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Vice President's Secretariat

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Addresses Orientation Programme for Newly Elected & Nominated Members of Rajya Sabha

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that the Members of Parliament should leave their politics outside the Parliament and they have to contribute their best for framing the programmes and policies for the benefit of the poor. He was addressing the Orientation Programme for Newly Elected and Nominated Members of Rajya Sabha, here today.

The Vice President said that the Rules are sacrosanct for all of us and together we are bound by the Rule Book. He further said that the Rules provide enough instruments to raise the issues of public importance. With scrupulous adherence to Rules, we can utilise available time efficiently, he added.

The Vice President said that the Parliamentary democracy allows enough space for the articulation of diverse view points. When an issue is thoroughly debated and multiple perspectives emerge, the final legislation is likely to be more comprehensive, he added.

Saying that the Rajya Sabha follows a set of rules and procedures, the Vice President said that adherence to these rules ensures an orderly conduct of the House. This Orientation Programme will enable you to get familiar with these important procedures, he added.

The Vice President quoted the first Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan as saying: "We are for the first time starting the new parliamentary system, with a Second Chamber in the Center, and we should try to do everything in our power to justify to the public of this country that a second chamber is essential to prevent hasty legislation. We should discuss with dispassion and detachment proposals put before us."

The Vice President said that India is now emerging as one of the fastest growing economies in the world and the new opportunities and new challenges are emerging. He further said that we need to provide a legislative framework to make economic reforms stable, sustainable, equitable. Ease of Doing Business is the touchstone to measure the success of our economic reforms, he added.

The Vice President said that Information Technology is an indispensable tool for enhanced efficiency and most of you extensively use IT tools in your work. He invited the Members to use the new IT initiatives. For your benefit we have also introduced e-Notice system whereby you can submit your Notices online, he added.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"I am pleased to inaugurate this Orientation Programme for the new Members of Rajya Sabha. I compliment the Rajya Sabha Secretariat for organizing this important programme for new Members of the House. New Members will have an opportunity to learn about different aspects of the functioning of the House and the benefit of interacting with senior parliamentarians who have kindly agreed to share their experiences as Members of the House.

Friends,

2. You are fortunate to be the Members of this highest legislative forum of the land. I expect you to make best use of your tenure for the benefit of people and enhance the quality of deliberations in this august house.

3. Most of you have spent long years in public life. Those who have been members of Legislatures would be conversant with the etiquettes and methods of legislature. You all are alive to the issues that concern people at local level. In your public life, you all would have worked to address these issues. This House gives you yet another opportunity to focus nation's attention on these issues and bring about changes.

4. Parliamentary democracy allows enough space for the articulation of diverse view points. When an issue is thoroughly debated and multiple perspectives emerge, the final legislation is likely to be more comprehensive.

5. What we need is this kind of constructive discussion based on arguments flowing from facts and evidence, from knowledge and empathy for the people we are serving.

6. Like any institution, the Rajya Sabha follows a set of rules and procedures. Adherence to these rules ensures an orderly conduct of the House. This Orientation Programme will enable you to get familiar with these important procedures.

Friends,

7. You join this august legislative institution in rather challenging times. Last Session, I had expressed my deep anguish over lost opportunities. We lost invaluable hours in disruptions.

8. In my concluding remarks, I had mentioned how leaders like Pandit Nehru himself, were apprehensive about the efficacy of the Second Chamber.

9. I am afraid similar apprehensions are being raised again after 65 years of functioning of our Parliament. We shall be betraying the faith and trust of stalwarts like Gopalaswamy Ayyangar and Dr. Radhakrishnan and several eminent Parliamentarians who contributed to the eminence of this House.

10. My illustrious predecessor and our first Chairman Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, in his very first inaugural address to the Members on 13th May, 1953, charted out the course of action for the Members of this House. He said:

“We are for the first time starting the new parliamentary system, with a Second Chamber in the Center, and we should try to do everything in our power to justify to the public of this country that a second chamber is essential to prevent hasty legislation. We should discuss with dispassion and detachment proposals put before us.”

