

CHAPTER-16

Obituary and Other References

It is customary and usual to make obituary references in the House on the demise of sitting members, Ministers, former members, outstanding and eminent personages, national leaders, men and women who have played an important role in the public life of the country, heads of Governments of foreign and friendly States. Apart from these, references are also made in the House to major natural calamities or accidents or tragic happenings involving loss of life and property. Befitting the occasions, tributes and felicitations are offered and laudatory references are made on some outstanding achievements, significant events, commemorative days or solemn occasions in the House.

(a) Obituary references

General procedure

Until 13 November 1972, obituary references on the passing away of members, Ministers, etc. used to be made in the House usually after the questions. In 1972, the General Purposes Committee considered the then existing practice in regard to the making of obituary references and adjournment of the House on the death of Ministers, sitting members, national leaders and other outstanding persons and made the following recommendations:

- (i) In the case of the death of a sitting member of the Rajya Sabha, the existing convention of adjourning the House for the day if the death took place in Delhi, in order to enable the members to participate in the funeral or sending of the dead body from Delhi, might be continued.
- (ii) In the case of the death of a Minister who, at the time of his death, was not a member of the Rajya Sabha, the House should be adjourned for the day, if the death took place in Delhi, in order to enable the members to participate in the funeral or sending of the dead body from Delhi.
- (iii) In the case of the death of the head of a national political party, the House might be adjourned for the day if (a) the deceased was a sitting member of the Lok Sabha at the time of his death, (b) his party was represented in the Rajya Sabha and had been recognised by the Chairman either as a party or group in the House and (c) the death took place in Delhi, in order to enable the members to participate in the funeral or sending of the dead body from Delhi.

- (iv) In the case of the death of an outstanding personality or national leader or a foreign dignitary, the Chairman, in consultation with the Leader of the House, might decide in each case whether the House should be adjourned for the day or not.
- (v) The existing practice of the Chairman alone making a reference should continue to be followed. This would not preclude other party/group leaders also participating in the obituary references on special occasions when there is a general consensus to that effect.
- (vi) Obituary references should be made immediately after the House meets.¹

These recommendations were notified in the Bulletin for information of members.²

An obituary reference is made in the House at the earliest available opportunity after receiving the news about the passing away of a member, ex-member, Minister, etc. either from a press report or a sitting member or a relation of the deceased or any other reliable source. In case of doubt, confirmation of the death of the personality concerned is also obtained from the appropriate authority of the State Government such as the Chief Secretary, the District Magistrate, etc. before a reference is made.

On 23 May 1970, just before 12.00 noon, a member informed that Shri P. Govinda Menon, the Law Minister was precariously ill. Another member informed that he had expired. The Chairman directed the Secretary to make inquiries. After some time the matter was again raised and members wanted that the House should be adjourned. The Secretary informed the Chairman that the Prime Minister was expected to come to the House. Only after the Prime Minister confirmed it, the Chairman made the obituary reference. Before doing so he observed, "How could I announce it unless I had confirmed it?"³

On 17 August 1990, at about 5.15 p.m. a member informed the House about the death of a former lady member of the Lok Sabha in a brutal attack at Calcutta. He wanted that the House should condole the death and be adjourned. The news was not confirmed from official source. When a member wanted that the member giving the information should give more details, the Vice-Chairman observed, "No individual member of the House can substitute for a member of the Government to take the House into confidence. Any other information is informal information." After some formal business the House was adjourned.⁴ On 20 August 1990, the matter regarding incorrect information was raised in the House and eventually, the member concerned expressed regret for wrong information.⁵

If before the list of business for the day is issued, it is known that an obituary reference is to be made in the House, as per the practice in vogue since 13 November 1972, an entry is made in the list of business under the caption "Obituary Reference(s)" before "Questions" but after "Oath or Affirmation",

if any, mentioning the name of the deceased and whether he was a sitting member or an ex-member, etc. The names of the deceased personages, when more than one, especially on the opening day of a session, are shown in the list of business in the order of death sequence; the heads of States of foreign and friendly countries being listed first in the order.

In the list of business for 23 January 1980, under the heading "Obituary References," the name of Lord Mountbatten appeared first followed by the names of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and others and the obituary references were made accordingly. The next day, a member raised a point of procedure followed in this respect and made a suggestion for the future that when the obituaries were read the names of the Indians should be in one category, the names of the foreigners should be in another category and in the case of Indians, "the eminence of the Indian personalities" should be kept in view when putting the names. The Chairman observed, "The hon'ble member has made a point which in future I will bear in mind. This time the death sequence was considered and utilized."⁶

If the information regarding the death of a member or any other person about whom an obituary reference is to be made in the House is received after the issue of the list of business for the day, necessary entry in respect of such reference is made in the memorandum of business prepared for use of the Chair.

In the list of business for 29 July 2002, the obituary reference to be made in the House regarding the passing away of Shri Krishan Kant, Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha was not mentioned. However, an entry was made in the memorandum of business prepared for the use of the Chair.

After an obituary reference is made, the House observes silence for a while, all members standing, as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed. Then the Chairman directs the Secretary-General to convey the sense of sorrow and sympathy of the House to the members of the bereaved family. Thereafter, the House proceeds with the questions or adjourns for the day, as may be decided. A letter to the next-of-kin of the departed is issued under the signature of the Secretary-General, as per the direction of the Chairman.

The General Purposes Committee in its meeting held on 9 December 1998, which was subsequently incorporated in Bulletin Part II, dated 28 January 1999, recommended the following modifications with regard to adjournment of the House on the death of Ministers, sitting members, national leaders and other outstanding persons and making of obituary references:

- (i) In the case of death of a sitting member of Rajya Sabha who dies when Parliament is in session, the House will be adjourned for the day as soon as the message is received or on the following day if the message is received late.

- (ii) In the case of death of a sitting member during the inter-session period, the House will be adjourned on the first day of the session after making obituary reference.
- (iii) In the case of the death of a Minister who, at the time of his death, was not a member of the Rajya Sabha, the House should be adjourned for the day, if the death took place in Delhi, in order to enable the members to participate in the funeral or sending of the dead body from Delhi.
- (iv) In the case of the death of the head of a national political party, the House may be adjourned for the day if (a) the deceased was a sitting member of the Lok Sabha at the time of his death, (b) his party was represented in the Rajya Sabha and had been recognised by the Chairman either as a party or Group in the House; and (c) the death took place in Delhi, in order to enable the members to participate in the funeral or sending of the dead body from Delhi.
- (v) In the case of the death of an outstanding personality or national leader or a foreign dignitary, the Chairman, in consultation with the Leader of the House, might decide in each case whether the House should be adjourned for the day or not.

The Committee also recommended that in the matter of making obituary references the existing practice of the Chairman alone making a reference should continue to be followed. This would not preclude party/group leaders also participating in the obituary reference on special occasions when there is a general consensus to that effect.

The Committee further, recommended that obituary references should be made immediately after the House meets.⁸

The above is the general procedure usually followed in regard to the making of obituary references in respect of members, Ministers, etc. However, departures are made as and when circumstances require.

