



FELICITATIONS
HON'BLE CHAIRMAN, SIR





Felicitations Hon'ble Chairman, Sir

*Congratulatory remarks made in the House on the completion of
four years of Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat as the
Chairman of Rajya Sabha on 18 August 2006*

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Preface

Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat completed four years as the Chairman, Rajya Sabha in August 2006. On 18th August 2006, when the House met at 11.00 a.m. for question hour, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Suresh Pachouri, congratulated him on completing four years in office and complimented him for his inspiring role as the Presiding Officer of the Upper House. Other members also followed suit, impromptu, cutting across party lines and showered praise on him on the smooth conduct of the House, his amiable personality, his innate ability to please everyone and his exemplary efforts at keeping the concerns of the common man uppermost in the discussions of the House. The Chairman reminded repeatedly that the questions may be taken up during the question hour. There was, however, a remarkable upsurge of emotions in the House and the members went on praising the Chairman profusely, throughout the question hour. Finally, the Chairman, touched by the views expressed so intensely by the members and in such a spontaneous fashion, thanked them for their support and cooperation and assured them that he would continue to conduct the House in a just and fair manner.

This kind of an occurrence is unprecedented in the history of Rajya Sabha when whole of the opening hour of the House was spent on offering rich encomiums to a sitting Presiding Officer.

It was felt that a small publication encapsulating the sentiments expressed by the members in the House on the 18th August 2006, and the response of the Chairman, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat to them, would be most appropriate. The text of the speeches has been slightly edited wherever required.

Dr. Yogendra Narain
Secretary-General
Rajya Sabha

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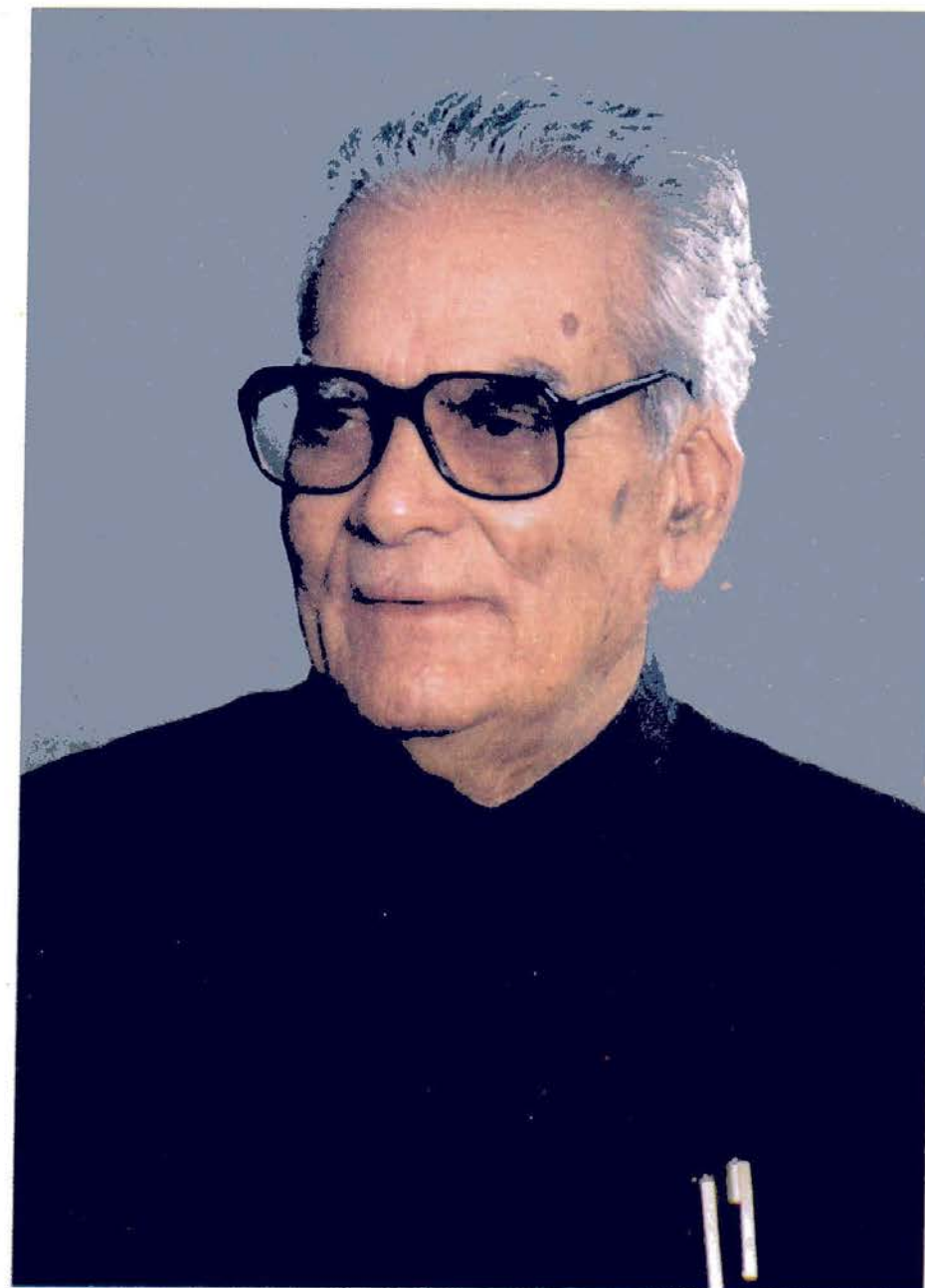
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SHRI BHAIRON SINGH SHEKHAWAT
Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha

**FELICITATIONS
TO
HON' BLE CHAIRMAN**

प्रेरक मार्गदर्शक

श्री सुरेश पचौरी

कार्मिक, लोक शिकायत और पेंशन मंत्रालय में
राज्य मंत्री तथा संसदीय कार्य मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री

सभापति महोदय ... आप उस सर्वोच्च आसंदी पर विराजमान हैं, जिस पर डॉ. सर्वपल्ली राधाकृष्णन, डॉ. ज़ाकिर हुसैन, श्री गोपाल स्वरूप पाठक, श्री हिदायतुल्ला जी, श्री वैकट रमन जी, डॉ. शंकर दयाल शर्मा जी, श्री के.आर. नारायणन जी और श्री कृष्ण कांत जी जैसे देदीप्यमान नक्षत्र विराजमान रहे हैं। मान्यवर, आज आपने अपने कार्यकाल के 4 वर्ष सफलतापूर्वक पूरे किए हैं। हमारे प्रेरक, मार्गदर्शक और निर्देशक के रूप में आपने अपनी एक अमिट छाप छोड़ी है। इस अवसर पर, मैं ज्यादा लम्बा कुछ न कहकर अपनी ओर से, सरकार की ओर से और सदन की ओर से जहां एक तरफ आपके यशस्वी होने की कामना करता हूं, वहीं हम सब इस बात के भी आकांक्षी हैं कि अनेक वर्षों तक हमें आपका मार्गदर्शन मिलता रहे। इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ, हम फिर से आपके प्रति शुभकामनाएं व्यक्त करते हैं और विनम्रता पूर्वक प्रणाम करते हैं।

* * *

यशपूरित सभापतित्व

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज
भारतीय जनता पार्टी

सभापति जी, संसदीय कार्य मंत्री ने सदन की ओर से आपके प्रति, जो भावनाएं और शुभकामनाएं प्रकट की हैं, उन्हीं के स्वर में स्वर मिलाते हुए, मैं यह कहना चाहती हूं कि आपने अपने सभापतित्व के 4 वर्ष बहुत यशस्विता के साथ पूरे किए हैं। राज्य सभा के सभापति का पद एक अनूठा पद होता है, क्योंकि राज्य सभा के सभापति भारत के महामहिम उपराष्ट्रपति भी होते हैं और इस गरिमामय सदन के सभापति भी होते हैं। इन 4 वर्षों में हमें आपका मार्गदर्शन तो मिला ही है, बीच-बीच में आपकी चुटकियां, आपकी फुलझड़ियां भी चलीं और इन सब के साथ-साथ हंसते-खेलते सदन भी चला। बहुत तनावग्रस्त सदन के तनाव को भी एकदम से अपनी हंसी के फव्वारे से समाप्त कर देने की आपकी खूबी रही है। इन सबके साथ आपने ये 4 वर्ष बहुत यशस्विता से पूरे किए हैं। मैं आपकी दीर्घायु की कामना करती हूं और आगे जो आपका कार्यकाल है, वह इसी तरह की यशस्विता से पूरा हो, मैं इसकी सद्भावना करती हूं और सदन के तमाम लोगों की तरफ से आपको बारम्बार शुभकामना देती हूं।

* * *

अजातशत्रु

श्री अमर सिंह
समाजवादी पार्टी

सभापति जी, एक तरह से 4 वर्ष पहले आप इस आसन पर बैठे थे और सभापति की हैसियत से आज आपकी वर्षगांठ भी है। मैं आपको बहुत-बहुत बधाई देता हूं। ... आपने अभिभावक के रूप में सदन को चलाया है और आपने इस गरिमापूर्ण आसन पर बैठने के बावजूद, एक परिवार के सदस्य की तरह हमारे मान को, हमारे सम्मान को, कभी-कभी हमारी अकुलाहट को और हमारी व्याकुलता को, सम्भाव से सम्बोधन किया है। महोदय, इस उच्च आसन पर कई लोग बैठे हैं, लेकिन आपकी बात अनूठी है। आपकी बात इसलिए अनूठी है कि आपको राजनीति का भी अनुभव है, आपको डिप्लोमेसी का भी अनुभव है और किसी के लिए कुछ न करके भी, आपको सबको प्रसन्न रखने का अनुभव है। आपसे कोई नाराज नहीं होता है, आप अजातशत्रु हैं। इसलिए मैं आपको सदन के सफल परिचालन के लिए और इस आसन पर आपके चार वर्ष पूरे होने पर बधाई देता हूं। ईश्वर करे कि हमें इसी तरह से आपका सान्निध्य और आशीर्वाद निरंतर मिलता रहे। धन्यवाद।

* * *

Protector of rights and privileges of members

*Shri P. G. Narayanan
All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam*

Sir, you have completed four years in office. Sir, you made a mark in the House by conducting the House smoothly and by giving equal opportunities to all Members. You have protected the rights and privileges of all Members. You are the only Chairman who occupied the posts of Chief Ministership and Vice-Presidentship. On behalf of the AIADMK, I wish you a happy and long life.

