

## **VALEDICTORY REMARKS:223<sup>RD</sup> SESSION**

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Hon'ble Members, the 223<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Rajya Sabha comes to a close today. Being the Monsoon Session, it has lived up to its appellation with stormy proceedings.

During the Session, thirteen new Members elected or re-elected, in the various elections from States of Goa, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, joined the House. The House also bid farewell to the retiring Members of Rajya Sabha from the States of Gujarat and West Bengal whose term of office expired on 18 August, 2011. Eleven new Ministers were introduced to the House by the Prime Minister.

The highlights of the Session included the proceedings relating to the Motion for Removal from Office of Justice Soumitra Sen of the Calcutta High Court and the discussion on the issue relating to setting up of a Lokpal. On both the occasions, the House witnessed a very high quality of debate.

Three Government Bills were introduced and nine Government Bills were passed or returned during the Session. I have asked the Secretary-General to make available the statistical information relating to this Session.

The Session was characterized by frequent interruptions and disturbances. No Business whatsoever was transacted on 10 days. Cumulatively, 53 scheduled working hours were lost. Only 65 out of the 500 questions were answered orally. Twenty-seven hours of the time allotted for discussion of Bills could not be availed of. Only one Calling Attention was taken up during the entire Session against the target of two Calling Attentions per week. Only four Short Duration Discussions could be held. As a result, many matters of public importance remained unattended. This is a sad commentary on the right and duty of the Members to participate meaningfully in the proceedings of the House. It calls for introspection. It should not be beyond our collective endeavour to seek ways of expressing concerns without transgressing on the rights of fellow Members and without infringing our own rules for conduct of Business.

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. Members for the cooperation extended by them for the overall functioning of the House.

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