

RAJYA SABHA

*SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE

(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

Friday, April 04, 2025/ Chaitra 14, 1947 (Saka)

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

MR. CHAIRMAN: The entire House must rejoice and share the joy of those whose birthday is today or tomorrow. Hon'ble Members, pleased to extend birthday greetings to hon'ble Members of Parliament, Shri Shaktisinh Gohil, Shri Arun Singh, -- what a coincidence, the two veterans have their birthdays on the same date -- Shri Sukhendu Sekhar Ray and Shri R. Dharmar. Their birthdays are tomorrow - April 5. Hon'ble Members, when the House is not in Session, I have the extreme pleasure and satisfaction to directly talk to those hon'ble Members and greet them.

Shri Shaktisinh Gohil represents the glorious State of Gujarat in this august House since June, 2020. Prior to this, Shri Shaktisinh Gohil has served four terms as a Member of the Gujarat Legislative Assembly, from 1990-95, a period I share with you. You were in the Assembly, I was in the Parliament. Then, from 1995-98, 2007-2012, and 2014-2017. He held key positions, including Minister of State for Finance, Education, and Health in the Government of Gujarat, and he also hailed the position of the Leader of Opposition in the Gujarat Legislative Assembly when the Leader of the House, then Chief Minister, now the Prime Minister of the country in his third term.

Shri Shaktisinh Gohil has represented India at various international conferences valuably strengthening democratic dialogue and parliamentary governance worldwide.

He is an extremely involved Member of this House, making sharp incisive and well thought out contributions. He happens to be a distinguished advocate and agriculturist. He has keen interest in regional languages and folk music. An avid sports enthusiast, he has led local cricket clubs and has been actively engaged in cricket, volleyball, and chess. On your birthday, my suggestion is, take parliamentary work also sportingly.

Shri Arun Singh is representing the State of Uttar Pradesh in this august House, for a second term (2019-2020 and 2020-present).

A Chartered Accountant by profession, Shri Singh believes in auditing himself before auditing others in his organizational duties. He has made significant contributions in public life, in the field of finance and management. His tenure as Director of the State Bank of India and the Union Bank for seven years is remembered for the pivotal role he played in bringing about transparency and accountability.

Shri Arun Singh had worked on key projects with the World Bank and the United Nations. Shri Singh plays a critical role in his organization as the National General Secretary

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

of BJP. Shri Singh also has the distinction of being Secretary of the Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Research Foundation.

Married to Shrimati Meenakshi Singh, the couple blessed with daughters, Ikshita Singh and Ashmita Singh and son Akshit Singh.

Shri Sukhendu Sekhar Ray – a picture of politeness and grace – always believes in rule-based regime, is both advocate like me and currently serving his third term in this august House continually from 2011 - First from 2011 to 17, 2017 to 23 and from 2023 still counting.

He is a veteran leader of the All India Trinamool Congress, consistently working at the grassroots with sublime commitment to public service. He has always been participant in parliamentary debates, exhibiting due diligence and highest consideration to the Chair.

His nomination to the Panel of Vice-Chairpersons for seven times (July 2014, April 2018, July 2020, July 2022, December 2022, July 2023 and June 2024) reflects his keen interest in parliamentary decorum and knowledge of procedure.

Beyond his legislative role, Shri Ray was Member of the National Jute Board (2015-2020) and that incidentally takes care of about four million farmers. He served as the Vice-President of the Calcutta High Court Bar Association from 2009 to 2011.

A prolific writer, Shri Ray has authored several notable books, including Chayatarini (2009) and Pranab Mukherjee – The All-Season Man (2010) and has also served as the editor of Jago Bangla, a Bengali daily.

Married to the late Shrimati Mahashweta Ray, the couple is blessed with daughter, Saswati Ray.

Shri R. Dharmar is representing the State of Tamil Nadu in this august House as a Member of Parliament since June 2022, serving his first term.

An agriculturist by profession, Shri Dharmar holds a B.A. degree and, as a dedicated member of the AIADMK party, continues to serve the people of Tamil Nadu in all earnestness and commitment. Widely respected as a local leader, he has earned a strong reputation as a grassroots representative tirelessly addressing the needs and aspirations of his community and others. He was married to late Shrimati Sivakami; the couple is blessed with daughters — Anandi and Indupriya.

Hon'ble Members, on my own and on behalf of this House, I wish them a long, healthy and happy life and extend greetings to their family members and friends.

FAREWELL TO THE RETIRING MEMBERS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, reception of Members in this House and farewell are very touching moments. Farewell is not a disconnect. It is only their absence from the House and sometimes, for the Members of this House, more often than not, their presence is as impactful as their absence. Two of our esteemed colleagues, Shri Birendra Prasad Baishya and Shri Mission Ranjan Das, representing the State of Assam, will retire from this House in their present term on June 14, 2025. All of us will miss their presence as their dedicated service and contributions have enriched the deliberations and their informed discourse has been enlightening.

