

Youth Parliament - Glossary of Parliamentary Terms

Adjournment: It means putting off till another time. It is either adjournment of the debate or adjournment of the house. Adjournment of the debate means postponement to the debate of a Motion/Resolution/bill on which the house is then engaged. Such a motion is moved at any time during a debate. A motion for adjournment of the debate, if carried, postpones the decision of any question. Adjournment of the house means termination of the sitting of the house till the time appointed for the next sitting. It should be differentiated from prorogation and dissolution.

Adjournment sine die: It terminates a sitting of the house without any definite date being fixed for the next sitting. Usually the Speaker adjourns the house sine die on the last day of its session.

Agenda: It means the List of Business for a particular day. It contains items of business to be taken up by the house in the order in which they are listed.

Amendment: It means a change proposed in a motion or a Bill. Amendment can be proposed either by leaving out or adding certain words or both.

Amendment to the Constitution can also be proposed, but a special majority is required to pass Constitutional Amendments.

Appropriation Bill: Money cannot be withdrawn from the Consolidated Fund of India except under appropriation made by law. Appropriation Bill is a Bill passed annually for authorization of the house for withdrawing money from the Consolidated Fund of India

Bar of the House: The Bar is the line which is marked by a broad strip of leather laid across the carpet on the floor of the house between the benches. The members are not allowed to speak outside the bar. Persons who are not members of the House, are not allowed to cross the bar during the sitting of the house. Persons who commit breach of privilege, can be called to the bar of the house for reprimand or admonition by the house.

Bill: It is the draft of a legislative proposal. It is a draft of statute, which can become law only when it has received the approval of a parliament and assent of the president. A bill consists of the title, a preamble and various clauses (sub-divisions of a Bill).

Budget: It is an annual financial statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the Government in respect of a financial year. The Budget or the annual financial statement is presented before the house in two parts, namely the Railway budget and the General budget.

Calling Attention Notice: A Calling Attention Notice is given by a member to call the attention of a Minister to a matter of urgent public importance.

Casting Vote: In case equal number of votes have been cast both in favour and against any matter (viz. Bill, motion, etc.) The Speaker may cast a vote to decide the matter. Such a vote is called the casting vote.

Closure: At any time during the discussion of a motion a member can move for closure which brings the debate to a close. The motion "That the question be now put" is put by the Speaker. If the motion "That the question be now put" is carried, the matter is immediately decided without any further debate. (With the coming into force of the Business Advisory Committee in 1953, the time for discussion on various items of business is

decided in advance and therefore the need for a closure motion is not felt by the members. Consequently, the occasions for taking recourse to the closure motion have become very rare.)

Committees: The Parliament has to transact a great deal of business. Since it does not have sufficient time, it transacts this business through various committees. The committees are appointed to deal with such items of business as require expert knowledge and detailed discussion.

The Lok Sabha has an organised system of committees. Members of various committees are appointed or elected by the house. The following are some of the important committees.

Business Advisory Committee: It recommends time that should be allocated for discussion of various items of business.

Select Committee: it is a committee the members of which are selected specially for the purpose of considering a particular Bill. Its function is to go through the text of a Bill, clause by clause, and suggest changes, if any. The Committee ceases to exist after it submits its report to the House.

Public Accounts Committee: Its function is to examine the yearly accounts of the Government and to see that the Government money is spent prudently and economically.

Committee on Public Undertakings: Lately there has been a steady growth of various statutory corporations and companies which are controlled and managed by the Government of India. The Committee on Public Undertakings examines the reports and accounts of such public undertakings.

Committee of privileges: When leave to raise a question of privilege is granted by the House, the House may refer it to the Committee of Privileges for consideration. The Committee examines the question of privilege and reports back to the house. In its report the Committee mentions whether or not a breach of privilege has been committed. In case of breach of privilege has been committed, it may recommend any action, if called for.

Contempt of the House: It means any act or omission which obstructs the House in the performance of its functions. For example, if a person disobeys an order to attend a committee, he is liable to be punished for contempt of the house. The person who has committed contempt of the house may apologise and it is up to the House to accept it and let him go. If the house decided to punish him, a motion has to be moved and in the motion the period of imprisonment and the place or jail where the contemnor is to be placed, are mentioned. In case the offence is not serious, the person concerned may be called to the bar of the House. He may be then reprimanded or admonished by the Speaker.

Contempt of the House may be distinguished from a breach of privilege. A breach of privilege is an offence against a specific privilege of Parliament while contempt of the House is an offence amounting to an obstruction in the proceedings of the house. All breaches of privilege are contempt of the House. It is possible that a person may be guilty of a contempt of the house, but he may not have violated any specific privilege of the members. **Crossing the Floor:** When a member passes between the member who is addressing the house (in possession of the house) and the speaker, he is said to have crossed the floor. This act of passing between the member and the Speaker is forbidden, because to cross the floor is a breach of parliamentary etiquette.

