

## RAJYA SABHA

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### \*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

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(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

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Wednesday, December 7, 2022/ Agrahayana 16, 1944 (Saka)

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### FELICITATIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN

**THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI NARENDRA MODI):** First of all, I would like to express my heartiest congratulations to the Hon'ble Chairman on behalf of this House and the whole country. Coming from a humble family, the position you have reached today despite facing all the ups and downs of life, is an inspiration in itself for a large number of people of the country. You are gracing this august Chair in the Upper House. The happiness of people of the country knows no bounds today on seeing the achievements of Kithana's son. It is a happy coincidence that we are also celebrating the Armed Forces Flag Day today. You come from Jhunjhunu which is the land of bravehearts. There will hardly be any family from Jhunjhunu which has not played a leading role in the service of the country. Moreover, you have also been a student of Sainik School. I see that as a farmer's son and a student of a military school, you embody the spirit of both a farmer and a soldier. Under your Chairmanship, I convey my best wishes to my fellow countrymen on this occasion of the Armed Forces Flag Day. On

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\*This Synopsis is not an authoritative record of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.

behalf of all the respected Members of this House, I salute the Armed Forces of the Country.

Today, the Upper House of Parliament welcomes you at a time when the country is witnessing two momentous occasions. Just a few days back, the world has entrusted India with the responsibility of hosting the G-20 group. Also, this time is the beginning of Amrit Kaal. This Amrit Kaal will not only be the period for building a new developed India, but India will also play a very important role in deciding the future course of the world during this period. Our democracy, our parliament and our parliamentary system will also play a very significant role in this journey of India. I am glad that the Upper House has got an able and effective leadership like you in this crucial period. Under your guidance, all our Members will perform their duties efficiently. This House will become an effective forum to fulfil the resolutions of the country. Today you are formally taking over a new responsibility as the Head of the Upper House of the Parliament. The primary responsibility of the Upper House is to address the concerns and serve the interests of the persons who are on the lowest rung of society. During this period, the country is realising its duty and fulfilling it with full sense of responsibility. Today, for the first time, the country's glorious tribal heritage is guiding us as the Hon'ble President Mrs. Draupadi Murmu. Even before this, Shri Ramnath Kovind ji had reached the highest position of the country coming from a deprived society and now as a son of a farmer, you are also representing the energy of crores of countrymen, villages, poor people and the farmers. Your life is proof of the fact that success is achieved not only through means, but through dedication. You have also seen the time when you used to walk several kilometers to go to school. What you did for village, the poor people and the farmers is an example for every person living in social life. You have over three decades of experience as a Senior Advocate. I can say with confidence that you will not miss the Court in this House because a number of persons have come to the Rajya Sabha, who used to meet you in the Supreme Court. So, that mood will keep reminding you of the atmosphere of Court here. You have also served in various positions as MLA, MP, Union Minister and Governor. The one thing that remained common in all these roles was your dedication towards the development of the country and democratic values. Certainly, your experiences are very important for the country and democracy. Despite being in politics, you have

been working by bringing everyone together and rising above narrow party politics. We have clearly seen everyone's affinity for you even in the election of the Vice President. Winning by getting 75 percent of the votes polled is a landmark achievement in itself. Leading the way is a sine qua non of leadership. This thing becomes more important in the context of Rajya Sabha because this House has the responsibility of furthering the democratic decisions in a more refined manner. So, when this House gets a down-to-earth leadership like you, I believe that it is a privilege for every Member of this House. Rajya Sabha has been an upholder of the country's great democratic traditions and values. We have had many Prime Ministers who at one time or the other served as Members of the Rajya Sabha. The parliamentary journey of many outstanding leaders started from the Rajya Sabha. Therefore, a major responsibility rests upon all of us to uphold and enhance the dignity of this House. I am sure that under your guidance, this House will take forward this legacy and will scale new heights. Serious discussions in the House as well as democratic deliberations will lend more strength to our democracy. Till the last session, our former Vice President and former Chairman used to guide this House and his word-play and improvisations always kept the House in good mood and offered great opportunity to laugh. I am sure that your quick-witted nature will never let his absence be missed and you will continue to give that benefit to the House. With this, on behalf of the entire House, entire country and on my own behalf, I convey my best wishes to you. Thank you.

**SHRI HARIVANSH:** Hon'ble Chairman sir, I express my heartiest congratulations to you on assuming this august office of the Rajya Sabha. On the first day of the winter session, we greet you with great warmth and affection. The people who assume this Chair have had a glorious history. Everyone has an important contribution in the smooth functioning of the House in their own way. Some of these people were from parliamentary background and some came from outside parliamentary life, but you have a vast experience of both public and parliamentary life. You were born in a humble farmer family and did your early schooling in the village itself. You have a long and rich experience of the legal system from the grassroots to the top. Then you served as a member of the Legislative Assembly and the Lok Sabha. You also served in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs in the Central Government. After this you also took over the responsibility of the

Governor. In this way, coming from rural background and having a rich and varied experience in the legal and parliamentary fields, you have reached this stage today. I believe that your long public life coupled with your rich experience will help you in dealing with the challenging role of running this House and the role of a guardian of the Honorable Members very well. You will always get our full cooperation in the functioning of the House. Many congratulations and best wishes to you once again.

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE):** On behalf of my colleagues in the Opposition and on my own behalf, I congratulate you as the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. On August 18, 2022, you assumed the position of the Vice President, the country's second highest constitutional post. Although I have met you personally and congratulated you, but today we have got the opportunity to welcome you as the Chairman of the Upper House. The Prime Minister spoke at length about your work and personality. I do not want to repeat those things again. I must say one thing that your role as guardian of the Upper House is much bigger than the rest. The great personalities of the country have graced this Chair. Six of our Chairmen later also became the President of India. You are the son of the soil, as the Prime Minister said that you are the son of a farmer. But I will call you the son of the soil. From a village in Rajasthan, you rose to the exalted position of the Vice President and Chairman of Rajya Sabha. You understand parliamentary conventions. You were elected to the 9th Lok Sabha and were a Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. You were an MLA in Rajasthan Legislative Assembly and had been the Governor of West Bengal for many years. You were associated with the cooperative movement and many sports organizations. You have interest in reading and writing. You are also having a rich profile. In our country, the Constitution is supreme and it is the bedrock of the democratic system of the Parliament. The Parliament also has the power to amend the constitution. Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha together form the Parliament of India. Within the ambit of the Constitution, both the Houses have the right to decide their own procedures and rules. In our parliamentary system, the Rajya Sabha is called the Chamber of Ideas. It is the permanent House and represents the states. The political picture of the states is visible here. Since the beginning, all the stalwarts of the parliamentary constituencies have been gracing this House. Rajya Sabha has

strengthened the tradition of respect in Indian democracy. Despite being the center of politics of different ideologies, everyone's aim here is to keep deliberating on the progress of the country. We all want that the issues concerning people should be discussed and solutions to their problems are provided. You are aware of the condition, rules, rights and feelings of the Members on both sides of the House. As the Parliament consists of two Houses, in the same way democracy runs on two wheels, i.e. the ruling party and the opposition. Both have their own importance. Only then democracy can thrive and be made successful. Baba Saheb had talked about setting up of independent Secretariats for both the Houses so that the proceedings of the Parliament are made more effective. Due to the efforts of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajya Sabha MPs got the representation of financial committees like Public Accounts Committee and Committee on Public Undertakings. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru never allowed the authority of the Rajya Sabha to be curtailed. The people of the Opposition may be less in numbers, but you know that there is strength in their experience and arguments. But the problem is that numbers are counted instead of ideas. Another problem is also that due to less sittings of the House, adequate time is not available for discussion on public issues. Members are unable to amply talk about the condition of the poor, the downtrodden, SC/ST, farmers and women who are victims of atrocities and the Bills are also passed in a hurry. Earlier, the Parliament used to function for more than 100 days in a year, but now it cannot function even for 60-70 days. I hope that under your leadership the days for discussion will increase. Being an expert in law, you will understand it very well that if the laws are made in haste, then there may be flaws in them. That is why we want that the task of proper examination of the Bills may be entrusted to the Select Committee, Joint Committee as well as the Standing Committee and the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee in the Lower House, as much as possible. I hope you will understand our sentiments. On behalf of the Opposition, I would like to convey that full cooperation will be extended to you from our side.

