

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Monday, July 18, 2022/ Ashadha 27, 1944 (Saka)

OBITUARY REFERENCES

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I refer with profound sorrow to the passing away of Shri Kishore Kumar Mohanty, Shri Robert Kharshiing and Shri K. K. Veerappan, former Members of this House and Pandit Shivkumar Sharma, a legendary Hindustani classical musician and Santoor player.

Shri Kishore Kumar Mohanty passed away on the 30th of December, 2021, at the age of 63 years.

Shri Kishore Kumar Mohanty was born in Jharsuguda District of Odisha in April, 1958.

An advocate by profession, Shri Mohanty worked assiduously for the upliftment of poor and downtrodden sections of society and took a keen interest in the developmental work in his area. He served as the Municipal Councillor and also as the Chairman of Jharsuguda Municipal Council in 1984 and 1992 respectively.

Shri Mohanty started his legislative career as a Member of the Odisha Legislative Assembly in the year 1990 and was serving for the fourth term in that Assembly at the time of his sad demise. He also

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served as the Speaker of the Odisha Legislative Assembly from 2008 to 2009. Shri Kishore Kumar Mohanty represented the State of Odisha in this House from August, 2009 to April, 2012.

In the passing away of Shri Kishore Kumar Mohanty, the country has lost a dedicated social worker and an able parliamentarian.

Shri Robert Kharshiing passed away on the 7th of April, 2022, at the age of 63 years.

Born in January, 1959, at Shillong in Meghalaya, Shri Kharshiing was educated at St. Anthony's College and the North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong.

A social worker, he was actively involved in politics right from his student days. He served as President of the Khasi Students' Union and as General Secretary of the Meghalaya Students Union from 1981 to 1983. He also served as a Member of the Court of the North Eastern Hill University. Shri Kharshiing started his legislative career as a Member of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly in the year 1990 and served that Assembly till 1993. He also served as the Deputy Chairman of the Meghalaya State Planning Board. Shri Robert Kharshiing represented the State of Meghalaya in this House, from April, 2002 to April, 2008.

In the passing away of Shri Robert Kharshiing, the country has lost a dedicated social worker and an able parliamentarian.

Shri K. K. Veerappan passed away on the 15th of June, 2022, at the age of 76 years.

Born in August, 1945, at Kottanampalayam in Tamil Nadu, Shri K. K. Veerappan was educated at the Kandasamy Kander's College, Velur and the Law College, Chennai.

An advocate by profession, Shri Veerappan, imbibing the principles of Self Respect Movement, worked assiduously for the upliftment of poor and downtrodden sections of society and eradication of untouchability. He was also actively involved for

promotion and development of Tamil Language. Shri K. K. Veerappan represented the State of Tamil Nadu in this House from April, 1990 to April, 1996.

In the passing away of Shri K. K. Veerappan, the country has lost a dedicated social worker and an able parliamentarian.

Pandit Shivkumar Sharma passed away on the 10th of May, 2022, at the age of 84 years.

Born in January, 1938 in Jammu, Pandit Shivkumar Sharma was first initiated into music by his father, Pandit Uma Dutt Sharma, at a tender age of five training in vocals and playing Tabla. However, his real charm and charisma lay in playing Santoor, the training for which also started under the mentorship of his father at the age of 13.

A pioneer in the realm of classical music, Pandit Shivkumar Sharma will profoundly be known for introducing Santoor to the Hindustani Classical Music. Dispelling the skepticism regarding the suitability of Santoor for classical music, Panditji not only established the instrument in the classical pantheon with aplomb but also displayed a remarkable ability to seamlessly blend traditional with contemporary and classical with popular music. He also delivered many mesmerizing performances in collaboration with Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, a flautist. The duo came to be popularly known as 'Shiv-Hari' duo, and have composed music for several movies.

For Pandit Shivkumar Sharma, music was not just a performance but was akin to a meditative journey. It was indeed this passion of his that enabled him to very skilfully blend the tunes of Santoor with the long-established symphony of Hindustani Classical music. Panditji, like a true maestro, took a keen interest in encouraging aspiring artists and was a fountain of inspiration to them.

Pandit Shivkumar Sharma was the recipient of several prestigious awards, notable being Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 1986, Padma Shri in 1991 and Padma Bhushan in 2001.

In the passing away of Pandit Shivkumar Sharma, the country has lost an outstanding Hindustani classical musician and a pioneer

who established new traditions in the realm of Hindustani classical music. His passing away has left an irreplaceable void in the Indian cultural ethos.