* * *

Enriching contribution to Indian democracy

*Shri Sitaram Yechury
Communist Party of India (Marxist)*

Sir, I have only risen to wish you all the best for the future and to thank you, Sir, because I have very limited experience in the House. It has only been less than a year. But you have been here for four years. Within this one year that I have seen, your conduct has been completely above board on all occasions and with your immense experience, political experience both in handling the Assembly and Parliament, I think, you have made a mark, not only as the Chairman in this House, but as an esteemed Vice-President of our country for Indian democracy itself. I would cherish this contribution that you have made for Indian democracy; and I wish you many, many years of such contribution for the sake of India's future. Thank you.

* * *

सदन के अभिभावक

प्रो० राम देव भंडारी

राष्ट्रीय जनता दल

माननीय सभापति जी, आज आपके कार्यकाल के चार वर्ष पूरे हो रहे हैं। आप सदन के अभिभावक हैं। कभी-कभी लगता है कि यह जो आसन है, यह कांटों का ताज है, क्योंकि आपको सभी सदस्यों के साथ एक जैसा व्यवहार करते हुए, सभी को प्रसन्न करते हुए, यह काम करना पड़ता है। आप हमारे बड़े गार्जियन हैं और हम चाहेंगे कि आप दीर्घायु रहें, वर्षों-वर्षों तक आप हमारा मार्गदर्शन करते रहें। इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ, मैं आपको मंगलमय शुभकामना देता हूँ। बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद।

* * *

सम्मोहक व्यक्तित्व

श्री मनोहर जोशी

शिव सेना

माननीय चेयरमैन साहब, आपको शुभकामनाएं देते समय मुझे बहुत खुशी हो रही है। यह कुर्सी कैसी होती है, इसका मुझे भी थोड़ा अनुभव है। मैं तो वहां 2 साल ही था, आप इस कुर्सी पर चार साल रहे हैं और इन चार सालों के बाद भी आपको ब्लड प्रेशर नहीं हुआ, इसके लिए मैं आपका अभिनंदन करता हूँ। मैं यहां आने के बाद यही सोच रहा था कि लोक सभा का और राज्य सभा का जो काम होता है, उसमें फर्क होगा, लेकिन मैंने देखा कि दोनों सदनों में बहुत अच्छे तरीके से काम चलता है और काम करने में हरेक को दिलचस्पी होती है। मैं सोचता हूँ कि यह सब चेयरमैन के ऊपर निर्भर करता है कि हाउस कैसा चले। मैंने इतना ही सोचा कि आपकी यशस्विता इसमें भी है कि सदन शुरू होने से पहले, आप कुछ महत्वपूर्ण मेंबर्स को चाय देते हैं और इतना थोड़ा खर्चा करने से इतना अच्छा काम हो सकता है, यदि सभी Presiding Officers को यह मालूम होगा, तो काम करने में किसी को भी कोई कठिनाई नहीं होगी, यही मेरा विश्वास है। आपका व्यक्तित्व भी इसमें एक कारण है। आपका व्यक्तित्व मुझे बहुत पसंद है। आप जवानी में कैसे दिखते थे, मुझे मालूम नहीं, लेकिन मैं यह जानता हूँ कि जवान लोग जो काम नहीं कर सके, इस उम्र में भी आप उनसे अच्छा काम करते हो। इसलिए मैं आपको शुभकामनाएं देता हूँ और आपको बहुत-बहुत बधाई देता हूँ। आपको लंबी आयु मिले और आपकी बहुत तरक्की हो, यही प्रार्थना मैं शिव सेना की तरफ से करता हूँ। बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद।

* * *

कुशल पथप्रदर्शक

श्री एस. एम. लालजन बाशा
तेलुगु देशम पार्टी

सभापति जी, आज हम सबके लिए बहुत ही खुशी का दिन है। आपने चार साल तो चार दिन के जैसे निकाल दिए, ऐसा सभी पार्टीज के लोग आपसे इतने प्यार-मोहब्बत से कह रहे हैं। सर, अभी recently मेरा राजस्थान का दौरा हुआ, as a Member of Joint Parliamentary Committee on Wakf Boards, तो मुझे वहां जाने के बाद यह महसूस हुआ कि यदि आप इससे प्रमोट होकर इस देश के प्रेजीडेंट बनें, तो देश की बहुत भलाई होगी। सर, यह मेरी ख्वाहिश है, क्योंकि राजस्थान जाने के बाद मैंने आपकी कद्र देखी है, क्योंकि आपने राजस्थान की जिस हालत से तरक्की की है, उसे देखने के बाद मुझे बहुत ही खुशी हुई। सर, आपकी कामयाबी के साथ-साथ आपकी अच्छी सेहत बनी रहे। मैं भगवान से यही pray कर रहा हूँ कि हम लोग जल्द-से-जल्द आपका प्रमोशन देख सकें।

* * *

फरिश्तों से बढ़कर

श्री उदय प्रताप सिंह
समाजवादी पार्टी

सर, आप जिस तरह से सारे लोगों को मोहब्बत से जोड़ देते हैं, तो मुझे एक शेर याद आ रहा है।

“जो खेमों में बंटे लोगों के दिल भी जोड़ देते हैं,
हकीकत में फरिश्तों को भी पीछे छोड़ देते हैं।”

* * *

आम जनता के हितों के संरक्षक

श्री शरद यादव
जनता दल (यूनाइटेड)

सभापति जी, मुझे स्मरण आता है कि एनडीए की सरकार थी और पहले-पहले वर्ष में आप उपराष्ट्रपति हुए थे, फिर आप सदन में यहां आए, एनडीए की सरकार में हम लोग मंत्री थे। आपके बारे में जो सबने कहा उसे मैं दोहराना नहीं चाहता हूं, मैं उनके साथ अपने आपको सम्बद्ध करता हूं। लेकिन मेरे साथ जो आपका इस सदन के भीतर पहला संवाद हुआ, वह पीडीएस (पब्लिक डिस्ट्रिब्यूशन सिस्टम) पर हुआ। उस पर आप मुझसे काफी झंझट भी करते रहे, प्राइम मिनिस्टर के साथ भी आपका इस पर, झंझट तो नहीं कहूंगा, लेकिन आपकी तरफ से आदेश हुआ। ... यही कुछ दिन पहले की बात है, जब किसानों की आत्महत्या के सवाल पर बहस हो रही थी, तो आपने मंत्री जी से कुछ पूछने की कोशिश की कि आत्महत्याएं क्यों हो रही हैं, इसके और क्या कारण हैं? बहुत से बड़े-बड़े लोग यहां बैठे हैं, एक-दो का मुझे भी अनुभव है। देश का बहुसंख्यक समाज पसीना बहा कर दौलत बनाता है, लेकिन देश वही बनाएंगे, जो उनकी चिन्ता करेंगे। आपके चार वर्ष के कार्यकाल में आपकी जो चिन्ता है, जिस आम आदमी के बारे में यहां आने का वादा करके यहां सरकार आई है, उस आम आदमी की जो बेचैनी है, उस बेचैनी की फिक्र और चिन्ता सदन के लोगों को बराबर आपने दिलाई। इसलिए आपके चार वर्ष पूरे होने पर मैंने दो बातें कही हैं। मेरा अनुभव बहुत सी बातों पर है, मैं उनके विस्तार में नहीं जाना चाहता। मैं इतना ही कहना चाहता हूं कि यह सदन और जो हमारा लोकतंत्र है, यह देश की शानदार जगह है। आपने इस जगह बैठकर इसकी आन, बान और शान को और बढ़ाने का काम किया है। मेरी कामना है कि आपके जो सपने हैं, आपकी जो चिन्ताएं हैं, वह सदन की भी, सबकी चिन्ताएं बन जाएं, यही इस देश की और आपकी सफलता का बड़ा काम है। आपकी उम्र और आगे बढ़े, आप यशस्वी हों और जो सदन के लोगों ने कहा, वह हमारी इच्छा है, लेकिन आप बैठे हैं, इसलिए हम नहीं कहेंगे। हम पीछे से ज्यादा तारीफ करते हैं। मैं इतना ही कह कर अपनी बात को समाप्त करता हूं। धन्यवाद।

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Youthful and cheerful

Shri N. Jothi
All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

There is a scene in Ramayana, written by Kamban. In Tamil, we call it *Kamban Ramayana*. The scene is like this. Rama, after succeeding against Ravana, had his coronation along with Sita — there is no Sita here — and during the coronation one after the other poets and great people come and praise Rama. Here, Kamban says, “*than namam thane kettan*”, which means, he listened to his own honours and greatness. Like that, the hon’ble Chairman is being praised by all of us, cutting across the party lines.

Sir, I would like to know two secrets from you. One, how you look so youthful and cheerful? What is the secret behind it? Second, you are always calm and quiet, which I never have. What is the secret behind it? Please tell us this, so that I can get motivated by you.

I wish you all the best. May you win many more laurels! You are a fit person to win many more laurels. I will be your chief campaigner, if you could come to that.