**SHRI SUKHENDU SEKHAR RAY:** On behalf of All India Trinamool Congress, I extend my warmest felicitations to you for being elected as the hon'ble Vice-President of India and taking over the charge as the hon'ble Chairman of this august House. We have also experienced your

style of functioning when you were the hon"ble Governor of West Bengal. I got an opportunity of exchanging a few letters with you on some legal and constitutional issues only to know that you are truly a constitutional expert and a legal luminary. We expect that your elevation to this position will help to strengthen the conducive atmosphere of this august House. It is also hoped that both the Treasury Benches and the Opposition Benches would get adequate opportunities to deliberate upon various issues and Bills. I have a suggestion that Bills must be discussed at length as generally done in Lok Sabha. The small parties too must get more time to express their viewpoint. With the passage of time, the allotted time for discussion has been going down. As requested by Leader of the Opposition, the Bills must be sent to Standing Committees and Select Committees to make better laws. Every week, we must have one Short Duration Discussion and one Calling Attention Motion as provided under Rule 267. The dissent of opposition should be heard to strengthen democracy.

**SHRI TIRUCHI SHIVA:** On behalf of my party, DMK, I extend my best wishes to you on becoming the 14th Vice President and assuming the post of Chairman of Rajya Sabha. My party leader and the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has already congratulated and assured you to give a constructive support in the functioning of the House. You have dual responsibility. You are the Vice-President and part of the Executive and you are part of the Parliament. All of us know that you are an expert in the Constitution. We expect you to be impartial. The Opposition parties should have equal share as that of the Treasury Benches and the numbers of the Members in the House should not decide the quality of the debate. Whenever I met you, I realised that you have a great concern for the smaller parties in the Parliament, the nominated Members, the independent. We hope that the coming days would be very bright. The Members of the Parliament come here to voice for the concerns of people. When we are not heard or when we are not allowed to speak, we have to resort to democratic processes of coming into the Well.

**SHRI H.D. DEVEGOWDA:** I am the only Member in this House from my party. I also had the bitter experience during the last twenty years. Sadly, a Member is not allowed to speak more than 2-3 minutes in this House. It is very difficult to raise the issues of farmers and rural people. This

should be reconsidered when a subject belongs to rural India or farming community, there should be a discussion on it. I don't want to take unnecessary time of the House. This is the only humble request I wanted to make. Hopefully, the hon'ble Chairman would consider it.

**SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA:** On behalf of Aam Aadmi Party and on behalf of our leader Shri Arvind Kejriwal, I congratulate you very much and wish you all the best for this new innings. Your illustrious life journey has been full of struggles and achievements. After taking birth in a simple farmer family, you served as an MLA, MP, Minister and a Governor. Now you are ready to serve as the Vice President of the country and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. You are a role model for millions of youngsters like us. I have come to this House as a representative of an agrarian state. I believe, since you also come from a farmer's family, then the issues of the farmers of this country will resonate in this House and their rights will be discussed. Within the last few weeks, I have developed a personal relationship with you. I can say on the basis of my experience that many Members of this House will not hesitate to share with you their personal matters apart from parliamentary matters. I hope you will show me more affection as the eldest Member of the Rajya Sabha family and give more time and relaxation to me , being the youngest Member of the family. I wish you all the best for this new innings. You are the most welcome.

**DR. SASMIT PATRA:** We welcome you on behalf of my party Biju Janata Dal and on behalf of our honorable leader, and honorable Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik. We assure that we will follow all parliamentary rules and regulations. We will extend full cooperation to you in running the House smoothly. You are a distinguished legal expert and we will have the opportunity to learn a lot from you. I would like to say few words about your big heart. Just a few days ago, I had come to the House with my family and the House was closed. But, I heard that you are present in the chamber. When I thought of meeting you for 30 seconds, you called me and my entire family inside, offered tea, chatted and you inspired my children too. It shows how your heart, your thinking is not only for the MPs but also for their families. This shows that your faith will take this House forward in the days to come. You have talked about giving importance to the views of the opposition in the meeting of the Business Advisory

Committee. The Rajya Sabha is called the Council of States. So naturally, enough time should be given to raise the issues of the states. But, due to frequent adjournment or disruption, many Special Mentions, Bills and regional issues can not be raised. If the regional parties get more time and opportunities for this, then they will be able to raise their voice in the Council of States in a better way and the Council of States will be empowered. We look forward to moving forward under your guidance. Thank you very much.

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE):** It is a matter of great pride that you have a unique and wide experience and you have reached here through struggles. Like a true *Karmyogi*, you have done a great job. You also successfully discharged your responsibility as the Governor of West Bengal under challenging circumstances. I am in favor of everyone's development under the leadership of Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. I am a follower of Babasaheb Ambedkar. I will continue to do my work on the ideals of Babasaheb Ambedkar and under your guidance. Thank you very much.

**DR. K. KESHAVA RAO:** I strongly support the views expressed by all my colleagues regarding your personality and the challenges that this House is going to offer. Yesterday only, I witnessed that you made the Business Advisory Committee meeting so informative and purposeful. You assured us that the views of opposition would be heard and respected. It is in the right spirit of parliamentary democracy. I would say that the voice of 'Opposition' is the 'voice of the people' and 'the sufferers'. So, everybody must get some chance to speak, and the answer to that was 'time management'. I request that within the rules and the Constitution, there should be a deliberation. Most importantly, the small parties must be heard. They must get sufficient time to raise genuine issues. It is the Council of States. If the State is not represented even in the Council of States, there cannot be a greater perplexing paradox than that. So, we need to see that we do not forget the small parties. We need to look at them from an entirely different angle because they need to be represented in this House. Your wisdom and your personal talk to us on Constitutional ethos yesterday gave us some reassurance. I say it was all understated because you deserve more than that.



**SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA:** I congratulate you, on my behalf, on behalf of my party and on behalf of our National President Lalu Prasad ji. You come from a rural background and belong to a farming family. You have struggled a lot, I am fortunate to have known you for the last 35 years. You were appointed Senior Counsel of the Supreme Court of the country in the youngest age. You have vast expertise in International and National Arbitration. I would like to say that under your leadership all of us will get a chance to speak.

**SHRI ELAMARAM KAREEM:** On behalf of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), I welcome you as Chairman to this House. The principles of the Constitution such as federalism, secularism, democracy and social justice need to be protected. If these principles are undermined, it may affect the unity of our nation. I hope, under your leadership, Upper House would discharge its duties strictly honouring the principles of the Constitution. Legislation is the prime duty of the Parliament. Hence, continuous disruption should be avoided. Process of legislation should be undertaken through a strictly democratic process. Ample opportunity should be given to hon. Members. Important Bills should be referred to Standing Committees or Select Committees I hope you would uphold the concept of the Constitution and the principles of democracy. I also request the House and the Ruling Benches, please cooperate with the hon. Chairman.

**SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR:** I heartily welcome you on behalf of our party, Janata Dal (U), our leader Nitish Kumar ji. I request you to give more time to the smaller parties.

**DR. M. THAMBIDURAI:** On behalf of AIADMK Party and my General Secretary, Edapaddi Palaniswamy, I congratulate you on occupying this highest position. You are an eminent person. You also served as a Minister in the Ninth Lok Sabha. My association with you dates back to that time when I was also the Member of that Lok Sabha. I also remember our great leader of Tamil Nadu, Perarignar Anna and my leader, Madam Amma Jayalalithaa, also served this House. Most of the Members come here not only to pass legislations but also to protect the State's right of federalism. Federalism is the basic concept that this House represents. You very well know the sentiment of the House. The politics may change. Therefore, small numbers cannot be treated as small Members. Therefore, as other Members

have requested, we have to give more time to 'Others'. I have served as the Deputy Speaker and also on the panel of Vice-Chairmen here. What happens here is that a single Member is given the same time as is given to a party with four Members. I request you that we have to consider the numbers. I have a very affectionate relation with you and, on behalf of my Party, we will always be supporting you.

**SHRI PRAFUL PATEL:** Adding my feelings to the feelings of all my colleagues, I congratulate you a lot. It has been my good fortune that since 1989 you and I have had a very close relationship. It is a different matter in a democracy that some have more numbers and some have less. There was a time we also used to sit in the first row and today we sit in the third row. It is not always as peaceful here as it is today. Sometimes there are a lot of disruptions here too. Like sometimes steam is released in a pressure cooker, if you modulate it, you will definitely be very successful in running this House. In the end, on behalf of our leader Sharad Pawar ji, NCP and our members, I would only say that till date we have never crossed the Lakshman Rekha. You will get full cooperation from our side, you will get it in future as well, you will always get it.

**PROF. RAM GOPAL YADAV:** I heartily welcome you on behalf of my Samajwadi Party and on my own behalf. When I met you for the first time, you were very open-minded, it was naturally a great thing. Everyone says in principle that I will cooperate, and tomorrow you will see that many people will not cooperate. The reason is that there are many such issues, which are against the public's aspirations, then the people, whose representatives we are, expect from us, tomorrow they will ask us when laws were being made against our interests, What were you doing in the House? I do not promise you that there will be no disruption in the House. If there is anything against the public interest, there will definitely be disruption.

**SHRIMATI PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI:** I would like to congratulate you on behalf of my party Shiv Sena and the President of the party Mr. Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray. Rajya Sabha is an important platform where we can tell the problems of our states. It is unfortunate that nowadays hearings are less and allegations are more, so looking at you, I would hope that you will take cognizance of this and the opposition will also get a chance to speak. No one here wants to cross the Lakshman Rekha, but

Sir, when the ego takes over the religion, then it becomes the responsibility of the opposition to cross the Lakshman Rekha.

**SHRI BINOY VISWAM:** Sir, I welcome you and I wish you all possible cooperation. But the Government also have to cooperate with us. We are here to raise the voice of the people, and we have been doing that task of ours. We have always held the values of democratic norms. We have a right here, a duty here to raise those tasks in our capacity as much as possible. We wish that all the promises made by the Government for the deprived sections are fulfilled. Sir, you are a kisan-oriented man. Kindly legalize the MSP for kisans. Many a time when our request is denied, we have no other option but to raise the voice. Kindly help us. When we met yesterday for the first time, I thought that you would be a man of great protocol and great high-handedness. But you behaved with me as a man known to me for so many years. I never expected a Vice-President, a Chairman, to come to the car to see off a Member. You did that. Yesterday, for the first time, I talked to my wife about this. Sir. My party and I have great trust on you.

**SHRI RAMJI:** On behalf of our Bahujan Samaj Party President respected sister Kumari Mayawati ji and on my own behalf, I convey many good wishes to you. Today, coming out of a small village, you have become the Vice President of this country and also the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. This struggling life of yours is inspirational for all of us. There are people from the opposition and there are people from the ruling party, for you people from both sides are equal. We don't get time to talk about all those issues. I would request you to give time to the genuine issues of all the MPs in Zero Hour, you have a lot of attachment with the founder of our party, Sh. Kanshi Ram. We have full faith that your blessings will be with all of us.

**SHRI KANAKAMEDALA RAVINDRA KUMAR:** I, on behalf of Telugu Desam Party and on behalf of our leader, Shri Nara Chandrababu Naidu, congratulate you. You are a constitutional expert. You have the position to protect and safeguard the provisions of the Constitution. I am happy to note that you have practised in the Magistrate Court, District Court, High Court and the Supreme Court. If an opportunity is given to a Member, then he can justify his duties as a Member of the Rajya Sabha. Similarly, I hope you will give opportunities to the smaller parties.

**SHRI ABDUL WAHAB:** Wish you success from myself, my party and my party president Syed Sadiq Ali Shihab Thangal. My only request to you is that instead of putting us as tailenders, sandwich us between large parties. It will be justified and we can tell something or make some points. Otherwise, everything is told by everybody.

**SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA:** I, on behalf of my party, Asom Gana Parishad, congratulate you. You have gained vast experience in your social and political life. You started your career as a good lawyer. You served the nation as a Minister. I come from the North-Eastern Region of our country. Our population is less compared to other states of the country. Having the least population, Mizoram has only one Member in Rajya Sabha; likewise, Arunachal Pradesh has one Member in Rajya Sabha and Nagaland has only two Members in Rajya Sabha. They represent whole state. But, here, they are treated as a small party. So I request you to allow all the small parties some more time so that they can at least address the problems faced by their respective States.

**SHRI VAIKO:** Bigger parties are given more time than they deserve. Small parties should be given ample opportunity to protect the cornerstones of the Constitution -- secularism, federalism and social justice. Brutal majority should not bulldoze the basic concepts of the Constitution. You are a legal luminary and handled many portfolios as a Minister, as a parliamentarian and as a jurist. Therefore, we also expect due justice from the Chair.

**SHRI G.K. VASAN:** This House represents unity in diversity of this country. Members represent various states-villages, towns and districts. People of those areas expect us to echo their voices in the House. We are confident that you will guide us in getting the support of the people.

**SHRI JAYANT CHAUDHARY:** Personally, I am feeling very happy that I will have the opportunity to work as a member of this house in your leadership. As you have a rural background, you are fully aware of the pain faced by the farmers. You understand the difference between the claims of the Government and ground reality as well. Therefore, we need your protection that if a member raises any issue relating to poor, Scheduled tribe or villages, then you kindly give that member more time.

**SHRI AYODHYA RAMI REDDY ALLA:** You are a role model in your personal and professional life. Your social and political contributions are praiseworthy. Through you, I want to communicate to this House that as a largest democracy we have a greater responsibility. So, a clear dimension and direction need to come under your leadership through this House the way we are going to make ourselves present to the people of the country and to the world. Also, we have to ensure the manner of the issues being raised in the House and how the House has to give directions to the rest of the country.

**SHRI GULAM ALI:** My heartfelt Congratulations to Mr. Chairman Sir. As a new nominated member, I believe that we will get an opportunity to learn from your vision and the experiences of your Life.

