

RAJYA SABHA

STATISTICAL INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE 217TH SESSION [02-07-2009 to 07-08-2009]

1. The 217th Session, the first Budget Session after the constitution of new Lok Sabha, commenced on Thursday, the 2nd July, 2009. The Session, as scheduled, comes to an end today, the 7th August, 2009.
2. The Session had 26 sittings in all and the House sat for about 148 hours. During the Session, more than 9½ hours were lost on the issues like (a) alleged remarks made by Smt. Rita Bahuguna Joshi, Chief of Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh against Ms. Mayawati, Chief Minister (UP); (b) reported move of the Govt. to reduce the security cover of Kum. Mayawati, Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi and Shri Lalu Prasad Yadav; (c) reported attack on Journalists in Assam; (d) reported intervention of the Central Govt. in the affairs of Bundelkhand (UP); and (e) reported decision to bifurcate the SGPC by the State Governments in Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. The House, however, made up this loss by skipping lunch recess and sitting late for about 31 Hours to complete legislative and other important business. On four days i.e. 16th & 23rd July, and 3rd & 6th August, 2009, the Question Hour could not take place.
3. Seventeen new Members, elected in the recently concluded Bye-elections to the Rajya Sabha from different States joined the House during the Session.
4. The House was informed by the Chair about the vacancy caused due to the resignation of Shri Balihari Babu, Shri Hansraj Bhardwaj,

- Members representing the States of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana respectively and Dr. K. Kasturirangan, a nominated Member of this House.
5. During the Session, the House condoled the death of six former Members of the Rajya Sabha, *namely*, Prof. Naunihal Singh, Shri D. Heerachand, Dr. G. Vijaya Mohan Reddy, Dr. M. N. Das, Shri Syed Rahmat Ali and Shri Devendra Nath Dwivedi.
 6. There were 7 *suo motu* Statements by Prime Minister/Ministers which were either made or laid. These Statements related to (a) Anniversary of the attack on Indian Embassy in Kabul on the 7th July, 2008; (b) Significant developments in our neighbourhood; (c) Accident at Delhi Metro site on the 12th July, 2009; (d) Prime Ministers' visit to Italy, France and Egypt; (e) Recent visit to India by the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Ms. Hillary Clinton; (f) decisions taken by the board of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on the basis of the report of high-level committee that enquired into the accident at the DMRC construction site on the 12th of July, 2009; (g) import of raw and white/refined sugar. These statements provided opportunities to Members to seek further clarifications. 20 statements were also laid in pursuance of the Direction of the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, dated the 24-9-2004 on the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the Reports of various DRPS Committees.
 7. The Railway and General Budgets for the year 2009-10 were laid on the Table of the House on the 3rd and 6th July, 2009 respectively. The discussion on the Railway Budget was spread over three days, 67 Members participated in the debate which lasted for more than 12½ hours. The discussion on the General Budget was also spread

over three days, 55 Members participated in the debate which lasted for more than 13 hours.

8. The House also discussed the Jharkhand Budget alongwith the Appropriation Bill and the Statutory Resolution seeking approval of the continuance in force of the Presidents' Rule in the State of Jharkhand for a further period of 6 months with effect from the 19th July, 2009.
9. Working of six Ministries, *namely* (a) Health and Family Welfare; (b) Social Justice and Empowerment; (c) Communications and Information Technology; (d) Road Transport and Highways; (e) External Affairs and (f) Environment and Forests, as recommended by the B.A.C. was discussed at length in the House. The discussions on the working of the Ministries lasted for more than 32 hours and 126 Members participated in the debates.
10. The following 9 matters of Urgent Public Importance were discussed in the form of a Calling Attention during the Session:-
 - (i) growing number of swine flue cases in the country;
 - (ii) depletion of the population of tigers and in some cases their extinction in many protected areas in the country;
 - (iii) disturbance of peace in North Cachar Hills District of Assam;
 - (iv) deteriorating financial condition of Air India;
 - (v) hike in price of petrol and diesel and pricing policy of petroleum products;
 - (vi) uncertain position of Monsoon and deficient rainfall in the country causing hardships and anxiety among the farmers and the need for a contingency plan therefor;