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चमन का नूर

डा० फारुक अब्दुल्ला
जम्मू और कश्मीर नेशनल कॉन्फ्रेंस

“हजारों साल नरगिस अपनी बेनूरी पे रोती है,
बड़ी मुश्किल से होता है चमन में दीदा-ए-वर पैदा।”

मैं इन की रियासत में पढ़ा हूँ। मैंने वही पानी पिया है, जो इन्होंने पिया है और जिस तरह से इन्होंने उस चमन को इतना बुलंद किया कि आज राजस्थान सचमुच में हमारी एक चमकती हुई रियासत है, उसी तरीके से इन्होंने एक वालिद की हैसियत से इस चमन को भी संभालकर रखा है। कई दफा वहां से शोर उठता है, कई दफा यहां से शोर उठता है, मगर बड़ी बराबरी की तरह से ये बच्चों को चुप कराते हैं। मैं अपनी तरफ से आपको मुबारक करता हूँ इन चार सालों पर। मैं उम्मीद करता हूँ, हमारे साथी भी और यहां के साथी भी, चाहे जिन पार्टियों से ताल्लुक रखते हैं, आप को उस मुकाम पर पहुंचाएंगे जहां आप भारत का नाम और ज्यादा रोशन करेंगे। हमारी उम्मीदें यही हैं। अल्लाह आप को सलामत रखे, आप को सेहत बख्शे।

आप से एक बात जरूर कहना चाहता हूँ कि ये हर वक्त हंसते हुए दिखेंगे। मैंने एक दफा राजीव गांधी से पूछा, वह लाल दिखते थे हर वक्त, मुझे अपनी बहनें माफ करें, हमें लाल दिखने के लिए कभी-कभी रूज लगानी पड़ती है। तो मैंने उन से पूछा क्या आप कोई रूज लगाते हैं, आप कोई चीज लगाते हैं जिस से आप हर वक्त लाल दिखते हैं? तो उन्होंने कहा कि, रुमाल से देख लो, अगर कोई रंग उतरता है। उसी तरह इन का भी वही हाल है। भगवान ने इनको अंदर से वह शक्ति दे रखी है जिस से ये हर वक्त जवान दिखते हैं।

बहुत-बहुत मुबारक, इन चार सालों पर।

* * *

Father figure

Dr. P. C. Alexander
Independent

Mr. Chairman, Sir, all those who spoke before me were representing various political parties. There are about a dozen of us who are 'unattached'. On behalf of these Members, I wish to join the chorus of compliments that have been placed before you. What has impressed us all, irrespective of affiliating with political parties, or, unattached strategy, is the manner in which you dealt with each person, the manner in which he deserves to be dealt with. You have been able to handle the irrepressible veteran politicians, like, Mr. V. Narayanasamy, on the one side, and Mr. Ahluwalia, the most experienced, veteran politician, on the other side. And, more important than that, even you have scolded Paniji, I have seen him coming and falling at your feet. In other words, you have no enemies on any side of this House. We are most grateful to you because we all look up to you as a father figure on whom we can always depend. We, the unattached Members, are grateful to you for the chance or opportunities given to us which remind us that we are also Members of the House. Thank you.

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Touching all hearts

*Shri B. J. Panda
Biju Janata Dal*

Sir, in these four years you have not only upheld the prestige of your high office, but I have no hesitation in saying that you have enhanced the prestige of your office. By your conduct — and you already came with a big reputation — you have not only earned our respect, but, I think, more important than that, you have touched all our hearts. Sir, on behalf of the Biju Janata Dal Party and the people of Orissa, I would like to convey our deepest regards to you and our sincere good wishes for a long and more successful life. Thank you.

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पदगरिमा संवर्धक

*श्री तारिक अनवर
राष्ट्रवादी कांग्रेस पार्टी*

सभापति महोदय, मैं सबसे पहले आपके चार वर्ष पूरे होने पर अपनी ओर से मुबारकबाद देना चाहता हूँ। यह बात भी सच है कि कुछ लोगों का, कुछ व्यक्तियों का पद पाने के बाद व्यक्तित्व निखरता है और कुछ व्यक्ति ऐसे होते हैं, जो उस पद की गरिमा को बढ़ा देते हैं। आपका जो राजनीतिक अनुभव है, शायद यही कारण है कि जिस तरह से आप सारे हाउस को विश्वास में लेकर चलते हैं और बड़े प्यार से बिल्कुल एक स्कूल के हेडमास्टर की तरह कभी प्यार से, कभी डांट के, कभी समझा के सरकारी पक्ष को भी और विपक्ष को भी, सभी को अपने साथ विश्वास में लेकर आप चलते हैं, मैं समझता हूँ कि यह आपके लम्बे राजनीतिक अनुभव की देन है यह आपकी खूबी है। मैं आपको अपनी ओर से और अपनी पार्टी की ओर से बधाई देता हूँ और उम्मीद करता हूँ कि आप इसी तरह इस पद की गरिमा को बनाए रखेंगे और इस सदन की तथा देश की सेवा करते रहेंगे।

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सफल सदन संचालन

श्री राहुल बजाज
निर्दलीय

सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके यहां सबसे नया मੈम्बर होने के नाते आपके लिए देश की तो शुभेच्छा लाया ही हूं, पर महाराष्ट्र से भी लाया हूं। मैं सब को आपके माध्यम से कहना चाहूंगा कि भैरों सिंह जी और मैं राजस्थान के एक ही डिस्ट्रिक्ट, सीकर से आते हैं। इसलिए मैं इनको शुरू से, वर्षों से अपना बड़ा भाई मानता हूं। हम सब, जैसा लोगों ने कहा है, यही आशा करते हैं कि आपने यहां पर, इस कुर्सी पर, जो चार साल इतनी अच्छी तरह से बिताए हैं और अब आगे दूसरी कुर्सी पर जाएं, उसके लिए आपको हम सब की सपोर्ट है और शुभकामनाएं हैं।

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Man of high stature

Dr. M. S. Gill
Indian National Congress

Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, with your permission today, I will speak on this subject in Punjabi. Sir, you can understand Punjabi. I hope, other hon'ble Members will also be able to understand it.

Sir, you have completed four years in your present post. I had the privilege of first meeting you in the office of late Prime Minister Morarji Desai. You, the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, were there along with Sardar Prakash Singh Badal, Chief Minister of Punjab and Chaudhari Devi Lal ji. All of you were stalwarts. But you were the tallest among them, Sir. And you were the tallest not only in height but in stature too. Hon'ble Bhairon Singh Shekhawat had a golden heart and a sharp mind. And that is more important.

Now, you have completed four years presiding over this august House. I too have completed over two years here. But the commendable way in which you have conducted the proceedings of the House, it seems as if these four years have passed in a matter of four minutes. Unfortunately, two years of my tenure have also passed in a matter of two minutes. I am concerned.

Sir, I can see stalwarts on all sides in this House. Many a time, efforts are made to terrify others. Raised voices can be heard. Anger is visible. However, Sir, I have seen lions being reduced to rats here. Those who are intelligent, know the strength of others. They know that like the great strongman Bheema of yesteryears, hon'ble Bhairon Singh Shekhawat is more than a match to anyone. Your work in this august House has been commendable.

Sir, I envy you for the remarkable way in which you conduct the proceedings of the House. However, I also feel sorry for you because the hon'ble Members test your patience. I have seen the proceedings of

(Translated from Punjabi)

British Parliament. However, your role as *Bhishma Pitamah* is something to be emulated. You have a large heart. You never lose your cool. You give equal opportunity to all the hon'ble Members. You impart justice to everyone.

Sir, today is an auspicious day. Whether you continue to guide us in this capacity after a year, or you touch greater heights, I convey my best wishes to you. May *Wahe Guru* bless you. Thank you.

Source of strength and encouragement

Shrimati Jaya Bachchan
Samajwadi Party

Sir, I do not know whether I should speak from the experience of the previous two years or just one month that I have been here. Anyway, thank you for having given me this opportunity, which I seldom get. Sir, I have seen, in the last few years, many politicians, many diplomats, but never seen a person who is a politician and a diplomat together, except you. The people to whom you have been fair feel very happy, the people who are unhappy with certain opportunities that they are not given on the floor of the House, you fulfil that behind the doors. I think आपकी खिचड़ी में जो मिठास है, वह शायद रसगुल्ले में भी न हो। मगर आप खिचड़ी भी खिलाते हैं, रसगुल्ले भी खिलाते हैं।... I would like to say, not only as Member of Parliament, but individually and personally also, that you have always been very kind and generous to me. As for my experience as the Chairperson of the Children's Film Society, when you were the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, I remember, how kind you were, how generous you were. I have also to say that you have maintained the same personal relationship with me, maybe, not on the floor, but, definitely, when I go and see you, you have always blessed me which has given me strength and encouragement to come back and face a lot of other difficulties. You have taught me not to be a defeatist and you have taught me by being present there, by facing a lot of antagonism and a lot of aggression, but dealing with it in a very calm and cool manner. That is what I have learnt from you; that is what I have practised; and that is what I have done. At a time when I was going through a bit of a difficult period, you had encouraged me, Sir, and I hope you will continue to encourage me. I also hope — with due respect to the ruling party — that I will be given the opportunity to complete my term. I hope that you will continue to give me the strength that you have always given.

I wish you all the best and we need you here. I hope with the help — and I know for sure for this side — and with the kind words that they

are saying today, they will see to it that you continue with us and with the entire House for the next term as well. Thank you very much. Wish you all the best.

Pioneer for people's cause

Dr. Gyan Prakash Pilania
Bharatiya Janata Party

Sir, I have the honour to greet you as a humble *Rajasthani*. I have served for fifty-five years with you, I wanted to share with this august House how you are adored as a demi-God in Rajasthan, how they worship you and how they remember your historic step of starting *Antyodaya Yojana*, not only in Rajasthan but also in the whole of India. It was a pioneering step, and they take you not as a Chief Minister or as a *Uprashtrapati* or as a *Sabhapati* of this august House, they take you as a *Vaishnav Jan* :-

वैष्णव जन तो तेने कहिए, जे पीर पराई जाने रे,
पर उपकार करे, मन अभिमान न आने दे।

You have been serving the people of Rajasthan and the country with such devotion that it is difficult to give any example. It is difficult to describe it. I can only say one word about you, Sir, that you are '*Ajatshatru*'; you are '*Devanampriya*'; and I will say only this thing - जीवेम् शरदः शतं, श्रुणियां शरदः शतं, प्रब्रवाम शरदः शतं, अदीनाः श्याम शरदः शतं, भूयः च शरदः शतात्।

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Organiser *par excellence*

*Dr. Bimal Jalan
Nominated*

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Sir, for giving a chance to a non-political and non-elected Member who happens to have the great privilege of being in the midst of great political leaders of our time, and I thought I would share with you a little of my experience here over the past three years in regard to what I have seen.

