

OBITUARY REFERENCES

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I refer with profound sorrow to the passing away of Shri Sikander Bakht and Shri S.B. Chavan, former Members and Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Dr. Abrar Ahmed, sitting Members and Dr. Shrikant Ramchandra Jichkar, a former Member of this House.

Shri Sikander Bakht passed away on the 23rd February, 2004, at the age of 86 years. Born at Delhi in August, 1918, Shri Bakht had his education at Anglo-Arabic College, Delhi and Delhi University. A political and social worker, Shri Bakht took keen interest in sports, Indian classical music and Urdu poetry. Shri Bakht was also associated with various social welfare and educational institutions. He was also Chairman of the Delhi Electricity Supply Undertaking. He was conferred the Padma Vibhushan Award in the year 2000.

Shri Bakht started his political career with the membership of Municipal Corporation of Delhi and Delhi Metropolitan Council. He was Member of the Sixth Lok Sabha from 1977 to 1979. Shri Bakht represented the State of Madhya Pradesh in this House for two consecutive terms from April, 1990 to April, 1996 and again from April, 1996 to April, 2002. Shri Bakht had the distinction to serve as the Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha and also as the Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha. He was the Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha from July, 1992 to May, 1996 and again from June, 1996 to March, 1998 and the Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha from March, 1998 to November, 1999. He was Chairman of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce from December, 1999 till April, 2002 and was also Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the functioning of Wakf Boards from October, 1996 to December, 1997 and again from May, 2000 to April, 2002.

Shri Bakht served as Union Minister for several years and held the portfolios of Works Housing, Supply, Rehabilitation and Wakf, Urban Affairs and Employment, External Affairs and Industry. He was Vice-President of the Bharatiya Janata Party from 1982 to 1993. Shri Bakht was known for his humility and simplicity. He enriched the debates of this House by his valuable contributions. A widely travelled person, Shri Bakht was member of various Indian Parliamentary delegations and represented the country in several international events. He attended the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Conferences, at Canberra, Australia, in 1993 and at Bucharest, Romania, in 1995. He also attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1996 and at Port Louis, Mauritius, in 1997. Shri Bakht was the Governor of Kerala from April, 2002 till he breathed his last.

In the passing away of Shri Sikander Bakht, the country has lost an eminent Parliamentarian and an able administrator.

Shri S.B. Chavan passed away on the 26th February 2004, at the age of 84 years, after a prolonged illness. Born at Paithan, District Aurangabad, Maharashtra in July 1920, Shri Chavan had his education at Madras University and Osmania University. An advocate by profession, Shri Chavan participated in the freedom struggle in former Hyderabad State right from his student days and gave up practice during the Quit Court Movement there. He was also associated with various social and educational organisations. He was Chancellor of the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, a deemed University, in Pune and was President of the Nanded Town Municipality and Bharat Scouts and Guides, New Delhi. He also served as Chairman of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi.

Shri Chavan had a long and distinguished political career starting with membership of the Bombay State Legislative Council in 1956. In 1957, he was elected to the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly and remained a Member of that Assembly till 1980. He was elected to the Maharashtra Legislative Council in 1986 and remained a Member of it till 1988. Shri Chavan held the Office of the Chief Minister of Maharashtra twice, from 1975 to 1977 and again from March 1986 to June 1988. Shri Chavan was also a Member of the Seventh and the Eighth Lok Sabha. He represented the State of Maharashtra in this House for three terms, from October 1988 to April 1990, April 1990 to April 1996 and again from April 1996 to April 2002. Shri Chavan was the Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha from July, 1991 to May, 1996. He also acted as the Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha from 23rd to 31st May 1996. He was Chairman of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development from 1996 to 2002 and was also Chairman of the Ethics Committee from 1997 to 2002.

Shri Chavan served as Union Minister for several years and held

the portfolios of Education, Culture and Social Welfare, External Affairs, Defence, Home Affairs and Finance. He also had the distinction of serving as the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of India from August 1981 to July 1984.

In the passing away of Shri S.B. Chavan, the country has lost an outstanding Parliamentarian, an eminent political personality and an able administrator who made valuable contributions in diverse sectors of national life.

Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra passed away on the 1st April 2004, at the age of 80 years. Born at Village Tohra, District Patiala, Punjab, in September, 1924, Sardar Tohra had his education at Gurumukhi Vidyalaya, Patiala and Punjab University, Lahore. An agriculturist and a social worker, Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra was associated with various social, educational and religious organisations. He took keen interest in the welfare and uplift of weaker sections of the society and in the religious affairs. He was Vice-President of the Shiromani Akali Dal from 1958 to 1960 and again from 1962 to 1965. Sardar Tohra was President of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee from 1973 to 1999, with only a short break of about one year in between. Sardar Tohra was also founder President of the Sarb Hind Shiromani Akali Dal and Chairman of the Sikh Education Society, Chandigarh, Guru Nanak Khalsa College, Mumbai, Nankana Sahib Education Trust and Guru Ram Das Charitable Trust. He was imprisoned a number of times during his life time for espousing different causes including that of farmers and protection of Human Rights.

