

RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 11th August, 1986/20
Sravana, 1908 (Saku)

The House met at eleven of the lock,
 Mi". Chairman in the Chair.

OBITUARY REFERENCE

MR. CHAIRMAN; Hon. Members must have heard with utmost sorrow about the sudden passing away of one of our valued and respected colleagues, Shri Sankar Prasad Mitra.

In the sudden and untimely passing away of Shri Mitra we have lost a person whose views and ideas always commanded respect and attention. His sober and objective contribution has been deeply appreciated by all sections of the House. Shri Mitra. was a multi-faceted personality and there was are of life with which he was not associated.

Shri Mitra was born in December, 1917 at Calcutta and had his initial education at Calcutta and, thereafter, at the Trinity College, Cambridge and Lincoln's Inn, London, from where he was called to the Bar. A man of letters, Shri Mitra practised law and served as a standing counsel for the State and Central Governments besides appearing in several important cases. Shri Mitra was appointed Judge

of the Calcutta High Court in 1957 and was elevated as its Chief Justice on 1 July 1972. Shri Mitra served the Calcutta High Court for nearly 22 years and some of his judgements were widely acclaimed. He had the welfare of the poor and the down-trodden uppermost in his mind and he organised movements to fight the evils of hoarding, black-marketing, adulteration and corruption.

For one term, from 1952 to 1957, he was also a Member of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly and also served as a Minister of the West Bengal Government for some time. Shri Mitra was a Member of this House

since July 1981. His thoughtful and resonant voice still resounds in our ears. A devotee of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Shri Mitra represented the rich culture of India.

As we meet today, a great tragedy has cast its long shadow over the country. General Arun Sridhar Vaidya, former Chief of Army staff, has been felled by a fanatical bullet of a despicable assassin. That the cult of terrorism in its senseless sprawl should claim an upright soldier of distinction, now living in quiet retirement, is a matter of shame and sorrow to the entire nation. This utterly odious and heinous crime is as cowardly as it is senseless. In the anguish caused by this event, we have been given some relief in the knowledge that the late General's wife, Shrimati Bhanumali Vaidya, who also received bullet injuries during the outrage, is reported to be out of danger.

General Vaidya was an exemplary soldier, for whom duty and discipline were axiomatic. Decorated twice with the highest award, the Maha Vir Chakra, General Vaidya had guided the destinies of the Indian Army through troubled times. It was under General Vaidya's stewardship, again, that the Indian Army successfully repulsed Pakistani intrusions in the Siachen glacier of the Eastern Karakoram in Jammu and Kashmir.

General Vaidya was born on January 27, 1926 in Bombay. He had his initial schooling in Pune and then in Elphinstone High School and College in Bombay. Then he went to the M. I.E. College in Surat where he joined the University Training Corps and was adjudged its best cadet. In 1945 he joined the Officers Training School in Belgaum. He was selected for the Armed Corps and after further training was commissioned in January 1946. Soon he was in action in Burma. Three years later he took part in the police action in Hyderabad. General Vaidya distinguished himself in both the 1965 and 1971 wars. In 1969,

(Mr. Chairman)'

he successful'y organized a series of operations in Nagaland against hostiles. General Vaidya had an impeccable record of service.

General Vaidya held important staff appointments as Director, Military Operations at Army Headquarters and then as Corps Commander in the Eastern Sector in July 1980. General Vaidya became the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Eastern Command in 1981, which position he held until his appointment as Chief of Army Staff. l?d-ii H SRDSDR cfw cfw wipnp

A gallant soldier, trained and tempered in the highest traditions of the Indian Army, he has met a soldier's end. His assassination has evoked a spontaneous reaction of anguish from i tors of our society—serving and retired officer of the Defence Forces as well as the common man. If the Pune outrage strengthens the Nation's resolve to meet the cult of violence with determination, then his

martyrdom will not have gone in vain.

I am sure lion. Members join me i sending to Shrimati Vaidya our solidarity as well as our deepest condolences. We deeply mourn the passing away of Shri Sankar Prasad Mitra and General Arun Sreedhar Vaidya. I request Members to rise in their places and observe a minute's silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.

[Hon. Members then stood in silence for one minute].

MR. CH/-IRMAN: Secretary-General will convey to the members of the bereaved families our sense of profound sorrow and deep sympathy.

The House stands adjourned as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed, till 11.00 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at seven minutes past eleven of the clock till eleven of the clock on Tuesday, the 12th August, 1986.