ADDRESS OF WELCOME PRESENTED TO SRI GOPAL SWARUP PATHAK, M.A., L.L.B., D.Litt., VIDYA VACHASPATI, VICE-PRESIDENT OF INDIA

BY

THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BERHAMPUR (ORISSA) ON THE OCCASION OF HIS AUGUST VISIT TO BERHAMPUR ON 9.10.73.

Most Honoured Sir,

It is a proud privilege of the Citizens of Berhampur which is the birth place of the beloved President of India Sri V.V. Giri, and a great honour for them, to have you in their midst for a short time amidst your counted programme. On this auspicious day, our heart is full of joy and pleasure to have been fortunate in getting a chance to welcome you, an illustrious son of the Country, a versatile genius and a man of towering personality and one who has excelled in the field of law, education, diplomatic mission and public administration.

Revered Sir, although you have started your career as an advocate in Bareilly, then by dint of your outstanding merit and exemplary character and selfless service for the country, you had been elevated to the Bench of the Allahabad High Court, elected as a member of Rajyasabha, became Union Law Minister, installed as the Governor of Mysore and above all adorned the coveted seat of Vice-President of India.

As a member of the Parliamentary committee and special representative of the Prime Minister as well as a member of the delegation of Jurists and Law Commission of India you have visited various countries of the world and have successfully represented our country in various International Organisations including U.N.O. Besides, you have been honoured being elected as the President of All India Seva Samiti and Vice President of Indian Council of World Affairs, Honorary treasurer of the Allahabad University and Director of Press Trust of India.
With your kind permission we take this opportunity to give vent to some of the pressing needs of this locality which we earnestly hope will receive your kind notice for their solution.

1. There is an open space in the centre of the town known as Barracks Maidan which is the only space available inside the town for conducting sports and games. This is under the control of the Defence Department of Government of India. If it is transferred to the control of the Municipality, it will be used for the overall benefit of the town people in the least possible manner. In this connection it will not be out of place to mention here that the President of India Sri V.V.Giri had also expressed his favourable opinion in regard to the proposal.

2. The Government have taken decision to establish a port at Gopalpur for which preliminaries are being worked out. Along with the opening of this port, it is proposed to lay a new railway line from Gopalpur to Bolangir via Berhampur, Aska, Bhanjanagar, Phulbani and Sonpur. This will meet the long standing demands of the people of the districts of Ganjam, Phulbani, Bolangir which when worked will open a new route between Southern and Western Orissa and will eradicate to a great extent regional imbalance in the State. We will be highly obliged if a preliminary investigation in this regard is taken up and if found feasible implemented in the 5th Five Year Plan.

3. The City of Berhampur has been traditionally a centre of culture of Southern Orissa with its original and rich values of Poetry, folk lore, Drama and other cultural activities. It has been felt that a broadcasting station of the A.I.R. will lead us a long way in sustaining and improving these values and as such we appeal to you to move your Government for instalation of such a station at Berhampur.

4. As the City of Berhampur has now a population of about 1,30,000 it is proposed to convert it to a Corporation for which kind cooperation of the Centre is solicited.

(P.T.C.)
5) The present financial resources of this Municipality are very meagre. With this limited resources it becomes extremely difficult to execute the proposed Rusikuliya Drinking Water Supply Project, take up sewage system in the town and to convert all dry latrines into sanitary ones. These are some of the outstanding problems of the Municipality which need very urgent implementation and so we appeal the Governments both at the Centre and at the State and to provide special grants to this Municipality for implementation of the above projects successfully.

6) The last but not the least, which we bring to your kind notice in general, is, the existing deplorable financial condition of almost all the Local Bodies of the state. This state of affairs, though very rich in art and culture, as well as in natural resources, is proverbially poor in the economies and it is an admitted fact that 70% of its population are below the poverty line. Under this background the financial condition of Urban Local Bodies of the state can be well imagined. After twenty six years of freedom, the conditions of Urban Local Bodies have not been changed substantially upto our expectation. Therefore we feel that it is high time for setting up a commission to go deep into the problems and suggest remedial measures for their revival and efficient working so that the faces of our cities and towns will remarkably change.

We are extremely obliged and therefore, for your kind acceptance of our invitation for receiving a Civic reception sacrificing your most valuable time and very sincerely wish and pray for your sound health and a good God that you may enjoy a sound health all through and have a more glorious and prosperous life dedicated to the Service of the nation.

Jai Hind! We beg to remain, very sincerely, Chairman and members of the Berhampur Municipal Council.