On an occasion, obituary reference was made on the death in Delhi of Shri Mehr Chand Khanna, a former member both of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, on 20 July 1970. When the House reassembled after the lunch-recess, a member mentioned that the Lok Sabha had adjourned on that score and so the Rajya Sabha should also adjourn. The Leader of the House observed, "... the tradition of the House is that if he is a member of this House and dies during the session, the House adjourns. The Lok Sabha Speaker said that this was not to be treated as a precedent but since all the party leaders made a request the House was adjourned." The suggestion to adjourn the Rajya Sabha was not accepted.⁹

Adjournment on the opening day of the session

On the opening day of a session, obituary references are made to the passing away of sitting members, former members, Ministers, etc. during the preceding inter-session period. Before 1999 the House was not generally adjourned thereafter except on the opening day of the first session of the year when the House adjourned after laying of a copy of the President's Address on the Table, obituary references and other business of a formal nature. There had, however, been exceptions and the House had adjourned on the opening day of the session as a mark of respect to the departed, namely Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai (Minister for Food and Agriculture),¹⁰ Shri H.C. Dasappa (Minister of Industry and Supply),¹¹ sitting members Shri D. Sanjivayya,¹² Shri Bhupesh Gupta,¹³ Shri Bir Bahadur Singh,¹⁴ Shri N.E. Balaram,¹⁵ Shri Jagjivan Ram (National Leader)¹⁶ and Choudhary Charan Singh and Shri Morarji Desai (former Prime Ministers)¹⁷ who had passed away when the House was not in session. The adjournment of the House in such cases was decided by the Chairman on the basis of the consensus or general wish of leaders of parties, etc.

There has also been an instance when the obituary reference in respect of a sitting member was not made along with others on the opening day of the session but was made on the second day and thereafter the House adjourned for the day.

Shri Darbara Singh, a sitting member died on 12 March 1990, which was the opening day of the 153rd session. After making other obituary references, the Chairman announced that the obituary reference in respect of Shri Darbara Singh would be made on 13 March 1990. It was accordingly made on that day and the House adjourned.¹⁸

Adjournment for the rest of the day

When the news of the death of a member or Minister or any other outstanding personality is received whilst the House is sitting, the practice is that the proceedings are interrupted to make the obituary reference or express sorrow and the House adjourns for the rest of the day.

On 14 March 1961, at about 3.30 p.m. the Deputy Chairman informed the House of the passing away of Shri Ram Kripal Singh, a sitting member, in Delhi. After brief reference by the Chair and observance of silence by members, the House was adjourned at 3.32 p.m. for the rest of the day.¹⁹

On 29 April 1969, immediately after Question Hour, the Chairman made a reference to the passing away of Shri P.N. Saprú, former member of the House at Hyderabad that morning. Thereafter, the House observed silence. A suggestion was made that the House might be adjourned after lunch "as a matter of respect and homage to that great soul." The Chairman suggested that the House would adjourn at 3.30 p.m. At 4.00 p.m. the Vice-Chairman informed the House that the body of late Shri Saprú was expected to arrive in Delhi between 6.30 p.m. and 7.00 p.m. He adjourned the House at 4.02 p.m. for the rest of the day as a mark of respect to Shri Saprú.²⁰

Besides adjourning the House on 20 November 1969, as a mark of respect to Shrimati Violet Alva, former Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, the House also adjourned on 21 November 1969 at 2.41 p.m., on a suggestion of a member, to enable members to attend her funeral.²¹

On 23 May 1970, after 12.00 noon, the Prime Minister informed the House about the passing away of Shri P. Govinda Menon in Delhi. After a reference by the Chairman and observance of silence, the House was adjourned *sine die*, being the last day of the 72nd session.²²

On 23 November 1977, when the House reassembled after lunch-recess, the Minister of Railways made a statement regarding derailment of Ahmedabad-Delhi Mail and in the course of the statement informed that among the dead was Shri Prakash Veer Shastri, a sitting member of the House. After the Deputy Chairman made a reference and the observance of silence, the House adjourned for the rest of the day at 2.09 p.m.²³

On 8 December 1981, at about 12.20 p.m., the Deputy Chairman informed the House of the passing away of Shri Kartik Oraon, Minister of State in the Ministry of Communications. The House observed silence and adjourned for the rest of the day at 12.21 p.m.²⁴

Sometimes the House has adjourned for the day immediately after receiving the news of the death of a member or Minister and the obituary reference was made at the next sitting.

On 13 August 1963, at 3.42 p.m., the Vice-Chairman informed the House of the passing away of a sitting member Shri Satyacharan Shastri a short while ago that day. The House was adjourned for the rest of the day and obituary reference was made the next day.²⁵

On 27 May 1964, immediately after the House assembled, the Minister of Finance (Shri T.T. Krishnamachari) reported to the House that the Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, had been taken seriously ill suddenly that morning at 6.25 and his condition was causing anxiety. After Question Hour, one member requested the Chairman to convey the good wishes and the prayer of the House for the recovery of the Prime Minister. When the House reassembled after the lunch-break at 2.30 p.m. the Minister of Steel, Mines and Heavy Engineering (Shri C. Subramaniam) announced the sad news of the death of the Prime Minister. The House was adjourned for the rest of the day and obituary references were made on 29 May 1964.²⁶

On 27 April 1992, in the afternoon, news came about the passing away of Shri A.G. Kulkarni, a sitting member at Pune that day. There was a demand that the House should be adjourned immediately. The Vice-Chairman adjourned the House for consultations. The House reassembled after about an hour with the Chairman in the Chair. He adjourned the House for the rest of the day at 3.57 p.m. as a mark of respect to Shri Kulkarni's

memory. Obituary references were made by the Chairman and leaders of various parties/groups the next day.²⁷

On 25 July 2001, in the afternoon, news came about the death of Shrimati Phoolan Devi, a sitting member of Lok Sabha, who was shot dead at her residence at 1.30 p.m. on that day. Shri Rama Shanker Kaushik informed the House about her death. The Deputy Chairman then came to the House. She took the sense of the House and the House observed silence. The House was then adjourned for the day. The next day, the Chairman made reference regarding the tragic incident and the House observed silence and adjourned for the day to facilitate members to attend the funeral of late Shrimati Phoolan Devi.²⁸

Similarly, on 19 March 2002, in the afternoon news came about the death of Shri Dayanand Sahay, a sitting member of the Rajya Sabha, following a tragic road accident. The Vice-Chairman, (Shri Adhik Shirodkar) informed the House about the passing away of Shri Sahay and the House adjourned for the rest of the day. On the 20 March 2002, the Chairman made a reference to the passing away of Shri Dayanand Sahay, the House observed silence as a mark of respect to the departed and adjourned for the day.²⁹

Adjournment for a while or non-adjournment

Sometimes in view of the business which could not be postponed, the House was adjourned for a while immediately after knowing about the death of a member or Minister and it reassembled for the transaction of business.

On 31 July 1974, the Chairman made a reference to the passing away of Shri M.B. Rana, Minister of State in the Ministry of Industrial Development in the early hours of the morning that day. The House observed silence for a minute and adjourned till 5.30 p.m. The House reassembled at 5.43 p.m. and before it adjourned at 5.46 p.m., the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance (Shri K.R. Ganesh) laid on the Table a Statement of the Minister of Finance regarding the introduction of the Finance (No.2) Bill, 1974, in the Lok Sabha.³⁰

However, on an occasion, which was the last day of the session, the House did not adjourn for the rest of the day or for a while after making obituary reference in respect of a sitting member in view of the business to be transacted.

