

'RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Monday, September 18, 2023/ Bhadra 27, 1945 (Saka)

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I take this opportunity to extend birthday greetings to hon. Member of Parliament, Shri Sanjeev Arora.

Shri Arora has been a Member of this august House since April, 2022. He is an industrialist by profession with a passion for social service. His efforts to promote cancer care in India are highly laudable.

Shri Arora likes travelling and enjoys watching sports in his spare time.

He is married to Shrimati Sandhya Arora and has a son Kavya and a daughter Ketki.

Hon. Members, on my and on your behalf, I wish him a long, healthy and happy life and extend greetings to his family and friends.

REFERENCE BY THE CHAIR

Successful Conduct of G20 New Delhi Summit

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, it gives me immense pleasure to congratulate the entire nation at the successful conduct of G20 New Delhi Summit that has filled heart of every Indian with pride and raised the leadership stature of the country at the global level.

I laud the Prime Minister's vision that made it truly people's G20. More than 200 meetings in 60 cities covering all the States and Union Territories of India is unprecedented. At the same time, the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Summit, with 42 delegations, was one of the largest in size, scale and scope. This has provided opportunity to the world to experience richness of diversity, democracy and talent of India.

India's G20 Presidency has proven to be inclusive, ambitious, action- oriented, decisive and people-centric.

The outcomes of the G-20 Leaders Summit are transformational and would contribute to the reshaping of the global world order in the decades ahead.

With the Prime Minister's vision and guidance, the New Delhi G20 Leaders' Declaration was adopted unanimously and with consensus, including on difficult issues. It is globally acknowledged that India's leadership and endeavours were crucial in bridging

the North-South divide and overcoming the strong East-West polarisation. This is reflective of India's elevated stature and standing and the work that this Government has done in the last nine years. It is a testament to the global trust and goodwill that India enjoys under the Prime Minister's leadership. It is recognition that India is a voice of peace and moderation in a world ridden with divisions.

India's Presidency has been instrumental in bringing voice of the Global South into the heart of the G20 discourse. At the beginning of its Presidency, India hosted the Voice of the Global South Summit in January, 2023, with participation of leaders of 125 countries. The priorities and expectations of the countries of the Global South were brought onto the G20 Agenda. The Summit Declaration amplified and delivered on issues of interest to the developing countries, including poverty alleviation, climate finance, handling debt vulnerabilities, food security, health security, digital infrastructure development, among others.

Prime Minister's initiative led to the historic decision to accept African Union as a permanent member of the G20. It was a wonderful sight to see the world leaders pay respect to the Father of the Nation at Rajghat. They all endorsed the universal idea of peace and non-violence espoused by Mahatma Gandhi and its relevance in today's world. Prime Minister has himself made a strong pitch for reform of the international institutions which must keep pace with the changing times. This is important for true multilateralism in a divided world to ensure stability, growth and development. The focus of the G20 has moved from a mere economic centric to a much broader human-centric approach. The priority accorded to realizing Sustainable Development Goals, reforming international financial institutions, establishing digital public infrastructure, promoting a Green Development Pact, encouraging women-led development, taking Global Initiative on Digital Health, recognizing the role of traditional medicine, are praise-worthy. The energizing of the international economy, availability of greater resources for development, expansion of tourism, global workplace opportunities, stronger food security through millet production and consumption, addressing the skill gaps and mobility, mapping global value chains, supporting MSMEs, and a deeper commitment to bio-fuels are among the prominent outcomes of the G20 Summit that will benefit the entire nation. The launch of India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor and the Global Bio-fuels Alliance during the Summit are significant. These initiatives have sowed the seeds for a connected future in which India will continue to play an important role. India's climate leadership was visible with the adoption of High Level Principles on LiFE for building pro-planet people; and recognition by the developed world to substantially scale-up investment and climate finance to meet climate goals. India's Presidency achieved new milestones in setting up new G20 Working Groups on Women and Disaster Risk Reduction, as also a new G20 engagement group on Start-ups. The Deccan High Level Principles on Food Security, Gandhinagar Roadmap on Land Initiative, Goa Roadmap on Tourism, Chennai High Level Principles on Blue and Ocean Economy and the Kashi Cultural Pathway will provide global guidance in various sectors for times to come and make our people proud. Hon. Members, next month, our Parliament would have the honour to host the Parliament-20 Forum as part of our G-20 Presidency. I request each member of this august House to participate in welcoming the world to the Mother of Democracy and building on the theme '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* - One Earth, One Family, One Future'. I am confident that this august House will join me in commending Prime Minister's leadership, in recognising the enthusiasm of the people of India, and appreciating the contribution of all organisations and individuals, on this historic achievement.

OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I extend warm greetings to you on the beginning of 261st Session of Rajya Sabha.

Hon. Members, this Session makes available a befitting opportunity to reflect and introspect on "Parliamentary Journey of 75 years starting from Samvidhan Sabha - Achievements, Experiences, Memories and Learnings". Traversing over seven decade journey, from Samvidhan Sabha to the present day in Amrit Kaal, these hallowed precincts have witnessed many milestones.