11. I quite understand and expect divergence of views, informed critique of Government but I shall expect you to eschew from protracted disruption as parliamentary strategy. This tendency of repeatedly resorting to disruption as parliamentary strategy shall undermine the Parliamentary institutions. I go back to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan who back in 1955 cautioned against such disruptive strategies:

“We want to maintain the good name and dignity of this House. Every one of us is interested in that as much as I am. I do not want it to be said that sometimes these discussions suggest that we are not behaving like serious, responsible Members of Parliament but rather like irresponsible

professional agitators.”

Friends,

12. India is now emerging as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. New opportunities and new challenges are emerging. We need to provide a legislative framework to make economic reforms stable, sustainable, equitable. Ease of Doing Business is the touchstone to measure the success of our economic reforms. Our policies and processes need to be predictable, transparent and efficient to attract the investments and promote innovations. We need to keep updating our laws in consonance with the demands of the changing times. Being representatives of people, you have to educate and guide the people through this transformative transition.

13. As a Member of Parliament you are assigned Rs. 5 crores annually under MPs Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS). As a Member of this House, you have the flexibility in choosing one or more Districts of your State. Nominated Members can choose one or more District from any State in the country. You can use this money for local community level development. The Saansad Aadarsh Gram Yojna was formed to synergise this Scheme with other Government scheme in one focal village that was supposed to become model village for others. This Orientation Programme will be a forum to learn more about this Scheme and share experience of senior Members and Officials.

Distinguished Members,

14. We have a rich library in Parliament. Do make use of its rich resources. We also have Research and Reference Service to assist you with ready reference material.

15. We all are aware of the indispensability of Information Technology tools for enhanced efficiency. Most of you extensively use IT tools in your work. I invite you to use of the new IT initiatives we have taken from this Session. For your benefit we have also introduced e-Notice system whereby you can submit your Notices online.

Friends,

16. As you start your tenure in Rajya Sabha, to be an effective Parliamentarian, I advise you to carefully select a few subjects of your interest and make informed contribution to the debates.

17. As Member of the House, you will also be a Member of Parliamentary Committees. These Committees effectively supplement the work of Parliament. You must fully make use of this forum.

Friends,

18. Though the Constitution bestows primacy to Lok Sabha in financial issues like Money Bills, yet the Rajya Sabha can make constructive suggestions.

19. Financial management and budget allocations are crucial for governance. Our Parliament has 24 Department related Parliamentary Standing Committees, to examine annual Demands of Grants and financial management of respective Government ministries. Members of Rajya Sabha too are Members of these Committees. These Committees will give you an insight into the processes and planning in the Government.

20. I suggest that the Secretariat should organize a brief orientation programme on Budget making process. Such a programme will immensely help Members to assess and appreciate the finer points of Budget documents.

21. Hon'ble Members, I once again reiterate the need to adhere to Rules. The Rules are sacrosanct for you as well as for me as the Chairman. Together we are bound by the Rule Book.

22. In addition, there are precedents set by the previous Chairmen and their Directions.

23. The Rules provide you enough instruments to raise the issues of public importance. With scrupulous adherence to Rules, we can utilise available time efficiently.

24. Let me once again remind you of the unanimous resolution against disruption and disturbance which Members of both the Houses adopted on the occasion of Golden Jubilee of country's independence in 1997. This resolution was reiterated again in 2013 on the occasion of 60th anniversary of the first sitting of our Parliament.

25. I can say with some satisfaction that with your collective cooperation in this Session, the House has been able to transact business well. In the first week of this Session, the House sat for almost 40 hours. In seven days 6 Government Bills were passed after detailed discussions. 29 Special Mentions and 68 Zero Hour matters were raised. Question Hour has been productive 41

Starred Questions were replied orally and replies to another 40 Starred Questions were laid. I compliment you and thank you for your cooperation.

Friends,

26. At a personal level, I am overwhelmed by your warmth and affection. As your colleague in public life, I seek your cooperation in running the House. I have always maintained that my operation as the Chairman of Rajya Sabha shall depend on the cooperation of entire House.

27. I wish you all a very successful tenure in Rajya Sabha. May your erudition and experience enhance the stature of this House; May we all be guided by the ideals set by the founding fathers of our Constitution. May we all rise up to the expectations of our people.

Jai Hind.”

AKT/BK/RK

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