Shri Birendra Prasad Baishya, a senior parliamentarian and an experienced leader, has served as a Member of the Eleventh Lok Sabha and, now, in his second term in the Rajya

Sabha. He has also held the office of the Union Minister of Steel and Mines, from 1996 to 1998.

Shri Baishya has been a distinguished voice in this House, actively engaging in discussions on key issues concerning Assam's development and the welfare of its people. He has been ever alert to seek attention of the Chair. His keen insights and unwavering commitment to societal upliftment are truly commendable. Notably, his dedication to public causes, particularly in promoting sports and youth development, has been remarkable. His contributions to policy discussions, especially in infrastructure, industrial growth, and social justice, will be remembered with great appreciation by this House. He has advocated and strongly appreciated the phenomenal development in the North-East.

Shri Mission Ranjan Das, a dedicated public servant and a staunch advocate for the rights of the people of Assam, brings with him vast legislative experience, having served four terms as a Member of the Assam Legislative Assembly. He has also held key positions as Chairman of the Assam Industrial Development Corporation and the Assam State Transport Corporation, contributing significantly to the State's economic and infrastructural growth.

His active participation in legislative debates and his unwavering commitment to the progress of the State have been praiseworthy. He has worked tirelessly to address the concerns of the people, particularly those in rural areas, in the field of education, and self-employment generation. His efforts to strengthen democratic values, improve administration and governance have been of immense value to the proceedings of this House.

Hon'ble Members, I place it on record my heartfelt appreciation for the contributions and service rendered by both the Members to parliamentary democracy and to society at large. Their dedication, wisdom, and experience have enriched the functioning of this House.

On behalf of the entire House, I extend my best wishes to Shri Birendra Prasad Baishya and Shri Mission Ranjan Das for good health, happiness, and long, fulfilling years ahead. The House shall always cherish their association. Hon'ble Members, I need to inform, for ex-Members, my office has a dedicated service. If they inform my office, they are taken care of for logistics and transport so that they should have no such difficulty.

VALEDICTORY REMARKS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon'ble Members, before I make observations about this Session, I would personally express my gratitude to the hon'ble Members who felt concerned yesterday while I was sitting. There was a direct intervention by Sonia *ji* that I must have water. There was intervention from Nadda *ji*, Health Minister, by a slip, that I must have water. This convergence for health of the Chairman, I am ever indebted.

Hon'ble Members, we have come to the conclusion of a very productive 267th Session of Rajya Sabha. As we conclude sitting of this Session, because technically this Session ends when the hon'ble President takes the constitutional step, I extend my gratitude to each one of you for your active participation and valuable contributions to the enriched discussions and soothing deliberations. The debate and discourse in the House were exemplified by enlightened inputs and varying opinion shades. After a long gap, the House witnessed welcome wit, humour, satire, sarcasm and repartee apart from intellectual fusion, while ensuring parliamentary decorum, cross-party collaboration and legislative rigour. The House engaged in insightful debate on the Motion of Thanks to the hon'ble President for the

Address rendered by her, spanning three days with active participation of 73 hon'ble Members. The deliberations on the Union Budget 2025-26 were equally incisive and comprehensive, lasting over three days, and drawing the considered contribution of 89 hon'ble Members. Besides, the House held substantive discussion on the working of four key Ministries of the Government. On the Union Budget 2025-26, we had lively interaction between the hon'ble Finance Minister and the former Finance Minister that was absolutely soothing to us. As usual, they agreed to disagree. The introduction of as many as 49 Private Members' Bills in this House needs special mention. The concern of the hon'ble Members for Private Members' Bills is taken note of by me and I will be in touch with the Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition to see that we act more diligently in this direction. Overall, the House functioned for a total of 159 hours, including more than four hours after midnight. The productivity of this Session stood at 119 per cent.

On April 3, 2025, the Rajya Sabha began proceedings and etched its name in the annals of legislative history with an unprecedented sitting from 11.00 a.m. on that day until 4.02 a.m. the following day, that is, this day -- the longest in its history. This would send a very great message to the people at large and enhance belief in this great institution. During this marathon sitting, the House passed the transformative Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2025, bringing transparency and accountability to work property management, while modernising legacy systems and upholding principles of equity and justice.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Shri Harivansh. His wise counsel has always been a great asset to me. I extend gratitude also to the Vice-Chairpersons, the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the party leaders and all the hon'ble Members for their invaluable assistance and co-operation in conducting these proceedings.

I greatly recognise and acknowledge the diligent efforts of the Secretary-General and the staff for having engaged in smooth functioning of the House, working long hours. The House also had the occasion to see the presence of the hon'ble Prime Minister in this House.

The Session will be remembered for its historic legislative accomplishments and the spirit of unity that prevailed. It stands as a defining moment in India's parliamentary journey, a powerful reminder of what can be achieved through dialogue, perseverance and shared purpose. The Rajya Sabha has once again set the democratic standards worth emulation by others. Hon'ble Members, our future sittings will see enhancement of these democratic values getting blossomed.

The National Song, 'Vande Mataram' was played.

The House adjourned sine die.

P. C. MODY,
Secretary-General.

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