Hon. Members, this journey had historical moments - from 'Tryst with Destiny' at Midnight of 15th August, 1947 to unfolding of innovative, forward looking GST regime at midnight of June 30, 2017 and now this day.

Deliberations in the Constituent Assembly in various Sessions spread over three years exemplified decorum and healthy debate. Contentious and highly divisive issues were negotiated in a spirit of consensus. There is enough take away from this for us all.

Healthy debate is hallmark of a blossoming democracy. We must eschew confrontational posturing. Weaponising disruption and disturbance as strategy would never secure sanction of the people. We all are constitutionally ordained to nurture democratic values and must so justify and vindicate the trust of the people.

We owe it to the nation to optimally utilise the opportunity and time to subserve public interest.

Hon. Members, this is also an occasion to recall and glorify our tenacious freedom fighters. They were the pioneers in true sense to fight for democratic rights; our erudite constitutional forefathers - they were farsighted visionaries who, after much deliberations and discussions provided us a Constitution which has stood the test of time; our statesmen and politicians have time and again respected and abided by constitutional ideals and have democratised the Constitution itself by taking its essence to the masses; the civil service - the bureaucrats who have been steadfast day in and day out in ensuring that the state machinery works in a free and fair manner; and, finally, it is the masses whose deep faith and unflinching belief in the Parliamentary democracy sustained it and thwarted the worst possible attempt to deny democratic values.

The success of our democracy is thus a collective concerted endeavour of "We the People of India."

Expectedly, the hon. Members, during the course of the day, would enrich the House and enlighten the people at large as regards our 75 years' journey and unfold vision for years ahead.

Hon. Members, use of wit, humour, sarcasm and even acerbic comments inside Parliament are important inalienable facet of a vigorous democracy. These days we do not get to hear such light-hearted exchanges. Hopefully, we will see the revival of wit, humour and scholarly debates.

The hallowed precincts of Parliament for years have witnessed highs and lows which we need to reflect and deliberate so as to take our Bharat to its rightful place in 2047 when it celebrates centenary of Independence.

**DISCUSSION ON "PARLIAMENTARY JOURNEY OF 75 YEARS
STARTING FROM SAMVIDHAN SABHA - ACHIEVEMENTS, EXPERIENCES,
MEMORIES AND LEARNINGS"**

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY; THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION; THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES; AND THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE (SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL), initiating the discussion, said: Hon'ble Chairman Sir, I am fortunate that today on the eve of Ganesh Chaturthi, we all have gathered here for discussion in such a lively atmosphere. First of all, on behalf of all of us, I would like to convey my heartiest congratulations and best wishes to you and through you to all colleagues, MPs and countrymen on the auspicious occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi. Parliament consists of the Hon'ble President, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Our House is also called Upper House and I feel blessed and obliged that I got the opportunity to serve in this House for the third term. I am sure that the discussion that is going to be held today will further motivate us and let us know as to how we all can contribute to nation-building. The people of this country help strengthen our democracy. Our democracy is rooted in local ethos. Very few countries which got freedom have been able to uphold democracy. On the contrary, democracy in India is increasingly becoming stronger. And the two Houses of Parliament have played a pivotal role in that. The level of debates in the Constituent Assembly was very high. When we read them, we learn that many great leaders explained the importance of the need for both the Houses. Considering the utility of the Upper House, this House was formed in April, 1952 and its first meeting was held on May 13, 1952. Today, we are all going to discuss the journey of 71 years of this House. Generally, it is expected from the Rajya Sabha that there will be a meaningful discussion here and it will be conducted in keeping the national interest at the forefront. Hon'ble Prime Minister had also said that in our discussions, whether inside or outside the House, serving the country and protecting its interests remains paramount. I think that all of us have fulfilled our responsibilities to the best of our ability. In this period of 71 years, many great personalities have contributed to protect the Constitution and democracy of India. Many of our senior Members made this House proud as the Chairmen. Among them, the names of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan ji, Dr. Zakir Hussain ji, Justice Hidayatullah ji, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma ji, Shri K.R. Narayanan ji, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat ji, Hamid Ansari ji, Shri Venkaiah Naidu ji and our present Chairman, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar ji are noteworthy. Everyone gave a new dimension to the dignity of this House during their respective tenures. I keep remembering the words of Venkaiah Naidu ji a lot. He often used satire in a creative manner. He once said, 'People expect three D's in a meeting, i.e. Discuss, Debate and Decide and do not want other types of D, i.e., disruption. We all have tried in our own way to ensure that the work of this House runs smoothly and that we are able to serve the country through a good discussion. In this House, prominent intellectuals of the country and important representatives of the public get nominated. Such innumerable dignitaries have enhanced the dignity of this House and left a mark of their work. These nominated Members have rendered remarkable service to the country in diverse fields. A unique feature of this House is that many great personalities from the field of sports, film, music and drama have enhanced the dignity of this House. This House has also taken many such major decisions, which have had a wide impact on our lives and country. These decisions will be remembered for centuries. In this House, Atal ji, Advani ji, Sushma ji, Dr. Karan Singh ji, V.P. Singh ji, Chandrashekhar ji, our former Prime Minister Shri Deve Gowda ji had participated in many important debates. All these Members were in favour of working together even amidst serious debates. Despite political differences, public interest and the

