional occupations. In urban areas our focus will be mainly on enhancing the employability of students and youth, and create an aptitude for self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Developing a Democracy of Stakeholders: The BJP is committed to continuing reforms in the financial sector that have contributed to better performance of the corporate sector and the evolution of well regulated stock markets. We believe that the gains of this process must be shared more equitably. Today, less than 2 per cent of Indians are retail investors. We believe that the base of investment in equities must be broadened. The BJP believes that the advantages of low interest credit must be shared by all productive forces in society, including small businesses, the self-employed and farmers.

The BJP is proud that the vigilance and intervention of the Union Government have helped revive institutions like the UTI. We believe that public financial institutions and corporate houses must conduct themselves with exemplary responsibility.

Widening the Social Security Net: The BJP is proud of the NDA Government's initiative to launch a social security scheme for 37 crore people in the unorganized sector. Expanding its coverage and its effective implementation will be our commitment. The BJP believes that all Indians must have access to competitive and well regulated pension and insurance schemes tailored to every income level. The needs of senior citizens, widows, disabled persons, etc will continue to receive our special consideration. We shall ensure that money invested will be both secure and fetch good returns.

Focus On Social Development

The BJP believes that faster economic growth cannot be an end in itself; rather, it is a means to ensure a high quality of life to all citizens by fulfilling their material needs and satisfy their social, educational and cultural aspirations.

Education for All: We believe that both society and the Government at all levels must give top priority to meeting the goal of "Quality Education for All" since education aids both economic growth and social development. Its importance in the emerging Knowledge Economy has increased manifold. Enriched human resources of our one billion population can propel India into a higher orbit of development with limitless possibilities in the new century.

The BJP's ideal of good education is one expressed in Swami Vivekananda's profound words: "Education for Man-Making and Nation-Building". India needs a system of education that opens the doors of knowledge to all citizens, develops their talents and skills, anchors them strongly in human values and Indian culture, reinforces their patriotism, and equips them to explore opportunities both in India and abroad.

Because of inadequate and unbalanced attention by successive governments in the past, India continues to face major challenges in education. Our strategy for overcoming these challenges and unleashing the potential of the India's enviable human resources has the following underpinnings:

- Steadily raising the total spending on education to 6% of the GDP by 2010, with enlarged public-private partnership.
- Achieving complete eradication of illiteracy within a decade. For this, we will ensure that every child goes to school, every school is made accountable to the community, every State is made accountable for its quality education status, and appropriate resources both from Government and non-government sources are mobilized to match our ambitious goals.
- Further intensification of measures aimed at education of the girl child, and spread of education among SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities.
- Improving the standards of education at all levels of the Educational Pyramid from primary to university.
- Making quality education affordable to a common Indian family. No student should be deprived of access to higher education for lack of resources. Hence, scholarships and soft loans should be made widely available.
- While encouraging private investment, necessary steps will have to be taken to check commercialization of education.
- Rectifying the biases in history education, increasing the moral and cultural content in syllabi, and restoring the neglected focus on character-building.
- De-bureaucratising the administration of our educational institutions; autonomy to centers of excellence; empowering teachers; and maximizing community participation.
- Enlarging the partnership between Government and the private sector, and between industry and universities, to promote world-class R&D.
- Making India a preferred higher education destination for students from all over the world. This would not only reduce huge spending abroad by rich Indians, but also enable India to earn significantly from higher education.

Healthcare for All: The BJP believes that healthcare is a basic need and rightful entitlement of every citizen. Hence, its provision should be made immune to the citizen's economic status. Wrong policies, inadequate resource allocation, and neglect of our

country's traditional wisdom by the Congress governments have created daunting problems in this field. The BJP's strategy to overcome them, and to enable India to move quickly towards the goal of "Health For All", is guided by the following principles:

- The Centre and State Governments should together facilitate manifold increase in spending on healthcare, with enlarged public-private partnership.
- The priority of public spending should be on primary healthcare, with a focus on preventive rather than curative measures.
- Increasing people's awareness about health issues and making them take good care of themselves by cultivating healthy habits and lifestyles; towards this end, building a strong physical and sports culture among all age-groups.
- Healthcare should be made affordable to the poor and middle classes.
- The NDA Government's good work in promoting yoga, ayurveda, naturopathy and other systems of indigenous medicine should be vastly intensified.
- Private and foreign investment in tertiary and super-specialty healthcare should be encouraged. However, all private healthcare establishments should have enhanced obligation for treating poor patients.
- Public-private partnerships should be institutionalized on a widest possible scale.
- Concerted efforts should be made for India's emergence as a centre of health tourism.

