

RAJYA SABHA

*Monday, the 11th August, 1986/20
Shravana, 1908 (Saka)*

The House met at eleven of the
lock, **Mr. 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 col-
leagues, **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 no sphere 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 be-
sides appearing in several important
cases. **Shri Mitra** was appointed Judge
of the Calcutta High Court in 1957
and was elevated as its Chief Justice
in 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
organised movements to fight the evils
of hoarding, black-marketing, adulte-
ration 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 Ben-
gal 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 co-
untry. General Arun Sridhar Vaidya,
former Chief of Army Staff, has been
felled by a fanatical bullet of a des-
picable assassin. That the cult of ter-
rorism 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 Bhanumati
Vaidya**, who also received bullet in-
juries during the outrage, is report-
ed 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 un-
der General Vaidya's stewardship,
again, that the Indian Army success-
fully repulsed Pakistani intrusions in
the Siachen glacier of the Eastern Ka-
rakorams in Jammu and Kashmir.

General Vaidya was born on Janu-
ary 27, 1926 in Bombay. He had his
initial schooling in Pune and then
in Elphinston 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 train-
ing was commissioned in January
1946. Soon he was in action in Bur-
ma. Three years later he took part in
the police action in Hyderabad. Ge-
neral Vaidya distinguished himself in
both the 1965 and 1971 wars. In 1969,

(Mr. Chairman)

he successfully 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.

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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 all sectors 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 hon. Members join me in 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 minutes silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN: 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.