interest of the country were paramount for him. I remember that there was a Communist Party Member, Shri P. Rajeev, who used to come to this House very well prepared. Information about new things was received from him. Even today, whenever I meet him, I feel happy. We can express criticism and differences with civility. The country will be able to move forward only by our working together. About 68 years ago in the year 1955, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan had also supported the same idea. Our senior leaders have also taught us a lot in different ways. I believe that the feeling of all of us is that the House should run well. In this '*Amrit Kaal*', the call given by the Hon'ble Prime Minister to all of us is that India should become a developed country; we all will play a role in it. I feel that all the hon'ble Members are trying their best to fulfil their responsibilities well and will continue to do so. If I talk about the past, we remember the wit and satirical skills of Arun Jaitley ji, Hon'ble Venkaiah Naidu ji and hon'ble Ghulam Nabi Azad ji in this House. Hon'ble Kharge ji has also started doing a lot of poetry these days. It has been the dignity of the House that we all handle even controversial issues with decency. In his farewell speech given to Ghulam Nabi Azad ji at the end of his tenure, the Hon'ble Prime Minister had whole-heartedly praised Ghulam Nabi Azad ji and the former President because during the period of terrorism, they had helped a lot to the people of Gujarat in returning home who were stranded in Kashmir. We will continue to work in the same spirit of friendship, rising above party sentiments. The dignity of the House will lie in the fact that if we keep the national interest and public interest paramount, then naturally the dignity of the House will get enhanced and good work will also be done.

Sir, I remember my maiden speech in July, 2010. At that time Dr. Manmohan Singh was the Prime Minister and hon'ble Pranab Mukherjee was the Minister of Finance. Shrimati Maya Singh was the chief whip of our party. At that time, there was some debate going on about IRDA and SEBI. She came and told me that you have to open the debate the day after tomorrow. I was surprised at this, because it had been only two days since I had come to the House. Perhaps till then I had not even got the kurta-pajama and jacket stitched. I went to Mumbai the same day night and prepared for the subject. I had some knowledge of SEBI but did not know much about insurance. I studied it deeply and got personal benefit out of it. There was no place for securing the interests of the policy holder in the one-sided insurance policies issued at that time. At that time there was no time limit for the maiden speech. I had studied hard for about 30-40 hours, so the speech also took a long time. I presented my views for about 40-42 minutes. But my concerns were addressed. I studied the subject deeply and have benefited greatly from it. The then Minister of Finance replied to the debate after that speech. He also encouraged me. This sentence of his will inspire me throughout my life that we have to express our views and also learn from the words of others. At that time the 'note for vote' scandal was going on in the House. During the serious discussion going on, hon'ble Manmohan Singh ji had quoted Urdu poet Mirza Ghalib ji, while hon'ble Sushma Swaraj ji, sitting in the opposition, had replied to him in a poetic manner. This feeling of mutual respect enhanced the dignity of this House. I hope that with the same spirit we will move into the new premises of the new House building.

Hon'ble Atal ji had said in his historic speech in May 1996 that the game of power will continue, Governments will come and go, parties will be formed and will deteriorate, but this country should remain, this country's democracy should remain immortal. I believe that we will be able to serve the country and do good work only in the right spirit. Eliminating red beacons for all Ministers was also a sign of giving priority to duty over prestige. When our Government was formed in the year 2014, for the first time, the country elected a non-Congress Government with full majority. From 2014 till now, many historic laws have been enacted in this House, which have made a huge contribution in the

development journey of the country and in social harmony and taking the society forward. Today, under the leadership of hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi and hon'ble Minister of Finance, Shrimati Nirmala Ji, India has become the fifth largest economy in the world. We all made our contribution to that flow, did our work, and fulfilled our responsibilities. I would also like to congratulate all the hon'ble Members on this. I understand that it is everyone's wish and as the hon'ble Prime Minister said that in the next term i.e., in the next four-five years, the country will become the third largest economy in the world and by the year 2047 we will celebrate 100 years of democracy as a developed India.

