

**PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS AND  
MOTION OF THANKS**

F. No. RS. 17/5/2005-R & L

© RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT, NEW DELHI

<http://parliamentofindia.nic.in>

[http://rajya\\_sabha.nic.in](http://rajya_sabha.nic.in)

E-mail: [rsrlib@sansad.nic.in](mailto:rsrlib@sansad.nic.in)



**RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

PUBLISHED BY SECRETARY-GENERAL, RAJYA SABHA AND  
PRINTED BY MANAGER, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS,  
MINTO ROAD, NEW DELHI-110002.

## **PREFACE**

This booklet is part of the Rajya Sabha Practice and Procedure Series which seeks to describe, in brief, the procedure about the President's Address and the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address in Rajya Sabha. The booklet is based on the provisions of the Constitution of India and the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Rajya Sabha. This booklet is intended to serve only as a handy guide for ready reference and the information contained in it is not exhaustive. For full and authentic information, original sources may be referred to and relied upon.

New Delhi  
February, 2005

DR. YOGENDRA NARAIN  
*Secretary-General*

## **PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS AND MOTION OF THANKS**

### **President's Address**

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, there has not been any occasion when the President has addressed either House or both Houses assembled together, under the provision of this article.

Article 87 provides for the special address by the President. Clause (1) of that article 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. Such an Address is called 'special address'; and it is also an annual feature. No other business is transacted till the President has addressed both Houses of Parliament assembled together. The time and date of the President's Address are notified in the Parliamentary Bulletin, Part II.

This Address has to be to both Houses of Parliament assembled together. If at the time of commencement of the first session of the year, Lok Sabha is not in

existence and has been dissolved, and Rajya Sabha has to meet, Rajya Sabha can have its session without the President's Address. This happened in 1977, when during the dissolution of Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha had its session on 28 February 1977 without the President's Address.

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.

### **Ceremonies connected with the Address**

The President's Address is a solemn and formal act under the Constitution. Utmost dignity and decorum befitting the occasion are maintained. Any action on the part of a member which marks the solemnity of the occasion of the President's Address or creates disturbance is viewed seriously and dealt with by the House concerned accordingly, either by disapproving the conduct of the member concerned or by constituting a Committee to go into it.

Certain ceremonies are observed in connection with the President's Address. Members assemble in the Central Hall of Parliament at least five minutes before the arrival of the President. Except the rows reserved for Ministers, Deputy Chairman/Deputy Speaker and Leaders of Opposition Groups in both Houses, members

can occupy other seats which are not allotted or earmarked. Members are expected not to leave the Central Hall when the President is addressing.

The President drives-in-state to the Parliament House and arrives in the State Coach. He is presented national salute by the President's Bodyguard at Gate No. 5, Parliament House. He is received at the Gate by the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, the Speaker, Lok Sabha, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and the Secretaries-General of both the Houses. Thereafter, he is conducted to the Central Hall in a procession. As soon as the Presidential procession enters the Central Hall, the Marshal of the Speaker announces the arrival of the President. Simultaneously, two trumpeters positioned in the gallery above the dais sound the bugles and a fanfare is given till the President reaches his seat on the dais. Then the President arrives in the Central Hall, members rise in their places and remain standing until he has taken his seat. Immediately thereafter, the National Anthem is played by the band of the Rashtrapati Bhawan 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 Address in English or Hindi, as the case may be, is read out by the Chairman of 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 his arrival. Members remain standing till the procession leaves the Central Hall. On reaching the Gate, the President takes leave of the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, the Speaker, Lok Sabha, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and the Secretaries-General of both the Houses, and then returns to the Rashtrapati Bhawan in the coach. The entire ceremony as also the reading of the Address takes about an hour or so.

