

VALEDICTORY REMARKS: 222ND SESSION

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, the 222nd Session of the Rajya Sabha comes to a close today. Being a shorter Budget Session, it was principally devoted to the Financial Business of the Government.

The Session began with the Address of the Respected Rashtrapati ji to both the Houses of Parliament assembled together on 21.02.2011 and was followed by a discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address. In addition to the discussion on the Railway and the General Budgets as well as return of the concerned Appropriation Bills and the Financial Bill, an important Legislative Business transacted during this Session related to the passing of the Orissa (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2010 along with the Constitution (One Hundred and Thirteenth Amendment) Bill, 2010.

Several statements were made or laid by the Prime Minister and the other Members of the Council of Ministers during this Session. A large number of Special Mentions on Matters of Public Importance as well as Matters Raised with Permission of the Chair were made during this Session. Two Calling Attention notices on 'Unprecedented and untimely heavy rains in Andhra Pradesh' and 'Utilisation of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes' were discussed. A Short Duration Discussion on the 'Statement made by the Prime Minister on 18.03.2011 on a newspaper report on Cash-for-Vote' was also taken up.

In order to optimize the output of the Question Hour, and at the same time allow Members regular opportunity to mention matters of urgent concern with the permission of the Chair, it was decided to commence the working day at 11.00 AM with matters raised with permission and shift the Question Hour to the first hour after lunch. The Chair appreciates the cooperation in the matter of the Hon'ble Members. Initial results have been encouraging. I have also received some feedback which will help fine tune the new arrangement.

Six new Ministers were introduced to the House by the Prime Minister. Smt. Hema Malini, elected in a bye-election from the State of Karnataka, joined the House during the Session.

I take this opportunity to thank the Leader of the House, the Leader of the opposition, the Leaders of various parties and groups and the Hon'ble Members for the cooperation extended by them for the overall smooth functioning of the House.

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