

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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Monday, September 2, 1996/Bhadra 11, 1918 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Three Minutes Past

Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

[English]

SHRI TARIQ ANWAR (KATIHAR): Happy birthday, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (BOLPUR): Happy birthday retrospectively, Sir !

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

11.04 hrs.

OBITUARY REFERENCES

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I inform the House, with a deep sense of sorrow, of the passing away of two of our esteemed friends—Shri Nathu Ram Mirdha and Shri Ashoke Kumar Sen.

Shri Mirdha, a sitting Member of this House, passed away on the 30th August, 1996 in New Delhi at the age of seventy-five.

Hailing from Nagaur District of Rajasthan, Shri Mirdha simultaneously fought feudalism as well as the British during the freedom Movement. Drawing his strength primarily from the peasantry, he was an undisputed leader of his people for nearly five decades. He was a Member of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly from 1952 to 1967 and 1984 to 1989 and held several important portfolios in the Government of Rajasthan. Commencing from 1972, he was returned to the Lok Sabha six times. He served in the Union Council of Ministers in 1979-80 and 1989-90. He served too, with distinction, as the Chairman of the National Agricultural Prices Commission.

He was also the Deputy Leader of the Congress-I Parliamentary Party in the present House.

With the passing away of Shri Mirdha, a living link with

the days of freedom movement has been snapped, the peasantry have lost one of the doyens of their emancipation; and this House, a near constant Member.

Shri Ashoke Kumar Sen passed away on 31st August, 1996 in New Delhi at the age of eighty-three.

Having had his higher education initially at Dhaka and Calcutta, he did his Economics at the London School of Economics and Bar at Grays Inn at London.

He started his career teaching Law in the City College, Calcutta and later practising it in the Calcutta High Court. He was a specialist in criminal, commercial and International law.

He entered public life as a contemporary of the first generation leaders of modern India like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Shri Bidhan Chandra Roy and Shri V.K. Krishna Menon. With his electoral base at North West Calcutta, he served the Lok Sabha from 1957 to 1977 and from 1980 to 1989. He was a Member, Rajya Sabha till April, 1996. He was Union Cabinet Minister five times over. For long, he was the inevitable Union Minister of Law, the portfolio he held with distinction. Other portfolios he held include Communications, Steel and Mines.

He ably represented India in the United Nations and the Commonwealth several times.

He was a keen journalist as well. He was the editor of the Calcutta Law Journal for about a decade from 1948.

Shri Ashoke Sen was at once a brilliant academic, a legal luminary with few peers, a steady parliamentarian, a capable administrator, a sophisticated diplomat and a reputed legal journalist.

In his demise, we have lost a distinguished and versatile son of India.

We deeply mourn the loss of these veterans. I am sure that the House will join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved families.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI H.D. DEVE GOWDA): Hon. Speaker, Sir, the death of Shri Nathu Ram Mirdha has left a void in the public life of this country. Shri Mirdha was a veteran freedom fighter and an erudite Parliamentarian. He was a Member of either the Lok Sabha or the State Legislature of Rajasthan for nearly half a century. During this long period,