Sir, one thing which is most impressive about our democracy is the equality of people all around us, in the sense, that I am unelected, I am non-political, but I have the same rights as anybody else — some of the great leaders on this side, on that side, wherever you come from — and I think it is a great, great privilege to watch these proceedings. What I have admired most about you, Sir, is your sense of humour. We all get depressed, at times, about the activities which go on in the House, the disruptions, the interruptions, the sort of lack of procedures and so on and so forth. But, in the midst of all this, as somebody, who comes from a different background entirely, what I have found is, we have a political leader with us with such a tremendous sense of humour, organisation and complete courtesy to even many of us who are here for the first time.

So, Sir, I would like to congratulate you, and I must tell you that while we are all discontented with the way of working of our democracy sometimes, we are proud of the rewards that you have conferred on all of us.

Sir, I hope that we would have many, many happy years of your leadership in this House and elsewhere. Thank you very much, Sir.

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कदावर शख्सियत

*श्री राज मोहिन्दर सिंह मजीठा
शिरोमणि अकाली दल*

महोदय, यहां आपने अपनी टर्म के चार साल पूरे किए, उसके लिए मैं आपको बधाई देना चाहता हूं। जिस तरह हाउस के काम को आपने चलाया और मुझसे पहले जो भी एम् पीजे बोले हैं, उन सबने आपको बधाई दी है। मैं तो एक ही बात कहता हूं कि जब उस दरवाजे से आप निकलते हैं जिस तरह से मनोहर सिंह गिल साहब ने कहा, कोई शख्सियत कदावर भी हो, दिमागी भी ठीक हो, और अंदर से भी सोहणी हो तो वे हैं भैरों सिंह जी शेखावत। जब उस दरवाजे से आप आते हैं तो देखते ही मन खुश होता है, जैसे किसी बारात का लाड़ा सोहणा हो तो कुड़ियां बहुत खुश होती हैं। जब आप हाउस में आते हैं तो हम सभी खुशी से अपनी कुर्सियों से खड़े होकर आपको नमस्कार करते हैं। मैं पंजाब के लोगों, सिक्ख कौम और बार्डर के लोगों की तरफ से चार साल पूरे करने पर आपको दुबारा बधाई देता हूं और सच्चे बादशाह, परमात्मा से कामना करता हूं कि आप इसी तरह से ऊंचाइयों को छूते रहें।

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सहृदय शिक्षक

श्री दारा सिंह
नाम-निर्देशित

चेयरमैन सर, मैं हाउस में बहुत कम बोलता हूँ, सिर्फ सुनता हूँ और सब के विचार ग्रहण करता रहता हूँ और आपको चार साल पूरे करने और सभी लोगों को कंट्रोल करके हाउस को चलाने के लिए बधाई देता हूँ। एक मेंबर ने जो कहा मास्टर वाली बात, वह मैं हाउस को बताना चाहता हूँ कि जो लोग टी० वी० देखते हैं, उनमें से मेरी बीवी भी टी० वी० देख रही थी और जब यहां शोर मच रहा था तो आप हाउस को कंट्रोल कर रहे थे तो उन्होंने मेरे से कहा कि भैरों साहब की ड्यूटी तो मास्टर से भी खराब है, इनको छोड़ देनी चाहिए। मैंने कहा कि नहीं, वे मुस्कराते हुए, हंसते हुए हाउस को कंट्रोल करते हैं। यहां हाउस में सभी के तरह-तरह के दिमाग हैं, अलग-अलग सब को कंट्रोल करना बड़ी मुश्किल बात है। आप अच्छी तरह से कर रहे हैं, बहुत अच्छी बात है। मैं आपको बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद देता हूँ।

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Man of infinite varieties

Dr. K. Malaisamy
All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

Mr. Chairman Sir, time-honoured, you have completed four years in office. I have completed only two years, but I have learnt so many things. What I could not learn in several decades, I could learn within a period of two years. I have been listening to my colleagues who have been patting, praising and saying tall words about you. If I were asked, I would sum up all these words with a couplet of Shakespeare:

"Age cannot wither her nor customs stale her infinite variety."

You are a man of varieties; you are a man of infinite variety.

Sir, I am inspired by Mr. Jothi to cite two sentences from *Kamban Ramayana*. When Lord Rama, who had such a great personality, great strength and so on, was walking in a procession along the streets of Ayodhya, young, energetic and beautiful girls were looking at him.

...People who were trying to have a look at Lord Rama from a height could only look at his shoulders. Some of them saw his feet. Some were looking at the shoulders while others were looking at his feet. Thus, some people didn't get to see one side of his while others could see the other side.

Similarly, while analysing the various traits in you, some people have seen certain aspects, while others have seen some others. In totality, the Chairman is unique, unique and unique.

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कौमी एकता के पक्षधर

श्री तरलोचन सिंह
निर्दलीय

माननीय चेयरमैन सर, इस हाउस में जो यह तीन लाइनें पीछे की हैं, इनको शायद ही कभी मौका मिलता है। ऐसा लगता है कि जो यह आपके साथ खड़े हैं ये लेफ्ट राइट देखते हैं, सामने वालों को देखने का कम ही इनको मौका मिलता है, जहां मैं सब में शामिल हूं आपको बधाई देने के लिए, वहां गुरुनानक देव जी का एक श्लोक है :

“जननी जने तो भगत जन, क्या दाता क्या शूर”

यह जो तीन क्वालिटीज इंसान में होनी चाहिए वे परमात्मा ने आपको दी हैं।... मैं सिर्फ एक बात यहां, जो मेरे तमाम भाई-बहनों ने कही है, उसमें ऐड करना चाहता हूं कि मुझे माइनोंरिटी कमीशन के माध्यम से जब सारे भारत में जाने का अवसर मिला, तो राजस्थान में जब भी, कभी कोई वाक्या हुआ, तो लोग आपकी मिसाल देते थे। जब श्री भैरों सिंह जी मुख्य मंत्री थे, तो सबसे अच्छे फिरकू माहौल की मिसाल जो आपने देश में कायम की, बावजूद आप एक पार्टी के थे, लेकिन तमाम कौमों आप पर ऐसा विश्वास करती थीं कि आप उन्हीं के थे। मैं समझता हूं कि आज के माहौल में, जहां हम हर रोज़ ऐसी बातें पढ़ते हैं, आपने एक ऐसी मिसाल कायम की, जिसको सारे देश में फॉलो करना चाहिए। मैं और मेरे पीछे जो सदस्य बैठे हैं, हम आपको बधाई देते हैं। मैं यही कामना करता हूं कि परमात्मा इससे भी जो बड़ी सीट है, यूनिमिसली आपको इलेक्ट करें, ताकि सारा देश इसी माहौल में, इसी रंग में, आपको देखे। धन्यवाद।

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हर पक्ष के हितैषी

श्री नंदी येल्लैया
भारतीय राष्ट्रीय कांग्रेस

सभापति महोदय, पांच साल के समय में से आपका चार साल का समय कम्प्लीट होने पर कई माननीय सदस्यों ने आपको बधाई दी है। क्योंकि आपकी एक चेयरमैन की हैसियत से, यहां पर जितनी भी कार्यवाही होती है, उसमें आपकी कंट्रोलिंग कैपेसिटी अच्छी रही है।

सर, हमारे हैदराबाद के अंदर बहुत से राजस्थान के लोग हैं। वे हर वक्त, आपका हर छोटा-सा फंक्शन भी हो, उसे देखना चाहते हैं। मैंने सुना है कि आप राजस्थान के मुख्य मंत्री की हैसियत से और आज भी उपराष्ट्रपति की हैसियत से हर गली में घूमते रहे हैं। आपको लोग चाहते हैं, क्योंकि आप पब्लिक लाइफ के अंदर, एक दफा चुनने के बाद, चाहे आप बड़ी कुर्सी पर हों या छोटी कुर्सी पर हों, उनमें कोई फर्क नहीं समझते। हमारे हैदराबाद के अंदर आपको उपराष्ट्रपति की हैसियत से बहुत दफा कई फंक्शनों में भाग लेने का मौका मिला। आज भी आपको जब कभी समय मिलता है, तो आप राजस्थान में जाने की कोशिश करते हैं। मैंने हाउस में यह देखा है कि आपके चार साल के पीरियड के अंदर बहुत से मसले यहां पर आये, चाहे वह पक्ष का हो या विरोधी पक्ष का हो, अगर उसका प्रॉब्लम यहां सॉल्व नहीं हुआ, तो फौरन चैम्बर में बुलाते हैं। मैं आपके लिए प्रार्थना करूंगा कि आपका स्वास्थ्य ठीक रहे और आप अच्छी तरह से सदन को चलाते रहें। धन्यवाद।

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आशीर्वाद की कामना

श्री दिनेश त्रिवेदी

अखिल भारतीय तृणमूल कांग्रेस

धन्यवाद, सभापति महोदय। हमारे मित्र ने अभी बैंक बैंचर्स का जिक्र किया, मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि बिल्कुल निराश मत होइये। अभी शायर ने कहा कि फरिश्तों को भी पीछे छोड़ देते हैं, तो शायद उनका नज़रिया इन फरिश्तों पर है, जो हम पीछे बैंक बैंचर्स बैठे हुए हैं। सभापति महोदय, आपके कार्यकाल के चार साल पूरे हुए, यह बड़ी खुशी की बात है, मगर जब हमारे छह साल पूरे होते हैं, तब पता नहीं कि हमें खुशी होती है कि गम होता है। इस मौके पर बहुत कुछ कहना चाहता हूँ, मगर दो शब्दों में, मैं यह कहूँगा कि वर्षों-वर्षों तक आपके आशीर्वाद की वर्षा हम पर होती रहे। धन्यवाद।