On 31 January 1985, after the House passed the Constitution (Fifty-second Amendment) Bill, 1985, the Deputy Chairman announced the passing away of Shri Kalyan Roy, a sitting member, at Calcutta in the afternoon that day and made obituary reference about him. The House then observed silence for a minute. The next item on the Agenda was consideration and passing of the Administrative Tribunals Bill, 1985 as passed by the Lok Sabha. On the suggestion that the Bill could be taken up during the next session and the House should adjourn as a mark of respect to the memory of Shri Roy, the Deputy Chairman after putting the matter before the House observed, "We wanted... the obituary at the end of the deliberations on this Bill. But we wanted to have most of our members present...we thus did it," and the Bill was taken up for consideration.³¹

On another occasion, the Chairman made the obituary reference, the House observed silence and adjourned for a while in the midst of the sitting to pay respects to the departed.

On 24 March 1992, the Chairman made a reference to the passing away of Shri Gurdial Singh Dhillon, former Speaker of the Lok Sabha. The House observed silence. At 3.19 p.m., the House was adjourned to enable members to pay respects to the late Shri Dhillon, whose body was brought at Gate No. 1, Parliament House. The House reassembled at 3.33 p.m.³²

Leaders' participation in the reference-making

The general practice as stated earlier is that an obituary reference is made only by the Chairman on behalf of the House. In exceptional cases, the Prime Minister or the Leader of the House may initiate the reference and leaders and representatives of various parties/groups and some other members may also participate in the reference-making in which case the Chairman would associate himself with the sentiments expressed by various sections of the House at the end.

Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, informed the House of the death of Acharya Narendra Deva, great socialist leader and sitting member of the House and thereafter the Chairman associated himself with the sentiments expressed by the Prime Minister.³³

Obituary references about the death of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, former President of India,³⁴ Shri G.B. Pant, Leader of the House,³⁵ Shri Jawaharlal Nehru³⁶ and Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri,³⁷ Prime Ministers, Dr. Zakir Husain³⁸ and Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed,³⁹ Presidents, Babu Jagjivan Ram⁴⁰ and Chaudhary Charan Singh⁴¹ were initiated by the Leader of the House and then leaders and representatives of various parties/groups in the Rajya Sabha spoke. At the end the Chairman/Deputy Chairman associated themselves with the sentiments expressed.

Obituary references in respect of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia,⁴² Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi⁴³ and former Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi⁴⁴ were initiated by the Chairman and leaders/representatives of parties/groups, etc. spoke thereafter.

The Prime Minister also spoke after the Chairman made an obituary reference in respect of Shri Bir Bahadur Singh, a sitting member and a Minister.⁴⁵

The Chairman made a reference to the passing away of Shri A.G. Kulkarni, a sitting member. Thereafter, leaders of various parties/groups associated themselves with the sentiments expressed.⁴⁶

Condolence resolutions

In some exceptional cases the House has adopted condolence resolutions proposed by the Chairman or moved by the Leader of the House while making obituary references in respect of the departed.

Resolutions condoling the death of Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Zakir Husain and Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed were moved by the Leader of the House.⁴⁷ Those on the passing away of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Shri Rajiv Gandhi were placed before the House by the Chairman.⁴⁸

After the leaders of various parties/groups, etc. had spoken, the House adopted the resolution, all members standing and observing silence. Obituary references in respect of other members or personalities were made thereafter and the House again observed silence for them before adjourning for the day.

Black-bordered Bulletin

When an obituary reference is made, the Bulletin Part-I which contains the brief record of the proceedings of the House gives names of persons in respect of whom the reference was made and the fact of observance of silence and adjournment of the House. A practice has also been introduced since June 1991 to black-border the Bulletin whenever the House adjourns, after obituary reference, as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed. In the past, the practice of black-bordering of the Bulletin was selective inasmuch as it was done only in respect of the following:

Acharya Narendra Deva, Speaker Shri G.V. Mavalankar, Shri P.C. Bhanj Deo, Shri G.B. Pant, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President John F. Kennedy, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, Dr. Zakir Husain, Shrimati Violet Alva, Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and Shrimati Indira Gandhi.⁴⁹

Obituary references in respect of former Chairmen

In the matter of obituary references to former Chairmen of the Rajya Sabha, the House observed the following procedure:

Dr. Zakir Husain, former Chairman died on 3 May 1969 (Saturday), while in office as the President. The Leader of the House initiated the reference by moving a condolence resolution on 5 May 1969. Thereafter, leaders of parties/groups and other members spoke. At the end, the Deputy Chairman, who presided in the absence of the Chairman who, as the Vice-President was acting as the President, associated herself with the sentiments expressed. The resolution was adopted, members observing silence for two minutes. The Deputy Chairman, before adjourning the House for the day observed, "We will all be at Rashtrapati Bhawan to pay our homage to the late departed President half an hour after the House rises."⁵⁰

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the first Chairman and the former President, died on 17 April 1975. The House was not in session. Obituary reference was made by the Chairman on the opening day of the 92nd session on 25 April 1975 in respect of Dr. Radhakrishnan as well as in respect of a sitting and two former members. The House observed two minutes' silence as mark of respect to the memory of the deceased. After the Secretary-General reported two messages from the Lok Sabha

regarding the Constitution (Thirty-seventh and Thirty-eighth Amendment) Bills, 1975 and laid the Bills on the Table, the House adjourned for the day.⁵¹

On 24 June 1980, the Chairman made a reference to the passing away of Shri V.V. Giri, former Chairman of Rajya Sabha and the President of India, that day in the morning. The House observed silence for one minute, all members standing as a mark of respect to his memory and thereafter adjourned for the day. When the House met the next day, the Leader of the House made a suggestion for adjournment of the Rajya Sabha without transacting any business on account of the cremation of Shri Giri to be held that day. Leaders/representatives of parties/groups in the House supported the suggestion. In view of the unanimous acceptance of the suggestion, the Chairman adjourned the House for the day.⁵²

Shri Gopal Swarup Pathak died on 31 August 1982. The House was not in session. The Chairman made a reference to the passing away of Shri Pathak, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Shri C.D. Deshmukh and two former members of the Rajya Sabha on the opening day of the 124th session on 4 October 1982. The House observed one minute's silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.⁵³

Shri M. Hidayatullah died on 18 September 1992. The House was not in session. The Chairman made references to the passing away of Shri M. Hidayatullah and others on the opening day of the 165th session on 24 November 1992. Before the House met that day, at an informal meeting of the leaders and representatives of parties/groups with the Chairman, it was agreed that the House should adjourn for the day in memory of the former Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Shri M. Hidayatullah. After observance of silence the House adjourned.⁵⁴ It was the first day when after being elected as the Vice-President, the Chairman, Shri K.R. Narayanan, was presiding over the House. National Anthem was not played nor felicitations were offered to the Chairman that day which were done the next day.

On 15 July 2002, the Chairman made a reference to the passing away of Shri Basappa Danappa Jatti, Former Vice-President of India and former Chairman, Rajya Sabha. The House observed silence, as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed and then adjourned for the day.^{54a}

On 29 July 2002, the Deputy Chairman made a reference to the passing away of Shri Krishan Kant, Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha. The House observed silence for one minute, as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed and then adjourned for the day.⁵⁵

Obituary reference for a sitting member of the Lok Sabha

Usually an obituary reference is not made in the Rajya Sabha on the demise of a sitting member of the Lok Sabha, unless such a member had been previously a member of the Rajya Sabha or the Minister or otherwise eminent. Such references were made on the demise of Prof. Meghnad Saha⁵⁶, eminent scientist and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia⁵⁷, socialist leader, who were also sitting members of the Lok Sabha when they passed away. The House also adjourned

for the day in memory of the Speaker, Shri G.V. Mavalankar⁵⁸, Shri Feroze Gandhi⁵⁹, Shri K. Kamaraj⁶⁰, former Congress President, Shri Sanjay Gandhi.⁶¹ Shri Lalit Maken⁶², (the Chairman took the sense of the House and adjourned it—no obituary reference was made nor did the House observe silence), and Shri Frank Anthony⁶³ (before deciding to adjourn the House, the Deputy Chairman held an informal meeting of leaders in her Chamber that morning).