On August 5, 2019, a major historic decision was taken to abolish Article 370 and 35(A). This was truly a step taken to unite the country. All of us in the country wished that there should be one constitution, one law and order; and the law and order and rights should be equal for all. It was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's desire, strong will power, work and efforts to strengthen the unity and cohesion of the country, which we accomplished in a complete manner that day and completed the task of uniting the country. However, when Article 370 was imposed, the then Prime Minister had expressed his wish that this was a temporary provision and it will take some time for Jammu and Kashmir to build its own future in a good way with India. That took relatively a longer time. Still, it is a matter of joy for all of us that we took that decision in 2019. It would also be appropriate to mention that the states of Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand were created unanimously. I remember when the new state of Telangana was formed, I was also present in this meeting and the scene here was not as expected. In the year 2017, on the basis of consensus, 'One Nation, One Tax' was introduced in the form of 'The Goods and Services Tax Act'. There was a consensus of the entire country in this and every state of the country extended their cooperation on it. This Act has given new impetus to trade and industry and the country is progressing at a very fast pace. With all these decisions, the Parliament gave a very good message to the country. Similarly, in the year 2019, Triple Talaq was declared illegal and abolished. Similarly, the country's '*Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*' campaign was successfully launched. Today, the women have an important contribution in India's economy. The terrorist attack on Parliament in 2001 has inspired us to be more alert. We all should contribute and cooperate in the efforts made by the security personnel to protect the Parliament. After this incident, we gave a message of unity to the entire country and told that no one can defeat our democracy. Today, under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India is moving forward in the flow of development at a very fast pace with great confidence. I believe that past experiences will help us build a better future. The mistakes of the 42nd Amendment made during the Emergency were rectified through the 44th Amendment in the year 1978. Many obsolete or unnecessary laws were abolished in the country. According to the demand of time, many changes have been made in the old laws or new laws have been made. By making ease of doing business its priority, it has worked to move the country forward. The construction of the new Parliament building is also a matter of great pride for the country. This is the House for all of us. This building has architecture as per modern requirements and is equipped with modern equipment. This building will send a message to the whole world for India to move forward with a new zeal and enthusiasm. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has recently inaugurated *Bharat Mandapam* and *Yashobhoomi Centre* located in Dwarka, Delhi. Now our country will be able to organize world class exhibitions and conferences. We witnessed a beautiful example of this in the recently held G-20 conference. All these decisions are symbols of our inclusive development and transparent governance for taking this country forward. Let us all join together in this effort and connect the countrymen with a sense of duty. Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar had said in his

speech in the Constituent Assembly that when constitutional methods are open, there could be no justification for unconstitutional methods. This sentence keeps reminding all of us that this House should maintain its dignity in the future also. We will all enter the new House tomorrow with resolve and commitment to fulfil the hopes of 140 crore people of India. I congratulate all of you for that and wish you all the best for the new House.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE):

We all have to follow the Constitution made after independence. This building is a witness to all the major decisions of Independent India. Our Constituent Assembly sat in this building for 165 days in 11 sessions. The Constitution it created consisting of 90 thousand words came into force on January 26, 1950. At that time, Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister. At that time the work of laying the foundation of the nation was going on. Great leaders from different streams were elected in the Constituent Assembly. The Constitution that the Constitution makers gave us at that time has created a strong framework for the nation, and because of that the principles and practices of democracy are an integral part of the nature of the people even today. The Indian Constitution gave us adult franchise. Poor or rich, illiterate or literate, everyone got equal right to vote. Baba Saheb had said in his last speech in the Constituent Assembly that the work of the present Drafting Committee would have become very difficult, if this Constituent Assembly had been merely a community of persons with different views. Due to the presence of the Congress party in the meeting, both order and discipline were created in the proceedings. Baba Saheb Ambedkar endured hardships and made the Constitution by sitting day and night. On that, T.T. Krishnamachari ji had said that Dr. Ambedkar played the biggest role in the drafting committee of 7 members that formulated the Constitution. There were 7 members in it. Of these, one resigned, one member died, one member went to America, one member remained busy in the affairs of the State and 2 members were away from Delhi, their presence was less due to poor health. So the entire responsibility was on Baba Saheb Ambedkar.

We are fighting to protect that Constitution. We all have one intention that we do not want to lose what we have earned with so much pain and hard work. When India adopted democracy in 1950, many foreign scholars thought that democracy would fail here, but we strengthened it. Because of the ideals of our Constitution that are here for us, today everyone follows it. The fortunes of the country have changed in this building during the last 75 years and many laws that have changed the face of the country have been passed here. Our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru believed that Parliament remains relevant only as long as it remains a dynamic institution, constantly evolving according to the changing needs of time. Nehru ji included the most capable people in his first Cabinet. Five people, who were not in Congress, were also included. He made Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, who was opposed to his political ideology, the Minister of Industries and Supplies. He used to sit patiently and listen to his colleagues and young MPs.

The first Prime Minister regularly met opposition leaders on important issues and listened attentively to the Members of Parliament during debates. He did not want the powers of the House to be limited. He considered that a strong opposition is essential for a democratic system. There has also been a tradition of Prime Ministers giving statements on different issues in the House. But this is happening very rarely during the regime of the present Government. The House had discussions under Rule 267 on some occasions and on many occasions, Question Hour was also suspended to discuss important issues. Parliament and Legislative Assemblies are the supreme representative institutions, through which aspirations of common people get expressed. In these changing times, there should be high level discussions in these bodies to meet the increasing aspirations of the