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समन्वय के समर्थक

डा० (श्रीमती) नजमा ए० हेपतुल्ला

भारतीय जनता पार्टी

सर, ये जो बातें यहां पर हो रही थीं, सब लोगों ने इतनी अच्छी-अच्छी बातें आपके बारे में कहीं, मैं सबको इंडोर्स करती हूँ। मगर ये सब बाहर की बातें थीं, क्योंकि इस चार साल में से दो साल मैंने आपके साथ अंदर काम किया है, तो मैं थोड़ी अंदर की बात बताना चाहती हूँ। ... अगर मैं इस वक्त सत्ता में डिप्टी चेयरमैन रहती तो अंदर की बात नहीं बताती। ... सर, हमारा एक रूल है कि जो चेयरमैन के चैम्बर में बात होती है, वह हाउस में नहीं दोहराते। ... अब चूंकि मुझ पर वह पाबंदी नहीं है, इसलिए मैं कहूँगी। शायद मुझे लगता है कि अगर मेरी याददाश्त सही है, तो हाउस में यह मेरा 26वां साल है। शायद सबसे ज्यादा समय का अनुभव है। सर, उम्र में तो मैं आपसे जूनियर हूँ मगर इस हाउस में मुझे बहुत साल हो गए हैं। मैंने बहुत से चेयरमैन के साथ काम किया है। मैंने वैकटरमन साहब, शंकर दयाल शर्मा, कृष्ण कान्त जी, नारायणन साहब और आपके साथ भी काम किया है। मुझे लगता है कि आप सबके साथ जो समन्वय रखते थे, चाहे वे अपोजिशन वाले हों, चाहे सत्ताधारी हों, उनके साथ एक स्वभाव के साथ जो आपने यहां किया, वह तो सबने देखा, अंदर आपने मुश्किल मसलों का जिस तरीके से हल ढूंढा, मैं समझती हूँ कि वह बात भी सबके सामने आनी चाहिए। यह हाउस न तो सिर्फ रूल बुक से चलता है और न किसी कायदे-कानून से चलता है, यह परसनल रेपो से चलता है। आपने जो हाउस में काम किया, अंदर भी और बाहर भी, मैं उसके लिए आपको मुबारकबाद देती हूँ और एक शेर है, 'कि तुम जियो हजारों साल, साल के दिन हों पचास हजार।' ... थोड़ा अमेंडमेंट हुआ है, 'आप न सिर्फ जियो हजारों साल, बल्कि सत्ता पर भी आप, जहां भी रहो, हजारों साल रहो' यही मेरी शुभकामना है।

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Inspiring confidence

*Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss
Pattali Makkal Katchi*

Sir, I rise today as the youngest Member of this august House joining all my senior colleagues in this House in congratulating you on your successful completion of four wonderful years as Chairman. Sir, before coming to this House as a youngster and a fresher, I had a lot of apprehensions how I will be able to perform. But then, having come here, under your guidance and the confidence you infused in us, the youngsters like us, we are able to do what little we have done. Sir, along with my leader, Dr. Ramadoss, and my party, PMK, and the people of Tamil Nadu, I would like to once again congratulate you. Sir, the country owes a lot to you and also expects a lot more from you in the years to come. Thank you, Sir.

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निष्पक्ष और सुधारवादी

*श्री संतोष बागड़ोदिया
भारतीय राष्ट्रीय कांग्रेस*

सर, यह मेरे घर का मामला है, यह बात सही है। सर, 1986 में जब मैं पहली बार यहां पर मैम्बर बनकर आया, तब से लेकर अब तक मेरा बहुत से वाइस प्रेजिडेंट्स से सम्पर्क रहा है। जब मैं 1998 में इलेक्शन लड़ रहा था, तब आप राजस्थान में मुख्य मंत्री थे। मैंने देखा कि यहां भी बीजेपी की सरकार थी और वहां भी बीजेपी की सरकार थी, मैंने सोचा पता नहीं किस तरह की व्यवस्था रहेगी। मैं आपको बधाई देता हूं कि आप मुख्य मंत्री रहते हुए भी इतने फेयर ... सही बात है, जो आपने कहा, मैं वही बोलने वाला था, फिर भी मैं जीत कर आया क्योंकि आप बहुत फेयर मुख्य मंत्री थे। इसके लिए भी आपको बधाई है और आपको धन्यवाद है। अभी 4 वर्ष से जो मेरा आपके साथ सम्पर्क रहा है, मैं दो वर्ष इंडस्ट्री कमेटी का चेयरमैन भी रहा हूं, मैंने इस दौरान यह देखा कि आपने जो चेंजेज़ किए और जो हाउस में भी चेंजेज़ किए, शुरु-शुरु में हमको लगता था कि यह सही नहीं है ... अब लगता है कि उन चेंजेज़ से हाउस और कमेटी दोनों का भला हुआ है। आपको बहुत-बहुत शुभकामनाएं, धन्यवाद।

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Sagacious advisor

*Shri V. Narayanasamy
Indian National Congress*

Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, I am a privileged person today because you are kind enough to give me sweets, like a father gives to his son. I am a privileged person today. Sir, inside the House, I will be a party man; I will defend my party; but outside the House, I will be friendly with everybody, including my dear friend Shri Ahluwalia. Sir, when Najmaji was the Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha, I had an opportunity to work with about five hon'ble Vice-Presidents. For the past three years, I have been working under you. It is a great opportunity for all of us. Whenever we get an opportunity to speak in this august House, when we come to you, you give us advice as to how issues have to be raised and especially, Sir, when issues related to farmers, Public Distribution System, and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and the housing problems of the people come, you take keen interest in the House during the Question Hour and during debates also, you put questions to the hon'ble Ministers to help those downtrodden people, and the oppressed and suppressed people of the society. Sir, I have got only one small problem because we have been either on this side or the other side of the House. Sushmaji knows that Shri Suresh Pachouri, Shri Ahluwalia, Shri Anand Sharma, and I were all on one side. Sushmaji's throat has gone bad because of that only. We have to defend our party. Though we change sides, we don't leave our policies and our aim in life. Sir, one thing is that whenever we meet you, though we come with some problem, you used to soothe us giving sage advice, and you have been helping us to grow in this House and also outside the House and telling us how we should discharge our duty as sincere parliamentarians in this august House.

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संवेदनशील नेतृत्व

*श्री ललित किशोर चतुर्वेदी
भारतीय जनता पार्टी*

माननीय सभापति महोदय, मैं शायद इस सदन में ऐसा सदस्य हूँ, जिसका सबसे लंबा परिचय और पहचान आपसे है और जिसे आपके साथ रहने का मौका मिला है। मुझे 1946 से लेकर आज तक, यानी 59 वर्षों तक लगातार आपको बहुत निकट से देखने का मौका मिला है। आप एक कुशल प्रशासक और एक संवेदनशील नेता के रूप में जाने जाते हैं। मुझे वह दृश्य याद आता है, जिस समय राजस्थान में भयंकर अकाल पड़ा था। वहाँ के मरे हुए लोगों की सूची तत्कालीन प्रधान मंत्री के पास पहुँचाने के लिए आपका जो परिश्रम था, मैं आज भी उस दृश्य को याद करके इतना रोमांचित हो जाता हूँ कि कुछ कह नहीं सकता। इस आसन पर बैठकर भी आपने पिछले 4 वर्षों में इस प्रकार बैलेंस रखते हुए, इतनी कामयाबी हासिल की है, मैं आपको आपके कार्यकाल के 4 वर्ष पूरे होने पर बहुत बधाई देता हूँ और धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ। आपकी छत्रछाया हम लोगों पर लगातार इसी प्रकार, निरंतर बनी रहे, ऐसी कामना मैं करता हूँ।

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सद्भावनाओं के लिए साभार

श्री भैरों सिंह शेखावत
सभापति, राज्य सभा

माननीय सदस्यगण, मैं आज सुबह जब यहां आया, उस समय तक मुझे पता नहीं था कि मैं आज इस पद पर चार वर्ष पूरे कर रहा हूं, लेकिन यहां आने के पश्चात् एक सज्जन बोले कि आपके कार्यकाल के चार वर्ष पूरे हो रहे हैं, मिठाई खिलाइए, तब मैंने थोड़ी सी मिठाई मंगाई और उस मिठाई ने इस प्रकार का संदेश दिया कि आज सब मुझे मिठाई खिलाने को तैयार बैठे हैं।

माननीय सदस्यगण, आपका जिस प्रकार का स्नेह और सहयोग मुझे मिला, केवल यही कारण है कि मैं इस पद पर रहकर आपकी सेवा कर सका हूं। आज Question Hour था, मुझे इस बात का खेद है कि मेरे कारण Question Hour नहीं चल सका। ...

माननीय सदस्यगण, मैं जब यहां आया था, मुझे इस बात का विश्वास नहीं था कि मैं सदन में बैठ कर चेयरमैन के नाते सदन का संचालन कर पाऊंगा। मैं स्पीकर के चेयर पर केवल एक बार बैठा था, जिस समय नए-नए सदस्य आते हैं, मैं प्रोटेम स्पीकर के रूप में बैठा था, इसके अलावा इस चेयर पर मैं बैठा ही नहीं। इस चेयर पर मैं जब बैठा, तो यह सही है कि ईश्वर की कृपा और आपकी कृपा बहुत रही कि मुझे आप लोगों का पूरा विश्वास मिला। मैं भी यह कह सकता हूं कि मैंने भी निष्ठापूर्वक काम करने की चेष्टा की है। उसमें यह भी हो सकता है कि कई माननीय सदस्य नाराज़ हों, कई नाराज़ नहीं हों, लेकिन नाराज़ होने वाले सदस्यों के लिए भी मेरे दिमाग में एक टेंशन रहता था कि वे इस मामले से नाराज़ हुए होंगे, तो मैंने उनको व्यक्तिगत रूप से बुला कर उस बात का समाधान करने की चेष्टा की। यह सही है कि यहां आने के बाद मैंने सीखा बहुत है। इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं है। उस सीख का लाभ किस प्रकार से उठाया जा सके, उसे मैं लगातार क्वेश्चंस में उठाता भी रहा हूं। मुझे आप सब लोगों का प्रेम मिला है। मुझे इस बात की बहुत खुशी है कि आप सब लोगों ने आज जिस प्रकार से मेरे प्रति सद्भावनाएं प्रकट की हैं, मैं इसके लिए आपका बहुत आभारी हूं। मैं यह भी समझता हूं कि आपने मुझे आज इस प्रकार का स्नेह दिया। मैं एक विश्वास लेकर आया था और मैंने शायद पहले ही दिन इस हाउस में कह दिया

