

Title: References made on the conclusion of the Eighth session of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha.

15.34 hrs.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, we have had a very meaningful discussion on a subject of crucial concern for the nation as a whole. It is a matter of satisfaction for all of us that the discussion was marked by consensus and unanimity. We are all united in our resolve to safeguard the unity and integrity of the country. I have had discussion with Leaders of Parties where a consensus emerged that it will be in the fitness of things to conclude our last Session of this year in a spirit of unanimity and national consensus, and that the House may adjourn *sine die* today. I am inclined to accept this suggestion. Thus, today, we come to the end of the Eighth Session of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha – indeed, one of the most eventful in the life of our Parliament and the nation.

This Session and more particularly, 13th December, 2001 will ever remain etched in our collective conscience in the wake of the terrorist attack on this supreme institution of the country. This attack on the nation and its elected leadership was defeated by the timely and courageous action of our security forces belonging to the CRPF, Delhi Police, ITBP and of course, the officers of the Parliament Watch and Ward Service. In their attempt to save the ultimate symbol of Indian democracy, some of them laid down their lives. We once again pay our tributes to the memory of those brave souls.

All of us here realise the magnitude and seriousness of the challenge posed to the nation's unity and integrity by the terrorists and their collaborators. That makes our resolve all the more strong to make safe and secure what the terrorists were trying to destroy – in this case, the Parliament of India which is the epitome of the largest working democracy in the world. We take it as not merely an attack on the most important institution in the country but as an attack on our political system, our ethos and values and on our very way of life. But, in the days to follow, we have shown to the world that we stand as one in ensuring the unity and integrity of our motherland.

During the Session which commenced on 19th November, 2001, the House had a total of 21 sittings spread over about 80 hours. In the course of the Session, the Lok Sabha transacted several important items of financial, legislative and other business. The Supplementary Demands for Grants (Railways) for the year 2001-2002, Demands for Excess Grants (Railways) for the year 1998-99, Supplementary Demands for Grants (General) for the year 2001-2002 and the Budget in respect of the State of Manipur were passed with the full cooperation of the House.

In the legislative sphere, the Lok Sabha gave approval to 11 Bills. The House passed the Constitution (Eighty-fifth Amendment) Bill, 2001 to amend article 16A of the Constitution to provide for restoration of consequential seniority in the case of promotion to the Government servants belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. The historic Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Bill, 2001, also passed by the House, sought the insertion of a new article 21A, conferring on all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years the right to free and compulsory education; substitution of a new article for article 45 to provide that the State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education to children below the age of six years; and to amend article 51A of the Constitution with a view to providing that it shall be the obligation of the parents to provide opportunities for education to their children. Two other important Bills passed by the Lok Sabha were the Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2001 and the Explosive Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2001.

The House had fruitful debates on four matters of public importance under Rule 193. Besides the statement made by the Minister of Home Affairs regarding the terrorists attack on Parliament House on which the discussion was completed today, the other discussions were on: (i) the problems being faced by farmers; (ii) the Ayodhya issue; and (iii) the statement made by the Minister of Commerce and Industry regarding the Fourth Ministerial Conference of WTO held at Doha.

Two important matters were raised by Members by way of Calling Attention and the concerned Ministers made statements thereon. These were on the situation arising out of the influx of religious minorities from Bangladesh to India and steps taken by the Government in regard thereto; and on the situation arising out of the denial of a financial package to the Government of Bihar by the Central Government. Eleven Statements were made by Ministers on different issues of urgent public importance.

As regards the Question Hour, out of 420 Starred Questions listed, 38 were orally answered in the House. Replies to the remaining 382 Starred Questions and 4675 Unstarred Questions were laid on the Table.

Insofar as the Private Members' Business is concerned, twelve Bills were introduced during this Session. One Private Member's Resolution moved during the last Session was further discussed and withdrawn by leave of the House. Another Resolution remained part discussed.

Members raised 148 matters under Rule 377, while ninety matters of public importance were raised by Members

during the 'Zero Hour'.

During this Session, the Departmentally Related Standing Committees presented thirteen Reports.

Hon. Members, we have always endeavoured to see to it that the proceedings of our Legislative Bodies are conducted in an orderly manner. As you are aware, an all-India Conference of Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies, Chief Ministers of States, Ministers of Parliamentary Affairs and Leaders of Parties and Whips was convened in the Central Hall of Parliament House on 25th November, 2001 to discuss 'Discipline and decorum in Parliament and Legislatures of States and Union Territories in India'. The hon. Vice-President of India, hon. Prime Minister, hon. Leaders of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, Presiding Officers of State Legislatures, Chief Ministers and other dignitaries attended the Conference and shared their views on this issue of vital concern to all of us. The Conference adopted a Resolution encompassing a Code of Conduct for Members of all our Legislative Bodies. I need hardly emphasize that we not only enhance our own dignity but also that of the Institution of Parliament when we conduct the proceedings of the House in a disciplined manner. It is my firm belief that the positive ideas that emerged out of the Conference will guide the conduct of our elected representatives in the days ahead.

I am extremely grateful to the hon. Leader of the House, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of various Parties and Groups in the House as also their Chief Whips and Whips and indeed to each and every Member of the House for their kind cooperation to me and to my colleagues, the hon. Deputy Speaker and Members of the Panel of Chairmen in conducting the proceedings of the House in a smooth and orderly manner during this Eighth Session of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha. I would also like to express our appreciation and thanks to the officers and staff of the Lok Sabha Secretariat and allied agencies for their valuable support in this regard. I also thank the Members of the media for the cooperation extended by them.

At the end, let us once again reiterate our resolve to stand united in the face of any threat to the unity and integrity of our country and pay our homage to all those who made the supreme sacrifice in the cause of the nation.

May I now wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

15.43 hrs. National Song

Hon. Members may now rise in their seats as *Vande Mataram* would be played.

(The National Song was played.)

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

15.44 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned sine die.