people and the whole country should watch their live telecast. Here MPs can raise issues of public interest, and whatever they say in the House is officially recorded, so the public also has the confidence that their issues are being raised. Parliament is the guardian of the interests and rights of the people, and the Chairman is the guardian of us Members of the Parliament. When we are unable to put forth our issues, we ask for his protection. Many important discussions took place in this House. The shortcomings in the management of the Corona epidemic were also brought to the fore during the discussion in the House. This round building of Parliament has a very special place in the minds of the people of India. In the 75 years of independence, all the important decisions have been taken here. The architecture of this building has the imprint of Indian tradition. Big leaders like Nehru ji, Ambedkar ji, Vallabhbhai Patel ji used to sit in here. The best work of Parliament took place during the tenure of the first Lok Sabha. The debates on the bills of that period remain a center of curiosity even today. There are many experienced MPs in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha even today, hence everyone should get freedom of speech. Similarly, it is also necessary to send the Bills to the Standing Committees for scrutiny, so that the laws are not made in haste and have minimum flaws. Otherwise, the Courts raise objections on them, and common people think that MPs do not think about us and make laws without proper deliberation. Sometimes, Laws have to be withdrawn. This should not happen. Nowadays, the trend of passing Bills in limited time has increased, which is not good. Similarly, the number of the sittings of the Parliament is also being kept less. This is also not right. I would like to add one more thing that there are many democratic ways of expressing one's views in Parliament and as many former senior leaders have said, disrupting the House is one of them. The job of the Parliament is to discuss but when issues are ignored, creating disruption in the House cannot be termed as undemocratic. We have been trying for a long time and everyone also wants that the Women's Reservation Bill should come. Women should be given reservation. There is talk of unemployment. On one hand we talk about 75 years of independence, but on the other hand unemployment has increased so much that today 8 crore educated people are on the way. Inflation is increasing everywhere.

SHRI MOHAMMED NADIMUL HAQUE: The word 'federal' is not mentioned in the Constitution even once, yet it is the spirit and soul of this country. Remember, it is the Council of States. Do not do anything that will hurt federalism and compromises the States. Do not assault federalism 'Federalism' is a nation's precious asset. Depriving the States of funds is a threat to democracy. The double engine government that you propose is against the federalism that our founders envisioned for this country. It is against the very spirit of India. In conclusion, I must say that India's equilibrium depends on fair play. Do not penalize those States that have done better in successful implementation of schemes but oppose you politically.

SHRI SHAKTISINH GOHIL: Today we talk about parliamentary traditions and procedures, but I would say that changing the building will not do anything, rather the feeling of the heart should change. We must do what is required to preserve these traditions today. Democracy is considered the best in the world.

DR. M. THAMBIDURAI: This is Rajya Sabha, representing the States. As States' representatives, we come here and ensure that federalism has to be established. I want to say that the founder of our Dravidian Party, Anna, was the single Member of our Party at that time in this House, and we had two Members in Lok Sabha then. After that, political developments took place in a different way and my leader, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, created history in Indian politics by bringing 50 Members to the Indian Parliament - 37 Lok Sabha Members and 13 Rajya Sabha Members. When Anna was here, he fought for

the federalism and the language issue because the language is one of the important issues that we all discuss. Federalism and regional sentiments have to be respected. Anna had said that Tamil should be made the official language of this country. I would like to highlight that 1967 onwards, only Dravidian parties are ruling the State of Tamil Nadu, and no other national party has won the elections there. That is the situation because regional sentiments are also very important. Sometimes, the States are given step-motherly treatment, and they are not given due importance. At present, even though we have limited number of Members in the Rajya Sabha, we are still fighting for the people of Tamil Nadu on important issues like Cauvery and Katchatheevu. The history shows how the Parliament functions and how we play our respective roles for the welfare of the people. Sometimes, it is said that the Parliament was built by British. No, it was Indian property. Even though we are moving from this building to the new building, it is the same site, the same area where the British established the Parliament. I must appreciate Modi ji for having come forward to make the new building, which can accommodate more Members, which has better facilities. We are moving to that building for these things and not for any other reason. Parliament is the highest body in our democratic system. In our journey, we have to have respect for the States and their respective cultures. We request that the Parliament must come forward and ensure that all the languages of the Eighth Schedule must be official languages. That should be the spirit of democracy and also federalism, and this is the Parliament which should ensure this. We all know that in democracy, there must be some kind of opposition. At the same time, the Ruling Party also has to implement their policies and programmes. The Opposition must raise the issues and not disrupt the proceedings.