#### **Contents of the Address**

The President's Address is the statement of policy of the Government and, as such, is drafted by the Government which is responsible for its contents. The Address contains a review of various activities and achievements of the Government during the previous year and sets out the policies, projects and programmes which Government of the day wishes to pursue with regard to the important national and international issues. The Address also indicates, in broad terms, items of legislative business which are proposed to be brought during the sessions to be held in that year.

#### **Laying of a copy of the Address on the Table**

The assembly of members of the two Houses to hear the President's Address is not treated as a sitting of either House. In order that the Address delivered by the President forms part of, and is incorporated in the proceedings of the two Houses, both the Houses meet

separately in their respective Chambers half-an-hour after the Address, when a copy each of the Hindi and English version of the Address, duly authenticated by the President, is laid on the Table by the Secretaries-General of the respective Houses. This laying of the Address on the Table brings the House into formal possession of the Address. Thereafter, copies of the Address are distributed to members in the Lobby and/or also through the Publications Counter.

#### **Discussion on the Address by Motion of Thanks**

Clause(2) of article 87 of the Constitution requires that provision shall be made by the rules regulating the procedure of either House for the allotment of time for discussion of the matters referred to in the President's Address. Accordingly, rules 14 to 21 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Rajya Sabha make provisions for the discussion of the Address. Under rule 15, discussion on the matters referred to in the President's Address takes place on a Motion of Thanks moved by a member and seconded by another member. Members who are to move and second the Motion are selected by the Prime Minister and the notice of such a motion is received through the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. The form of the Motion is:

"That the Members of Rajya Sabha assembled in this session are deeply grateful to the President for the

Address which he has been pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on....."

Generally, the discussion on the Address is set down in the List of Business two to three days after the Address.

#### **Scope of discussion**

The scope of the discussion on the Address is very wide and members are at liberty to speak on every matter of national or international importance and other issues. Generally, three days are allotted for the discussion on the Motion of Thanks. Notwithstanding that a day has been allotted for discussion on the President's Address, a motion or motions for leave to introduce Bills or other business of a formal character may be transacted before the House commences or continues the discussion on the Address. The discussion may also be postponed in favour of an urgent Government Bill or other business. The time allotted by the House for discussion on the Motion of Thanks is distributed amongst various parties and groups in proportion to their strength in the House. At the end of the discussion, the Prime Minister replies to the debate. Thereafter, the amendments are disposed, and then the Motion of Thanks is put to vote in the House. If any of the amendments is accepted then the Motion of Thanks is adopted in the amended form.

There have been only three instances so far, when the Motion of Thanks was adopted by Rajya Sabha with

amendments. The Motion of Thanks with an amendment was adopted for the first time on 30 January 1980. On 29 December 1989, the Motion of Thanks was adopted with six amendments. Again on 12 March 2001, the Motion of Thanks was adopted with an amendment.

#### **Amendment to the Motion of Thanks**

Notices of amendments to the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address can be tabled after the President has delivered 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 Chairman. However, the general form of amendments is as follows:

"That at the end of the Motion, the following be added, namely:

but regret that the Address does not mention/fails to mention/does not take notice of, etc. ..."

Every year, a large number of amendments are moved by members of the opposition highlighting the issues or pinpointing the failure of the Government or criticising the policy enunciated in the Address.

The list of amendments are circulated to members in advance and amendments are moved in the House after the speeches of the mover and the seconder when the

Chair formally puts the Motion to the House for discussion.

#### **Conveying the Motion of Thanks adopted by the House to the President**

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

#### **Message from the President**

In reply to the Chairman's letter, the President acknowledges, the receipt of the same conveying that he has received "with great satisfaction the expression of thanks by the members of Rajya Sabha" for the Address which he delivered to both Houses of Parliament assembled together. This message is read out to the House by the Chairman. If the message from the President is received after the House is adjourned *sine die* or prorogued, the same is reproduced in the Bulletin Part-II. Thus concludes the entire process which begins with the Address of the President delivered to members of both Houses of Parliament assembled together in the Central Hall of Parliament.