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‘Legislatures shouldn’t be reduced to slugfest zone’

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Dehradun: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, on Wednesday, said legislatures in the countries should not be reduced to arenas of political slugfest since they are “temples of democracy” where wishes and expectations of people find voice.

Addressing the 79th Conference of Presiding Officers of India, Birla said, “There should be discussion, debate, and dissent in the House, but no disturbance. Legislatures should not be reduced to arenas of political slugfest... They are temples of democracy to raise issues related to people.” He added that he made every effort to maintain the dignity of the Lower House, the productivity of which was 125% in the first session of the 17th Lok Sabha and 115% in the recently-concluded Winter session.

Birla also said the House was able to, for the first time since 1972, take up all 20 questions laid on the table of the House on November 27, 2019. He added that he tried to allow all first-time MPs to speak. “Several people who could never utter a word in



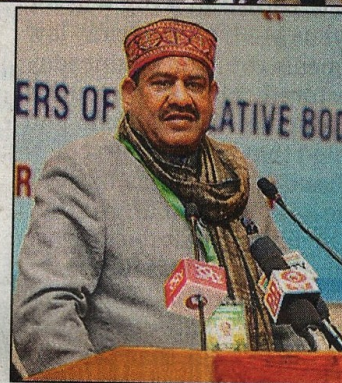
Sukanta Mukherjee

SPEAKER OM BIRLA IN DOON

the 16th Lok Sabha have spoken more in two sessions of 17th Lok Sabha than they ever did,” he said.

Birla also said that India’s new Parliament will be constructed by 2022 when the nation celebrates 75th year of independence. He suggested that a special session on strengthening democracy should be held in all legislatures to mark the occasion.

The Speaker emphasised the efforts being made to go digital by various legislatures. In a tweet that he posted following the day’s discussions, he said, “We have E-portal, Online Reference Ser-



vice & E-Office which make Parliament paperless & an E-Parliament. We are modernising services in the Chamber through which members can use laptops & tablets. I am happy to note that some legislatures are also working towards digitalisation.”

‘Parl disruption index should be evolved’

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Dehradun: Rajya Sabha deputy Chairman Harivansh said on Wednesday that a “Parliamentary Disruption Index” should be evolved to monitor disruptions in Parliament and state legislatures.

This, he said, will help deter instances of indiscipline and make time for debate and discussion on various issues before the Houses. Harivansh was initiating the discussion during the opening session of the Conference of Presiding Officers of India on Wednesday. A total of 11 Speakers discussed the capacity building and training for members to decrease disruptions and improve their functioning, bump up quality of debates in the House, as well as the need to develop a “Code of Conduct” for members, especially relating to suspension for entering and protesting in the well of the House.

The inaugural day’s discussions also centred around the need for uniformity in Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business, the need to increase the sittings of State Legislatures need to be increased, as well as the need for media to cover positive debates held on floor of House.