Social and Economic Justice: The BJP has always been a strong votary of social justice for SCs, STs, OBCs and other disadvantaged social groups. Going beyond the traditional advocacy of this important cause, we have also been consistently emphasising two related imperatives (a) social justice is incomplete without economic justice and political empowerment; and (b) The means to secure social justice (samajik nyay) have to also promote social harmony (samajik samarasata).

To advance these ideals, the BJP commits itself to:

- Strict implementation of provisions of the policy on reservations. A major drive has to be launched for filling up all backlogs in jobs and promotions for SCs, STs and OBCs.
- Private sector enterprises will be incentivised for creating more educational, training, employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for SCs and STs.
- Strict enforcement of laws to check atrocities against SCs, STs and other weaker sections.
- Provision of greater financial resources and better managerial resources for the delivery of education, healthcare, and other social security services to the poor and weaker sections of society.
- Improvement in the functioning of various Commissions and Finance Corporations for the development of SCs and STs.
- Operationalisation of the newly announced Commission for Nomadic and Denotified Tribes and development corporation for the shepherd community.
- Safeguarding and promoting the economic wellbeing of fishermen and others engaged in traditional occupations.
- Serious consideration to the recommendations of the newly established Commission for examining reservations for the poor among "Forward Classes".

Welfare of Tribals: Of all the deprived and neglected sections of society, tribal Indians suffered the most during the long Congress rule. Their ability to benefit from the policy of reservations in education and jobs has remained far less than that of the Scheduled Castes

and OBCs. Many of them have been uprooted from their habitations and livelihoods in forests. Frequently they are victims of exploitation by powerful local interests and harassment by the police and government officials. They rank the lowest in literacy, longevity, health status and other indicators of human development.

The BJP is committed to ending the plight of India's tribals. Ours was the first government, since Independence, to set up a separate ministry for tribal welfare and also a separate commission and a separate finance and development corporation for tribals. We shall take necessary steps for regularization of land rights of tribals living on forest lands and for promoting their economic activities based on forest produce. These measures, in addition to providing them livelihood security, will also help in preservation of our forests. The BJP believes that, as the original inhabitants of forests with a deep attachment to their natural endowments, tribals are the best protectors of our depleting forest and wildlife resources. We will also take steps to preserve tribal art and culture, honour tribal heroes, and frustrate efforts to create a wedge between tribals and non-tribals.

Women's Empowerment: The BJP is committed to gender equality and justice. We consider educational, social, economic and political empowerment of women to be one of the preconditions for making India a Developed Nation. Our Party is committed to providing women an enabling environment free from injustice and violence in the public as well as the private sphere, which would pave the way for women to contribute to every walk of life. We would develop strategies to enable women in balancing work and family by introducing a national childcare plan, decent wages, workplace flexibility, and greater career opportunities.

The BJP believes that every able-bodied woman should have at least some source of livelihood, so that she can enjoy economic independence within the framework of a harmonious family. Education not only equips her to raise her economic and social status, but also helps our country realize many of its developmental goals. Accordingly, the BJP commits itself to eliminating gender disparities in both education and property rights. In official records of schemes such as giving land or a house, woman will be made a joint beneficiary having precedence over man. Opportunities for women in training, employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship will be expanded. Simultaneously, we will intensify governmental and societal efforts to ensure safety for women, and clamp down on female foeticide, dowry, trafficking and rape.

India has a very rich tradition of the social reforms movement where men championed the cause of women. In the 21st century, it is once again necessary for men to play a constructive role in establishing gender equality. They can play an especially crucial role in ensuring dignity of women and eliminating violence against them.

Ours was the first party to raise the demand for 33% reservation for women in Parliament and State legislatures. We remain committed to this goal. It is well known that the NDA Government did its best to enact the Women's Reservation Bill. However, the Congress and some other parties sabotaged it. The BJP is prepared to support any alternative proposal for women's reservation, on which broad consensus can be forged. We believe that the nation's commitment to take this revolutionary step forward can no longer be kept in abeyance.