था कि मैं चेयरमैन बन कर आ रहा हूं, लेकिन मैं आपको यह कह सकता हूं कि मेरे दिल में किसी प्रकार की राजनीति नहीं है और मैं राजनीतिक भेदभाव नहीं करूंगा। कोई मेरे ऊपर इस प्रकार का इल्जाम न लगाए कि मैंने राजनीतिक कारणों से एक प्रश्न को उठाया, दूसरे का जवाब दिलवाया, तीसरी बात की, मैंने इसका प्रयत्न किया है। जब मुझे पार्टी के नेताओं ने वाइस-प्रेज़ीडेंट बना कर भेजा था, वह दृश्य मुझे आज याद है कि मैं जब निकलने लगा, तो पार्टी के लोग भी रोए और मैं भी रोया और रोते-रोते न तो वे रुके और न मैं रुका। लेकिन मेरे दिमाग में यह बात आई कि जिस प्रकार के मेरे संस्कार हैं, उन संस्कारों के आधार पर मुझे इस कार्य का संचालन करना है। मैंने निष्पक्षता से कार्य का संचालन करने का प्रयत्न किया। मुझे बहुत खुशी हुई कि आज आप सब लोगों ने मुझे इस बात का आशीर्वाद दिया। मैं आपके प्रति बहुत-बहुत आभारी हूं।

जहां तक उम्र का प्रश्न आता है, आपमें से अधिकांश उम्र में मुझसे छोटे हैं। मैं 83 वर्ष का हो रहा हूं, कोई भी यहां 83 से ऊपर का नहीं होगा, नहीं है न ! इसका भी मुझे थोड़ा लाभ हुआ कि मेरी उम्र के कारण से भी आप लोगों ने उम्र का लिहाज़ रखा, मेरे काम में सहयोग दिया। मैं आप लोगों को बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूं, एक मिनट है, मैं धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूं, खास तौर से बागडोदिया जी को, जो हमारे राजस्थान से ही आते हैं। वे राजस्थान से आते हैं, मैं उन्हें अच्छी तरह से जानता हूं। लेकिन जिन माननीय सदस्यों को मैं नहीं जानता, मैं ऐसा समझता हूं कि मेरे प्रति उनका भी इतना स्नेह है कि वे जहां कहीं भी मिल जाते हैं, तो उसी स्नेह से बात करते हैं। कहीं यह पता ही नहीं रहता कि वे मैम्बर हैं और मैं चेयरमैन हूं, लेकिन जब मिलते हैं, उस समय इस प्रकार का भेद बिल्कुल खत्म होता है। मुझमें भी एक आत्मसंतोष पैदा होता है कि मेरे यहां आने के कारण से किसी से मेरी दुश्मनी नहीं हुई। मैं अपने जीवन में एक उद्देश्य लेकर चल सकता हूं कि राजनीति में विरोधी तो हो सकते हैं, लेकिन दुश्मन नहीं हो सकता और मैं किसी को दुश्मन नहीं बनाऊंगा। इसी आधार के ऊपर मैं काम करता आया हूं। अब इसकी परीक्षा आपके हाथ में है। इस परीक्षा के अन्तर्गत आपने मुझे जो आशीर्वाद दिया है, उसके लिए मैं आपके प्रति बहुत-बहुत आभार प्रकट करता हूं। धन्यवाद।

FOUR GLORIOUS YEARS

**Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat completes four glorious
years in office as Vice-President of India and
Chairman, Rajya Sabha**

Beginning of an Eventful Era

Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat assumed the office of the Vice-President of India on 19 August 2002. On 20 November 2002, the then Prime Minister, the Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha, the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leaders of all the Political Parties in Rajya Sabha warmly welcomed Shri Shekhawat as the Chairman of Rajya Sabha.

The then Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee while emotionally referring to the golden voyage of completing half-a-century of public life by Shri Shekhawat, said: "This son of the soil has arisen from the soil to become the sandal wood 'tilak' on the forehead".

The then Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Manmohan Singh also accorded him a hearty welcome by saying "your public life, extending over half-a-century, is an epitome of wisdom, knowledge and experience, which we are very proud to say, will be a very important asset for us as we deliberate in this august House."

Responding to the felicitations, Shri Shekhawat had said, "the Parliamentary institutions are the temples of democracy; they are the moral fulcrum of our country and have to set standards for others to follow. We are watched and observed as role models by State Legislatures, Zilla Parishads and other elected local bodies". He urged the hon'ble members to introspect whether we are giving adequate time and attention to issues such as national security, poverty, unemployment, population control, problems of farmers and the labour, planning, development and growth, issue of corruption in public life and other such issues having an impact on public governance. He assured the hon'ble members that he would conduct the proceedings of the House impartially and it would be his sincere endeavour to have serious discussion and constructive debate on issues of national importance so that we can evolve a shared approach of action.

During the period of four years, twelve sessions of Rajya Sabha have been completed. If we review the functioning of the House and the results achieved therefrom, we can say with a measure of certainty that the assurance given by Shri Shekhawat in his response to felicitations with regard to making the proceedings of the House more productive and effective has been fulfilled.

Conducting Meaningful Debate in the House

True to his commitment, Shri Shekhawat facilitated in having long and meaningful discussion in the House on several important issues such as effective functioning of the Public Distribution System, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Central Bureau of Investigation, need for reforms, state of States' finances, incidents of suicide by farmers, malnutrition and starvation deaths of children, school drop-outs, rise in prices of essential commodities, communal violence and so on.

During these discussions, the hon'ble members have put forward practical and meaningful suggestions to find solution to our national problems and admittedly, the proceedings of the House have immensely contributed to public governance and public welfare. Free from personal rancour, members took part in the debate and appreciated one another's viewpoints regardless of their political and ideological differences.

On an occasion, when a Short Duration Discussion was held on the 'suicide by farmers in various parts of the country', and the issue of distress sale by farmers also came up, Shri Shekhawat intervening during the reply by the Minister, reminded that Government had provisions for warehouses in every State and under the Warehousing Act there was a provision that farmers could store their produce and get payment for 70 per cent of the produce deposited and whenever the prices stabilized, the farmers could sell their produce in the market. The suggestion made by Shri Shekhawat was well received by the Minister.

Recently on 28 July 2006, while replying to a Starred Question on 'relief package for suicide prone areas' raised by Shri Varinder Singh Bajwa, Shri Sharad Pawar, the Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, stated that in order to check the incidents of suicide by farmers the Government had raised the crop loan from 86,000 crores to 1,50,000 crores. Besides, interest rates were also rescheduled. To this the Chairman, Shri Shekhawat asked the Minister whether steps

were being taken to strike at the root of the problem and check the actual causes which force the farmers to take loan which ultimately results in their death.

On another occasion, when a reply to a Starred Question on starvation deaths was given in the House, Shri Shekhawat was not satisfied. He asked the Prime Minister present in the House, that whereas the foodgrains were being allocated in sufficient quantity to the States by the Central Government and the State Governments were taking the same, then what was the reason for the foodgrains not reaching the poor. Responding to his touching remarks, the then Prime Minister stood up and said that his Government would certainly look into the matter. Again, in March 2006, during the Question Hour, intervening in the debate on 'the disbursement of foodgrains to the people living below poverty line' Shri Shekhawat asked the Government to be serious about providing foodgrains to the poor instead of reiterating the old promises.

On 17 March 2006, in response to a question relating to the 'leprosy patients in the country' the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss gave a reply on which some members sought a number of clarifications regarding the number of leprosy patients in the country and the steps taken by the Government to control the spread of the disease, etc. On his part, the Chairman, Shri Shekhawat while making a suggestion to the Minister said "There is a lot of publicity on television about the measures being taken by the Government to eradicate leprosy. But there is hardly any publicity on television about this disease not being contagious. I believe that the more it is publicized, the more number of patients will visit the Treatment Centres and people will also come forward and cooperate in the cure of the patients. Therefore, my request to you is to give more publicity to this aspect".

On 16 May 2006, on a question on 'allotment of petrol pumps and LPG dealership to the widows of martyrs of Kargil War' when Shri Laxminarayan Sharma raised the very sensitive and emotional matter that even after 7 years of the Kargil War, the families of those killed in the War had not been provided adequate help and enquired from the Minister as to how many requests were received. As the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Murli Deora began to give details of the scheme and the number of cases recommended by the Director-General of Resettlement, the member persisted and said that

he was asking about the number of requests made. Shri Shekhawat intervened to ask the Minister whether he was in a position to give the number of requests received by the Ministry or not. The Minister had no option but to tell that he could only state about the number of cases recommended by the Director-General of Resettlement.

At this point another member, Shri Manohar Joshi, asked a supplementary as to how many families of employees of Parliament who were killed in the terrorist attack on Parliament House had been given petrol pumps as the aforesaid scheme had been extended to them also. When the Minister could not reply, Shri Shekhawat intervened and said that "this is an important question and hon'ble members of this House desire that help should be given to families of those who sacrificed their lives for Parliament. I understand that you are not ready to reply today. Please tell me when will you be ready with the reply." The Minister then assured that he would give a written reply to the member. The Chairman also assured the member that he would himself see to it and speak to the Minister and find out as to why the allotments were not made.

Thus, the Chairman, Shri Shekhawat by his insightful interventions in the discussions on such sensitive and emotive issues has on many occasions forced the Government to take speedy action.

Ensuring Purposeful Business of the House

Shri Shekhawat believes that Rajya Sabha, as an ideal Parliamentary Institution in a federal set up, will, no doubt, become an apex forum to articulate the democratic concerns of our country and become a role model to be emulated by the State Legislatures, Panchayati Raj Institutions and other local bodies so that the democratic aspirations of our people not only find an effective expression but are also fulfilled. That is the reason why, when the House does not transact any business or is boycotted by the members, Shri Shekhawat feels deeply anguished to preside over the House, for it undermines the very dignity of parliamentary democracy.