**SHRIMATI P. T. USHA:** In a short span as the Vice President and Chairman of this House, you have earned the confidence of people and people's representatives across the political parties. This is evident from the speeches the members of the treasury and opposition have made. It is a grace for the nation that our hon. President of India belongs to tribal community and a son of a farmer is now Vice-President of India. This is New India where republican spirit is now transformed from symbolism to substantive form. I hope that your role and personality, your intellect and philosophy of life will create a history and strengthen the glory of the House.

**SHRI PRAMOD TIWARI:** Many luminaries have held this post before. There are some people identified by their pos't but there are some, who increase the dignity of that chair by holding the post. I would only wish that when you are remembered, you are remembered for the glorious traditions of the Rajya Sabha. We have seen you struggling on the road as the leader of the opposition more, so I believe that you can understand the worries, troubles and sufferings of the opposition better than anyone else. Abhishek Bhai was just saying that you were a big name in the legal field. But, there is a difference. There you used to pray that the decision should come in favour of the poor, but now you have to take the decisions.

**SHRI JOSE K. MANI:** Sir, I extend my hearty congratulation to you for taking up the post of Chairman of this Upper House. We had an all-party meeting yesterday in which great concern was expressed over the reducing number of working days and working hours in the

Parliament. Every year, there could be election anywhere in the nation and the schedule of the Parliament is shifted as per that election. My only request is that irrespective of the elections being held in any state, the number of days and hours of Parliament should not be reduced. This is actually unjust to the people of the nation.

**\*SHRI SANT BALBIR SINGH:** Our best wishes and prayers for you and special thanks to you, that the papers I wanted in Punjabi, I have got them in Punjabi today. I also wish to especially say that when I first came to the Parliament, parliament could not function for eight days because the opposition had raised one issue of price rise and the time for discussion on that issue was given after eight days. If that time for discussion had been fixed earlier that the discussion would be taken up on this day, then all this shouting and disruption would have stopped much earlier.

**SHRIMATI RANJIT RANJAN:** I congratulate you on becoming the Chairman of Rajya Sabha. Be it Treasury benches or the opposition, the dignity of our house is decreasing day-by-day. Many important issues should be discussed here, we should have the courage and patience of listening to each-other, which is lacking. I have full confidence that you will play an important role in saving the dignity of this house and protect the rights of the opposition of asking questions.

**SHRI RWNGWRA NARZARY:** I would like to welcome and express my deep respects and honour, on behalf of the millions of the people of Assam, particularly of the Bodoland Territorial Region. I do hope that under your able leadership in this august House, we will find ample opportunity to raise important issues of our State as well as our region.

**SHRI VIKRAMJIT SINGH SAHNEY:** You are son of a farmer and I hope this House will be able to bring about significant changes in the plight of the farmers in your leadership. Today you have started Rajya Sabha Bulletin in Punjabi, I congratulate you for that too. We expect every issue will be resolved through dialogue.

**SHRI GHANSHYAM TIWARI:** You belong to a society which was earlier suffering from feudalism. I want to congratulate you for rising

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\* Spoke in Punjabi.

from that society and reaching this place, taking that society forward in many ways and establishing harmony with other societies. One more thing the beauty of the Parliamentary Democracy lies in the harmony among government, opposition and the chair. I wish you work for the enhancement of the beauty of this Parliamentary Democracy.

**DR. V. SIVADASAN:** I believe Mr. Chairman will protect the rights of the Members and provide opportunities for a proper discussion on Bills and other subjects

**SHRIMATI RAJANI ASHOKRAO PATIL:** Everyone has missed one important point, which I want to quote here. We saw at your place that you introduced your wife Dr. Sudesh Dhankhar ji to us with such pride and love, it felt very nice. Often people do not accept the importance of wife's point of view, so I wanted to put forth this aspect of yours.

**DR. ASHOK KUMAR MITTAL:** We are small, so we need to learn more. I hope you will give us more opportunities, more time.

**SHRI AHMAD ASHFAQUE KARIM:** I hope that under your patronage, this House will continue to run with a rational approach and will continue to move forward. I pray to God that you continue to take this House forward with good health and well-being. Thank you very much.

**SHRI IMRAN PRATAPGARHI:** Respected Chairman Sir, you are very welcome, I request you that these walls are not made only of bricks, mortar and wood. The feelings and emotions of crores of people of the country are involved therein. So, the country wants that good things should be discussed here. You are the head of the Rajya Sabha family, so it is your responsibility to patronize us while we raise people' concerns and give us a chance to speak.

**LEADER OF THE HOUSE (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL):** Honourable Chairman sir, it is a matter of great pleasure and pride for all of us today that you are occupying this prestigious position as the Chairman of this Upper House. I would like to congratulate and wish you from the bottom of my heart. Just now a young member tried to remind you about your responsibilities. It is a different matter that it is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that the House runs smoothly. Your responsibility is to take care of

all of us. It is in our hands to run the House smoothly and I believe that the good things that have been expressed today, the way everyone has welcomed you with enthusiasm, this feeling will reflect in our work too in the days to come. Considering the importance of the work of this House, we all will try to cooperate in running the House smoothly. You are a farmer's son, who has become the Vice President of the country today, you are also a source of inspiration for all of us. A new tradition, which is getting established in this country is that political leaders or leaders of the society coming from very humble backgrounds are holding key positions today. Our Excellency President Smt. Droupadi Murmu ji, coming from the forest area of Odisha, from the post of a teacher in a small school, is occupying the first position in the country today. You are a farmer's son, a son of the soil, who studied at a Sainik school in a small village, as reported today, walked 12 kilometers a day . Our Honorable Prime Minister was born in the house of a tea seller and got his education by selling tea at the railway station in his childhood. He devoted his whole life of more than five decades to the service of the country and the society. A belief has arisen in the society that there is a place for everyone in this country. Today, people do not get positions on the basis of their surnames, but according to their ability and work, people get a chance. I think that you are also a symbol of that and in the coming days all of us will continue to get the benefit and guidance of your long experience and style of work. We got a chance to observe your scholarly and reasoned approach during the first meeting of the Business Advisory Committee yesterday . I was very much impressed by your comment that it will not depend on the statistics whether a bill will go to the Standing Committee or the Select Committee. Statistics have their own place but the substance is important. There are many subjects on which consensus can be formed, with consensus the work can move forward at a faster pace. If we have to make this country developed in this Amritkal. I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for one more topic. You respected all of us, this Upper House and the entire democratic process, because a law passed by consensus has an importance. Your two foreign visits have also really made all of us very proud. The country fought the Covid pandemic with great speed, which has been praised in great detail in the Supreme Court also yesterday. You put this thing in front of world leaders about which you told that they all praised it. I understand when great people set the direction, others follow. Under your



leadership, we will work with high ideals, high principles. The work of Rajya Sabha will echo in other Houses and Legislative Assemblies across the country. Today we all are working with the spirit of Antyodaya for the poorest of the poor so that every section of the society is uplifted without any discrimination. Today the whole world is praising India and looking towards India to give a boost to the economies of the world. Under your leadership and guidance, on behalf of every member of the House, I want to assure you that we will definitely fulfill our responsibility and conduct the proceedings of this House smoothly. Many many congratulations and best wishes to you from all of us on your assuming this position.

