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Title : The Speaker made reference to the passing away of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, former President of India and Bharat Ratna awardee.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I rise today with a heavy heart to pay homage to Bharat Ratna and former President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the real gem of India. Dr. Kalam passed away on 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2015 at Shillong due to heart failure at the age of 83 years. Till his last breath he was doing what he loved best, interacting with young India igniting their minds with scientific temperament and spirit of inquiry.

Dr. Abdul Kalam was one of our country's unique personalities who embodied rare intellectual brilliance, undying scientific zeal and above all a great human being with love and compassion.

Born on 15 October, 1931 in a humble family in Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu, with sheer hard work, determination, education worked his way up to become the driving force behind India's space and missile programme, eventually adorning the highest office of the land.

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam served as the 11<sup>th</sup> President of India from 2002 to 2007. A rare visionary with scientific temperament, he zealously spent four decades as a scientist and science administrator, mainly at the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and was intimately involved in India's civilian space program and military missile development efforts. He thus came to be known as the "Missile Man of India" for his work on the development of ballistic missile and launch vehicle technology. He also played a pivotal organizational, technical and political role in India's Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998, the first since the original nuclear test by India in 1974.

He received several prestigious awards, including the Bharat Ratna in 1997, for his immense and valuable contribution to the scientific research and modernization of defence technology in India, Padma Bhushan in 1981 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1990 for his work with ISRO and DRDO and his role as a Scientific Advisor to the Government. Dr. Abdul Kalam's 79<sup>th</sup> birthday was recognized as World Students' Day by United Nations. He has also received honorary doctorates from 40 universities. In 2005, Switzerland declared 26 May as science day to commemorate Kalam's visit in the country. In 2013, he was the recipient of the Von Braun Award from the National Space Society to recognize excellence in management of and leadership for a space-related project.

A person endowed with exceptional brilliance, Dr. Kalam had also distinguished himself as a brilliant scholar. He authored many books like: "India 2020: A Vision for the New Millennium"; "Wings of Fire: An Autobiography"; "Ignited Minds: Unleashing the Power Within India" and many more.

Dr. Abdul Kalam enriched and enhanced the prestige and dignity of the august Office of the President of India by his utmost commitment to high constitutional values and ideals which considerably strengthened our democratic edifice.

After serving as President of India, Dr. Abdul Kalam returned to his civilian life of education, writing and public service. He became a visiting professor at many prestigious academic institutions such as Indian Institutes of Management, Shillong, Ahmedabad and Indore; Honorary Fellow of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore; Chancellor of the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram.

In Dr. Kalam's death, the country has lost a sagacious statesman, a great scientist and a friend of the underprivileged and a fine human being, who strove all through his life for building a progressive, rational and egalitarian society. He was an inspirational and motivational icon for the youth and the children of the country. He was a noble man at the age of 83, with energy and enthusiasm of 38 and an innocent smile of eight. His passing away has indeed left a void, but his life will ever remain an inspiration to all. He has left an indelible imprint upon our national psyche.

The House may now stand in silence for a short while in memory of the departed soul.

11.06 hrs.

*The Members then stood in silence for short while*

HON. SPEAKER: As a mark of respect to the departed, the House would stand adjourned today and also to enable the hon. Members to attend the funeral at Rameswaram tomorrow, 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2015, the House now stands adjourned to meet again at 1100 hours on 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2015.

11.08 hrs

## **The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock**

on Thursday, July 30, 2015/Shrawana 8, 1937 (Saka)

