

A week in, Speaker Om Birla turning the tide in House

Agency
New Delhi June 28,

If his first seven days in office are any indication, the Lok Sabha's new Speaker Om Birla doesn't believe in business as usual. Birla has already introduced major changes in the functioning of the House, where proceedings in the past many years had been marred by repeated interruptions and adjournments.

Unlike his predecessors, Birla has started sitting through longer hours of the proceedings and often delays lunch to allow more first-time MPs to raise matters of importance. He has also handled disruptions adeptly so far, giving no sign of buckling under pressure.

He has also set a personal record of sorts, becoming the first Speaker to use chaste Hindi in all his conversations inside the House while having no qualms about members talking in their own preferred language. Experts say this is a big shift; for ages, Lok Sabha speakers have

preferred to communicate in English. He hasn't even uttered the words "Aye" and "No" while addressing members taking part in a voice vote on a Bill or a parliamentary motion. It's always "Haan ke paksh mein" (in support of yes or no). The new Speaker was elected on June 19 and on Thursday, he completed his first seven days in office after setting the tone for how the House may run over the next five years.

On Wednesday, Birla allowed first-time MPs more time to raise important issues by extending the Zero Hour (a span of 60 minutes given to MPs to raise issues) and pushed back the lunch hour to 2.30 pm. All the while, he sat through the proceedings himself. Even Opposition MPs couldn't help but praise his attitude. Trinamool Congress leader Saugata Ray said: "You have forgotten your hunger pangs to give younger members a chance to speak. You are an example on how business should be conducted." A day after getting elected

unanimously, in his first meeting with senior floor leaders of different parties, Birla made it clear that he wants to give a chance to more people to raise issues during Question Hour. He suggested that questions be kept short and crisp and the answers to-the-point. Lok Sabha is discussing around eight questions every day—higher than the previous average of 4.5 in the last five years. On Wednesday, 84 MPs raised issues in Zero Hour—the highest so far.

In his first seven days, Birla didn't use a single English word in House. "He is very well conversant in English. But use of the Hindi can help in reaching out to a wider audience. But while he sticks to Hindi, he has never asked any member to speak in Hindi," said a senior official of the Lok Sabha on condition of anonymity. "Hon'ble MPs" are addressed as "Mananiya Sadasy-gan", an adjournment motion has become "sthanagan prastav" and Zero Hour is called "Shunya Kaal".

Birla even cuts short MPs who try to thank him for giving them an opportunity to speak. On Wednesday, when Khagen Murmu of Malda North tried to thank the Speaker for allowing him to raise an issue, Birla told the House in Hindi, "No member needs to thank the Chair. Your chance has come through lottery (to select the names of MPs who can speak during Zero Hour), so you can speak straight away."

On his first day in office, Birla cautioned a Bharatiya Janata Party MP that he will be compelled to mention the latter's name (a major embarrassment to an MP) because he was trying to disturb the House. He also told Congress floor leader Adhir Chowdhury, who turned around to talk to his colleague Shashi Tharoor, not to do so. Ex-Parliamentary affairs secretary Afzal Amanullah said, "It's very good that the Speaker has taken these steps. It was necessary to improve the performance of the House..."

India signs USD 400M loan agreement with World Bank to eliminate TB

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India has signed a loan agreement worth 400 million dollar with the World Bank to help treat and eliminate Tuberculosis from the country. In India, around five lakh people died every year due to Tuberculosis. Finance Ministry said the World Bank supported program will cover nine States and it will support the government's National Strategic Plan to end TB in India by 2025. The Program will provide financial incentives to



private sector care providers for reporting cases of TB and ensuring that their patients complete the treatment regimen. The Ministry said it will also provide Direct Benefit Transfers to patients for acquiring the critical nutrition needed during

treatment. The Program will also strengthen the detection, treatment and monitoring of Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis and will track progress in the detection of additional drug resistance.

PM Modi holds bilateral talks with US President Trump

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On the sidelines of the summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral talks with US President Donald Trump.

Both the leaders discussed a host of bilateral and global issues including Iran, trade, defence and 5G communications networks. Mr Modi thanked President Trump for expressing his love towards India in a letter

recently delivered by the US secretary of state Mike Pompeo. Mr Trump also congratulated Prime minister on the election victory and said the two countries would work together in many areas including military.

The Prime minister also held trilateral discussions with his Japanese counterpart and US President under 'JAI' (Japan, America and India) group. During the meet, Mr Modi highlighted the importance India attaches to the grouping.

Later, briefing media, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale informed that the meetings were mostly focused on peace, stability, Infrastructural development and new initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region.

Mr Gokhale informed that Mr Trump expressed hope that oil prices will remain stable and Mr Modi outlined that India is having a billion consumers and both the countries need to collaborate communication networks.

Nagaland Governor Sworn-In As Governor Of Manipur

DIPR
Imphal, June 28,

Governor of Nagaland Shri Padmanabha Balakrishna Acharya was sworn in as the Governor of Manipur at Darbar Hall, Raj Bhavan, Imphal, today. Justice Lanusungjam Jamir of High Court of Manipur administered the oath of Office to the Governor. The Governor Shri Padmanabha Balakrishna Acharya will discharge the functions of the Governor of Manipur, in addition to his own duties, during the absence (on leave) of Dr Najma Heptulla, Governor of Manipur.