On the demise of Shri N. V. N. Somu⁶⁴, Union Minister and a sitting member of Lok Sabha, Shri Indrajit Gupta⁶⁵, eminent leader and veteran parliamentarian and a sitting member of Lok Sabha, Shri P.R. Kumaramangalam,⁶⁶ Union Minister and a sitting member of Lok Sabha, Shri Madhavrao Scindia⁶⁷, eminent parliamentarian and former Union Minister and a sitting member of Lok Sabha, the Chairman made obituary references, observed silence and adjourned the House.

On the demise of Shri G.M.C. Balayogi, Speaker in the twelfth and thirteenth Lok Sabha, the Chairman made reference to the passing away of Shri Balayogi on 4 March 2002 and adjourned the House for three consecutive days after observing silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.⁶⁸

On 9 August 1967, the Lok Sabha adjourned on account of the death of one of its sitting members Shri Jai Bahadur Singh. On a suggestion that the Rajya Sabha should also adjourn, the Chairman observed that unless all sides and all leaders in the Rajya Sabha agreed, it was difficult to create a new precedent because there was only one exception of Shri Feroze Gandhi. The House was, therefore, not adjourned. The Chairman, however, expressed sorrow and the House observed a minute's silence in memory of that member.⁶⁹

Obituary references in respect of important personalities of the country

As is customary, references are made in the House on the demise of important personalities who have played prominent role in public life of the country or internationally. After the Chair has made the reference the House observes silence, all members standing, as a mark of respect in memory of the departed. The following are some of the eminent personalities on whose death, references were made in the House and the House observed silence:

Shri B.N. Rau, Judge, International Court of Justice;⁷⁰ Shri Maneckji Byramjee Dadabhoy, member and President of the former Council of State;⁷¹ and Shrimati Sivakamamma Radhakrishnan, wife of the Chairman, Dr. Radhakrishnan.⁷²

The Chairman in his letter of reply which was read out to the House expressed his deep gratitude to the Rajya Sabha for their sympathy for him in sorrow and stated, "Even without a formal resolution, I would have known it. It is pleasing to note that the members with whom I have the honour to work sympathise with me in this hour."⁷³

Shri T. Prakasam, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh;⁷⁴ Dr. Bhagwan Das, philosopher; ⁷⁵ Saiyid Fazal Ali, former Judge of the Supreme Court and

Chairman, States Reorganisation Commission;⁷⁶ Dr. John Mathai, former Union Finance Minister;⁷⁷ Dr. P. Subbarayan, former Union Minister and Governor of Maharashtra;⁷⁸ Dr. B. C. Roy, Chief Minister, West Bengal;⁷⁹ His Highness Sir Tashi Namgyal of Sikkim;⁸⁰ Shri Deen Dayal Upadhyay, President of Jana Sangh;⁸¹ Shri M.S. Aney, prominent leader;⁸² Dr. C.V. Raman, scientist;⁸³ Shri Sri Prakasa, Governor of Maharashtra;⁸⁴ Shri G.M. Sadiq, Chief Minister of J&K;⁸⁵ Shri C. Rajagopalachari, the first Indian Governor-General;⁸⁶ Shri M.S. Golwalkar, Sar Sanghchalak of R.S.S.;⁸⁷ Shri Muzaffar Ahmed, founder member of the Communist Party of India;⁸⁸ Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah, former Chief Minister of J&K;⁸⁹ Shri C. D. Deshmukh, former Union Finance Minister;⁹⁰ Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Bhoodan leader;⁹¹ Sardar Hukam Singh, former Speaker, Lok Sabha;⁹² Shri Tenzing Norgay, Everest climber;⁹³ Dr. Nagendra Singh, Judge, International Court of Justice;⁹⁴ Shri H.N. Bahuguna, former Union Minister of Petroleum and Chemicals;⁹⁵ Shri S.M. Joshi, socialist leader;⁹⁶ Shri S.A. Dange, Communist leader;⁹⁷ Shri Achyut Patwardhan, socialist leader;⁹⁸ Shri N.T. Rama Rao, former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and a national leader;⁹⁹ Giani Zail Singh, former President of India;¹⁰⁰ Shrimati Aruna Asaf Ali, noted freedom fighter;¹⁰¹ Mother Teresa, Nobel Peace Prize recipient;¹⁰² Shri E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Veteran Leader of Communist Party (M);¹⁰³ Shri Shanker Dayal Sharma former President of India;¹⁰⁴ Shri S. Nijalingappa, member of Constituent Assembly and eminent Gandhian;¹⁰⁵ and Shri C. Subramaniam, former Union Minister and member of Constituent Assembly.¹⁰⁶

The House has also adjourned as a mark of respect in memory of the following:

Dr. H.C. Mookerjee, Governor of West Bengal;¹⁰⁷ Shri Jayaprakash Narayan;¹⁰⁸ Acharya J.B. Kripalani;¹⁰⁹ Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, Akali leader;¹¹⁰ Shri M.G. Ramachandran, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu;¹¹¹ Shri Karpoori Thakur, former Chief Minister of Bihar;¹¹² Gen. A.S. Vaidya, former Chief of Army Staff;¹¹³ Shri J.R.D. Tata, industrialist;¹¹⁴ and Shrimati Aruna Asaf Ali, freedom fighter.¹¹⁵

On occasions the Chair expresses sorrow on behalf of the House over the death of a personality. On the death of Shri Potti Sriramulu,¹¹⁶ who undertook fast for the formation of a separate Andhra Pradesh and Dr. Imkongliba Ao, Chairman of the Nagaland Interim Council,¹¹⁷ the Chairman expressed sorrow.

References to demise of Heads of foreign States or eminent international personalities

In case of demise of the Head of a foreign State or any other outstanding international or eminent foreign personality, the Chairman or the Prime Minister makes a reference and the House observes silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased. References have been made in the House to the death of the following personalities:

King Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah of Nepal;¹¹⁸ Lady Mountbatten;¹¹⁹ Jigme Dorji, Prime Minister of Bhutan;¹²⁰ Harold Holt, Prime Minister of

Australia;¹²¹ Abdel Nasser, President of UAR;¹²² Gen. Charles de Gaulle, former President of France;¹²³ King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah of Nepal;¹²⁴ King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk of Bhutan;¹²⁵ Kazi Nazrul Islam, great Bengali poet;¹²⁶ Lord Mountbatten;¹²⁷ Josip Broz Tito, President of Yugoslavia;¹²⁸ Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev¹²⁹ and Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov, Presidents of erstwhile USSR;¹³⁰ Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, Governor-General of Mauritius;¹³¹ Mr. Samora Machel, President of Mozambique;¹³² Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, President of Pakistan;¹³³ President Kim-II-Sung of North Korea;¹³⁴ Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel;¹³⁵ Deng Xiaoping, Chinese Leader;¹³⁶ King Hussain of Jordan;¹³⁷ Julius S. Nyerere, former President of Tanzania;¹³⁸ and Shri Hafez-M-Asad, President of Syria.¹³⁹