'**Crossing the floor**' also means changing one's political allegiance, i.e. changing from one political party to another.

Division: After the voice vote is taken on any item, the Speaker says, "I think the Ayes (or the Noes) have it." If his opinion is challenged by the minority, he orders division so that the exact balance of the opinion may be determined. The Speaker directs that the votes be recorded either by operating the automatic vote recorder or by using 'Aye' and 'No' slips in the House or by members going into the lobbies. In case the votes are to be recorded by members going into the lobbies the members for 'Ayes' go to the right lobby and those for 'noes' go to the left lobby. Votes are recorded in the lobbies and then the Speaker announces the result. Thus division is a mode of deciding a question by recording votes for or against it.

Expunction: It means deletion of words or expressions from the proceedings of the house by the Speaker. Such expressions as are considered to be indecent or un-parliamentary, are ordered to be deleted from the records.

Finance Bill: It means the Bill which is introduced each year to give effect to the financial proposals of the Government. It is a Bill to impose or alter taxes.

Financial Bills: Financial Bills are of two categories. Money bills fall in the first category. They can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha.

Bills of the second category are different from Money bills. They contain proposals involving incidental expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India. They may be introduced in either house. Examples of such Bills are: the All India Khadi and Village Industries Commission bill, 1955; the Foreign Exchange Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 1957.

Gazette: It is an official newspaper containing lists of government appointments, legal notices, dispatches and announcements, etc.

Guillotine: It means putting to the vote of the house all outstanding questions relating to the business on hand by the speaker on the expiry of the time allotted for the discussion of such business. Guillotine is a form of closure, but unlike closure it is applied straightway by the Speaker without any motion.

Half-an-hour Discussion: The Speaker may allow discussion on a matter of sufficient public importance which has been the subject of a recent question and the answer to which needs elucidation of a matter of fact. Such a discussion is held in the last thirty minutes of a sitting.

Hear, Hear: It is an explanation. Members are allowed to exclaim Hear, Hear during a debate provided it is used with moderation.

Joint Sitting: Whenever there is an agreement between the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on a Bill, other than a Money Bill, the President may summon them to meet in a Joint Sitting. The Speaker presides at a Joint Sitting.

Law: Law is a body of rules given in an Act which in the form of a Bill has been duly passed by the two Houses and assented to by the President. It is binding on every citizen and the courts are bound to apply it. The term 'law' covers any rule, regulation, bye-law or sub-rule made by a subordinate authority under delegated powers.

Leader of the House: He is an important functionary and exercises direct influence on the course of business. The Prime Minister who is the Leader of the majority party in the Lok Sabha, usually functions as the Leader of the House in the Lok Sabha.

Leader of the Opposition: Generally the leader of the largest recognised Opposition party having at least one-tenth membership in the house is recognised as Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition is the

official spokesman of the Opposition in the House. In India he/she has been granted the same status as that of cabinet Minister.

Lobby: It is the covered corridor immediately adjoining the House. There are two lobbies in the Lok Sabha, the Inner Lobby which is also called Division lobby and the Outer lobby. The Outer lobby is intended for the use of members of Parliament, for members and the press representatives for informal discussion and exchange of views.

Lok Sabha: The House of the People is called the Lok Sabha because it is elected directly by the people.

Message: Under the provision of the Indian Constitution the president can send a communication to either House of Parliament. Such a communication is known as 'Message'. Messages to the Lok Sabha are sent by the President through the Speaker. the Speaker reads out the message to the house and then the house takes up the matters referred to in the message for consideration.

Money Bill: A Money Bill contains provisions dealing with all or any of the matters specified in the Constitutions of India. Some of these matters are the impositions or abolition of any tax, and the payment of money into or the withdrawal of money from the Consolidated Fund or the Consolidated Fund of India. A Money Bill cannot be introduced in the Rajya Sabha.

For example, a Message from the President notifying his intention to call a Joint Sitting of both the houses, in connection with the Dowry Prohibition Bill, 1959, was sent in 1961.

Motion: It means a proposal submitted to the House for its consideration and decision. When the House votes a motion, the motion becomes the opinion or the will of the whole House.

Motion fall into three broad categories: (i) Substantive motions; (ii) Substitute motions, and (iii) Subsidiary motions.

(i) A substantive motions, is a self-contained proposal submitted for the approval of the House. It is drafted in such a way that it enables the House to express its decision. The motion of thanks on the President's Address to the House, the motion of no-confidence and the motion for adjournment on a matter of public importance are some of the examples of substantive motions.

(ii) A substitute motion is moved in substitution of the original motion. As a substitute motion arises out of the original motion, it has to be moved before the discussion on the original motion commences.

(iii) A subsidiary motions is related to other motions or it emerges from some proceedings of the House.