DR. K. KESHAVA RAO: Everybody knows we have really made great strides of progress. There is no doubt about it. Let me tell you that our journey has been a tragic journey. In the beginning, we thought of Independence for a nation, but we got two nations and ultimately it turned into two races fighting each other. It really hurts me. Today, the people are getting identified more by their religion, caste and region than as individuals. It is something that 75 years of independence could not set right. Economically, we have been a fast-growing nation. But we still have this kind of a divide. The Britishers took advantage of this at one time to differentiate those two people, the Hindus and Muslims. This is something which really hurts us today when we are standing against it. When we had independence and when Nehru went to give his stirring speech of 'Tryst with Destiny', where he said, 'we have promises to keep, if not totally, at least, substantially', we have really done substantially well during the past 75 years. I am not talking only about the last 10 years. Even during these 10 years also, we have done good. Nehru, after his speech, went to give his list of Ministers to the Governor-General. It was Gandhi ji, who said that we got independence for the country, not for the Congress. And in that Cabinet, we had people who were opposed to Congress, who did not participate in the freedom struggle at all, three of them but yet, Nehru did not have any reservation in including them. What I am telling you is the kind of broad mind the Government had at that time. It wanted to take all people along. It wanted to be inclusive. That, as I said, is being lost today. In the name of 'Hindutva', or whatever you call it, today, majoritarianism has become mass mobilization movement, which is wrong. We have a different view of majoritarianism when we speak of Hindus. But today it has become a mass movement for political mobilisation. That is also something which we must not do. The second thing that we should have done after getting independence was not only get this kind of inclusive Cabinet to govern, but we should have also wanted to get all people on the board. At the same time, we had other challenges to face. I would first try to tell you about the class approach or the class situation that we inherited at that time. Some were very rich and some were poor. What did we do in these 75 years? We did not bridge the gap at all. We can talk much about the

divide between the rich and the poor and how one per cent of the people are holding 40 per cent of the nation's wealth. All this can be discussed. Today, we are trying to talk about the 75 years of journey. I am a witness to the 75 years of journey. We must understand that a great debate went on whether we should go totally towards the Russian model or should have 'socialism' of our own. Because Ram Manohar Lohia ji and other socialists in this country thought that 'socialism' can be considered for the Indian ethos. When Mr. V.P. Singh came, the Mandal issue was there. The issue of reservation for backward classes was there in the Congress regime. We knew that there was 25 per cent in States but the point was of accepting it at national level. So, Mr. V.P. Singh is the one person who brought this and thought that this should go through which goes as a feather in the cap of the Indian achievements. Now I come to the part of religion. As I said earlier, today, we are trying to identify more by one religion rather than by our nation. There were cynics at that time when we got our independence like Churchill, Kipling, etc. All of them thought that India will not be able to sustain democracy at all. But India sustained it. Not only democracy lived here but it lived so well that other nations are looking forward to us for democracy. It is because we are a democracy since millennia. Let me also tell you this. We had communal tension; we had communal violence. But in the present time, it has become some kind of a pride. Once it comes, it really troubles you the most. Hinduism is a way of life. Anything that transcends time and space is called truth. Gandhi reduced the very aspect of God as a concept and said that truth is God. This is what Hinduism is all about. That is exactly what Hinduism has done. I consider it as one of the greatest thought processes. Hinduism is one of the greatest thought processes which take every truth. Hinduism believes that all are one that is why they say, 'Ekam Sat Viprah Bahudha Vadanti'. People may call it by different names, but truth is only one. We believed in it unlike others; I am not trying to criticize other religions. We must build a nation, the Indian nation as such. We are Indians first, Indians last, we are Indians. There is no question of first or last like *sanatanis* say 'there is no beginning and no end'. The 75 years' journey has been really rewarding, has been very good. I also congratulate you, the G20 was a welcome thing. As Gandhiji said: "Independence is not for Congress, Independence is for the nation." Let us all realize that this nation's development is for the entire nation, not for one party or one thing.

SHRI G.K. VASAN: Today is the last day of our speech in this building. Maybe, tomorrow, we all would go to the new Parliament building. This is the 75th year of our Independence. We have genuinely preserved the sovereignty, integrity, security and solidarity of this country with pride. We have made remarkable progress in these 75 years in the field of education, agriculture, healthcare, industrial growth, economic equality and even in scientific space research. We should be very thankful to our regional leaders who have been in this Parliament, spoken in the interest of the country. From Tamil Nadu, I would like to proudly quote Rajaji and Kamaraj ji, who have been the pioneers. The national approach and outlook of leaders from the South has been great in the development of this country. I must also place on record that India has achieved great heights during these nine years under the Prime Minister Modiji. To conclude, I would say that schemes, plans and programmes launched by the Government have embraced every citizen and have enhanced and improved the living conditions of every Indian.

SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR: In the last 75 years this House has had great dignity and many great men have been members of this House. Jannayak Karpoori Thakur ji had worked to implement reservation in Bihar. The Mandal Commission had put pressure on this House in 1990, it is about this House. The Mandal Commission was implemented due to the pressure that was on the government at that time. We want to request you, when we are shifting to a new building, why doesn't the government give and

implement 33% reservation for women. Out of these 75 years, the government has done many things in 9 years. I want to request the government through you that the prisoners who are lodged in jails, against whom there are no charges, who are poor, unhappy, deprived, who do not have money to get their bail, these prisoners should also be left. The second request I want to make to you is that similarly, by calling a special session or keeping a special day, inflation should be discussed and resolved. Similarly, you should have announced jobs for those who are unemployed, and the unemployment has increased. With these few words, I want to request the government through you that the government should pay attention to the issues that we have raised and work on implementing them.