Shri Shekhawat makes thorough preparation by intense study of all the issues relating to day's business before going to House during the sessions. He always takes the Leader of the Opposition and leaders of other political parties in confidence on all the prospective controversial

issues and respects their advice and ideas. With advance preparation, mutual trust and thorough knowledge of the parliamentary rules, Shri Shekhawat conducts business of Rajya Sabha with great confidence and comfort.

For this success of Shri Shekhawat, co-operation from all the hon'ble members has been truly immense. Because of his unique style, he has informal and warm relations with almost all the members.

Making Question Hour Effective

The Chairman, Shri Shekhawat, from the very beginning, has been interested in enhancing the effectiveness of the Question Hour. He is so involved in the proceedings that he never fails to intervene during the reply of a Minister to further elucidate the point on an issue of vital public importance.

Shri Shekhawat never hesitates to tell the Ministers about the sanctity and seriousness of the Question Hour, whenever he feels that the concerned Minister's reply is not satisfactory. All these factors reflect such a positive and healthy impact on the transaction of business in the House that the Ministers come to the House well prepared and take each question seriously.

Shri Shekhawat is generally opposed to the idea of suspension of the Question Hour for discussing some other urgent issue. He tries to convince the members to raise the matter after Question Hour or through some other procedural device. On rare occasion, he has allowed the suspension of Question Hour.

Shri Shekhawat has been very alert about following the rules pertaining to asking of questions in order to ensure that this procedural device is effectively used. In this larger perspective, he has taken meaningful steps to enhance the effectiveness of the Question Hour. It was during the Chairmanship of Shri Shekhawat that the House on several occasions witnessed the disposal of all twenty Starred Questions during the Question Hour. His determination to cover as many questions as possible is apparent from the proceedings of 5 December 2003, when soon after the Question Hour began the question on 'drought in Southern States' put by Dr. Dasari Narayana Rao and Shri K. B. Krishna Murthy was taken up, he observed:

It is my request to the members that if today all the twenty Starred Questions listed for oral answers may be taken up then this tradition will keep on developing.

With a view to giving maximum number of members the opportunity to question the Government of the day on various aspects of its functioning, Shri Shekhawat observed that not more than two members may be allowed to ask supplementaries on a Starred Question, apart from the members against whose name the question is listed so that maximum number of questions could be covered for oral answers. He urged the members for putting brief and objective questions.

Shri Shekhawat's efforts to make the Question Hour effective never rested with that. He has constantly encouraged the members to be present in the House during the Question Hour. His emphasis on maintaining the sanctity of the Question Hour moved a step ahead when he urged the members who sought reply to remain in the House during the Question Hour. He encouraged the women members as also the backbenchers to put supplementaries to questions and also to take interest in the proceedings of the House.

Even on 18 August 2006, while thanking the members for felicitating him on completion of four years as Chairman, Rajya Sabha Shri Shekhawat expressed disappointment that the Question Hour was dispensed with because of him.

Upholding Probity and Ethics in Public Life

Shri Shekhawat has always upheld the values of ethics in public life. It was due to his active interest and avowed commitment that the Members of Rajya Sabha (Declaration of Assets and Liabilities) Rules were framed in 2004 in pursuance of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Shri Shekhawat is in favour of making the study tours of the Committees more focused and dignified and it is because of his initiative that new Guidelines are being implemented so as to avoid adverse criticism from press and public.

In 2005, private channels telecast two programmes titled "Operation Duryodhan" and "Operation Chakravyuh" which damaged the dignity and prestige of Parliament. The Chairman, Shri Shekhawat taking serious

view immediately took a decision to refer these episodes to the Committee on Ethics, Rajya Sabha for a prompt consideration.

In the episode titled "Operation Duryodhan" some members were shown accepting money for asking questions in Parliament. Deeply anguished by the deteriorating ethical standards in public life, Shri Shekhawat insightfully observed in the House:

The Parliament is the pillar of dignity for the democracy. The dignity of democracy can remain safe and dignified only if the dignity of Parliament itself remains intact. The dignity and prestige of our Parliament have suffered a blow by incidents being shown on TV channel. The House will have to contemplate seriously on how to maintain the integrity and credibility of the Parliament and in case its dignity is harmed in any manner, how to protect it effectively.

The Committee presented its final report to Parliament which was adopted on 23 December 2005, by the House.

In case of 'Operation Chakravyuh', the Committee presented its report to the House on 24 February 2006. The House, on 21 March 2006, in line with the earlier decision, unanimously adopted the recommendations of the Committee to expel a member from the membership of the House and to refer the complaint of another member to the Committee of Privileges for further examination and report.

Thus under the guidance of Shri Shekhawat who has always been concerned about the ethical and moral standards in public life, the House collectively resolved for upholding the dignity and highest values of Parliament and maintain the integrity and credibility of Parliament.

Observations and rulings are given by the Chairman after careful consideration of any matter without any favour or bias. His ruling on the issue of leakage of Pathak Committee Report to the media exhibited his ability to assess and assuage the mood of the members on both sides and give a balanced ruling.

On 10 August 2006, the Chairman rejected Shri Natwar Singh's Privilege Motion against Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh and ruled that though the leakage of some contents of the Report was unfortunate, it however, did not involve any question of breach of privilege. Recounting the sequence of events and giving his ruling regarding the issue the Chairman stated:

It is sad as well as unfortunate that some contents of the report came to be known to the media that very day. It would have been appropriate and desirable that when Parliament was in session, no part of the report should have become public before it was presented to Parliament. This is definitely a serious matter which needs to be looked into and investigated. However, this matter, though very unfortunate and deplorable, does not involve the question of any breach of privilege of the House. Past precedents in similar cases also lead me to reach the decision that this matter does not constitute any breach of privilege of the House. I, accordingly, hold that the said notice is not admissible.

Advocating and Initiating Reforms in the System

Shri Shekhawat is a reformist to the core. To him, one of the most frightening challenges confronting the nation is the politics of elections, rather the politics of frequent elections. To usher in political stability, to ensure good public governance, to lessen the burden on State exchequer and to bring about some fundamental reforms in our electoral system, Shri Shekhawat is in favour of simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. His views on this subject have been widely appreciated by the people. In a poll conducted by India Today on the subject, respondents as high as 69 per cent have supported his view to simultaneous elections.

Shri Shekhawat is a man of action for reforms. He is always keen to take follow up action on any well-considered proposal. When he perused some recommendations made by the National Commission to Review the Working of Constitution pertaining to Parliament, he immediately got a committee set up comprising Secretaries-General, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and Secretary, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs to formulate specific proposal for follow up action on the recommendations made by the Commission. The report of the committee has been recently submitted to the Presiding Officers.

For Shri Shekhawat, reform in the criminal justice system has gained urgency because of the low conviction rate in criminal cases and the steady decline in people's faith in the system. Therefore, he got a Short Duration Discussion held in Rajya Sabha on the Report of the V.S. Malimath Committee on Reforms of Criminal Justice System and thus provided an opportunity to the members to express their concerns

and suggestions on varied aspects of criminal jurisprudence. The Malimath Committee which submitted its report in the year 2000 made far reaching recommendations on which a well informed debate in the House was long over due.

Enjoying the Full Confidence of the House

Shri Shekhawat enjoys full confidence of the House. All the members look upon him with respect as a father figure and have full faith in his impartiality and fair play. The then Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad, while making his valedictory remarks on the conclusion of the 201st Session of Rajya Sabha on 10 June 2004, praised Shri Shekhawat for his dynamic chairmanship. He said, "Hon'ble Chairman, I am grateful to you for providing us the leadership in the House in the last few years...Whether we were in Opposition or in this Government, all have trust and confidence in you". On the occasion of the felicitation of the newly elected Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, while appreciating Shri Shekhawat's role as Chairman said, "You have been steering the proceedings of this House with great wisdom, patience and equanimity". These remarks of the Prime Minister echoed the same sentiment of respect and confidence in Shri Shekhawat's stewardship which he had expressed earlier as the Leader of the Opposition while felicitating him on becoming Chairman. Paying his gratitude to Shri Shekhawat, Shri K. Rahman Khan on being elected as the Deputy Chairman said, "It is my good fortune to work under your guidance. I will be benefited by your long and rich parliamentary experience". His philosophy of reconciliation and consensus building has earned him friends across political spectrum. Ability to take along diverse segments has been his greatest strength, which often helps him resolve delicate issues in and outside the House.

Enriching his Work with Wisdom and Experience

Shri Shekhawat performs a varied role in his capacity as Chancellor of various Central universities, President of several bodies and Chairman of the Jury Committees for a number of national and international awards. Being an outstanding public personality having wide knowledge, long experience and insight into various facets of governance, Shri Shekhawat brings certain depth and understanding to his work.

Voicing the Concern of the Nation

Shri Shekhawat, during the last three years, visited the length and breadth of the country and attended to hundreds of public functions. In all his public speeches, he highlighted the trials and tribulations of the poor and the deprived, the concerns of the rural India, the strength of India's democracy, the worth of India's human resources, the buoyancy of India's economy, the vibrancy of our ancient culture, the sustainability of our environment and so on. The national concerns such as illiteracy, poverty, poor health, population growth, the menace of corruption etc. always engaged his undivided attention.

To Shri Shekhawat, the biggest problem of the country is our bulging population. It is his considered view that unless there is a vigorous movement to control population, the fruits of development would never be real. He urges all to lend whole-hearted support to promote the cause of population stabilization.

Shri Shekhawat feels that wide spread corruption is one of the biggest challenges to our democracy. Corruption is also adversely impacting on the integrity and efficiency of public governance. To him, hassle-free and corruption-free governance can go a long way in improving the quality and efficiency of public delivery system for the benefit of common man.

Protection of environment for sustainable development is one of Shri Shekhawat's key concerns. He feels that mass awareness is imperative to check forest degradation and over-exploitation of natural resources. He advocates universal environmental literacy so as to make the society ecology sensitive.