Sardar Tohra represented the State of Punjab in this House from March, 1969 to April, 1970; April, 1970 to April, 1976; May, 1980 to April, 1982; April, 1982 to April, 1988 and again from April, 1998 till he breathed his last. He was also elected to Rajya Sabha in the recently held biennial election from the State of Punjab and his fresh term of office was to commence from the 10th April, 2004. Sardar Tohra was also a Member of the Sixth Lok Sabha. A deeply religious person, Shri Tohra remained a simple man and was always accessible to people from all walks of life.

In the passing away of Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra, the country has lost an eminent religious personality and a veteran Parliamentarian.

Dr. Abrar Ahmed passed away on the 4th May, 2004, under tragic circumstances. Dr. Ahmed was travelling in a car from Jaipur to Jhalawar

when his car collided head-on with a truck near Devali, 7 kms. from Tonk and he succumbed to the injuries. Dr. Ahmed was only 48 years old.

Born at Chipabarod, at Baran District, in Rajasthan, in July, 1956, Dr. Ahmed had his education at Rajasthan University, Jaipur. A social worker and an educationist, Dr. Ahmed was actively associated with various social, cultural and welfare organizations. He was Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee from 1995 to 1997 and was Working President of the Rajasthan Pradesh Congress at the time of his death.

Dr. Abrar Ahmed represented the State of Rajasthan in this House from April, 1988 to April, 1994 and again from April, 2002 till his death. He was awarded the Best Parliamentarian Award by Gandhi Abhivadan Samiti in 1992. Dr. Ahmed served as the Union Minister of State in the Ministries of Finance and Parliamentary Affairs from January, 1993 to April, 1994.

In the passing away of Dr. Abrar Ahmed, the country has lost a young and dynamic Parliamentarian.

Dr. Shrikant Ramchandra Jichkar passed away on the 2nd June, 2004, in a car accident, at the age of 50 years.

Born at Nagpur, Maharashtra in September, 1954, Dr. Jichkar had his education at several renowned schools, colleges and Institutions at Nagpur.

A scholar, medical practitioner, agriculturist and businessman, Dr. Jichkar had several degrees in various streams of education to his credit. He was also a very good painter and photographer. Dr. Jichkar was elected as the Chancellor of the Kavi Kulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University, Nagpur, in 1993 and was also the Working President of the All India Sanskrit Shiksha Sammelan. Dr. Jichkar was selected as an I.P.S. officer in the year 1978 and as an I.A.S. officer in the year 1980. He was an awardee of one of the 'Ten Outstanding Young Persons of the World' award in 1983. He was the Managing Editor of the *Nagpur Times* and *Nagpur Patrika* from 1993 to 1994. Dr. Jichkar had several publications to his credit and had a personal library of about 52,000 books.

Dr. Jichkar started his legislative career with membership of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly in 1982 and remained a member of that

Assembly till 1985. He was also member of the Maharashtra Legislative Council from 1986 to 1992. Dr. Jichkar represented the State of Maharashtra in this House from July 1992 to July 1998. Dr. Jichkar had the distinction of serving as a Minister of State in Maharashtra Government and was holding various portfolios.

A widely travelled person, Dr. Jichkar was leader and member of various Indian delegations to several countries and represented the country in many international events.

In the passing away of Dr. Shrikant Ramchandra Jichkar, the country has lost an eminent scholar, a dynamic and versatile personality and a thorough gentleman.

We deeply mourn the passing away of Shri Sikander Bakht, Shri S. B. Chavan, Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra, Dr. Abrar Ahmed and Dr. Shrikant Ramchandra Jichkar.

I request Members to rise in their places and observe silence as a mark of respect to the memory of the departed.

(Hon. Members then stood in silence for one minute)

REFERENCE TO VICTIMS OF IED BLAST IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, it is with utmost grief and sorrow that I refer to the tragic killing of twenty-nine persons, comprising twelve BSF personnel and seventeen of their relatives and family members, and injury of five others in the blast that occurred near the Lower Munda, Anantnag, on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway in Jammu and Kashmir on the 23rd May, 2004. No words are strong enough to condemn this gruesome act. The killing of so many innocent people has shocked the entire nation. I am sure that the whole House will join me in condemning this cowardly and senseless act and in offering condolences to the bereaved families and expressing concern and sympathy for those who got injured.

(Hon. Members then stood in silence for one minute)

MR. CHAIRMAN: As a mark of respect to the memory of Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Dr. Abrar Ahmed, sitting Members, the House stands adjourned till Monday, the 7th June, 2004.

(The House then adjourned at twenty-six minutes past eleven of the clock till Monday, the 7th June, 2004.)