DR. JOHN BRITTAS: We are having a discussion with regard to the Amrit Kaal and when we speak about Parliament, the basic aspect which we need to keep in mind is parliamentary democracy. Sir, the exercise would be meaningful if you discuss about the dreams and goals of architects of our Constitution. Sir, I will just dwell on its Preamble What does it say? It speaks about liberty, equality and fraternity. If you take justice, you will notice that we have reached the bulldozer era. If it is economic justice, we do not want to speak about the Oxfam report because that is not a good organisation for the present dispensation. You see the inequality is spiralling up. Liberty is not being assured. Another cardinal principle is equality of status and opportunities. In this connection I would like to ask about the status of the representation of minority in the present Government. Nehru's Cabinet had given representation to every segment of the people of the country. Coming to fraternity, new usage have been devised to define fraternity. We are as patriotic as you are and Maybe more. Now coming to G20, we appreciate if India gets a standing amongst the other nations. But in global indices we are last. You don't want Non-Alignment Movement to be there. Secularism is nowhere in your priorities. Democracy means accountability of the Executive to the Parliament and the Parliament being accountable to the people. When we talk about 75 years of Indian democracy, we cannot forget the name of Mahatma Gandhi. I was surprised that nobody even referred to Mahatma Gandhi. This government claims great people like Sardar Patel and Swami Vivekananda as its own. Every institution is being dismantled. Kerala contributes a lot but gets very little. This is the state of federalism. Structure does not matter, new Parliament or old Parliament. The process matters, the content matters. We should enrich our parliamentary proceedings. Let us all resolve to enrich democracy of this great nation.

SHRI VAIKO: I am extremely thankful for giving me this opportunity to participate in the discussion on Parliamentary journey of 75 years. It was also a long journey for me, having entered Parliament in 1978 as a Member of Rajya Sabha. The name of the country is changed to 'Bharat'. From where did the word 'Bharat' come from? It came from Upanishads, from Sanatana. Government should refrain from making any such change. I demanded installation of Dr. Ambedkar's Portrait in the Central Hall of Parliament.

PROF. MANOJ KUMAR JHA: Today is a very important day. This morning the Hon'ble Chairman had said that humour has gone from our lives. I have brought a book on the Constituent Assembly debates. According to me this is not 75, but I will express my views in the feel of 75. Very few people here would know that Sarojini Naidu ji had come to the Constituent Assembly after being elected from Bihar. She expressed her views in a very sweet and witty manner. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan ji also explained the benefits of simplicity and humility. From there my learned colleagues enumerated the achievements, from here some of our learned colleagues enumerated the shortcomings and I want to enumerate the challenges between the two. This is also a farewell speech to this building, in which the destiny of India was written through the Constituent Assembly. This building,

its foundation is in harmony. I would just say that the cement of harmony is coming to an end, save it. Jawahar Lal Nehru brought the objective resolution in the Constituent Assembly and the draft was presented in the Constituent Assembly by Shri B. R. Ambedkar ji. We have to balance how far we have come in terms of fundamental rights, sovereignty and as a democratic republic. High-flying words don't cover up our failures. The writings should not be changed by constructing or destroying a building. Our spirit should be the same with which our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru ji had followed. If freedom is evaluated, it will be on the basis of how much political freedom is transformed into socio-economic freedom. This country needs scientific data on the basis of which policies should be decided. There is a difference between majority and majoritarianism. We have to understand this difference. We have to live together here, I am not saying these things, Ambedkar Saheb himself had said. Our view regarding unemployment should be clear. We should think about the right to employment. A large population of this country is being viewed with suspicion. This is not correct. Portraits of our great freedom fighters should be installed in the new Parliament building.

SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: It is a privilege to us. Tomorrow, we are going to attend the new Parliament House built with modern art and technology. The Parliament has a long history. This is the building where the first Indian financial Budget was passed by the then Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. I remember when China attacked my country, my motherland, in the 60s, the then Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, had given a goodbye to the people of North-Eastern Region from India. But I salute the great parliamentarian of India from Assam, Hem Barua, who fought for Assam and who had, in the 61st Session of Parliament, warned the Government from this House. This Parliament is also witness to the imposition of Emergency in our country. Our Prime Minister rightly says that India is the mother of democracy. In Bihar, democracy was first started in Vaishali. Six hundred years ago, in Vaishali town, 7000 people locally selected their representatives to sit together and take decisions. This was the first democratic process in our country. This is the beauty of democracy that I, a son of the soil, am elected to this Parliament. In new building, we will start our new parliamentary life and our new democratic life.

SHRI JOSE K. MANI: Over the years, the parliamentary democracy has played a pivotal role in shaping India's destiny. It has been a source of progressive legislations, from the eradication of untouchability to the establishment of gender equality, from comprehensive land reforms to the liberalisation of our economy. As low as only 25 per cent referral rate of the Bills to the Committees during the 16th Lok Sabha clearly shows that the Government is not open to the scrutiny and engagement that the Committee system offers. The suppression of the dissent, be it from the civil society, academia or the media is a matter of deep concern. Curtailing these Fundamental Rights poses a threat to the health of democracy. May our Parliament continue to be the beacon of hope and the voice of the people for the generations to come!

