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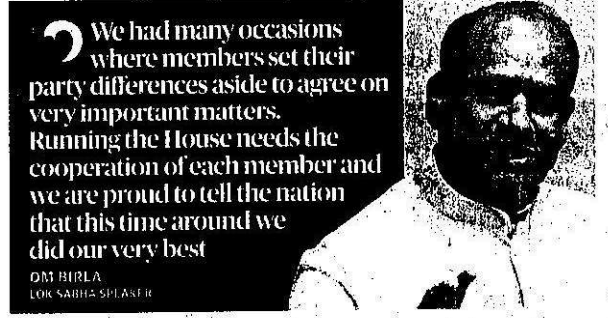
J&K Bill posed big challenge: Om Birla

Speaker says Lok Sabha had the most productive session since 1952, lauds commitment of members

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"The day the Central government introduced the J&K Reorganisation Bill, 2019 was the most challenging day of the recently concluded first session of the 17th Lok Sabha," Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla told *The Hindu* on Saturday on the sidelines of his press conference about the various initiatives that he proposes to bring in.

Elaborating on how he dealt with this "challenging day," the Speaker said: "The House functioned smoothly that day with the members of the House having confidence in the Chair that adequate time would be given to everyone and that no voice, opinion, argument or discussion on the subject would go unheard."



"The House, which has had the most productive session since 1952, was able to function smoothly because of the commitment and discipline that was shown by the members and we had many occasions where people set their party differences aside to agree on very important matters. Running the House needs the cooperation of each member, and

we are proud to tell the nation that this time around we did our very best," the Speaker said.

'Discipline a must'
Asked about the incident where Samajwadi Party MP Azam Khan had to apologise in the Lok Sabha for making "sexist" remarks against BJP MP Rama Devi, the Speaker said: "Discipline is vital

while running this temple of democracy. Our aim is to run this House in the best way possible and make it the best in the world. We are committed to this."

Giving details of the work conducted during the first session of the 17th Lok Sabha, he said that work began on June 17 and was to conclude on July 26, but it was extended till August 7. The session had 37 sittings of a total 280 hours and saw the passage of 35 Bills. The House sat for 75 hours late in the evening to transact business. As many as 1,086 issues were raised by members, mostly first-timers, during the Zero Hour.

Out of the 265 first-time members, 229 got a chance to speak during the Zero Hour, while 42 out of 46 wo-

men MPs also spoke during the same period.

"Besides trying to go paperless in the next session and having hour-long routine briefing for MPs on the Bills being introduced in the House, we have requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to include the expansion and modernisation of the Parliament building in his resolution for "New India", marking the completion of 75 years of Independence in 2022," the Speaker said.

On the suggestion for construction of a new building for Parliament, which had been mooted during the tenure of former Speaker Meira Kumar, Mr. Birla said: "We will invite suggestions on this matter and then finalise this."