

## HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSIONS

Members have a right to get information from the Government on any matter of public concern by means of questions to Ministers. When members feel that the answer given to a question, Starred or Unstarred or Short Notice, is not complete or does not give the desired information or needs elucidation on a matter of fact, they may be allowed by the Speaker to raise a discussion in the House for half an hour. The procedure is, therefore, termed as 'Half-an-Hour Discussion'.

2. Half-an-Hour Discussions are generally held on the three sittings in a week, namely, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. While specifying the date of discussion, Members should ensure that the date of discussion falls on any of the above three sittings. In case, where wrong dates are given by the members, the notice will be deemed to have been given for the next available date.

3. No Half-an-Hour Discussion is fixed on the first day of the session. Half-an-Hour Discussions are also not usually held during the Budget Session till the disposal of financial business.

4. A member wishing to raise Half-an-Hour Discussion should give notice in writing, in the prescribed

printed form available in the Parliamentary Notice Office. The notice should be addressed to the Secretary-General.

5. While giving notice, the member should indicate in the form at the appropriate places the Question number (in reply to which further elucidation is required), with its date of answer. The point or points desired to be raised for seeking further clarifications should also be specified briefly. The members should write their name in block letters below the signature and should also mention their Division Number.

6. The member should also indicate in the notice the date on which the discussion is desired to be raised.

7. A notice is also required to be accompanied by an explanatory note stating the reasons for raising discussion and should also be signed. In cases where such explanatory notes are not furnished by the members, the notices are returned to them.

#### **Notice for raising Discussion**

8. Notices for raising Half-an-Hour Discussions should normally be given within 3 days of answering of the question and at least 3 days in advance of the day on which the discussion is desired to be raised. The Speaker may, with the consent of the Minister concerned, waive the requirement concerning the period of notice.

9. Notices for raising Half-an-Hour Discussions are received in the Parliamentary Notice Office. A Notice Box is placed outside Parliamentary Notice Office to enable members to deposit notices during hours when Parliamentary Notice Office is closed.

10. If the notice is signed by more than one member, it is deemed to have been signed by the first signatory only. Each notice may, therefore, be signed by only one member.

11. A notice admitted and put down in the List of Business during the last week of a session, but is not taken up for want of time etc., may be revived by the member in the next session provided a fresh notice is given within one week of the commencement of the next session. Its inclusion in the List of Business will however, depend on its securing precedence in the ballot as per normal procedure.

**Conditions of Admissibility**

12. The following conditions are required to be fulfilled for the admissibility of Half-an-Hour Discussion:

- (i) It should be based on an answer to a recent question in Lok Sabha.
- (ii) It should be intended to get elucidation on matters of fact and should not seek to revise the policy of Government.

(iii) It should relate to a matter of sufficient public importance.

13. If a notice is admitted and put down in the List of Business, the discussion is normally limited to half-an-hour and is held in the last half-an-hour of a sitting.

**Inclusion of Discussion on Agenda**

14. All notices of Half-an-Hour Discussions admitted for a particular day, are balloted and the notice which secures first priority in ballot is put down for discussion. The discussion is put down on the relevant date in the name of the member, who has secured first priority in the ballot.

\*15. In case the member, whose notice of Half-an-Hour Discussion has secured first priority in ballot, is not likely to be present on the relevant date, the notice which has secured second priority in ballot is put down for discussion.

16. The member and the Ministry concerned are informed as soon as a discussion is fixed for a particular date.

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\*Bulletin-Part II dated 9.11.1981.

17. In respect of other notices which fail to secure first priority, the members concerned are informed that their notices had not secured the priority and hence are not being included in the List of Business on the date specified by them. The members concerned are also informed that they may, if so desire, revive their notices specifying fresh date.

18. Normally, only one Half-an-Hour Discussion is put down for a sitting. Further, not more than one such discussion is put down in the name of any one member in a week. Also not more than two Half-an-Hour Discussions may be raised by one member in the same session. Therefore, if a member has raised such discussion once, the other notice(s) by the member will not be balloted for the remaining sitting(s) of the week. Likewise, where a member has already raised two Half-an-Hour discussions, the other notices by the same member during the same session will not be balloted.

19. On the day for which the discussion is placed on the agenda, at the appointed time (usually 5.30 p.m.), the member in whose name it stands in the agenda makes a short statement and members not exceeding four, who have previously intimated to the Speaker before the commencement of the sitting and have secured precedence in the ballot, are permitted to ask a question each for further elucidation on any matter of fact. Thereafter the Minister concerned replies briefly. There

is neither a formal motion before the House nor voting. If a member, who has secured one of the first four places in the ballot, is absent, no other member is permitted to ask the question in that place.

20. If a Half-an-Hour Discussion included in the List of Business for particular sitting, is not disposed of at the sitting, it is not set down for any further sitting unless the member so desires, and in the latter case, it has to go through the ballot, if more than one notice is admitted for that sitting.

#### **General**

21. The Speaker may postpone Half-an-Hour Discussion to some other day, if the House decides to dispose of an urgent business instead of the Half-an-Hour Discussion included in the List of Business.

22. When a discussion is interrupted for want of quorum or when there is no time for the Minister to give a full reply to the debate, the Minister may, with the permission of the Speaker, lay a statement on the Table of the House.

*[Half-an-Hour Discussions are governed by Rule 55 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha and Direction 19 of the Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha.]*

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## **PREFACE**

This Abstract is part of the Parliamentary Procedure Abstracts Series and describes the procedure regarding Half-an-Hour 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*