

VALEDICTORY REFERENCE

Title: Valedictory reference made by the Speaker on the conclusion of the Second part of the 14th Session of 13th Lok Sabha.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, we have now come to the close of the second part of the 14th Session which commenced on the 29th January, 2004. As the hon. Members are aware, it was convened specially to transact essential financial business before the dissolution of the 13th Lok Sabha. On this last working day of the 13th Lok Sabha, I would like to take this opportunity not only to make a mention of the business transacted during the second part of the 14th Session, but also to recapitulate some of the important events that took place during the 13th Lok Sabha.

In this short second part of the 14th Session, spread over five sittings, *inter-alia* the Interim Railway and General Budgets for the year 2004-2005, Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) and (General) for the year 2003-2004, the Demand for Excess Grant (Railways) for the year 2001-2002 as well as connected Appropriation Bills and the Finance Bill were passed by the House.

As in the past, the Lok Sabha Secretariat will be bringing out, in due course, a Souvenir containing a detailed account of the business transacted by the House and the work done by the Parliamentary Committees during the life of the 13th Lok Sabha. However, I may now touch upon some of the salient features and significant events of the 13th Lok Sabha.

The present Lok Sabha was constituted on the 10th October, 1999 and the House met for the first time on the 20th October, 1999. In all, the House had 356 sittings spread over 1,944 hours.

We celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India as well as the 50th Anniversary of the Indian Republic on the 26th November, 1999 and the 27th January, 2000, respectively. The Golden Jubilee of the Parliament of India was also celebrated during the tenure of the 13th Lok Sabha. As you know, the two Houses had met for the first time, after the First General Elections, on the 13th May, 1952. To mark the occasion, an International Parliamentary Conference was hosted by us from the 22nd to the 26th January, 2003.

For the first time, on the 16th May, 2000, my worthy predecessor, Shri G.M.C. Balayogi, constituted a 15-Member Ethics Committee of the House. This was clearly a reflection of our collective concern for probity in public life.

Some of the important *ad hoc* Committees constituted during the Lok Sabha were the Joint Parliamentary Committees on 'Stock Market Scam and matters relating thereto', 'Security in Parliament House Complex', and 'Pesticide residues in and safety standards for soft drinks, fruit juice and other beverages'. All the Parliamentary Standing Committees and the *ad hoc* Committees functioned very well during the Thirteenth Lok Sabha and presented 839 Reports containing important recommendations.

During the course of the 14 sessions that we have had, the House passed 305 Bills. Of these, 14 were Constitution (Amendment) Bills, which include: the Constitution Amendment Bill making the right to education as a Fundamental Right and laying down that 'the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age group of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine'; the Constitution Amendment Bill restricting the size of the Council of Ministers and amending the Anti-Defection law by omitting the provisions relating to splits; and the Constitution Amendment Bill including four more languages in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution.

Among other important Bills passed during the tenure of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha were the three Bills of the year 2000, which paved the way for creation of the new States of Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal and Jharkhand.

The Joint Sitting of Parliament summoned by the President of India under the provisions of article 108(1) of the Constitution on 26th March, 2002, for the purpose of deliberating and voting on the Prevention of Terrorism Bill, 2002 was an event of parliamentary importance. It was the third such occasion when a joint sitting of the Houses was summoned, the earlier two being in connection with the Dowry Prohibition Bill, 1959 and the Banking Service Commission (Repeal) Bill, 1977.

While there have been events and occasions concerning the House in the last four years and nearly four months which are worthy of being proudly taken note of by the posterity, we have also had our share of moments of concern, sadness and grief.

It is with a heavy heart that I recall the tragic and untimely demise of my illustrious predecessor, Shri G.M.C. Balayogi. As Speaker, he endeavoured to uphold the dignity and prestige of the Parliament. On behalf of the entire House, I once again pay respectful homage to this leader of eminence.

The dastardly attack on our Parliament by terrorists on 13th December, 2001 was a reminder of the threats to our democratic institutions and way of life. This violent and senseless attempt was thwarted by the prompt and courageous response of the security personnel. The sacrifices made by the brave souls in protecting our supreme legislative institution will remain etched in our memories forever.

The new Parliament Library Building was inaugurated by the then hon. President, Shri K.R. Narayanan on 7th May, 2002. The fully computerised Library, with its modern facilities, will help the Members not only in discharging their parliamentary duties more effectively but also in their intellectual pursuits.

Hon. Members, as you are aware, the plans to augment and improve the infrastructure of the Constitution Club for the benefit of the Members have also finally fructified. The foundation stone for undertaking the work of renovating and remodelling the Club facilities was laid by the hon. Vice-President of India, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat yesterday, the 4th February, 2004.

The very good performance of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha, in discharging its multifarious role in the fields of Legislation and Finance as well as in transaction of other business of national importance, has been made possible because of the valuable contributions made by the Leader of the House, the Deputy Prime Minister and other Members of the Council of Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leaders, Deputy Leaders and Whips of the political Parties, Chairmen of Parliamentary Committees and indeed each and every Member of this House.

19.00 hrs.

I gratefully acknowledge the unstinted cooperation and support extended to me by all sections of the House, the Treasury as well as the Opposition Benches, in discharging my duties as the Presiding Officer of this House.

I am thankful to the hon. Deputy Speaker and Member on the Panel of Chairmen who have very ably shared the responsibility of presiding over the House.

I, on behalf of the entire House, express my thanks to the Secretary-General and officers and staff of the Lok Sabha Secretariat who have worked hard behind the scene to help us perform the duties bestowed on us as representatives of the people of India.

I also appreciate the services of the Watch & Ward Staff, CRPF, Delhi Police and other security agencies who are vigilantly protecting the Parliament House Complex. I also thank the CPWD and other allied agencies which have rendered their valuable support.

The media persons have taken the work done by us to the people and have helped us in enhancing our parliamentary performance.

We extend our sincere thanks to them and hope that we will continue to have such cooperation in future too.

Very soon, we would be going back to the people to seek their renewed mandate. Let us hope to meet again in the new House as well.

With the conclusion of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha, we take a step towards crossing another significant milestone in the history of our parliamentary democracy. We are confident that the future augurs well for all of us and that we shall be able to realise our much cherished goal of making India a fully developed country very soon.

My best wishes to all of you.

Hon. Members, we may now stand up as '*Vande Matram*' would be played.

फिर एक बार अपनी तरफ से आप सभी सांसदों को चुनाव के लिए मैं शुभ कामनाएं देता हूँ।

19.02 hrs.

NATIONAL SONG

(*The National Song was played.*)

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned *sine die*.

19.03 hrs

The Lok Sabha then adjourned sine die.
