

## SHORT DURATION DISCUSSIONS

### **Introduction**

One of the important parliamentary devices available to members to draw the attention of the Government to matters of urgent public importance is to raise short duration discussions on such matters. Prior to 1953, there was no provision in the Rules for raising a discussion in the House on a matter of urgent public importance except by way of a resolution or a motion. Whenever members wanted to draw the attention of the Government to a matter of urgent public importance, they resorted to adjournment motions. As an adjournment motion is in the nature of a censure motion, recourse to such a procedure was not considered appropriate in the new set-up, when the Government became responsible to Parliament. With a view to providing opportunities to members to discuss matters of urgent public importance, a convention was established in March, 1953 whereby members could raise discussions for short duration without a formal motion or vote thereon. The procedure has now come to form part of the Rules.

### **Notice for raising discussion**

2. Notice to raise a short duration discussion is to be given in writing, addressed to the Secretary-General,

specifying clearly and precisely the matter to be raised. Standard printed forms for giving notices of short duration discussions are available in Parliamentary Notice Office with effect from 18 July, 2016, Members can also table notices in electronic form through e-portal, especially developed for the purpose. The notice should be accompanied by an explanatory note stating reasons for raising the discussion and should be supported by signatures of at least two other members. Only one matter can be raised in a notice. A notice signed by more than one member is deemed to have been given by the first signatory only.

3. Notices for raising short duration discussion can be tabled from the date following the date of issue of summons for a session. *Inter se* priority of notices on the same subject received within seven days from the date following the date of issue of summons for a session is determined by ballot if the time gap between the issue of summons and the commencement of the session is more than 21 days. Priority of notices received thereafter is determined according to the date and time of their receipt. In case the time gap between the issue of summons and the commencement of the session is 21 days or less, *inter se* priority of notices is determined according to the date and time of their receipt.

4. Notices of short duration discussions regarding statements to be made in the House by Ministers or statements, reports or papers to be laid on the Table are

entertained from 10.00 hours on the day the List of Business wherein the item has been included, is circulated to members. In case that day happens to be a Saturday, Sunday or a public holiday, the notices are entertained from 10.00 hours on the next working day.

5. In case a supplementary List of Business is circulated in the House with regard to a statement, notices in respect of that statement, received within fifteen minutes of circulation of the supplementary List of Business, are deemed to have been received at the same point of time and their *inter se* priority determined by ballot.

6. In case an announcement is made by the Chair about a statement to be made by a Minister in the House, notices in respect of that statement are accepted from the time the announcement is made by the Chair in the House.

7. In case a statement is made without being included in the List of Business or supplementary List of Business or without any announcement being made by the chair in regard thereto, notices in respect of such statement are accepted from the time the statement is actually made in the House.

8. All notices received within fifteen minutes of announcement by the Chair, or statement by the Minister under paragraphs 6 and 7 above are deemed to have been received at the same point of time and their *inter se* priority determined by ballot.

*Explanation.*—The period of fifteen minutes referred to in paragraphs 5 and 8 above is computed from the time of completion of circulation of List of Business or the announcement by the Chair or the statement of the Minister, as the case may be.

9. All such notices are to be delivered in the Parliamentary Notice Office and these are not to be passed on to any officer at the Table of the House. In any case the time of receipt of the notice in the Parliamentary Notice Office alone is taken into account for determining the *inter se* priority of the notices.

10. In case notices of short duration discussion on a subject matter are received in general form as well as on the statement made by a Minister on the same subject in the House and it is decided to have a discussion on the subject, the notices in general form are not taken into account and only those seeking discussion on Minister's statement are considered.

**Conditions of admissibility**

11. A notice of short duration discussion to be admissible should, *inter alia*, satisfy the following conditions:

- (i) It should relate to a matter which is primarily the concern of the Government of India;
- (ii) It should not contain allegations/unparliamentary expressions etc.;

(iii) it should not raise a matter of hypothetical nature;

(iv) it should not raise a matter which lacks an element of urgency.

12. The Speaker decides the admissibility of a notice of short duration discussion. If an early opportunity is otherwise available for discussion of the matter, the Speaker may refuse to admit the notice.

**Fixation of date for discussion**

13. The Speaker may allot two sittings in a week for short duration discussions and allow such time not exceeding two hours at or before the end of the sitting for such discussion. The Business Advisory Committee normally selects the subject for discussion and also allocates the time therefor. Generally, discussions for short duration are taken up on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In exceptional circumstances, these may be taken up on any other day.

**Procedure for raising discussion**

14. After a notice is admitted and date fixed for its discussion, the item is included in the List of Business for that date in the names of the first two members.

15. The first member in whose name the discussion stands makes a short statement. Any member who has previously intimated to the Speaker, is permitted to take

part in the discussion. The Minister replies briefly at the end.

16. There is no formal motion before the House nor is there any voting. The purpose of the discussion is that members who are in possession of some facts about the matter should apprise the House of the same.

17. The member who raises the discussion has no right of reply.

**Limit on raising discussions**

18. Unless the Speaker otherwise directs, No-Day-Yet-Named Motions and Short Duration Discussions are arranged in such a way that no member moves or raises more than two of these during a session.

*[Short duration discussions are governed by Rules 193—196 of Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha and Directions 113BB and 113C of Directions by the Speaker.]*

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## **PREFACE**

This Abstract is part of the Parliamentary Procedure Abstracts Series and describes the procedure regarding Short Duration Discussions. It is based on the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, the Directions issued by the Speaker under the Rules of Procedure and the decisions/rulings given by the Chair from time-to-time. It is intended to serve as a handy guide for ready reference.

The information contained in this Abstract is, however, not exhaustive. It will, therefore, be prudent to refer to and rely on the original sources for full information.

NEW DELHI

*Secretary General*