It is further sub-divided into ancillary motions, superseding motions, and amendments. Motions made in connection with the various stages of a Bill are called ancillary motions. For example, "That the bill be referred to a select committee," is an ancillary motion. Superseding motions are moved in the course of a debate. They may seek recirculation of a Bill for eliciting further opinion. Amendments are the third type of subsidiary motions. An amendment may be to a Bill or a motion or even to an amendment.

Motion of No-Confidence is a motion moved in the House to express want of confidence in the Council of Ministers.

Cut Motion is a motion moved in the House during the discussion on the demands for grants to reduce the amount of demand. Cut motions are moved by the members of the Opposition only. M.P: It means Members of Parliament. Members of Parliament can use the abbreviation 'M.P.' after their names.

'Order, Order: The Speaker uses these words to call the House to order or to ask the House to hear the Chair or a member who is in possession of the House.

Ordinance: An Ordinance can be issued by the President in exercise of the powers vested in him by Article 123 of the Constitution, when the Parliament is not in session. Such an ordinance has the same force and effect as an Act of Parliament.

Papers Laid on the Table: It means the papers or documents laid on the Table of the House for the purpose of bringing them on the record of the House. Papers can be laid on the Table by a Minister or by a Private member or by the Secretary-General with the permission of the Speaker.

Parliamentary privileges: It means the powers other than legislative, possessed by both the Houses and their members. Without these privileges the members cannot discharge their functions. Examples freedom of speech and freedom from arrest during sessions.

Point of Order: It means a point relating to the interpretation or enforcement of the Rules of Procedure or such Articles of the Indian Constitution as regulate the business of the House. A point of order is raised in the House for the attention and decision of the Chair.

It can also be raised on a matter relating to the maintenance of decency and decorum of the House.

President's Address: The President of India addresses the joint sitting of the two Houses at the commencement of the first session after each General Election to the Lok Sabha and also at the commencement of the first session of each year. His address is a statement of policy of the Government and is, therefore, discussed in the House.

Prorogation: It means the termination of a session of the House by an order of the President.

Question: The Parliamentary Question is an effective technique by which a member can elicit authentic and concrete information on programmes, policies and performance of the government.

Question Hour: The first hour of sitting of the House each day is the Question Hour during which members ask questions and the Ministers answer them. In the Lok Sabha it is from 11 a.m. to 12 noon.

Starred Question: A member who desires an oral answer to his question on the floor of the house is required to distinguish it by an asterisk and therefore such a question is known as Starred Question.

Unstarred Question: It is a question which does not call for oral answer. Unstarred Questions are listed for written answers which are laid on the Table of the House.

Supplementary Question: A member can ask a supplementary question arising out of the main question and demand an answer. Supplementary Questions are asked for the purpose of further elucidation on any matter of fact.

Short Notice Question: Normally a ten days' notice is required for any Question to be answered. However, a question relating to matter of urgent public importance may be asked for oral answer, with a shorter notice.

The member asking such a question has to state the reasons for shorter notice.

Quorum: It means the minimum number of members required to be present at a sitting of the House. The quorum to constitute a sitting of the Lok Sabha is one-tenth of the total number of members of the House.

Readings: There are three Readings or stages through which a bill passes. The First Reading means a motion for leave to introduce a Bill. The Second Reading consists of discussion of the principles of the Bill and also its clause-by-clause consideration. The Third Reading means discussion on the motion that the Bill be passed.

Secretary-General: The Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha is a permanent official of the secretariat of the House. He/she is appointed as the speaker. He/she performs parliamentary and administrative functions. He/she advises the Speaker on various parliamentary matters and procedures.

Session: It is the period from the day the Parliament begins its first sitting to the day the Parliament is prorogued.

Subordinate legislation: It means rules or regulations, having the force of law. They are framed by the subordinate authority in pursuance of the power delegated to it by the Parliament.

Summons: It is an official communication issued by the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha under the President's order to the Lok Sabha members informing them about the place, date and time of commencement of a session of the House.

Unparliamentary words: Words or expressions which ought not to be used in debate, are known as unparliamentary words. The use of such words or expressions is a breach of order and a member using such words can be called upon to withdraw from the House or be 'named'. When the Speaker so names the member to the House, the Leader of the House moves at once "that Shri/Smt. (name of the member) be suspended from the service of the House". The question on this motion is put at once without any debate."

Vote on account: It means grants in advance made by the House to enable the Government to carry on until the voting of the demands for grants and passing of the general Appropriation Bill.

Whip: In the parliamentary form of Government, a party has inside Parliament a number of officials known as Whips. The main duty of the Whips is to ensure attendance of the members at the time of important decisions. The Whips form a link between the top leadership and the ordinary members.

Zero Hour: It is of a recent origin and starts immediately after the Question Hour. During the Zero Hour any matter not listed in the business of the House, can be raised by a member. The Zero Hour can extend to any period of time depending upon the Speaker's direction. The Government is not obliged to answer any of the questions raised in the Zero Hour.