

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS AND MOTION OF THANKS

President's Address

The Constitution provides for an Address by the President to either House of Parliament or both Houses assembled together. The provision for Address by the Head of State to Parliament goes back to the year 1921 when the Central Legislature was set up for the first time under the Government of India Act, 1919.

2. The President may address both Houses of Parliament assembled together or either House of Parliament separately in the following two cases:

- (i) Article 86 (1) of the Constitution provides that the President may address either House of Parliament or both Houses assembled together, and for that purpose require the attendance of members. However, since the commencement of the Constitution, the President has not so far addressed either House or both Houses assembled together under the provision of this article.

- (ii) Article 87 (1) of the Constitution provides that at the commencement of the first session after each general election to the House of the People and at the commencement of the first session of each year the President shall address both Houses of Parliament assembled together and inform Parliament of the causes of its summons.

When a session of Lok Sabha is not prorogued after being adjourned *sine-die* and subsequently re-convened to meet in the next calendar year, the President, in such cases, is not required to address both Houses of Parliament assembled together.

Contents of the Address

3. Being a statement of Policy of the Government, the Address is drafted by the Government who are responsible for its contents. It contains a review of the activities and achievements of the Government during the previous year and sets out the policies which it wishes to pursue with regard to important internal and international problems. It also indicates the main items of legislative business which are proposed to be brought during the session to be held in that year.

Fixation of Date for the Address

4. The President's Address under Article 87(1) of the Constitution is a regular feature. In the case of the first session after each general election to Lok Sabha,

the President addresses both Houses of Parliament assembled together after the members have made and subscribed the oath or affirmation and the Speaker has been elected. It generally takes two days to complete these preliminaries. No other business is transacted till the President has addressed both Houses of Parliament assembled together in the case of the first session of each year; the President's Address takes place at the time and date notified for commencement of the session of both the Houses of Parliament.

5. Members who have not made Oath or Affirmation: Members who have not made and subscribed the oath or affirmation are admitted to the Central Hall on the occasion of the Address on production of the certificate of election granted to them by the Returning Officers or on introduction by a sitting member who had made oath or affirmation or on production of the summons.

Ceremonies connected with the Address

6. President's Address to both the Houses of Parliament assembled together is the most solemn and formal act under the Constitution. Utmost dignity and decorum befitting that occasion is maintained. Any action on the part of a member which mars the occasion of the President's Address or creates disturbance is punishable by the House to which the member belongs.

7. In connection with the President's Address certain ceremonies are observed. Members of both the Houses

of Parliament assemble together in the Central Hall of Parliament House at least five minutes before the arrival of the President. In the Central Hall, seats are reserved for Prime Minister, Ministers, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha and Leaders of Parties in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha. Seats are also reserved for the members of Panel of Chairpersons, Lok Sabha; Panel of Vice-Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Chairpersons of Parliamentary Committees and Deputy Leaders/Chief Whips of Parties in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha. Members are free to occupy other seats which are not allotted/earmarked. Members are expected not to leave the Central Hall when the President is addressing.

8. The President arrives at Gate No. 5, Parliament House in the State Coach or in the car and is received by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, the Prime Minister, the Speaker, Lok Sabha, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and the Secretaries-General of the two Houses. Thereafter, the President is conducted to the Central Hall in a procession. As soon as the Presidential procession enters the Central Hall, the Marshal announces the arrival of the President. Simultaneously two trumpeters positioned in the Gallery above the dais sound the fanfare till the President reaches her/his seat on the dais. All the members then rise in their places and remain standing

until the President has taken her/his seat. Immediately thereafter the National Anthem is played by the band of Rashtrapati Bhavan which is positioned in one of the Lobbies of the Central Hall. The President then reads the Address in Hindi or English. The other version of the Address is read out by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha. After the conclusion of the Address, the National Anthem is played again. The President thereafter leaves the Central Hall in a procession which is formed in the same manner as at the time of arrival. The members remain standing till the procession leaves the Central Hall. On reaching the gate, the President takes leave of the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, the Prime Minister, the Speaker, Lok Sabha, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and the Secretaries-General of the two Houses.

Laying of a Copy of the Address on the Table

9. In order that the Address delivered by the President forms part of, and is incorporated in the proceedings of the House, both the Houses meet separately in their respective Chambers half-an-hour after conclusion of the Address, when a copy each of the Hindi and the English versions of the Address, duly authenticated by the President, is laid on the Table by the Secretary-General, Lok Sabha. Thereafter copies of the Address in Hindi and English are made available to members in the Lobby and through the Publications Counter.

Motion of Thanks on the President's Address

Scope of Discussion

10. Under rule 17 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, discussion on matters referred to in the President's Address takes place on a Motion of Thanks moved by a member and seconded by another member. The form of the Motion is:—

“That the Members of Lok Sabha assembled in this session are deeply grateful to the President for the Address which she/he has been pleased to deliver to both the Houses of Parliament assembled together on.....(date).”

11. On the days allotted for the discussion, the House is at liberty to discuss matters referred to in the Address. The scope of discussion on the Address is very wide and the members are free to speak on all sorts of national or international problems. Even matters which are not specifically mentioned in the Address are brought into discussion through amendments to Motion of Thanks. The only limitations are that members cannot refer to matters which are not the direct responsibility of the Central Government and that the name of the President cannot be brought in during the debate since the Government and not the President is responsible for the contents of the Address.

Amendments to Motion of Thanks on President's Address

12. Notices of amendments to Motion of Thanks on the President's Address can be tabled after the President has delivered her/his Address. Amendments may refer to matters contained in the Address as well as to matters which, in the opinion of the member, the Address has failed to mention. Amendments can be moved to the Motion of Thanks in such form as may be considered appropriate by the Speaker.

[For details, please refer to Parliamentary Procedure Abstracts Series No. 2.]

Discussion on the Motion of Thanks

13. The discussion on Motion of Thanks lasts for 3 or 4 days as may be allotted by the House itself or on the recommendations of Business Advisory Committee. The discussion is initiated by the proposer of the Motion who is followed by the seconder. Names of the proposer as well as the seconder of the motion are selected by the Prime Minister and notice of such motion is received through the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. Thereafter the amendments are moved. Time so allotted is distributed amongst various parties and groups in proportion to their strength in the House. The discussion on the Motion of Thanks is concluded by the reply of

the Prime Minister or any other Minister. The mover or the seconder does not have any right of reply at the end unlike other motions. Immediately thereafter, the amendments are disposed of and the Motion of Thanks is put to vote and adopted.

Conveying Motion of Thanks adopted by the House to the President

14. After the Motion of Thanks is adopted, it is conveyed to the President direct by the Speaker through a letter.

Message from the President

15. The President also acknowledges the receipt of the Motion through a message to the Speaker. On receipt of the message, the Speaker reads it out to the House. When the acknowledgement from the President to the Motion of Thanks is received after the House has adjourned *sine die*, it is published in Bulletin—Part II for the information of Members.

[President's Address and Motion of Thanks are governed by Articles 86 (1) and 87 (1) of the Constitution and Rules 16 to 24 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.]

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LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

T.O. No. 91

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Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and
Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Sixteenth Edition)
and printed by Jainco Art India, New Delhi-110 005

PREFACE

This Abstract is part of the Parliamentary Procedure Abstracts Series and describes the procedure regarding President's Address and Motion of Thanks. It is based on the Constitution, the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha 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