As soon as the House met on 6 May 1981, some members suggested that obituary reference should be made about Bobby Sands, the Irish freedom fighter and member of British Parliament. The Chairman stated that while he quite sensed the feelings of the House, he could not express himself till the Leader of the House had spoken. The Leader of the House, *inter alia*, explaining the position appealed to the House not to create any new precedent. Thereafter, a member made his observations and towards the end requested the opposition to stand up. At that stage, some members belonging to opposition parties stood up. The Chairman remarked, "It does not look nice. I may inform the House that this was raised in the other House also. But people did not stand in silence." He further said, "It does not look right...to stand." When one member (belonging to ruling party) asked whether it was not contempt or insult of the House, the Chairman closed the controversy with these observations: "...so much heat and so much anger need not be spent on a very sad affair. They have chosen some times to walk out. If they have chosen to stand in silence, you have not done so. You have not walked out with them...I cannot make them sit down in silence or in noise," and proceeded to questions.¹⁴⁰

The House adjourned for the day after the obituary references were made in respect of Marshal Stalin of USSR;¹⁴¹ President John F. Kennedy of USA;¹⁴² President Konstantin K. Chernenko of USSR;¹⁴³ Prime Minister Olof Palme of Sweden;¹⁴⁴ Emperor Hirohito of Japan;¹⁴⁵ Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran;¹⁴⁶ and President Ranasinghe Premadasa of Sri Lanka.¹⁴⁷ In case of the demise of Shrimati Sirimavo Bandarnaike, former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka¹⁴⁸ and King Birendra Vikram Shah Dev and his family members;¹⁴⁹ the Chairman made reference and the House observed silence. Thereafter, the House was adjourned.

Whenever a reference is made to the passing away of a foreign dignitary, the condolence message is sent to the Ministry of External Affairs to be conveyed to the appropriate person or authority of the foreign Government concerned.¹⁵⁰

(b) Tributes and homage

As occasions demand, the Chairman or members pay tributes or homage to persons for their outstanding actions or achievements, express their sentiments or feelings befitting the occasion.

At the end of short duration discussion regarding U.N. Security Council Resolution calling for ceasefire between India and Pakistan, at the suggestion of the Prime Minister, the House observed one minute's silence, all members standing, "in grateful remembrance of all those who have shed their lives in order that we might live in honour" before adjourning *sine die*.¹⁵¹

Leaders paid tributes to the late Trilokyanath Chakravorty Maharaj, freedom fighter of undivided Bengal who died on 10 August 1970.¹⁵²

After the House was informed of the unconditional surrender by the West Pakistani forces in Bangladesh, at the suggestion of a member, the House observed a minute's silence "to pay homage to the brave and valiant soldiers who have laid down their lives in the cause of Bangladesh."¹⁵³

Tributes were offered to Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan¹⁵⁴ and Shri G.V. Mavalankar¹⁵⁵ on the occasion of their birth centenaries.

Homage was paid to Karl Marx on the occasion of his death centenary.¹⁵⁶

The Chairman offered tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and also proposed a resolution which was adopted, by members standing, on the occasion of the Centenary Year of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi.¹⁵⁷

On the occasion of May Day, the Deputy Chairman greeted the working people and paid homage to all those who strived and struggled for improvement and amelioration of the conditions of the working class throughout the world.¹⁵⁸

The Prime Minister made a statement on the execution of three African patriots by the illegal Southern Rhodesian Government. Thereafter, the House observed silence in memory of the African patriots.¹⁵⁹

The Chairman paid homage to Oliver Tambo, Chairman of the African National Party on his demise and Chris Hani, General Secretary of the Communist Party of South Africa who was assassinated.¹⁶⁰

Whenever the House is sitting on 30 January, which is a Martyrs' Day, the House observes silence for two minutes before commencing the proceedings in memory of those who gave their lives in the struggle for India's freedom. In 1976, 1980 and 1985, the House sat on 30 January and observed silence before commencement of the proceedings.

Whenever the House is sitting on 9 August, it has become almost a regular practice to make references to the Quit India Movement and observe silence in honour of freedom fighters. The Chairman made reference to the Silver Jubilee of Quit India Movement. Members observed silence for a minute, all standing, to 'express great admiration and regard and respect for those who have given their lives for the cause of independence and for all those who have suffered in this cause.' On the solemn occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Quit India Movement, a special sitting of the House was

held on Saturday, 8 August 1992, to pay homage to the martyrs. A resolution proposed by the Deputy Chairman was adopted by the House with members standing and observing silence.¹⁶¹

Tributes were offered to Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev on the anniversary of their martyrdom, and silence was also observed in their memory on 23 March 1993.¹⁶²

Tributes were paid to the Vice-President, Shri V.V. Giri,¹⁶³ Shrimati Violet Alva,¹⁶⁴ Dr. (Shrimati) Najma Heptulla,¹⁶⁵ Shri M.M. Jacob,¹⁶⁶ Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil,¹⁶⁷ Deputy Chairmen and Shri Jaisukhlal Hathi, Leader of the House,¹⁶⁸ who had resigned their respective offices.

(c) Felicitations, appreciation and greetings

It is customary to offer felicitations or congratulations on behalf of the House whenever any achievement of great significance takes place. The following were some of the occasions when the House expressed its appreciation:

Election of Dr. G.S. Dhillon, Speaker, Lok Sabha, and of Shri S. L. Shakhder, Secretary, Lok Sabha, as President, respectively of the Inter-Parliamentary Council and the Association of the Secretaries General of Parliaments,¹⁶⁹ landing on the Moon by Appollo-8 Astronauts and American Astronauts,¹⁷⁰ winning of World Championship by the Indian Hockey Team,¹⁷¹ successful launching of SLV-3,¹⁷² success of Indian Hockey Team in the Moscow Olympics,¹⁷³ successful launching of APPLE (A resolution moved by the Prime Minister in this regard was also adopted),¹⁷⁴ success of Indo-Soviet Joint Space Flight,¹⁷⁵ climbing of Mount Everest by Shri Phu Dorjee, member of the Indian Mount Everest Expedition Team without oxygen,¹⁷⁶ Indian Cricket Team's victory at Sharjah,¹⁷⁷ conferment of Oscar Award on Satyajit Ray.¹⁷⁸

Immediately at the commencement of the House the Chairman made a reference to the successful holding of all-race democratic elections marking the end of apartheid in South Africa and offered greetings and good wishes to the people there.¹⁷⁹

Leaders and representatives of parties/groups in the Rajya Sabha expressed their happiness on the formation of new Government in South Africa. Thereafter, the Deputy Chairman who was in the Chair, placed a resolution before the House welcoming the event. The resolution was adopted unanimously.¹⁸⁰

On 28 November 1995, the Chairman felicitated Dr. (Shrimati) Najma Heptulla, Deputy Chairman on her election to the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.¹⁸¹

On 21 October 1999, Shri Jaswant Singh, Leader of the House and the Minister of External Affairs, Dr. Manmohan Singh, Leader of the Opposition, Leaders of various parties/groups and some other members felicitated Dr. (Shrimati) Najma Heptulla, Deputy Chairman on her unanimous election as President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council.¹⁸²

On 28 February 2001, Shri Jaswant Singh, Leader of the House, Leaders of various parties/groups and some members felicitated Dr. (Shrimati)

Najma Heptulla, Deputy Chairman on being conferred the highest civilian honour, the Grand Cordon of Alavi Wissam by the visiting Moroccan King His Majesty Mohammed VI for her salutary efforts in building Indo-Moroccan friendship.¹⁸³

Felicitations and tributes to Chairmen and others

It is an established convention that the House offers congratulations and felicitations to the Chairman on his election as the Vice-President of India at the earliest available opportunity and the Deputy Chairman immediately after his/her election.