Talking to media persons after the swearing in ceremony, Governor PB Acharya said that the Governor is the constitutional head of the State and that he will discharge his constitutional duties. Stating that a lot of



things can be done to strengthen India, all the states should be equally developed, those who have been denied the benefits of Central Projects can be involved in a

systematic manner to avail them the benefits. Chief Minister N. Biren Singh along with his Council of Ministers, MLAs, top Civil and Police Officials attended

the swearing-in ceremony. Later the Governor inspected the Guard of Honour which was led by Parade Commander Sh. Jugeshore Sharma, Commandant of 5th IRB.

AR Conducts Security And Ex-Servicemen Meet

IGAR (South)
Imphal June 28,

Mantripukhriand ThoubalBattalions of 9 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) conducted securityand ex-servicemen meets on 27 June 2019.

Sawomung Company Operating Base (COB) of Mantripukhri Battalion conducted a security meet for the locals of the area. The security forum was attended by the village headman, Youth Club members and MeiraPaibis. During the meet the locals were informed and updated on current situation existing in the area of responsibility. There was also an interaction carried out on necessary measures required to be undertaken by locals in synergy with Assam Rifles for maintaining a strict vigil against illicit activities in the area. In addition to the security issues,



future action plan in respect of civic action projects like medical camps, recruitment in Assam Rifles and Army and career counseling for youth were also discussed during the meet. Thoubal COB of the Thoubal Battalion conducted an Ex-Servicemen Meet (ESM) for retired personnel of the Indian Army, Assam Rifles as well as Veer Naris on 27 Jun 19. The meet was chaired by Commandant

Thoubal Battalion and Company Commander of Thoubal Company Operating Base. The meet commenced with an interaction with the ex-servicemen, followed by the interaction in which grievances of ex-servicemen, widows and their dependents were addressed to ameliorate any privation and hardships faced by them. The interaction also provided an opportunity to

update the ex-servicemen regarding various new policies and welfare schemes in vogue. The event concluded with tea and refreshments for all the attendees. The interaction brought together the serving and the retired fraternity of Assam Rifles and the Indian Army. Each veteran went back from the venue re-assured of the care and empathy of the Assam Rifles.

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The two days G-20 Summit is underway at Osaka in Japan. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe warmly welcomed the heads of member nations. The theme of the summit is Human-centred future society. Several state heads including Prime Minister Narendra Modi are taking part in the two-day summit.

19 countries, the European Union and several special invitees are participating at the Osaka Summit which will see discussions on Global

Economy- Trade & Investment, Innovation in Digital Economy and Artificial Intelligence. Addressing Inequalities, Realizing an Inclusive & Sustainable World and Climate Change Energy and Environment in four different sessions.

Mr Modi also met President of South Korea Moon Jae-In. Mr Moon said that Korea has a southern policy like India has act East policy adding that these two can be synergised. Prime Minister also had a meeting with Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

Both leaders discussed the situation in gulf, which can impact oil prices. In that sense, PM appreciated Saudi Arabia role on the supply side.

Foreign Secretary informed that the Haj quota has been increased from 1,70,000 to 200,000. Mr Gokhale said Crown Prince invited PM Modi for an international conference.

Our correspondent reports, Prime minister will also have bilateral meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin during the summit.

Arobserves International Day Against Drug Abuse And Illicit Trafficking

IGAR (South)
Imphal June 28,

A lecture on drug abuse and illicit trafficking was conducted by Shangshak Battalion of 10 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) on 27 June 2019 at Sorde, Ukhrul district. In efforts to curb the menace which weakens the social fabric of the

populace, the locals were exhorted to be vigilant about drug peddlers and users.

The lecture was planned with an aim to curb the growing trend of drug abuse in the region. The lecture addressed the most vulnerable group consisting of youth and the students. Support of women and elders was incorporated to

highlight the ills of drug abuse.

Posters and pamphlets were distributed to the youth clubs of the region. In addition, lecture on drug abuse was attended by more than 50 villagers. The people expressed their gratitude towards the Assam Rifles for having organised the awareness drive for the betterment of the society.

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Ashok Veilou's look at

The film was cinematographed by Jithu George from Kerala, edited by Pousheru Ngade from Purul village, Manipur, who passed from the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, Kolkata in Editing, and Sandeep Singh from Uttar Pradesh designed the sound.

The film also bagged the Golden Royal Bengal Tiger with a cash prize of Rs. 5 lakhs for the best short film award in Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF) 2018. Earlier, his 'Tou-Tai' (Seed) won the Golden Royal Bengal Tiger for best Short Film in KIFF

2016. The 28 years old director completed his 3-year PG in Direction and Screenplay Writing from the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, Kolkata, after graduation in Mass Communication and Video Production from St. Anthony College, Shillong.

He is the son of Thaipet Peter of Purul Village. According to family sources, Ashok is a very simple and down to earth person and continue to focus on his career.

Ashok Veilou's elder brother Alexander Leo Pou is also

renowned documentary film maker, who has got diploma in the Film Production and Television from SRFTI and is now working in National Film Development Corporation.

Ashok Veilou was happy that he was able to tell the story of his people and its rich culture to the world which otherwise might have never been told. He expressed his gratitude to the people of Purul, Koide, Onam and Shiroang for the making the film possible. Ashok Veilou says "My people are the backbone of the film. I want to tell their stories for the better world".