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Hon. Leader of the House Shri Piyush Goyal; hon. Leader of the Opposition, Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, hon. former Prime Minister, Shri H.D. Devegowda, hon. Ministers, hon. leaders of respective parties and hon. Members, deeply moved and touched by the indulgent words of welcome by the hon. Prime Minister, hon. Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the House and those who followed; grateful to the hon. Members of Parliament for affording opportunity to be in service of Bharat as Vice-President of India and Chairman of this august House; looking forward to contributing to growth trajectory of the largest vibrant democracy in the world and vindicate its trust and confidence. Hon. Members, availing this historic opportunity to share some concerns with the distinguished Members of this august House, the terms 'Upper House' and 'House of Elders', though not part of the official glossary, amply reflect uniquely significant importance of this institution. Nation justifiably expects the House of Elders to take decisive, directional lead in reaffirming and enhancing the core values of the Republic and setting up the traditions of Parliamentary democracy exemplifying the highest deliberative, emulative standards. Today, as we are in Amrit Kaal, we cherish one of the world's finest Constitutions as our own. The Members of the Constituent Assembly were enormously talented with impeccable credentials and immense experience. The Constituent Assembly, given the scenario then, was as representative as was practicable. Hon. Members, with each election, there has been progressively authentic enhancement in the representation gradient. Presently, the Parliament reflects with authenticity the mandate and aspirations of the people as never before. The Constituent Assembly addressed sensitive, complex and critical issues, engaging in dialogues, discussions, deliberations and debate marked

with cooperative and consensual attitude. Diverse issues were traversed without there being any disruption, any rancour. Obstruction and disruption of proceedings of parliamentary practice are options that are antithetical to democratic values. Contemporaneous scenario on this count is concerning and makes it imperative for us to follow the high standards set in the Constituent Assembly. We need to be cognizant of severe public discomfort and disillusionment and the lack of decorum in the temple of democracy.

Democracy blossoms and flourishes when its three facets, the Legislature, the Judiciary and the Executive, scrupulously adhere to their respective domains. Any incursion by one, howsoever subtle, in the domain of the other, has the potential to upset the governance apple cart. We are indeed faced with this grim reality of frequent incursions. This House is eminently-positioned to take affirmative steps to bring about congeniality amongst these wings of governance. The essence of democracy lies in the prevalence of the ordainment of the people, reflected through legitimized-platform. In any democracy, parliamentary sovereignty is inviolable. Power of the Parliament of the day to act in exercise of its constituent power to amend any provision of this Constitution in accordance with the procedure is unqualified and supreme, not amenable to Executive attention or judicial intervention, except for the purpose of deciding any case involving a substantial question of law as to interpretation of the Constitution envisaged in Article 145(3) of the Constitution. Using this constitutional power to amend, Parliament enacted wholesome structural governance-changes to further spinally strengthen our democracy. This has been by way of incorporation of Part IX, 9A and 9B in the Constitution providing comprehensive mechanism for Panchayati Raj, municipalities and cooperative societies. In similar vein, the Parliament, in a much-needed historic step, passed the 99th Constitution (Amendment) Bill, paving way for the National Judicial Commission. There was unprecedented support to the above. Rarely in parliamentary democracy, there has been such massive support to a constitutional legislation. This process fructified into a constitutional prescription after 16 State Assemblies, out of 29 States, ratified the Central legislation. This historic parliamentary mandate was undone by the Supreme Court as not being in consonance with the judicially-evolved doctrine of basic structure of the Constitution.

Hon. Members, there is no parallel to such development in democratic history where a duly legitimized constitutional prescription has been judicially undone, a glaring instance of severe compromise on parliamentary sovereignty and disregard of the mandate of the people of which this House and the Lok Sabha are custodians. In democratic governance any basic structure is the prevalence of primacy of the mandate of the people reflected in the Parliament. Parliament is the exclusive and ultimate determinative of the architecture of the Constitution. It is disconcerting to note that on such a momentous issue there has been no focus in the Parliament now for over seven years. This House, in concert with the Lok Sabha is duty-bound to address the issue, and I am sure it would do so. Authorities in constitutional positions are required to exemplify their conduct by high standards of propriety, dignity and decorum. I urge the Members of the House to proactively catalyze evolution of a wholesome cordial ecosystem ending this aberration. It is institutional seamless character marked with mutual trust and respect that generates the ecosystem best suited for serving the nation. As Vice-President, I had the honour to represent the country at the India-ASEAN and East Asia Summits in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on November 12 and 13, 2022, and at the FIFA World Cup inaugural ceremony in Doha, Qatar, on 20th November, 2022. I share with you my deep sense of pride and satisfaction at the level of respect India commands amongst world leaders. I look forward to a pleasant and fruitful association so that we all optimally serve the nation. Once again, I thank you most earnestly for your generous felicitations and I would do my utmost to come up to your very high expectations.

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#### **REFERENCE BY THE CHAIR**

##### **Taking Over of the Presidency of the G-20 by India**

India has taken over the presidency of the G-20. This is a matter of great pride for the entire nation. The G-20 Summit will, of course, be an unparalleled event in our diplomatic history. Almost 200 events at various levels will be spread across the length and breadth of the country. It will provide an opportunity to showcase India's rich and diverse culture. To

demonstrate the vigour of our democracy and to highlight the progress of our development, we should all appreciate that broad sections of the society are being involved through Jan Bhagidari approach. During the challenging times in global affairs, it is appropriate that we have chosen the theme, I quote, 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' This is much, much in keeping with our traditional belief in Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. I am sure that the entire House joins me in expressing our fullest support for the success of India's G-20 presidency.

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### OBITUARY REFERENCES

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Hon. Members, I refer with profound sorrow to the passing away of Shri K.R. Jayadevappa, Shri Syed Sibtey Razi, Shrimati Jayanti Patnaik, Shri Ahmad Saeed Malihabadi, Shrimati Ela Ramesh Bhatt, and Shri A.A. Jinnah, former Members of this House.

**Shri K.R. Jayadevappa** passed away on the 23rd of December, 2021, at the age of 84 years.

Born in March, 1937, at Malalkere village in Devanagere District of Karnataka, Shri Jayadevappa served as the Legal Advisor to the City Municipality, Agriculture Produce Market Committee and several banks of Devanagere, Karnataka.

Shri Jayadevappa represented the State of Karnataka in this House from April, 1992, to April, 1998.

In the passing away of Shri K.R. Jayadevappa, the country has lost a proficient advocate and an able parliamentarian.

**Shri Syed Sibtey Razi** passed away on the 20th of August, 2022, at the age of 83 years.

Born in March, 1939, in Amethi District of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Razi was actively involved in child and youth welfare and upliftment of weaker sections of the society.

Shri Syed Sibtey Razi represented the State of Uttar Pradesh in this House for three terms during 1980 to 1998. He also served as the Governor of the States of Jharkhand and Assam during 2004 to 2009.

In the passing away of Shri Syed Sibtey Razi, the country has lost a dedicated social worker, an able administrator and a distinguished parliamentarian.

**Shrimati Jayanti Patnaik** passed away on the 28th of September, 2022, at the age of 90 years.

Born in April, 1932, at Aska in Ganjam District of Odisha, Shrimati Patnaik was actively involved in espousing the cause of women and the promotion of sports. She has the distinction of being the first Chairperson of the National Commission for Women, an office which she held from 1992 to 1995.

Shrimati Jayanti Patnaik served as a Member of the Seventh, Eighth and Twelfth Lok Sabha and as a Member of this House representing the State of Odisha from April, 1996, to March, 1998.