Population Control: The BJP is convinced that neglect of the imperative of population control is one of the main causes for the shortcomings in India's all-round development. The Vajpayee Government has taken steps to overcome this neglect. We believe that the goals and targets set in the National Population Policy can be realized only by making it a people's

movement. State Governments -- especially in those States that are lagging behind -- and communities have to be energized. The BJP also believes that the time has come to introduce a set of incentives and non-coercive disincentives for the success of this campaign. We are in favour of providing incentives for the girl child within a two-child norm. Our Party shall build consensus over ways that would ensure success of this mission.

Securing a Bright Future for India's Children: India is home to the largest child population in the world. Every fifth child in the world is an Indian. Hence, what happens to India's children will determine not only India's future, but also the future of the world. For the BJP, securing a bright future for India's children is both a moral obligation and a matter of political urgency. We are proud of the Vajpayee Government's initiatives in this regard for example, making free and compulsory elementary education a fundamental right through a Constitutional amendment; launching 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan', the biggest ever educational programme since Independence; and vastly enlarging the scope of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) to cover nearly all the blocks in the country.

We are committed to further intensifying our efforts to put the needs, aspirations and rights of children at the heart of our development agenda. Drastic reduction in infant and maternal mortality, special focus on the education of the girl child, ending malnutrition among children from poor families, elimination of child labour, and the care of orphans will be our priority.

Unleashing India's 'Yuva Shakti': Demographically India is a Young Nation. Nearly 65 per cent of our population is below the age of 35. This 'yuva shakti' (youth power) is a source of immense strength and hope for the India of our dreams in the 21st century. Our first priority is to ensure that every young Indian is gainfully employed or self-employed, securing not only their own livelihood but also contributing to their family's well-being and to the country's progress. By their very nature, young people are an overflowing reservoir of energy, enthusiasm, creativity, idealism and patriotism. It is the duty of the government and society to create opportunities for the full flowering of these attributes. Care should be taken to see that their grievances and resentment over any issue are not exploited by parochial and anti-social elements.

The spirit of adventure among the youth and their natural inclination for voluntary service need to be promoted. Infrastructure for sports, arts, cultural activities and social service, and support for youth organizations engaged in these activities, need to be stepped up at all levels from the national to the local. In particular, Indian sports, which have suffered marginalisation, deserve special encouragement. We are proud that the Vajpayee Government not only created a separate Ministry for Sports and Youth Affairs for the first time since Independence, but also effected a five-fold increase in the allocation for sports in the Tenth Plan. The BJP's vision is to see that India emerges as a major Sports Power in the world over the next ten years. We will work for the realization of this vision.

Good Governance Issues

Governance Reforms: The principal aspect of the Congress misrule was its failure to transform India's hard-won Swaraj (self-governance) into Su-raj (good governance). It caused the government to enter every sphere of our national life, excessively enlarging the ordinary citizen's interface with the public authority. The overload of the government has led to inefficiency, harassment and corruption. Rather than being at the service of the people, the state machinery has reduced them to being supplicants. Its lack of transparency and accountability has alienated the people. Its highly bureaucratic working has undermined

their entrepreneurial energies and discouraged citizens' initiatives. In the absence of people's active participation, policies and programmes frequently fail to deliver desired results.

Punitive levels of taxation created a national culture of dishonesty. The licence-permit-quota raj produced a shortage economy and bred corruption and nepotism. The government was often the cause of the problem and not the solution.

The BJP is committed to making the role of the government more focused and effective by initiating a set of reforms for Good Governance with the same priority as economic reforms. Specifically, we will make the government's interaction with citizens more people-friendly and service-oriented. We will make the government's principal role in the economy that of a facilitator and creator of the necessary environment for the creative energies of the people to find full expression. We will reduce discretionary powers vested with public authorities, and base the exercise of such powers on objective criteria. We will ensure exemplary punishment for infringement.

The BJP is committed to removing all non-financial barriers to economic growth such as delays in clearances and decision making; obsolete laws, unnecessary procedures, and habitual litigation; lack of adequate empowerment of officers at appropriate levels; and lack of a level-playing field in the functioning environment of executives in the public sector vis-à-vis their private sector counterparts.

Re-orienting the Priorities of Government: The BJP believes that the thrust of the Union government in future should be on the core areas of national security, internal security, macro-economic management, and creation and upgrading of infrastructure. It should also expand the scope and improve the quality of services and amenities in the social sector, particularly targeted at the poor and disadvantaged communities. The government's traditional function of administration and upholding the rule of law and justice will have to be further strengthened.