After his election as the Vice-President, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan presided over the House for the first time on Tuesday, 13 May 1952, which was also the first sitting of the Rajya Sabha and devoted to swearing-in of members. The House adjourned till Friday, 16 May 1952. At the sitting one of the members raised a point stating that, "We have not been given an opportunity to congratulate you on your election to this high office." Soon thereafter, the Prime Minister and other leaders/representatives of parties offered felicitations to him. Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru's opening remarks were of significance:

Sir, during the last two or three days we have been engaged on various ceremonials in this House and in the other House. Members have taken the pledges and oaths of service. It is right that we should go through these ceremonials; they have a definite meaning.

And now we start, in both these Houses, on our real work. Before we do so, with your permission, Sir, I should like to say a few words, not of congratulation to you on occupying this high office, but rather of congratulation to the House that we have the privilege of having you here to guide the deliberations of this House as well as, if I may say so, to help us in a multitude of ways in another high capacity.¹⁸⁴

Felicitations were again offered to him on his re-election as the Vice-President, on 13 May 1957.¹⁸⁵ Tributes were also paid to Dr. Radhakrishnan on his retirement from office of the Chairman, Rajya Sabha.¹⁸⁶

After his election as the Vice-President, Dr. Zakir Husain presided over the House for the first time on 14 June 1962. On that day the House was adjourned on account of Muharram and so the felicitations were offered to him on 15 June 1962.¹⁸⁷ The House bade him farewell on 11 April 1967.¹⁸⁸

Shri V.V. Giri became the Vice-President on 13 May 1967. The House was not in session. Felicitations were therefore offered to him when the House met for the 60th session on 22 May 1967 after Question Hour.¹⁸⁹ Farewell tributes were paid to him on 22 July 1969.¹⁹⁰

Shri G.S. Pathak became the Vice-President on 31 August 1969. The House was not in session. Felicitations were therefore offered to him when the House met for the 70th session on 17 November 1969, after Question Hour.¹⁹¹

Shri B.D. Jatti became the Vice-President on 31 August 1974. The House felicitated him at its sitting held that day.¹⁹²

Shri M. Hidayatullah assumed office as the Vice-President on 31 August 1979. The House was not in session. The House met on 23 January

1980, for the 112th session. Being the first sitting of the year, it was adjourned after formal business and obituary references. Felicitations were offered to Shri Hidayatullah on 24 January 1980.¹⁹³ On his retirement the House bade him farewell on 24 August 1984.¹⁹⁴

Similarly, Shri R. Venkataraman who became the Vice-President on 31 August 1984, was felicitated on 18 January 1985, the House having commenced the first session of 1985 on 17 January 1985.¹⁹⁵

Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma became the Vice-President on 3 September 1987. The House was not in session. Felicitations were offered to him on 6 November 1987, when the House met for its 144th session.¹⁹⁶

Shri K.R. Narayanan became the Vice-President on 21 August 1992. The House was not in session. It met on 24 November 1992 for its 165th session. The House was adjourned that day as a mark of respect to the memory of the former Chairman, Shri M. Hidayatullah. Felicitations were offered to Shri Narayanan on 25 November 1992.¹⁹⁷

Shri Krishan Kant became the Vice-President on 21 August 1997. Felicitations were offered to him on 26 August 1997, by the Prime Minister and other members.¹⁹⁸

Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat became the Vice-President of India on 19 August 2002. The House was not in session. Felicitations were offered to him on 20 November 2002, by the Prime Minister and others.^{198a}

It is also customary to greet the Chairman and felicitate him on his birthday if the House is sitting that day. This is done by members as soon as the Chairman enters the House and before the questions are taken up.

Birthday greetings were offered to Shri Gopal Swarup Pathak on 26 February 1973 and 26 February 1974;¹⁹⁹ to Shri B.D. Jatti on 10 September 1974;²⁰⁰ and to Shri M. Hidayatullah on 17 December 1980 and 17 December 1981. On the latter occasion while responding to the greetings he, *inter alia*, remarked:

I wish to rule that nothing takes place during Question Hour. But I thought out of deference to the very kind words which have been spoken, I should not give that ruling and withhold it for the time being.²⁰¹

Shri R. Venkataraman was felicitated on his birthday on 4 December 1985, and 4 December 1986. On the former occasion while responding he, *inter alia*, remarked:

I think everyone of you would wish that I had a birthday every day, because I have been liberal in calling everybody which I do not do otherwise... today everything said will go on record.²⁰²

Birthday greetings were offered to Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma on 19 August 1988. On Friday, 17 August 1990, as soon as he entered the House some members wished him happy birthday. The Chairman while thanking said:

"But my birthday is not today. The Leader of the Opposition quipped: Sir, in anticipation, you may accept. We will come on Sunday."

On Monday, 20 August 1990, again, some members and the Leader of the House offered him felicitations.²⁰³

On occasions birthday greetings or wishes are also offered to members/Ministers.

Felicitations were offered to Shri Y.B. Chavan, Minister of Defence on his sixty-first birthday²⁰⁴ and Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi.²⁰⁵

The House, in appropriate cases, expresses its appreciation of the services rendered by a member.

At a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee held on 13 June 1977, the Secretary-General informed that the General Purposes Committee in its last meeting had recommended that a suitable reference relating to completion of twenty-five years of uninterrupted membership of Rajya Sabha by Shri Bhupesh Gupta might be made either in the House or at an appropriate function outside the House. The Committee agreed that reference in this regard be made in the House by the Leader of the House, Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Chairman on 22 June 1977, immediately after Question Hour. Accordingly, appreciative references were made by all sections of the House and the Deputy Chairman to Shri Bhupesh Gupta's services.²⁰⁶

Tributes were offered to Shri P. Shiv Shanker on his retirement from the membership of the Rajya Sabha, on 13 August 1993.²⁰⁷

Expressions of sense of relief or concern

The Chairman or members express their sense of relief or satisfaction on a happening.

The Chairman expressed sense of relief at the President's escape from accident in Bhutan.²⁰⁸

The Deputy Chairman made a reference to the providential escape of the Prime Minister in an air-crash near Jorhat.²⁰⁹

The Chairman and leaders condemned the act of sabotage of the aircraft MAKALU which was to be used by the Prime Minister for her foreign visit and wished her long life.²¹⁰

The Leader of the House moved a resolution, which was adopted, expressing sense of relief that no harm was caused to the Prime Minister when he was attacked in Colombo on 30 July 1987.²¹¹

Immediately the House assembled before taking up any business, the Leader of the House and leaders/representatives of parties/groups greeted the Chairman, on his return from convalescence.²¹²

Members expressed their concern on the detention of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan in Pakistan and his failing health.²¹³

(d) References to Secretary-General, Rajya Sabha

Obituary reference was made on the passing away of Shri S.N. Mukherjee, the first Secretary of the Rajya Sabha, while in office.²¹⁴

The Chairman and leaders of parties and groups paid tributes to the Secretary-General, Shri B.N. Banerjee, on his retirement and welcomed his successor Shri S.S. Bhalerao as the new Secretary-General.²¹⁵

Consequent on the retirement of the Secretary-General, Shri S.S. Bhalerao, the Chairman and leaders of parties and groups paid tributes to him and also

welcomed his successor Shri Sudarshan Agarwal as the new Secretary-General.²¹⁶

Consequent on the retirement of Shri Sudarshan Agarwal, Secretary-General, the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and the leaders and representatives of parties/groups paid tributes to him and also welcomed his successor Shrimati V.S. Rama Devi as the new Secretary-General.²¹⁷ (As a special gesture, Shri Agarwal was seated in the Special Box during the proceedings.)