In the passing away of Shrimati Jayanti Patnaik, the country has lost an eminent social worker, a sports enthusiast, a champion of the rights of women and a distinguished parliamentarian.

**Shri Ahmad Saeed Malihabadi** passed away on the 2nd of October, 2022, at the age of 92 years.

Born in October, 1930, at Malihabad in Lucknow District of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Malihabadi had worked with Mahatma Gandhi during his stay at Kolkata in 1947 during pre-partition and post-partition of India for peace and communal harmony. A journalist and a writer, Shri Malihabadi served as the Chief Editor of 'Azad Hind', an Urdu daily published from Kolkata, for over six decades.

Shri Malihabadi represented the State of West Bengal in this House from April, 2008, to April, 2014.

In the passing away of Shri Ahmad Saeed Malihabadi, the country has lost a veteran journalist, a scholar and an able Parliamentarian.

**Shrimati Ela Ramesh Bhatt** passed away on the 2nd of November, 2022 at the age of 89 years.

Born in September, 1933 at Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Shrimati Ela Ramesh Bhatt lived by the Gandhian spirit of trusteeship, non-violence and self-reliance. In 1972, she founded the renowned Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), one of the largest women's cooperatives with over two million members from across the country and in neighbouring nations.

Shrimati Ela Ramesh Bhatt was the recipient of several national and international awards including the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1977.

Shrimati Bhatt served as a Nominated Member of this House from May, 1986 to September, 1988.

In the passing away of Shrimati Ela Ramesh Bhatt, the country has lost a noted social activist, a doyen of women empowerment and a distinguished Parliamentarian.

**Shri A.A. Jinnah** passed away on the 14th of November, 2022 at the age of 81 years.

Born in February, 1941 at Tiruvarur in Tamil Nadu, Shri Jinnah, an advocate, served as Legal Advisor to State Transport Department of the Government of Tamil Nadu.

Shri Jinnah served as a Member of this House and represented the State of Tamil Nadu from April, 2008 to April, 2014.

In the passing away of Shri A.A. Jinnah, the country has lost an eminent advocate and an able Parliamentarian.

We deeply mourn the passing away of Shri K.R. Jayadevappa, Shri Syed Sibtey Razi, Shrimati Jayanti Patnaik, Shri Ahmad Saeed Malihabadi, Shrimati Ela Ramesh Bhatt and Shri A.A. Jinnah.

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

## **OBSERVATION BY THE CHAIR**

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Hon. Members, I need to share a thought with you. In this House, if there is any departure from established rules, that does not send a good signal either to the country at large or to other theatres of legislature. I would urge all of you to reflect and scrupulously follow the rules. If one occupying the Chair is on legs, a certain kind of decorum is required. I have seen violation of this. I would urge all of you that whosoever may be in the Chair, including myself, we must follow the rule. You all are aware of it. I am sure you will bear that in mind.

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## **STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER**

### **Latest Developments in India's Foreign Policy**

**THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S. JAISHANKAR):** I rise to apprise this august House of the key foreign policy engagements and initiatives taken by India since the Monsoon Session, which ended on 8th August 2022.

During this period, India's diplomacy continued apace. Hon. President, hon. Vice-President and hon. Prime Minister interacted with a number of their foreign counterparts, in India and abroad. We also participated in the events linked to the G-20, the SCO and the ASEAN, while hosting a number of foreign dignitaries in India. This included Secretary-General Antonio Guterres of the United Nations. I myself visited a number of nations, as did our Ministers of State. And we received many of our counterpart colleagues here in India. Together, these activities reflected India's growing interests, expanding footprint and more intensive partnerships. Through these efforts at multiple levels, we were able to advance our national objectives in a world that is increasingly beset with uncertainties, disruptions and rivalries.

Hon. President met Her Majesty Queen Maxima of Netherlands who visited India from 29-31 August 2022, in her capacity as United Nations Secretary-General's Special Advocate. Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, also called on hon. President during her State visit

to India. Hon. President's first overseas visit was to the United Kingdom to attend the funeral of the late Queen Elizabeth-II.

Hon. Vice-President represented India at the India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit at Cambodia which elevated the India-ASEAN relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. He also attended 17th East Asia Summit which is an important forum to promote free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific. Apart from bilateral engagements in Phnom Penh, he visited UNESCO world heritage temples at Ta Prohm and Angkor Wat, where conservation and restoration work has taken place with India's support. Furthermore, on the invitation of the His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of Qatar, hon. Vice-President attended the opening ceremony of FIFA World Cup 2022. This reflected India's long-standing relationship with Qatar, which is home to over 8.5 lakh Indian nationals.

Hon. Prime Minister participated in the Samarkand Summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of States where India assumed the Chairmanship of SCO. As Chair of SCO, India's priorities are to advance the theme of SECURE, articulated by the Prime Minister initially at the SCO Summit in Qingdao in 2018. SECURE stands for Security, Economic cooperation, Connectivity, Unity, Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and Environment.

At Samarkand, Prime Minister voiced global sentiment when he declared that this was not an era of war. His statement was in the context of the Ukraine conflict, where our advocacy of dialogue and diplomacy has been consistent and persistent. It has a larger resonance as well. We have also extended support on specific concerns, such as supply of foodgrains and fertilizers, as indeed on security of nuclear installations. Our position has been broadly appreciated by the international community and finds reflection in the G20 Bali Declaration.

I am very happy to inform the House that Kashi has been designated as the first SCO Cultural and Tourist Capital for 2022-23. This would facilitate showcasing of our age-old knowledge inheritance and our rich social and cultural heritage.

The Prime Minister also attended the state funeral of late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, who was a particular friend of India. In his



meeting with his counterpart, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, the Prime Minister noted the invaluable contributions made by Shinzo Abe to strengthening India-Japan relations, as well as conceptualising the vision of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. Both PMs renewed their commitment towards enhancing India-Japan strategic and global partnership and to work towards promoting regional and international cooperation.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Antonio Guterres, paid an official visit to India from 18-20 October and joined Prime Minister in Kevadia to jointly launch the Lifestyle for Environment, LiFE initiative. Heads of States and Governments from France, UK, Estonia, Georgia, Maldives, Nepal, Madagascar, Mauritius, Argentina and Guyana contributed with the messages of support for the LiFE initiative.

Allow me to now turn to the subject of G20. As the House is aware, the Prime Minister attended the Bali G20 Summit recently and we soon thereafter assumed its Presidency. G20 is the premier forum for global economic cooperation, representing around 85 per cent of the global GDP, over 75 per cent of the worldwide trade, and about two-thirds of the world population. The Prime Minister had noted that India's Presidency of the G20 during the year of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is a matter of pride for every Indian. The G20 meetings have already commenced in India and our endeavour is to organize about 200 of these meetings in 32 different sectors in multiple locations across India. The G20 Summit is to be held next year and it would be one of the highest-profile international gatherings to be hosted by this country.

During the G20 Bali Summit held under Indonesia's Presidency, India extended fullest support to ensure its success. Our contribution to finding a common ground among members in a polarized environment was widely appreciated. The Prime Minister also held discussions with counterpart leaders on key issues of global concern. They focused mainly on reviving global growth, ensuring food and energy security, promoting technology, preserving environment, and addressing public health and digital transformation. As is customary, many of these opportunities also provided an occasion to take stock of our bilateral relationships. Since we are assuming that responsibility, this was also a time to seek the support and cooperation of all G20 members for the success of India's Presidency.