- (vii) increasing incidents of so-called honour killings and honour related crimes in the country and the role of self-proclaimed panchayats therein;
 - (viii) large scale loss of jobs due to retrenchment and closure of industries including industries in the IT Sector as a result of global economic slowdown and recession and Governments' reaction thereto; and
 - (ix) power generation and other national priorities at affordable price throughout the country.
11. The following issues were discussed at length for about 7 hours in the form of Short Duration Discussions:-
- i. Need to strengthen the measures to prevent ragging in the Institutions of Higher Education;
 - ii. Increasing obscenity and vulgarity in Television programmes being shown on different Channels against cultural ethos of the country;
 - iii. Continued rise in prices of essential commodities in the country.
12. There were about 200 Special Mentions on Matters of Public Importance.
13. 2 Government Bills were listed for introduction of which one Bill was introduced and the introduction of the Judges (Declaration of Assets and Liabilities) Bill was opposed and therefore deferred. 8 Government Bills were passed/returned during the Session. (a) the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill seeking to provide for free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen; (b) the Finance and Appropriation Bills; (c) the

Constitution (109th Amendment) Bill seeking to continue the reservation for SC/STs and the representation of the Anglo-Indian Community by nomination in the House of the People and the Legislative Assemblies for a further period of ten years; (d) the Metro Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2009 were the notable legislation which the House passed/returned during the Session.

14. During the Session, 21 Private Members' Bills were introduced. The issues regarding need to (a) provide for establishment of a Voluntary Organizations Regulatory Authority for registration and regulation of voluntary organizations in the country; and (b) amend articles 85 and 174 of the Constitution were discussed at length through Private Member' Bills.
15. The following issues were also discussed through Private Members' Resolutions:-
 - a. need to take urgent steps to increase power generation in the country; and
 - b. urging upon the Government to take effective steps to ensure that the three organs of the State function smoothly so as to avoid any occasional confrontation between legislature and the judiciary.
16. During the Session, 10 Reports/Statements of various Parliamentary Committees including those of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees were presented or laid on the Table of the House.
17. 90 important matters, with the permission of Hon'ble Chairman, were raised by Members during the Session.

18. During the Session, 500 Starred Questions and 3810 Unstarred Questions were admitted and answered. Of these 108 Starred Questions were orally answered.
19. The House bade farewell to the six of our nominated members, *namely*, Dr. Bimal Jalan, Shri Dara Singh, Shrimati Hema Malini, Dr. Chandan Mitra, Dr. Narayan Singh Manaklao and Shri Ram Jethmalani who are retiring on the 26th August, 2009 after completion of their term of office.
20. The New Website of Rajya Sabha (both in English and Hindi) was launched on the 30th July, 2009.

Highlights of work transacted during the 217th Session – At a glance

Sittings		
Date of issue of Summons		16-06-2009
Duration of the Session		02-07-2009 to 07-08-2009
Number of actual days of sitting		26
Actual Hours of sittings (<i>excluding recess intervals</i>)		147 Hrs & 27 Mts.
Time lost due to interruptions/adjournments		more than 9½ hours
Time made up by late sittings/skipping lunch recess		About 33 Hrs.
Date of prorogation of Session		11-08-2009
Questions		
No. of Starred Questions listed		500
No. of Starred Questions answered orally		108
No. of Unstarred Questions listed		3810
Government Bills		
No. of Bills introduced		1
No. of Bills withdrawn		1
No. of Bills passed/returned		8
Budgets - Discussed		
No. of days the Budget (General) discussed		3
No. of days the Budget (Railways) discussed		3
No. of days the Budget (Jharkhand) discussed		1
No. of Ministries whose working was discussed		6
Private Members' Business		
No. of Bills introduced		21
No. of Bills part discussed (Under consideration)		1
No. of Bills withdrawn/negatived		1
No. of Resolution part discussed		1
No. of Resolution withdrawn/negatived		1
Oath/Affirmation		
No. of Members made and subscribed oath/affirmation		17
Statements by Ministers		
No. of <i>suo motu</i> Statements made/laid by Ministers		7
Matters of public importance raised		
No. of Calling Attentions		9
No. of Short Duration Discussions		3
No. of Special Mentions		200
No. of Matters raised with permission		90
Papers Laid on the Table		1474 papers