Hon. Members, I also refer with profound sorrow to the passing away of **His Excellency Shri Shinzo Abe**, former Prime Minister of Japan; His Highness **Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan**, President of the United Arab Emirates and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, and His Excellency **Shri Mwai Kibaki**, Third President of Kenya.

His Excellency Shri Shinzo Abe passed away on the 8th of July, 2022. Shri Shinzo Abe, a Member of the House of Representatives of Japan, was a great champion of India-Japan relations and shared a special bond with our hon. Prime Minister. Under Shri Abe's guidance, India-Japan relations underwent an unprecedented transformation into a comprehensive strategic partnership covering a wide range of areas such as Industrial Competitiveness, Investment Promotion, Skill Development, Digital Partnership, Defence Cooperation, Civil Nuclear Cooperation, Space and Cybersecurity. For his exceptional service in the field of Public Affairs, Shri Abe was conferred, by our Government here in India, the Padma Vibhushan award in the year 2021.

This House also recalls the famous "Confluence of Two Seas" speech delivered in our Parliament during his visit to India in August, 2007 as Prime Minister. In that speech he stated that India-Japan relationship is blessed with the largest potential for development of bilateral relationship anywhere in the world.

Shri Abe had also recently assumed the leadership of Japan India Association (JIA) and Japan India Parliamentary Friendship League (JIPFL) which reflected his deep commitment to further bolstering the India-Japan partnership.

Shri Abe served as Prime Minister of Japan between 2006 to 2007 and 2012 to 2020 and was the longest-serving Prime Minister of Japan. In his long political career, he served in various key positions in the Japanese Government, including as Chief Cabinet Secretary. He

shall continue to be widely recognized by the international community for his efforts towards advancing international cooperation for a rules-based regional and global order.

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan passed away on the 13th of May, 2022. Sheikh Khalifa will be remembered and admired for his contribution towards the development of the UAE and strengthening of India-UAE bilateral relations under his leadership. He took great care of the large Indian community in UAE, who held him in high esteem.

His Excellency, Shri Mwai Kibaki passed away on the 21st of April, 2022. Shri Kibaki served as the President of Kenya, from 2002 to 2013. He will always be remembered as a great leader who paid close and friendly attention to India-Kenya relations which was also manifested in his active participation and Kenya's representation at the India-Africa Forum Summits of 2008 and 2011.

We deeply mourn the passing away of **Shri Kishore Kumar Mohanty, Shri Robert Kharshiing, Shri K. K. Veerappan and Pandit Shivkumar Sharma**. The House also joins the bereaved families, the Government and people of Japan, UAE and Kenya in mourning the passing away of His Excellency Shri Shinzo Abe, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan and His Excellency Shri Mwai Kibaki.

(One Minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.)

REFERENCES BY THE CHAIR

(i) Reference to the Victims of Terrorist Attack at St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Nigeria

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, on 5th June, 2022, a group of five terrorists attacked the St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Ondo State of Nigeria while worshippers were celebrating

Pentecost. The indiscriminate shooting and explosions reportedly killed 40 persons and left many injured.

(ii) Reference to the Victims of Terrorist Attack at Gurdwara Dashmesh Pita Sahib Sri Gobind Singh Sahib Ji in Afghanistan

MR. CHAIRMAN: In another tragic incident, terrorists attacked Gurdwara Dashmesh Pita Sahib Sri Gobind Singh Sahib Ji in Kabul, Afghanistan on the 18th of June, 2022, resulting in loss of two innocent lives.

(iii) Reference to Massive Earthquake in North-East Afghanistan

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, as you might also be aware that on the 22nd of June, 2022, a massive earthquake struck north-east Afghanistan triggering a landslide which resulted in huge loss of lives and damage to property. In the incident, 1,100 persons reportedly lost their lives, 2000 were injured and almost 10,000 have been rendered homeless. The earthquake has been termed as the deadliest earthquake in Afghanistan since 1998. Given our special relationship with Afghan people, as an immediate measure, Government of India has dispatched 27 tonnes of relief assistance for distribution in the earthquake affected region.

The loss of precious lives and extensive damage to property in these tragic incidents are indeed painful and unfortunate. This House strongly condemns the act of terrorism committed by the terrorists in Nigeria and Afghanistan and expresses its heartfelt condolences as well as deep sympathy and sorrow on the losses suffered by the people of these countries and reiterate India's stand of solidarity with them.

(One Minute's silence was observed as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.)

ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to inform Members that I have received a communication from the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs informing me that Shri Piyush Goyal, the Minister of Commerce and Industry; Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles has been appointed as the Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha by the hon. Prime Minister.

OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Harivanshji; the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Pralhadji; the Leader of the House, Shri Piyush Goyalji; hon. Leader of the Opposition, Shri Mallikarjun Khargeji, respected Ministers and hon. Members of the House, I extend a warm welcome to all of you to this Monsoon Session of the House with eighteen sittings beginning today. We are all coming together after over three months since the Budget Session that concluded on 7th April this year. I have always cherished such coming together in our collective quest for doing our bit for making India of the dreams and aspirations of 140 crore people. Such coming together this time has a particular significance as it is the last such privilege for me.

Since my assumption of office five years ago, we have so far gathered together for 13 full Sessions and this is the 14th such Session. This journey of five years has been a quite learning experience for me. Dealing with about 245 Members of this august House, from over 30 political parties, with different minds, inclinations and political ideologies, is quite revealing and even a testing experience. I tried to do the best of my ability to draw the best

out of all of you and, as a collective effort, since the underlying unifying force was the interest of the nation, fulfilling the aspirations of the people and also the federal interest of the States, that this Council of States was required to sub-serve. The credit for the positives, if any, would go to all of you. And, if my best efforts, in spite of that, are short of expectations, I would not hesitate to take the responsibility for the same.

I would like to give you all a detailed factual account of perspective of the functioning of this august House during the last five years till 10th of next month – my last day in office. I would, however, like to mention one statistics today for all of you to think over. During the last 13 Sessions, 141 of the 248 scheduled full sittings, accounting 57 per cent of the totally sittings, were disrupted partly or fully. All of you would agree that this could have been better, given our mission for the nation. And, we must always try to fulfil the mission with passion for the sake of the nation. Better late than never. It is time to be different and better. I would like to remind all of you that this is the last Session in the 75th year of our hard fought Independence and is being celebrated across the country. As in the case of all 13 Sessions that I presided over, I would like to fervently appeal to all of you to give out your best performance to make this Session a memorable one, particularly in the context of its significance. I expect this Session to set the right tone for functioning of this august House for the next 25 years of Amrit Kaal – a critical period to take India to entirely new plain by the time our nation rejoices the centenary of its Independence. I would expect all of you to be propelled by the spirit of New India 100, so that our nation makes up for the missed time and opportunities. This spirit shall also inspire other stakeholders, particularly so as our nation is set to become the most populous in the world; or, the next most populous in the world.

There is some issue about overtaking China. This is not the right thing. It was something as projected by the United Nations Population Division last week. It was mentioned there that our population will increase by about twenty crores, when independent India turns 100 years. The challenges and opportunities that come with it, need to be addressed with a long-term vision and imagination. Parliament functions throughout the year through the Committees. During the inter-session period since the last Budget session, seven of the eight Department Related Standing Committees of Rajya Sabha have done satisfactory work. I am happy to share that the average duration of sittings of the Department-Related Parliamentary Committees have been over two hours and average attendance have been over 46 per cent. I am happy to note the improving performance of these Committees. The Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports had the highest average of 3 hours and 22 minutes for five of its meetings. The Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice had an average of two hours and fifteen minutes. The Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture, besides Committees on Education, Science and Technology have also reported good average attendance. While the senior re-elected Members provide continuity, the new Members bring in perspective and dynamism. We also welcome four Nominated Members -- Shrimati Pilavullakandy Thekkeyaparambil Usha, Shri Ilaiyaraaja, Shri V. Vijayendra Prasad and Shri Veerendra Heggade. They summarize the steady pursuit of breaking the barriers. We invite the newly-nominated Members to this House. All of them are eminent in their respective fields. These are also the qualities that are expected to mark the functioning of this August House. All sections should collectively endeavour. It is an immense pride for all of us to know that our country has created history by reaching the milestones of administering 200 crore COVID-19 vaccines across the country. This amounts to 97 per cent of the first dose coverage and 90

per cent of the adult population, receiving both the doses. Two hundred crore COVID-19 vaccinations across the country is a remarkable achievement. The House places on record its appreciation to all the stakeholders, including the vaccine-makers, producers, the Central and the State Governments, the frontline workers, and above all, the people. As a continuing measure, this Session will also be held in COVID protocol. Though this is being followed since 250th Session, yet I urge all of you to enable a safe and productive Monsoon Session of this August House. Join the campaign for vaccination in the interest of the country. This is an important subject. The campaign for precaution dose of Covid-19 has started. All of you should help this.

P. C. MODY,

Secretary-General.

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