Hon. Members are aware that the G20 is taking place in the larger context of a geopolitical crisis, food and energy insecurity, slow progress on Sustainable Development Goals, mounting debt burden and challenges to climate action and climate justice. Our endeavour is to build consensus within the G20, champion causes especially of the Global South, and shape the setting of the agenda. This will also be an occasion for us to highlight the 3Ds of India: Development, Democracy and Diversity.

In our global engagements, we have discerned strong interest in India's digital delivery, public health response, green growth and development as well as the empowerment of all sections of society. There is also an enhanced interest in our democratic traditions which go way back in our pluralistic and consultative culture. We envisage the G20 Presidency as an occasion to showcase India to the world. This will be done through cultural activities, regional festivals, technology programmes, sustainability initiatives, Millets promotion, One District One Product promotion, community engagement and civil society activities. Our Presidency will witness a Jan Bhagidari, where all of India would not just participate but celebrate this occasion. As the House is aware, the Government has briefed leaders of political parties in this regard. We see this as a truly national endeavour and seek the cooperation of everybody to make it a success.

I would also like to highlight that India will provide a stronger voice to issues of interest of the Global South. This is very much a part of our DNA. It was in evidence most recently during the Vaccine Maitri. Our emphasis will be on sharing the India story, caring for all and taking collective action. It will focus on emphasizing our achievements and priorities such as digital India, clean energy, sustainable lifestyles, women-led development, and multilateral reforms. Prime Minister's initiatives on 'LiFE' - Lifestyle For Environment Movement - and India's Millet initiative which has resulted in UN declaration of the year 2023 as International Year of Millets would also be prominent in India's approach towards addressing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Today, we are building stronger bridges with both developing countries and advanced economies. Apart from our G20 Presidency, we are members of a growing number of groups and mechanisms. Some of them are relatively established like the BRICS and Commonwealth. Others have been

more recent like the Quad and SCO. And still others are emerging like I2U2 and Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. We are also increasingly engaging the world in group formats, reflecting the growing interest on their part in cooperating with India. This could be with the ASEAN, Africa or the Pacific Islands, or indeed the Nordic nations, Caricom, CELAC or Central Asia. Our growing collaboration with the European Union is of particular importance.

I would also like to share with the House that the Ministers of MEA have been equally active during this period. I have myself hosted the Foreign Ministers of Maldives, France, Singapore, Botswana, United Kingdom, Ghana, Gabon, Belarus, Syria, UAE and Germany in this period.

I would also highlight the India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable and the collective interaction with 12 African Ministers dealing with education and skills that took place in New Delhi. It would give the hon. Members a sense of the breadth of our engagement and the growing global interest in India. This was also in evidence during my outgoing visits to Thailand, Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, UAE, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Egypt and Russia. It was my privilege to represent India at the UN General Assembly high level segment this year. I took the occasion to engage with the G4, the L69, Quad, IBSA, BRICS, CELAC, and Caricom and hold multiple trilaterals and bilaterals. Our Ministers of State have been equally vigorous in promoting India's interests abroad. Shri Muraleedharan went to Brazil, Senegal, USA, Oman, Djibouti, Kenya, Eritrea and Nigeria. Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi represented India at the CICA Summit at Kazakhstan and visited Georgia, Norway, Iceland and Malta. Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh was our representative at the IORA Ministerial and visited Indonesia. Sir, the House would also be aware that as Chair of the Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) of UNSC, India hosted its Special Meeting in October. All 15 members participated and paid homage to victims of 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attack at the Memorial Wall in Taj Mahal Palace Hotel. This was the first time that the UNSC held a meeting in India. Their 'Delhi Declaration' emphasized the need to display zero tolerance towards terrorism and to combat it in all its forms and manifestations. I am happy to inform the House that after a gap created by Covid, India will be hosting the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas at Indore from 8 to 10 January 2023. This year's theme acknowledges the contributions of Indian diaspora as "Diaspora: Reliable Partners for India's Progress in Amrit

Kaal". The 32 million Indian diaspora is a great source of support for our country. India's 4C commitment of Care, Connect, Celebrate and Contribute would be on display during the celebrations. H.E. President Mohamed Irfaan Ali of Guyana will be the Chief Guest at Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas – 2023. Where Republic Day 2023 is concerned, we have invited H.E. President Abdel Fatch Al-Sisi of Egypt as the Chief Guest. He has graciously accepted the invitation. Hon. Members would also be glad to know that 12th World Hindi Conference will be jointly organized by India and Fiji from 15 to 17 February 2023 at Fiji. This will be the first occasion of hosting this event in Pacific region. Foreign policy today is no longer just an exercise of a Ministry or even simply that of the Government. It has a direct impact on the daily lives of all Indians. This may be in ensuring that our products have market access or that our talent gets into the global work place. But it is equally an effort to ensure that technology, best practices and capital flow into India. Our endeavour in a difficult global situation is that the welfare of the Indian people is ensured, however challenging the circumstances. This may be in exceptional situations like Operation Ganga in Ukraine or the ability to access key necessities like energy and fertilizers on affordable terms. Or indeed in concluding Migration and Mobility Partnerships as we have just done with Germany. Indian foreign policy is there to serve the Indian people; we will do whatever it takes to discharge that responsibility. It could be in ensuring international support for our policies or in the acceptance globally of our interests and objectives. These may be difficult times but it is also an occasion to display our leadership and make a strong contribution to global peace, stability, growth and security. Hon. Members know this well and understandably approach the Ministry sometimes with their particular concerns and issues. It has been our earnest effort to respond as effectively and sincerely as possible to their communications. We are extremely conscious that foreign policy must respond to the requirements and demands of our society. We demonstrate that as much through the activities of our Embassies abroad as we do at home, through improved passport and emigration services. I have every confidence that this august House does appreciate both our promotion of national interests abroad as well as our responsiveness to the daily requirements of our people. I conclude with the expectation that the House will continue to extend its

fullest support to our efforts and encourage our success in the G20 Presidency in particular and foreign policy in general.

Starting with Shri Amar Patnaikji, the question of cross-border digital flows is not a direct Foreign Policy issue. It is under the domain of my colleague, the MIT Minister. It is a matter on which Government's views have been put in the public domain for comments. So, I think, it is obviously something that will evolve as public comments come in. And, the matter will be pursued. Regarding his second clarification whether we will speak up for Africa regarding inequality; whether we will take up Africa's cause and interest in the G-20. Absolutely, the answer is unambiguous 'Yes'. Now, I come to Shri Vaikoji's two questions. One was about our abstention in the UN Human Rights Commission. This has been a long-standing position by India. Not only this Government, but it's predecessor Governments also thought that it was the most constructive way of addressing and advancing the interests of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka. We have given support to the entirety of Sri Lanka, which includes the Tamil community, the Sinhalese community and also other communities. We have not taken a communal approach in giving support to a neighbour in this kind of a serious economic situation. We would be shirking our responsibilities if we did not step forward at that moment. If I could move on to Prof. Manoj Kumar Jha's observations that the view of Foreign Policy is 2014-centric. I would say "yes, 2014 was a watershed moment; things have changed better after 2014; our Foreign Policy has become more dynamic, more effective and more prominent after 2014." On the Gaza issue and the Palestine issue, We want a two-State solution, with the two States living peacefully side by side. Some of the Members suggested that our support or empathy for the Palestinians had changed. In fact, our financial support for the Palestinian Refugee Welfare Agency has gone up in the tenure of this Government. I hope that hon. Members would appreciate that. The issue was also raised about the neutrality. What I do want to say is, we have been publicly clear at the Prime Minister's level that this is not an era of war. We have consistently urged dialogue and diplomacy. When it comes to the impact of the war on Indian people or in the rest of the world, we have also done the right things about that. We have taken measures to soften the impact whether it is of fuel, whether it is of food inflation or whether it is of fertilizer cost. So, if it is your contention that our position has been in putting the interests of the