Shri Shekhawat is concerned about the welfare of the disabled who constitute nearly 2.2 per cent of country's total population, i.e. around 22 million. He motivates people and the civil society institutions to mobilise resources and facilities to meet the specific needs of education, training and skill formation of the disabled so as to enhance their livelihood opportunities. It is his ardent belief that Indian society and the people with a glorious tradition of care and compassion will not be found wanting in helping the disabled to overcome their disability.

The problem of HIV/AIDS and its impact on the youth of the country has been quite disturbing to Shri Shekhawat. He, therefore,

enthusiastically participated in the Youth Parliament on HIV/AIDS to spread awareness about the disease so as to effectively combat it.

Popularising Antyodaya Approach Towards Poverty Alleviation

To Shri Shekhawat will go the lasting credit of initiating and popularising the innovative poverty alleviation programme of 'Antyodaya' in the 70's when he was the Chief Minister of Rajasthan.

Of late, in his public speeches, Shri Shekhawat is emphasising on the fact that the poorest of the poor constitute the 'fifth pillar' of our democracy and it is they who have the first charge on the fruits of development and the resources as well. It has been his mission to serve the poor and deprived and to help them in enjoying their fundamental right to live, not simply to live but to live with dignity.

He believes that the upliftment of the poorest of the poor is the bounden duty of the State and the success of democracy is to be gauged by the extent of welfare it promotes for these people. The ultimate power to make or unmake a Government lies with the common man. The countries of the world have been witnessing the upsurge of the common people in different periods of their history. *Vox Populi* has always been supreme in a democracy.

A man who has deeply felt the pangs of poverty and is fully committed to ameliorate the conditions of the poorest of the poor can nurture such a noble vision with deep sensitivity to the cause of the poor.

Man of Compassion and Humanism

Shri Shekhawat is a man of deep humanism. His concern for the sufferings of the people is so overwhelming that he always tries to help them in his own modest way. Shri Shekhawat had personally contributed Rs. 1 lakh to the widow of a person who died after donating his organs. This news got prominent coverage in the newspapers. Late Shri Sunil Dutt, the former Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports after reading this news item, wrote a letter to Shri Shekhawat enclosing a check of Rs. 25,000/- to be given to the widow. In the letter, Shri Dutt wrote: "It was one of the finest humane gestures because in today's world of materialism very few people are there like you who feel for the poor. I sincerely salute you for that." It was the last letter of Shri Dutt's life.

When the nation was grappling to come to terms with the unprecedented havoc caused by the Tsunami, Shri Shekhawat lost no time to mobilise funds by making an emotional appeal to the Members of Rajya Sabha to contribute generously from their MPLADS funds to meet the enormity of challenges in the aftermath of the calamity. He also took personal interest in the formulation of plans and strategy to utilise the mobilised resources for enduring welfare of the grief stricken people.

Good Sense of Humour

Shri Shekhawat has a remarkable trait of giving a humorous tinge to a serious issue. On a number of occasions, he has diffused the tension prevailing in the House by making apt use of his famous wit.

Once when a question on the 'communicable disease control programmes in Assam' was asked during the Question Hour and the Minister of Health and Family Welfare, in his reply, referred to the National TB Control Programme and the National Leprosy Eradication Programme, some members raised objections. They opposed the view that leprosy is not a communicable disease. Shri Shekhawat then pacified the members with his witty remark that although leprosy is not a communicable disease but in the House, asking questions becomes a communicable disease. Thus, he was able to calm the members while pointing out that at times questions are put just to irritate others and thereby the precious time of the House is lost.

On an occasion when the House was having a debate on 'the Interim Budget, Shri Lajpat Rai rose to participate, thanked the Chair for giving him a chance to speak. Shri Shekhawat said that he would also thank the member if he finished his speech quickly. The member gave the plea that he was about to retire and it was the last session of his tenure. On being told of such a reason, Shri Shekhawat at once remarked with jest that the member could then go on speaking till his retirement.

Recently, on 18 August 2006, while felicitating Shri Shekhawat on completion of four years as Chairman, Shri Dara Singh a nominated member, revealed in the House that his wife feels that hon'ble Chairman's duty is worse than that of a teacher as he has to control the House with great difficulty when there is pandemonium. The Chairman immediately quipped saying that, he believes that having witnessed the

proceedings of the House his wife must have learnt to keep him under control.

Recognitions

Shri Shekhawat is an epitome of probity and morality in his personal as well as public life. As a mark of recognition of his exemplary life, the renowned Tulsi Foundation conferred upon him the prestigious *Anuvrata Award* which carried a cash prize of rupees one lakh and twenty thousand. True to his high principles, he donated the entire prize money to some dedicated philanthropic organisation for the welfare of the disabled.

Highly impressed by his life long commitment to the cause of the poor and downtrodden, his key role in building a modern Rajasthan and his qualities of leadership and perseverance in evolving a consensus on key socio-economic and political issues in Rajya Sabha, a large number of universities of the country have been making persistent requests to honour him by conferring honorary degrees. He has very reluctantly accepted Degrees of Doctor of Literature from Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidya Peeth, Varanasi, Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur and Honorary Fellowship from the Asiatic Society of Mumbai during the last four years.

During his visit to Armenia in 2005, Shri Shekhawat was also honoured with the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Medicine with a Gold Medal by the Yerevan State Medical University.

Enhancing India's Position at International Level

Goodwill visits to friendly countries to strengthen the country's bilateral relations constitute one of the important duties of the Vice-President. Shri Shekhawat has visited Seychelles, Myanmar, South Africa, Vatican City, Romania, Belarus and Armenia during the last four years in his capacity as Vice-President of India. Each of his visits proved to be a landmark in terms of further strengthening our mutual cooperation with these countries.

Shri Shekhawat's visit to Seychelles reaffirmed our commitment to the ideals of democracy and rule of law. He also addressed the Special Session of the National Assembly of Seychelles.

His visit to Myanmar, contributed immensely in the strengthening of the wide ranging bilateral ties between the two countries.

Shri Shekhawat impressed upon the leadership of Myanmar the need to further develop the areas of mutual cooperation.

The Government and people of South Africa were deeply moved and impressed by Shri Shekhawat's visit to South Africa to join the celebrations of South Africa's Tenth Anniversary of Freedom and the swearing in of the President Mbeki at a time when the process of General Elections was underway. Shri Shekhawat's visit significantly contributed towards transforming our historic ties with South Africa to a strategic partnership.

His visit to Vatican City was a solemn pilgrimage to pay respectful homage on behalf of the people and Government of India to His Holiness Pope John Paul II.

The Vice-President, Shri Shekhawat headed an official Indian delegation on a goodwill mission to Romania, Belarus and Armenia between October 1 and 8, 2005. It was the first high profile visit by an Indian dignitary to these nations since the collapse of the Socialist Bloc and the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

While in Armenia, Shri Shekhawat not only took up the issues of bilateral cooperation but also such issues affecting the comity of nations like the spectre of terrorism which threatens to engulf almost all the nations of the world. He called upon them to have faith in democratic ideals and to make concerted efforts to root out terrorism. He also stressed on the vast opportunities for cooperation in medical and health sector between India and Armenia.

He also handed over a symbolic key to 60 Indian tractors which were donated to Armenia and while handing it over, the Vice-President repeatedly emphasized the need to ensure that their ownership is not collective. "Unless farmers have a sense of belonging to their land and farm implements, they will never look after them. These tractors will not be properly maintained and the purpose of donating them would be lost", he told the Armenian Agriculture Minister who agreed with his view.

In all these visits, Shri Shekhawat represented the country in the international fora with a sharp focus on the shared agenda of action and conducted himself with dignity and stature to enhance the image of our country in the estimation of the world community.

In his capacity as the Vice-President, Shri Shekhawat has also met Heads of States and other dignitaries of a number of countries and advocated India's national interests with wisdom and sagacity. When media reports highlighted the visiting Russian President, Mr. Putin's views on India's candidature in United Nations' Security Council without the Veto power, Shri Shekhawat categorically expressed that the views of the President had not sent right signal in strengthening the time-tested friendship between India and Russia. Mr. Putin quickly rebutted the media reports as 'misinterpretation' and reiterated Russia's support to India's candidature as permanent member in the Security Council with Veto power. Shri Shekhawat's interactions with foreign delegates are always warm and cordial, reflecting his innate personality and friendly nature.

Promoting the Progressive Use of Hindi

Shri Shekhawat took an important step for the progressive use of Hindi in official work in the Secretariat when he constituted a *Hindi Salahkar Samiti* which includes officials and Members of Parliament for the Rajya Sabha Secretariat on 2 July 2005. Hon'ble Chairman is the Chairman of the *Samiti*. Similarly, an Official Language Implementation Committee for the Rajya Sabha Secretariat has been constituted by Shri Shekhawat in July 2005, to review the implementation of the orders relating to the use of Hindi in the Secretariat, the difficulties encountered in its implementation and to give suggestions.

He has set an example before others by using Hindi during his interactions with the leaders at the international level. During his visit to Romania, Belarus and Armenia he spoke to the leaders in Hindi which was translated by interpreters. Such gesture by the Vice-President, Shri Shekhawat has certainly enhanced the national pride.

He is deeply concerned about the neglect of Hindi and other Indian languages. During the struggle for our independence, the newspapers of Hindi and regional languages have played a crucial role in generating awareness amongst the common masses. He feels that the national problems can be solved by progressive use of the national language. He has often emphasized that we should make use of Hindi more and more in our conversations and writings. The regional languages will also grow

stronger as Hindi gains in strength. He suggested that there should be a comprehensive research to find out how Hindi could survive for centuries despite foreign invasions and how it can be protected from the present onslaught.

A Visionary

Shri Shekhawat, during his entire public life of over half a century, has always championed the cause of the poor and the downtrodden. He believes that if our country is to occupy a prominent place in the comity of nations, we should eliminate poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease. He is generating public opinion on all these issues of national concern. In all his public speeches, he stresses the need for imparting urgency to address these in our process of governance. His efforts to build political consensus to address the problems confronting the common people have placed him in a unique position where the people as well as the Executive and the Legislature look forward to him for guidance and inspiration.