

RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 21st March, 2025/30 Phalguna, 1946 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,
MR. CHAIRMAN *in the Chair*.

REGARDING JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND OTHER ISSUES

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH (Karnataka): Sir...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anything particular?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: This morning, we have read about a shocking case of huge amounts of cash unearthed at the residence of a judge of the Delhi High Court. Sir, earlier, 50 Members of Parliament have submitted a notice to you regarding certain remarks that were made by a Judge of the Allahabad High Court. You yourself have repeatedly called into question the urgency for judicial accountability. You have, in fact, directed the Leader of the House on this issue. I request that you please make some observations on this and give necessary directions to the Government to come up with a proposal for increasing judicial accountability.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I am seized of a representation by 55 Members of this House, and I have taken all necessary steps to get their verification. First mail was sent to all of them, and the good thing is most of the Members have responded positively, helping me perform my duty. Some Members are yet to do. A mail reiterating the same has been sent to them. I have taken all procedural steps, but I must share with you one concern that is engaging my attention. Of the 55 Members, who signed the representation, a Member's signature appears on two occasions and the Member concerned has denied his signature. Now, I do not wish to get into this act which may graduate to culpability to a higher level. If the number is above 50, I will proceed accordingly. Most of the Members have cooperated. Those Members, who have not done so far, may please do it in response to the second mail sent to them. Then, the process will not be delayed at my level even for a moment.

Coming to the second aspect, the Leader of the House is not here. I had the occasion to reflect, in a very focused manner, that what appears in the Indian Constitution has to emanate first from our founding fathers; any change effected, whatsoever, has to be sanctified by the Parliament and, in some cases, by 50 per

cent of State Legislatures; then, finally, it gets constitutional sanction with the hon. President signing it under Article 111. Therefore, I had pleaded with the Leader of the House that the House needs to know that the Constitution, according to this directive, is what holds the field today. You will all recollect about the mechanism, which was passed by this House with near unanimity, with no dissension, -- only one abstention in Rajya Sabha, with all political parties converging in support of the Government's initiative -- and I wish to find out the status of that, which emanated from Indian Parliament, made sacrosanct by the endorsement of 16 State Assemblies in the country and signed by the hon. President under Article 111 of the Constitution. That historic legislation, endorsed by this Parliament, with unprecedented consensual support, unknown to parliamentary history of this country, had addressed the malaise very severely.

Now, if the malaise had been dealt with, perhaps, we would not have countenanced such kind of issues. What bothers me is that the incident happened and did not immediately surface. If it happens with a politician, a bureaucrat, or an industrialist, he becomes a target immediately. Therefore, systemic response, which is transparent, accountable and effective, I am sure, will be on the way. I will get in touch with the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition and find a mechanism for a structured discussion during the course of the Session, subject to their agreement.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: What about today's news, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I discussed with them. Fortunately, the House is blessed with the Leader of the House who is also the president of the ruling political party, and the Leader of the Opposition, who is also the president of the main opposition party. So, with these very two distinguished people being present in the House, -- others will also come -- I am sure with their counsel, I will discuss. We need to have some structured discussion, which, so far, we have not had. I indicated this. Shri Derek O'Brien raised the issue. I had indicated that I would come back to the House. I will find their convenience during the course of the day and deliberate on the issue.

Now, Birthday Greetings.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, it is always a pleasure to greet Members, and also to greet them in advance for their birthdays. I am pleased to extend advance