

11.05 hrs.

Title: Mr. Speaker made observation regarding smooth and orderly conduct of the business of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, after I took over as the Speaker, I have had occasion to interact, during the inter-Session period, with a good number of political leaders, parliamentarians, media persons and many other dignitaries in public life, about the functioning of Parliament. The impression I gathered was that efforts are required to be made to ensure the smooth and orderly conduct of the business of our supreme legislative institution. I also met some of you and discussed this matter. I must say I had a very encouraging response in this regard. I think I should share my thoughts with all of you before we commence our formal business today.

As you are aware, we are presently celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the Indian Parliament. It is only appropriate that we re-dedicate ourselves to strengthen our parliamentary edifice. An important component of our endeavours in this direction should be to collectively ensure that the proceedings of the House are held in a smooth and orderly manner as per the rules and procedures we ourselves have framed this purpose.

During this year's Budget Session, out of 287 hours and 54 minutes of sitting time, 66 hours and 35 minutes of precious time was lost due to disturbances leading to adjournment of the House. This comes to losing out an alarming 23.12 per cent of the total time of the House.

As you would agree, frequent forced adjournments, besides, leading to wastage of the precious time of the House, tend to lower the dignity of Parliament in the eyes of the public.

All of us have been concerned about the gravity of the situation. We have discussed these issues during the Special Session of Lok Sabha convened to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Independence in August-September 1997 and in the All India Conference of Presiding Officers, Chief Ministers, Ministers of Parliamentary Affairs, Leaders and Whips of parties on "Discipline and Decorum in Parliament and Legislatures of States and Union Territories", held in New Delhi on 25 November, 2001.

In December 2001, a new Rule 374A was added to the Rule Book providing for automatic suspension of a Member who comes into the Well of the House and creates disturbance there.

In spite of these laudable initiatives, things did not improve much, as is evident from the loss of sitting time due to disorderly scenes and forced adjournments.

I am of the considered view that while rules are there to enforce discipline and decorum, Members should themselves voluntarily exercise self-restraint and ensure smooth and orderly conduct of the business of the House. Equally important, of course, is the need to strictly observe and adhere to the rules which we ourselves have framed. And this includes Rule 374A for automatic suspension of Members who rush to the Well of the House and create grave disorder. You all will agree that the Chair is duty bound to carry out the directions of the House as enshrined in the rules. I hope and trust that such unpleasant occasions would not arise and we would indeed be able to conduct our business as per rules. It would also be my earnest endeavour to see that sufficient opportunities are made available to Members for raising important issues in the House. I would also appeal to the Government to address sincerely and urgently the genuine grievances of the Members. These endeavours, to my mind, would be the best tribute which we could pay to the memory of our late Speaker, Shri G.M.C. Balayogi who ceaselessly worked throughout his tenure to facilitate orderly conduct of the of the House business

The Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha lay down certain norms of etiquette and behaviour to be observed by Members whilst the House is sitting. To cite a few, the Rules prohibit Members – from reading any book, newspaper or letter except in connection with the business of the House; passing between the Chair and any Member who is speaking; leaving the House when the Speaker is addressing the House; sitting or standing with their back towards the Chair; approaching the Chair personally in the House; and leaving the House immediately after delivering speech. The Rules also require Members to bow to the Chair while entering or leaving the House and also when taking or leaving seat; to always address the Chair; and avoid talking or laughing in the lobby loud enough to be heard in the House. These are small and simple but meaningful gestures of courtesy which the Members must observe with regard to one another and the Chair, who has the duty to enforce them.

As I had observed in my valedictory remarks on the last day of the previous Session, there has been a declining trend in the number of Starred Questions which are orally answered on the floor of the House. The average of the nine Sessions of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha has just been 2.52 Starred Questions per day, even though, as many as 20 Starred Questions are listed for each sitting. There is an imperative to gradually raise this average. My earnest effort would be, of course with your cooperation, to raise this average to 5 Starred Questions being answered each day, starting this Session.

I am also keen to facilitate a more purposeful 'Zero Hour' everyday. With this in view, I propose that only matters of emergent national and international importance be raised during the 'Zero Hour'. Matters relating to individual constituencies, however important those may be, could be raised by Members under Rule 377 by way of submissions. This, I strongly feel, could go a long way in a more positive and meaningful utilisation of the 'Zero Hour'.

Hon. Members, as the First Servant of this House – an honour which you have unanimously bestowed on me – it is my duty to ensure that the business of the House is transacted in accordance with the rules. I solicit the cooperation of all sections of the House to maintain the dignity, decorum and prestige of this supreme institution. Needless to say, Leaders, Chief Whips and Whips of Parties have a special role to play in this onerous task. Ultimately, it is left to each one of us, as servants of this great institution, to live up to the expectations of the people who have elected us to represent them. That would be the most befitting tribute to the millions, who make up this nation, in this Golden Jubilee Year of our Parliament.

श्री मुलायम सिंह यादव (सम्मल) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैंने एक बात कही थी कि आपकी नियमावली का पूरी तरह पालन किया जाएगा, पूरा अनुशासन बनाए रखेंगे। (व्यवधान) मैंने पहले भी कहा था और आज भी कह रहा हूँ कि कभी-कभी विय ऐसा होता है, जब हमें बोलना पड़ता है। (व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मैंने आपकी इच्छा जान ली है। आपके विय को ध्यान में लिया जा सकता है।

DR. C. KRISHNAN (POLLACHI): Sir, POTA has been misutilised. (Interruptions)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : प्रश्न-काल के बाद आप बोल सकते हैं। प्रश्न-काल में यह विय नहीं ले सकते।

MR. SPEAKER: Friends, as you are all aware, yesterday there was a Leaders' meeting and it was decided that after the Question Hour, the important subject of massacre in Jammu has to be taken up for discussion.

Before that, I will take up the item of laying of the Papers. So, I will request Shri L.K. Advani to lay the Papers.

...(Interruptions)

कुंवर अखिलेश सिंह (महाराजगंज, उ.प्र.) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, सूखे के सवाल पर हमने कार्य स्थगन प्रस्ताव दिया है। (व्यवधान) पूरा देश तबाही के कगार पर खड़ा है। किसान आत्महत्या कर रहा है। (व्यवधान)