Consequent on the retirement of the Secretary-General, Shrimati V.S. Rama Devi, members paid tribute to her for her services to the House. Shri R.C. Tripathi, Secretary-General, was introduced to the House by the Chairman on 19 November 1997.²¹⁸

Shri R.C. Tripathi remained the Secretary-General from 3 October 1997, till 31 August 2002. His successor Dr. Yogendra Narain became the Secretary-General from 1 September 2002, who was introduced to the House by the Chairman on 18 November 2002.^{218a}

Obituary references were also made on the passing away of former Secretaries-General, Shri S.S. Bhalerao on 23 July 2001²¹⁹ and Shri B.N. Banerjee on 18 November 2002.^{219a}

(e) Welcome to foreign parliamentary delegations

Whenever a distinguished foreign visitor or a foreign parliamentary delegation visits the Rajya Sabha to watch the proceedings from the Special Box, the proceedings are interrupted by the Chairman and on behalf of the House he welcomes the visitors and wishes them pleasant time during their stay in the country and also sends greetings and good wishes to the Government and people of the concerned country. Generally such visits take place sometimes during Question Hour and members also join the Chairman in welcoming the distinguished guests by applause. This practice has started in the Rajya Sabha from 8 December 1981.²²⁰

(f) References on solemn or significant occasions

A reference from the Chair has come to be an accepted and established customary procedure for the purpose of echoing and expressing the sentiments and feelings of the House on occasions and events—whether solemn or tragic—of national and international significance. References have been made in the House on the following occasions:

Tenth, Twentieth, Twenty-fifth and Fortieth Anniversaries of the adoption by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.²²¹ completion of 3000 sittings of the Rajya Sabha.²²² Meeting of U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Geneva.²²³ signing of Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Agreement between President Ronald Reagan and the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, at Washington on 8 December 1987.²²⁴

The Minister of Defence made a statement regarding Pakistan's war against India. At the end, the Chairman expressed sense of solidarity of the House.²²⁵

The Prime Minister made a statement regarding grant of recognition to Gana Praja Tantri Bangla Desh and conveying greetings and felicitations to the Government and people of that country. Thereafter, members of different parties/groups and the Chairman associated with the sentiments contained in the statement.²²⁶

A reference was made to the first anniversary of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy.²²⁷

It has become almost a regular practice to make a reference to the dropping of atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6/9 August 1945, if the House is sitting on those days. On this occasion the House observes silence as a mark of respect to the victims of nuclear holocaust.²²⁸

The Chairman offered felicitations to Namibia on its independence.²²⁹

The Chairman made an appeal to the people of the country from the Chair, in the context of demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya "to maintain peace, order and amity in this hour of crisis in the nation," and adjourned the House for a week in order to enable the members to return to their States and to their constituencies and to work for this noble cause of restoring peace and amity among the people.²³⁰

An announcement regarding the Vijay Diwas — 25th Liberation day of Bangladesh—was made by the Deputy Chairman.²³¹

A reference regarding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was made by the Chairman.²³²

A reference was made by the Chairman on the completion of fifty years of the Constitution of India on 26 November 1999.²³³

The Deputy Chairman made a reference on the International Women's Day on 8 March 2000. Thereafter, it has been a regular practice.²³⁴

The Chairman made a reference regarding soldiers martyred in Kargil Operations. Reference was also made to the first anniversary of India's victory in Kargil.²³⁵

The Chairman made a reference to the fiftieth anniversary of Rajya Sabha on 13 May 2002.²³⁶

(g) References to tragic happenings

It is the practice to make references to the tragic happenings either in the country or outside involving loss of life and property. The Chairman expresses sympathies and sorrow or grief on behalf of the House for those who have suffered or affected by the tragic occurrences such as major rail,²³⁷ air²³⁸ accidents, or earthquakes or other tragic events or natural calamities.

References were made to the explosion of ammunition packages at Pathankot military area;²³⁹ accidents at Bhakra Dam;²⁴⁰ and Bhilai Steel Plant;²⁴¹ devastating fire in Ahmedabad wherein several persons died;²⁴² killings in Punjab in 1986 (the House adopted a resolution proposed by the Chairman condemning the killings)²⁴³ and in 1987;²⁴⁴ earthquakes in Kashmir in 1963,²⁴⁵ in Bihar, West Bengal, North-eastern parts of India and Nepal and Bangladesh in August 1988;²⁴⁶ in USSR in December 1988;²⁴⁷ and the violence that took place within the sacred precincts of the Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat.²⁴⁸

The Leader of the House made a statement regarding the calamity befallen on the people of East Pakistan on account of the cyclones, and expressed sense of sorrow and grief on the loss of human lives and extended heartfelt sympathies to the Government and people of Pakistan. Leaders of various groups and the Deputy Chairman associated themselves with the sentiments.²⁴⁹

On occasions, in view of the gravity of happenings, besides expression of sympathies and sorrow, the House has observed silence, all members standing, as a mark of respect to those who lost their lives in (i) train²⁵⁰ and air ²⁵¹ accidents; (ii) earthquakes in Koyna in 1967,²⁵² in Gujarat in 1970 (the House adopted a motion moved by three members of the House expressing sympathies for the sufferers,²⁵³ in Garhwal in 1991,²⁵⁴ in Latur, Osmanabad in Maharashtra, some parts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka in 1993;²⁵⁵ (iii) sewage plant in Delhi in 1957,²⁵⁶ killings in Assam in 1983²⁵⁷ and Bhopal-Gas Tragedy in 1984.²⁵⁸ The other events when the House has observed silence were: Israeli attack on Indian personnel in Gaza.²⁵⁹ Kumbha Mela tragedy of 1954 (the House adopted a motion of condolence proposed by the Chairman)²⁶⁰ and of 1986;²⁶¹ cyclones in South India;²⁶² floods in Morvi in Gujarat;²⁶³ kidnapping and gruesome murder of two children—Geeta and Sanjay Chopra in Delhi;²⁶⁴ killings in Punjab and Haryana;²⁶⁵ bomb blasts in Bombay;²⁶⁶ death of devotees at Baripada in Orissa in a devastating fire in 1997;²⁶⁷ tragic death of several Indian Haj pilgrims in a devastating fire at Mina near Mecca in 1997;²⁶⁸ large scale loss of life and destruction in the earthquake in Iran in 1997;²⁶⁹ severe tornado that swept through several villages of Midnapore (West Bengal) and Balasore (Orissa) in 1998;²⁷⁰ tragic train accident at Khanna in Punjab in 1998;²⁷¹ AN-32 transport plane crash in 1999;²⁷² earthquake in several parts of North India especially in Garhwal region;²⁷³ super cyclone that hit the coastal parts of Orissa;²⁷⁴ Kargil Operation;²⁷⁵ brutal killings of innocent people by militants in J&K almost every other day;²⁷⁶ severe earthquake in several parts of Gujarat which took place in 2001;²⁷⁷ deaths of Amarnath Pilgrims in 2001;²⁷⁸ bomb blast at J&K Assembly in 2001;²⁷⁹ and terrorist attack in the USA in 2001.²⁸⁰