SHRI PRAFUL PATEL: During these 75 years of Independence, our country has really come a long way and our democracy, no matter what the assaults have been from within and outside, has withstood the test of time and has got stronger by the passing day. Our Constitution can be rated as one of the finest constitutions drafted anywhere for any country in the world. If a country as populous as India, which has 140 crore people who speak so many languages, so many dialects, follow so many religions, and, which comprises of so many States and so many ethnicities, remains together as one, it is something which really astonishes many people in the world. Today in our country, whether it is gas connection or telephone connection or any other field, there has been

progress on a large scale. This is a big example for the world. When we complete 75 years, talk about 'Amrit Kaal' and talk about moving from this House to the new House, then what should be today's India and future's India, how should modern India be, for this, there should definitely be a good discussion in the House. We talk a lot about America's democracy, but many people may not know that even in America's democracy, people of African descent also got the right to vote in the 1960s when Martin Luther King fought for them. Before that they did not have equal rights. In our country, Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar and our Constituent Assembly along with him gave equal rights to everyone in this country in our Constitution in 1950. We will go to the new house. A glimpse of a modern India and future India will be visible in the new building.

SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA: While speaking on 75 years of our journey, we must remember some of the key milestones in the history of Indian Parliament. The Constituent Assembly convened for the first time on December 9, 1946. So, our journey starts from there. On 26 January, 1950, India adopted its Constitution, a momentous event for Indian parliamentary democracy. In 1952, the first general elections were held, marking the initiation of our democracy. In 1956, the States Reorganisations Act was passed, leading to reshaping of State boundaries. There was some struggle, but the Members of the State Assembly had given shape to this country, particularly by re-organizing the States for the convenience of the people and administration. The significant milestones in India's political and social development, such as the second general election, the liberation of Goa and Daman & Diu, and the amendment to the Constitution's Preamble in the 42nd Amendment during the mid-20th century were highlighted. In 1986, The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act was enacted, which aimed to provide equal rights to women from various religious backgrounds. The economic liberalization initiated in 1991, led to India's economic progress and its current status as the fifth-largest economy globally. During the progress of parliamentary democracy, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was implemented to streamline the taxation system which enriched the national exchequer. In 2019, Article 370 was abrogated, which unified India under the slogan of 'One Nation, One Flag, and One Constitution.' India not only successfully managed the COVID-19 pandemic but also produced vaccines. The increased inclusivity in Indian democracy, with a rise in women's representation and a substantial increase in the number of voters, is also emphasized as a significant achievement. Though, India has made substantial progress in the past 75 years, there is a need to continue striving for development and become a developed economy. India will achieve this goal within the next 25 years by 2047 when the country celebrates 100 years of independence. While concluding I acknowledges the challenges and changes in India's parliamentary dynamics over the years. This inclusivity is seen through increased women's representation, citizen engagement in public debates, the role of Parliamentary Committees, and the passage of legislation aimed at social welfare and labour rights. Commemorating the key milestones in the history of the Indian Parliament, we are reminded of the enduring spirit of democracy in the nation. It starts with the adoption of the Constitution in 1950 and culminates in the recent inauguration of a new Parliament Building in 2023. These events symbolize India's growth, resilience, and adaptability in the face of various challenges. We continue to uphold democratic principles, inclusivity, and transparency, which have been fundamental to India's parliamentary democracy. By learning from the past and embracing future opportunities, India can maintain robust and responsive democratic institutions that meet the evolving needs and aspirations of its diverse population.

SHRI VIKRAMJIT SINGH SAHNEY: The transition from the historic Parliament House to the new Parliament Building marks a significant milestone in the 75th

year of the Indian Parliament. The Parliament House is not a physical structure but a living institution that embodies the core values and ideals of India's democracy. We embody the unique fibre of unity in diversity, secularism, pluralism, social justice, and equal fundamental rights for all citizens. The speech commemorates the historical significance of Parliament House and the values it represents while paying tribute to those who have contributed to India's democracy and freedom struggle. For a smooth functioning of Parliament, I think that both Treasury Benches and the Opposition have to play together a positive and constructive role so that optimum productivity of this institution is maintained. It is our humble invocation to every individual sitting here that we all should commit to this Parliament ensure healthy debates, discussions, least disruptions and adjournments and we do maximum work for the nation building.

SHRIMATI MAMATA MOHANTA: India is my country, and we are only Indians. I salute all the freedom fighters and the creator of the Constitution, Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar. Due to this Constitution, the system of governance came into force in the country. In this democracy, equal importance was given to the legislature, executive and judiciary. There are more than 700 tribal communities in India. Social and economic development, protection of their culture and protection of language are being given to the tribal classes by all the states. They are being given education in their own language. There are many institutions in our country including universities, global universities and research universities. More than 77 percent people in this country are educated. There are 60 percent farmers in the agriculture sector. The government has also made many schemes for these farmers. There has also been a change in the health sector and all diseases are being treated immediately. Today our country is far ahead in all these areas. A new history of India will be written from this new Parliament.

* * * * *

P. C. MODY,
Secretary-General.

rssynop@sansad.nic.in

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