

Statement of the Chairman at the conclusion of the 212th Session

Hon. Members, the Winter Session which was the 212th Session, commenced on the 15th November, 2007. The Session, as scheduled, comes to an end today, the 7th December, 2007.

The Session had 17 sittings in all and the House sat for more than 84 hours. During the Session, more than 18 hours were lost on the issues like Nandigram, bomb blasts in Uttar Pradesh, protest over the AIIMS Bill, 2007; Draft National Mineral Policy, and Anniversary of demolition of Babri Mosque at Ayodhya.

The House, however, made up this loss by skipping lunch recess and sitting late for about 26 Hours to complete legislative and other important business. This is significant. On the opening day of the Session, Dr. V. K. Agnihotri, the new Secretary-General of Rajya Sabha was introduced to the House.

During the Session, a new Member, Shri Ambeth Rajan, from the State of Uttar Pradesh, joined us in the House.

During the Session, the House condoled the death of Shri Jana Krishna Murthy K., a sitting Member and three former Members of the Rajya Sabha, *namely*, Dr. L.M. Singhvi, Shri S. R. Bommai and Shir Jagdish Prasad Mathur. The House was adjourned on the 15th November, 2007 as a mark of respect to the memory of Shri Jana Krishna Murthy K.

There were 12 *suo-motu* Statements by Ministers, which were either made or laid. These Statements related to: -

- (a) Recent cyclone and devastation caused by it in Bangladesh;
- (b) National Policy for Farmers;
- (c) Serial bomb blasts in the State of Uttar Pradesh;
- (d) Violence by All Adivashi Students Association of Assam);
- (e) Stay of Ms. Taslima Nasreen in India;
- (f) Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS);
- (g) Status of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA);
- (h) Status of implementation of the components of Bharat Nirman relating to the Ministry of Rural Development;
- (i) HINDRAF demonstration in Malaysia; and
- (j) Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

34 Statements were made or laid in pursuance of the Direction of the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, dated the 24-9-2004 on the status of implementation of recommendations contained in the Reports of various DRPS Committees.

The following issues were discussed at length for more than 21 hours in the form of Short Duration Discussions:-

- (i) The proposal to set up SEZ in Nandigram and consequent large scale violence;
- (ii) Indo-US Nuclear Deal; and
- (iii) The situation arising out of the misuse of funds provided by the Central Government under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme.

26 Notices for Suspension of Question Hour and 95 Notices for matters to be raised with the permission of the Chair were received during the Session. Important matters were raised by Members during the Session.

More than 80 Special Mentions on Matters of Public Importance which were raised/laid on the Table by Members, with the permission of the Chair.

A reference to the victims of bomb blasts in Uttar Pradesh and Assam was made by the Chair in the House. One Government Bill was withdrawn and one Government Bill was introduced during the Session 15 Government Bills were passed/returned during the Session:

- (a) The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) (Union Territories) Order Bill;
- (b) The Indian Boilers (Amendment) Bill;
- (c) The Sashastra Seema Bal Bill;
- (d) The AIIMS and PGIMER (Amendment) Bill;
- (e) The NCT of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Bill;
- (f) Appropriation Bills relating to the Supplementary Demands for Grants (General and Railways);
- (g) The Payment of Bonus Bill; the Indira Gandhi National Tribal University Bill;
- (h) The Armed Forces Tribunal Bill; and
- (i) The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Bill.

These were some of the notable Bills, which the House passed during the Session. However, as decided by the House, the consideration and passing of the Jawaharlal Institute of Post-Graduate Medical Education and Research, Puducherry Bill was deferred.

Three Government Resolutions including seeking approval of the President's rule in Karnataka were adopted by the House.

During the Session, 13 Private Members' Bills were introduced. The issue regarding Compulsory Voting and Prohibition of Pre-poll Survey and Exit Poll of Elections was discussed at length through a Private Member Bill. The issue regarding need to amend the Constitution by way of adding a new chapter on the Governance of Coalition Governments was also discussed at length through a Private Member Resolution.

During the Session, 91 Reports of various Parliamentary Committees including those of Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees were presented or laid on the Table of the House. This is significant. These include a Report of the Committee of Privileges on the alleged derogatory remarks made against Members of Parliament by Shri Ronen Sen, India's Ambassador in the United States of America. During the Session, a total number of 5046 notices, including 1244 in Hindi, of Questions were received from

Members. Out of these, 4205 notices for Starred Questions and 841 were for Unstarred Questions. However, 340 Starred Questions and 2094 Unstarred Questions were admitted and answered. 47 Starred Questions were orally answered. 4 notices for Short Notice Questions and 7 notices for Half-an- Hour Discussion were received but none of them could be admitted. Some of the important papers that were laid on the Table of the House during the Session were the following:

- (i) The National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007;
- (ii) The White Paper on Disinvestment of Central Public Sector Enterprises;
- (iii) Notifications publishing the Orders pertaining to delimitation of Parliamentary constituencies and Legislative Assembly constituencies of the 25 States, issued by the Delimitation Commission of India;
- (iv) Report on the 'Youth in Panchayati Raj Campaign' an Appraisal of the Inter-State Interactive Experience-Sharing Programme;
- (v) Statement on Azadi Express, and public response to it at different stations during the course of its journey;
- (vi) Report on Dakshin Kranti Freedom Struggle in South India, and
- (vii) Mid-Year Review of the India Economy, 2007-08

I thank the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition, Leaders of various Parties and Groups and all the hon. Members for the kind co-operation extended by them in conducting the proceedings of the House.

I also thank the Deputy Chairman, Members on the Panel of Vice-Chairmen and the staff of the Secretariat for their help and cooperation.

Before we adjourn, may I extend to all of you my greetings and good wishes for the forthcoming festivals and other auspicious occasions ahead and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Now, before we adjourn the House sine die, we will have the National Song.