In the economic sphere, the government should progressively withdraw from involvement in non-priority sectors. It should create more avenues for entrepreneurship in a well-regulated competitive framework. In general, it should reduce its role in manufacturing and services business, where the private sector can serve the people better except where it is required for strategic reasons, to prevent private sector monopolies, run important utilities, or in exceptional circumstances.

At the same time, there is a need to enhance systemic capabilities for better policy formulation in the social sector, better designing of schemes and programmes, and, above all, better monitoring of their implementation. Towards this end, there is a need to maximize community participation and involve voluntary organizations, professional experts at all levels. In short, efficiency, accountability, responsiveness, pro-poor attitude, and treating the people as one's masters will be the hallmark of administrative reforms in the years to come.

Judicial Reforms: The BJP is firmly committed to the independence of the judiciary. At the same time, we acknowledge that judicial bottlenecks have become a major source of harassment for ordinary citizens. They are also acting as an obstacle to our economy growing faster. Therefore, we shall speed up judicial and legal reforms on an urgent basis. Our specific commitments are:

- Considerable enhancement in allocations to improve the physical and operational infrastructure of our courts;
- Increasing the number of courts and appointment of more judges at all levels;
- Reform of the criminal justice system to make dispensation of justice simpler, quicker and more effective;
- Extension of Fast-Track Courts to all layers of the judiciary;
- Expansion of alternative dispute redressal mechanisms through Lok Adalats and Tribunals;
- Setting up a National Judicial Commission for appointment of judges and ensuring judicial ethics.

Electoral Reforms: The NDA Government has introduced certain important electoral reforms such as rightsizing of the Council of Ministers at the Centre and in States, open ballot in Rajya Sabha elections to check misuse of money power, the facility of proxy vote to defence personnel, etc. We have made political funding more transparent. The BJP will pursue this agenda vigorously by working towards state funding of elections. We shall evolve a consensus to prevent entry of criminal elements into politics. In cooperation with other political parties, the BJP will consistently strive to raise the standards of Parliament and State Legislatures and making their functioning more effective.

The BJP firmly holds that the high offices of the Indian State legislative, executive and judicial should be occupied only by those who are India's natural citizens by their Indian origin.

Effective Empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions: The BJP believes in Gandhiji's philosophy that Ram Rajya cannot become a reality without Gram Rajya. We are committed to decentralisation and grassroots democracy, with the village as the unit, through transfer of power from the Centre to the States, from State governments to Panchayati Raj Institutions and from impersonal bureaucracies to communities. We believe that effective empowerment of Panchayati Raj Institutions is the most urgent good governance task for achieving the cherished ideal of speedy and all-round rural development. The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution, introduced by the Congress government, devolved many important functions to Panchayati Raj Institutions. However, they failed to equip these institutions with necessary financial and administrative powers to discharge their Constitutional obligations. The BJP will remove this shortcoming by enacting, if necessary, a new Constitutional amendment.

The institution of the Gram Sabha will be strengthened. We believe that it is the most effective platform for promoting grassroots democracy, since it enables all the people in a village to discuss every developmental work, scrutinise the allocation and spending of funds, and evaluate the performance of panchayat and government functionaries.

Improving Fiscal Health of State Governments: The BJP believes that the distortions introduced by Congress governments in the past have undermined the financial viability of States. Several policy and administrative measures have become necessary to stop unproductive expenditure and enhance the resource mobilisation powers of States and institutions of local government. The BJP will strive to build political consensus, which is critical for achieving this objective.

The NDA Government has initiated the process of liberating India from an overdose of controls. It has abolished many state monopolies, simplified procedures, cut red tape in many places and eased controls. The BJP is committed to a simplified and low tax regime. Lower taxes encourage entrepreneurship, less tax evasion, a dynamic work culture and enable people to save more and spend more on themselves, their families and their communities. At the same time, efforts will be intensified to further expand the population of tax payers to reflect the growing preponderance of services in our economy, ensure better compliance, and plug significant leakage of tax revenue at various levels.

War on Corruption: The BJP believes that corruption is the greatest hurdle in India's developmental march. It has weakened the moral fabric of our society and polity. The long years of Congress rule have created a system of governance and administration where power is frequently misused for personal gain. Ordinary citizens often have difficulty getting their work done in government offices, without paying bribes. The BJP believes that the menace of corruption has to be fought at all levels. This requires both systemic reforms especially electoral and administrative reforms -- and heightened public action. No single political party can win the fight against corruption on its own. However, the BJP is committed to playing a leading role in its eradication.