In the 196th session, references were made regarding massacre by terrorists at Kasim Nagar near Narwal bye-pass in the outskirts of Jammu city²⁸¹ and killing of pilgrims and injury to several others by militants during the Amarnath Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir on 6 August 2002.²⁸² The House observed silence, all members standing as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed. On

9 August 2002, the Deputy Chairman made a reference to the Quit India Movement launched under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in 1942 and the House observed silence, all members standing as a mark of respect to the memory of martyrs and freedom fighters.²⁸³

References were also made regarding derailment of Howrah-New Delhi Rajdhani Express, terrorist attack on the Akshardham Temple, Gandhinagar and taking of hostages by terrorists in a theatre in Moscow (18.11.2002)^{283a}; terrorist attack on Raghunath temple in Jammu (25.11.2002)^{283b}; earthquake in Algeria (21.7.2003)^{283c}; crash of ONGC helicopter into the Arabian Sea (13.8.2003)^{283d}; twin bomb blasts in Mumbai (2.12.2003)^{283e}; earthquake at Bam in Iran (20.1.2004).^{283f}

In the following cases, the House adjourned as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased:

The House adjourned for half-an-hour on the firing on Satyagrahis by Portuguese authorities in Goa.²⁸⁴ The House adjourned for the day on account of tragedy at the Qutab Minar in which a number of children died. The Chairman associated himself with the expression of sorrow at the next sitting of the House.²⁸⁵

The House adjourned till noon on 26 August 1996, after reference to and observance of silence on the death of Amarnath pilgrims.²⁸⁶ The House adjourned for the day as a mark of respect to the memory of all those who lost their lives in the terrorist attack on the Parliament House on 13 December, 2001.²⁸⁷

The House condemned the execution of Benjamin Moloise, freedom fighter of Africa.²⁸⁸

(h) Resolutions adopted unopposed

Apart from condolence resolutions which have been adopted by the House, as already mentioned, the House also adopts resolutions on events and issues which are of great national and international significance, without discussion and dissent. They are proposed from the Chair or moved by the Leader of the House or the Prime Minister or any other Minister. They embody and reflect the general will and wish of the House.

(a) Resolutions/Motions from the Chair

Paying homage to Mahatma Gandhi on his Birth Centenary,²⁸⁹ welcoming the Delhi Declaration issued at the Conclusion of the Six Nation Summit held in Delhi on Nuclear Disarmament on 28 January 1985 (by way of a motion);²⁹⁰ commemorating the fortieth Anniversary of the founding of the United Nations Organisation falling on 24 October 1985;²⁹¹ condemning the bombing of Libya by U.S. Forces, at the end of discussion of calling attention on the subject;²⁹² condemning apartheid in South Africa;²⁹³ condemning killings in Punjab;²⁹⁴ demanding immediate and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela;²⁹⁵ exhorting people to preserve and promote amity and harmony and to uphold secular character and traditions of India, in the context of Babri Masjid-Ram Janam Bhoomi Dispute;²⁹⁶ welcoming release of Nelson Mandela;²⁹⁷ appealing political parties and religious organisations to preserve and promote communal

harmony, in the context of communal riots in Gonda (U.P.) at the end of the matter raised by members;²⁹⁸ appealing to avert war, in the context of Gulf crisis;²⁹⁹ urging end to Gulf War;³⁰⁰ appealing doctors to end strike, at the end of discussion of calling attention on the subject;³⁰¹ appealing to end violence in Karnataka on Cauvery Water Dispute;³⁰² paying homage to martyrs on the occasion of the fiftieth Anniversary of Quit India Movement;³⁰³ condemning Pakistan's interference in the internal affairs of India and promoting terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir;³⁰⁴ welcoming formation of new Government in South Africa;³⁰⁵ commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the founding of the UNO;³⁰⁶ and attack at Kaluchak, Jammu by terrorists belonging to LET and JEM.³⁰⁷ On 9 April 2003, the Chairman moved a Resolution deploring the military action by the coalition forces led by USA against sovereign Iraq, calling for the immediate cessation of hostilities and quick withdrawal of coalition forces from Iraq and calling upon the United Nations to protect the sovereignty of Iraq.^{307a}

(b) Resolution/Motion by the Prime Minister

Developments in East Bengal and extending support to people in their struggle there;³⁰⁸ successful launching of APPLE;³⁰⁹ and appreciating successful completion of the Seventh Conference of Heads of State/ of Government of Non-Aligned Countries held in New Delhi (by way of a motion).³¹⁰

(c) Resolutions by the Leader of the House

Expressing deep concern over killings in Assam and appealing people of Assam to strengthen feelings of brotherhood and cooperation, at the end of discussion on the motion regarding situation in Assam;³¹¹ expressing sentiments in connection with dastardly attack on the Prime Minister at Colombo;³¹² condemning the desecration and demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya;³¹³ condemning the barbarism and anti-civilizational intent of the Taliban in Afghanistan in the strongest possible terms;³¹⁴ and storming of the estate and precincts of State Legislature of Orissa by persons belonging to VHP and the Bajrang Dal.^{314a}

(d) Motion by the Leader of the Opposition

Expressing concern at the situation in Jammu and Kashmir moved by Shri P. Shiv Shanker while participating in the discussion on the statement on the subject made by the Home Minister.³¹⁵

(e) Resolution by the Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs

Condemning apartheid in South Africa and appealing to international community to save Benjamin Moloise moved with the permission of the House, at the end of a short duration discussion on racial riots in South Africa.³¹⁶

(i) Good wishes to retiring members and welcome to newly elected/ nominated members

About one-third of the members of the Rajya Sabha retire every second year on the expiration of their term.³¹⁷ It is customary to offer good wishes or bid formal farewell to them after Question Hour. Until 1986, this used to be generally done towards the close of the March-April session as most of such members used to retire on 2 April of every even year. In view, however, of the retirement of members at dates different from the 2 April of even year, farewell is offered as and when retirement of members is imminent, during the session. Members who are due to retire also give their responses.

After members who are newly elected/nominated have made and subscribed oath or affirmation and taken their seats, the Chairman welcomes them on behalf of the House.

(j) Valedictory remarks on the conclusion of the session

It is also customary in every session for the Chair to make valedictory remarks thanking members and leaders of parties and groups for their cooperation in the conduct of business, before the House adjourns *sine die*. This practice started from the conclusion of the 37th session.³¹⁸ Leaders/representatives of parties present also make observations appreciating the transaction of business.

However, in the 172nd, 175th, 177th, 182nd, 186th and 203rd sessions when the Rajya Sabha was adjourned *sine die* no valedictory remarks could be made.³¹⁹ In the 196th session, the Deputy Chairman laid the valedictory remarks on the Table.³²⁰ On two occasions, the valedictory remarks were made twice, both on the completion of first part and second part of the 155th³²¹ and 200th³²² session of Rajya Sabha.

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