

# High productivity in LS, RS in just-concluded budget session

## Budget Was Discussed For 14 Hours

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** The budget session, which was adjourned sine die on Thursday, saw the Lok Sabha record 114% productivity despite frequent adjournments during the first few days and the Union budget was discussed for 14 hours and 42 minutes in which a total of 146 members participated.

While the Rajya Sabha witnessed high productivity and passing of 19 bills, Chairman Venkiah Naidu expressed concern over "less attendance" of MPs and the duration of the meetings which, he said, needed further improvement. "This house functioned a total of 104 hours 23 minutes against the total scheduled time of 116 hours and 31 minutes during these 23 sittings," Naidu said, adding that "this in effect means that the productivity of the House, including both the parts of the Budget session, have been about 90%".

"A total of 21 hours and 26



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minutes of the house has been lost due to disruption during this session," he added.

However, he also said that the house sat 14 hours and 28 minutes beyond the time to complete the legislative and other business.

Meanwhile, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, who presided over the House for the whole session but had to skip the last few days after testing Covid positive, expressed gratitude to all the MPs for running the House smoothly.

Like previous sessions of the 17th Lok Sabha, record work was accomplished during the fifth (budget session) with a total of 24 sittings, lasting for 132 hours.

The productivity of the House during this session stood at 114%. Earlier, 125% productivity was achieved in the first session, 115% in the second session, 117% in the third session and a record 167% in the fourth session.

Naidu said, "People have a lot of expectations from the parliamentarians to guide

on the issues concerning the pandemic, the revival of the economy, and the agenda of inclusive growth." "Therefore, we should be guided by the mantra of 'debate, discuss and decide' and not disrupt. This is the only way forward in these challenging times," added Naidu.

During the session, the Upper House witnessed a "passionate and quality" debate on Motion of Thanks to the President's address and the Union Budget, said Naidu in his valedictory remarks. During the session, 17 government bills were introduced and a total of 18 bills were passed by the Lok Sabha.

Parliamentary committees made important recommendations on financial and other matters and a total of 171 reports were presented by committees.

Necessary arrangements were made in the Parliament house and especially in the Lok Sabha chamber in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## PM enters LS just as Cong questions his absence

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**New Delhi:** The final hour of the fifth session of 17th Lok Sabha on Thursday had some interesting moments as Prime Minister Narendra Modi entered the House just when his "absence" was being questioned by Congress' Ravneet Singh Bittu.

Bittu, leader of Congress in the House, said the PM wasn't seen in Lok Sabha even as the session was coming to an end, prompting junior Parliamentary Affairs Minister Arjun Meghwal to say that Modi attended proceedings on several days and that the opposition was making baseless allegations.

"If one has to meet the PM, one will have to go to Bengal rallies," Bittu said and also raised issues like fuel prices in the presence of former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi.

While heated exchanges were taking place between the treasury and opposition benches, Modi entered the House and was greeted with "Jai Shri Ram" slogans by his party colleagues.

A little later, Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die, bringing the nearly two-month long Budget session to an end. The session started on January 29 and was originally slated to end on April 8 but several members had urged Speaker Om Birla to end the session earlier in view of the assembly elections. Speaker Birla, who recently contracted Covid-19, was not present in the House. In his observations before adjourning the proceedings sine die, Bhartruhari Mehtab, who was in the chair, wished Birla a speedy recovery and informed members that the Speaker's condition was stable.

## Some bills passed in budget session will be challenged in court: Cong

**New Delhi:** As the budget session came to an end, Congress on Thursday said the government had passed legally untenable legislations without any parliamentary scrutiny and they will be challenged in the Supreme Court, even as it slammed the Modi government for curtailing the Parliamentary session on the pretext of assembly elections.

Addressing a press conference, top Congress parliamentary leaders Malli-

karjun Kharge, Jairam Ramesh and Ravneet Bittu singled out the bills on mines and minerals and Delhi statehood for alleged illegalities. They said the bills are sure to be challenged with Ramesh saying that he would personally petition against the mines bill.



Kharge said the opposition repeatedly demanded that the government send these crucial bills with far-reaching consequences to the parliamentary select

committee for scrutiny but the Centre refused to heed the request because of its brute majority. "Passing bills like this is against the tenets of democracy. We strongly condemn the government for this and the manner in which the role of parliamentary committees was ignored," Ramesh added.

Slamming the curtailment of session by two weeks, Ramesh said, "We wanted the session to run till April 8 and wanted to raise people's issues and debate them." **TNN**