Empowering Civil Society: After Independence, the Congress party let the country down on good governance. It also created an atmosphere of "statism", which made the Government machinery all-powerful and the people excessively dependent on it. As a result, the people's initiative and their efforts to solve their own local problems took a back seat. The Government did not sufficiently trust the

organizations of civil society, and the people in turn did not trust the Government to deliver. The lack of people's participation in government-led development became one of the principal reasons for India's slow progress.

The BJP believes that this has to be changed by empowering communities, voluntary organizations, not-for-profit groups, and respected senior citizens in society. The NGO sector, too, needs to apply self-correctives for it to play its role in the developmental process. We believe that there is a big scope for enlisting the cooperation of religious establishments of all denominations, which command large followings, in schemes and programmes for social development. We also believe that empowerment of the Civil Society will help in achieving dispute resolution ranging from local disputes over minor issues to major ones over contentious issues -- outside the realm of the judiciary and government. This vision is consistent with the traditional Indian approach to dispute resolution.

Strengthening India's links with the Indian Diaspora: The BJP believes that the growing achievements of the vast Indian diaspora are a matter of pride and a source of strength for India. Similarly, India's growing strength and its rising global stature are also a matter of pride and a source of strength for the Indian diaspora. Together we constitute the Great Indian Family. We are proud of the NDA Government's unprecedented efforts to broaden and deepen the emotional, social and economic links of NRIs and PIOs with their cultural motherland. These links will have to be comprehensively strengthened in the years to come.

India and the World

With the world recognizing India as an emerging power, our foreign policy has to become far more active, creative and sure-footed. This process has already begun under the NDA Government, which has launched a number of bold initiatives over the past five years. Our Look-East Policy has greatly strengthened the India-ASEAN relationship, reinforcing our close cultural links with this region in the past with new links in trade, technology and transport. We have recently given economic cooperation within SAARC a new impetus, creating the promise of free-trade in South Asia. Our economic cooperation with China is growing at an amazing speed. We have further strengthened our strategic partnership with Russia, expanded relations with USA, intensified our dialogue with the European Union, and rejuvenated traditional bonds with countries in West Asia, Central Asia, and Africa.

The BJP believes that this new pro-active and self-confident thrust of India's foreign policy should be continued. Our aim should be to secure for India a steadily broadening role in international affairs, so that we can contribute meaningfully to the global community's collective ability to deal with the challenges of today and tomorrow.

The broad contours of the BJP's vision for India's external affairs in the coming years are:

- Continue the dialogue process with Pakistan for a lasting solution to all the outstanding issues, including Jammu & Kashmir, on the basis of the Joint Statement issued in Islamabad in February 2004.
- Work towards realizing the vision for a South Asian Economic Union with a common currency for the region.
- Continue the dialogue process with China to achieve a mutually satisfactory resolution of the boundary issue, which is an objective of strategic interest for us.
- Intensify efforts to create suitable alliances to secure access to new energy sources.
- Work for the creation of a cooperative multipolar world order, with India as one of the poles.
- Continue efforts to secure permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

Conclusion

"Shaktishali Bharat ke liye Shaktishali BJP": For the past five years, Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee has given India a purposeful and dynamic government, ending the debilitating period of destabilization perpetuated by the Congress. Under him, India has entered the 21st Century with greater self-confidence, vastly enhanced capacity for achievement, and soaring expectations.

The remarkable progress made in the past six years is, however, only a beginning. India still has a long way to realise its full potential begins to flower. Inspirational leadership and good governance have put development on top of the political agenda. The BJP is committed to carrying forward this process and further strengthening it over the next five years and beyond.

Our vision is to make India a Developed Nation by 2020 strong in security, strong in national unity, strong in economy, strong in democracy, strong in diplomacy, and, above all, strong in every parameter of human development of all her one billion people.

Our vision is to make the 21st Century India's Century.

History has chosen the BJP to provide political leadership to our national endeavour to realize this vision. "Shaktishali Bharat ke liye Shaktishali BJP" is our clarion call.

A renewed and stronger mandate in Election 2004 an absolute majority for the BJP and a two-thirds majority for the NDA -- is the crucial first step to realise this dream.

To recall the Prime Minister's ringing words, "India's destiny is linked to victory for the BJP and the NDA." A renewed mandate for Shri Vajpayee is a mandate for India's renewal.

Vande Mataram!