Indian public first. Yes, I put the interests of the Indian public first. It is my duty to ensure that for fuel, fertilizer, food the Indian public does not pay the cost of some other country's actions, or some other regions' actions. I think that is the way, in my view, at least, Foreign Policy should be conducted. I would like to clarify that we do not ask our companies to buy Russian oil; we ask our companies to buy oil, what is the best option that they can get. Now, it depends on what the market throws up. If, tomorrow, the market gives us more competitive options, again, please do understand, it is not just we buy oil from one country; we buy oil from multiple sources. But it is sensible policy to go where we get the best deal in the interest of the Indian people; and, that is exactly what we are trying to do. Regarding the oil cap, the impact of this is not very clear to us. Our concern is really what it would do to the stability and the affordability of the energy markets. That is our concern. On his clarification regarding diversity in the G-20, absolutely yes. The fact is that we are going to celebrate the G-20 across the States of India in multiple cities in a manner in which we have never done any international event before. I think that is a greatest statement of proof of diversity, of our commitment to diversity; and it is spread without discrimination across every State, every region, of this country. Finally, again multiple Members asked about the Ukraine students. Some of the students have gone back; some have looked for other solutions. In some cases, the Ukrainian authorities have offered some solution. So, it is a very mixed picture. Unfortunately, there is a no clean and simple answer here. But the Government is doing what it can in this situation. That is also a concern which Tiruchi Sivaji raised about the Ukrainian students. To the clarification sought by Thambiduraiji about the India-Sri Lanka agreement of 1987, it is an Agreement which has been the basis for changes in Sri Lanka, including Provincial Councils which have come about as a result. In our view, it is still an agreement that continues to remain the foundation of how both our relationship with Sri Lanka is conducted and how Sri Lanka itself looks at its own future. So, I would like to assure him that we continue to do it. We are supportive of it. Then, the clarifications sought by Sujeet Kumar ji, this is a very sensitive case. I am referring to the detention of some of our ex-servicemen in Qatar. Because their interests are foremost in our minds, I can only assure him, we have been seized of the matter. Our Ambassadors, senior officials, have been in continuous touch with the Qatari Government on this. Our effort is obviously

to ensure that they are not treated unfairly and that the sooner we can bring them back home. So, I assure you that they are very, very strongly in our priorities in respect of Qatar, and it is something that we will be pursuing. Regarding Shri Pramod Tiwariji's clarification request on China and I think, Nasir Hussainji also brought up the same issue, diplomatically, we have been very clear. We have been very clear with the Chinese that we will not tolerate, we will not countenance attempts to unilaterally change the Line of Actual Control, and that so long as they continue to seek to do that, and if they have built up forces which in our minds constitute a serious concern in the border areas, then our relationship is not normal; and the abnormality of that has been in evidence in the last few years. Meanwhile, the military commanders continue to engage each other, and, I think, given the sensitivity of that matter, it is something which is left to the military commanders to deal with, and, I think, the House should be understanding of the national sensitivity of such a delicate matter. But I think two Members had concerns about the South Asian University. I would like to assure the Members, we would like obviously to not see this kind of situation. But the South Asian University is not under the direct jurisdiction of the Government of India or the Ministry of External Affairs. It is something which is run by a collection of countries, and part of the problem is that some of the countries have not made the payments which they were required to do for the university. So, the university is going through a period of very severe financial stress. Now, beyond that, there are issues of management and academic freedom for the university because it is an international university. It is not the policy of the Government of India to interfere in the workings of an international university. But whatever influence and counsel we can give them to sort out any problems in an amicable and non-stressful way, certainly, we would do that. On the issue of agenda of G-20, women-led development would certainly be high among our priorities as will be a set of sustainability issues including, lifestyle for environment. So, I think we should really look today at how the world sees our contributions and progress when it comes to climate action and climate justice. So, I would not take the very pessimistic view which the hon. Member has taken. Regarding Gen. Vats's point about study visas, we are very concerned that a number of countries, for reasons which have to do with their finance and their processes, have slowed down issue of visas. We have taken it up with many of these countries. I myself

have done it at the ministerial level with the US, with the UK. In many cases, our intervention has led to an improvement. I still think there is some distance to go, but as I said, we run a people-centric foreign policy in the Modi Government, and certainly, today, facilitating faster issue of visas would be high among our priorities. Finally, on the MT Heroic Idun ship, the one in Nigeria, we have been in touch with the crew since August. The people were initially detained in Equatorial Guinea, they were then brought to Nigeria. They are facing charges in court. There are a number of charges including oil smuggling against them. We have given them counselor support. Our High Commissioner has gone to see them. It is, again, our endeavour to ensure that they are not unjustly treated, that they have full access to all recourse of law and that they have the ability to communicate with their families. The last point was about the loss of jobs -- how many Indians are there abroad? Our estimate is that there are 3.2 crore persons of Indian origin and Indian nationals living abroad, but regarding job loss figures during COVID, that data is not maintained by the Government of India.

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## GOVERNMENT BILL

### THE WILD LIFE (PROTECTION) AMENDMENT BILL, 2022

**THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE; AND THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI BUPENDER YADAV), moving the motion for consideration of the Bill, said:** The Bill further to amend the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, as passed by Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration. There is a treaty named Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species among various countries of the world. The Government of India is also a member of this international treaty. Under the treaty, it was said for all the countries of the world that a separate structure should be made for wildlife. I would also like to say that the then UPA government had given this assurance at the international level as well, but they did not fulfill it and since we had given assurance to this international treaty in 2005, it is necessary to fulfill it, so this bill has been put in the Loksabha, which has been passed unanimously and I want that this Bill should also be passed unanimously in this Rajya Sabha. Our government is fully committed to the



protection of wildlife, to the protection of the forest area. We have worked especially for Tiger Conservation in the country and I am happy to say that 70 percent of the world's wild tigers are under our country. Along with that, by bringing back the leopards that had disappeared from our country in 1950, the ecological wrong that had happened in our country, under the leadership of the Honorable Prime Minister that ecological harmony has been established. The Tiger Reserves of our country have also received the International Award for TX2. Our 16 tiger reserves have also got international accreditation. In the region of Bengal, especially the Sunderbans Tiger Reserves area, we have made bilateral partnership with the cooperation of India and Bangladesh and we are working to take it forward. Now, along with leopard introduction, work is also being done on Project Lion in our country. It was also announced by the Honorable Prime Minister on August 15, 2020 from the Red Fort. We are also working on the conservation of Project Dolphin. We have two objectives of bringing this amendment. The first objective is that considering the need of our International Treaty and the capability of India's leadership, it was necessary to bring it in our legal provision. Secondly, it was necessary to give protection on some subjects to some extent to the people of traditional communities, who are tribal people, who have been living in our forest area for a long time. In our country there is a traditional thinking of living with nature, we have a way of life to live with nature. We have brought these amendments to strengthen our local administration, to strengthen our administration and to give concession to the local community. I would urge the House to pass it unanimously.

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*Secretary-General.*

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\*\*\*\*Supplement covering rest of the proceedings is being issued separately.