

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

PRESS RELEASE

Organizing the All India Whips Conference is one of the functions assigned to the Ministry of Parliamentary affairs, under Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 made under article 77(3) of the Constitution. However, in view of the important role played by Whips in the smooth running of the Parliament, the first All India Whips Conference was held, in September, 1952 at Indore – in the first year after the first general elections in the country. 13 Whips Conferences have been held so far. The 14th All India Whips Conference is now being organised on 4-5 February, 2008 in the Central Hall of Maharashtra Legislature, Mumbai.

In the parliamentary form of Government, Whips of various political parties are the vital links of the internal organization of parties, inside the legislatures. The efficient and smooth functioning of Parliament and State Legislatures depends, to a considerable extent, upon the office of the Whip. The Whips can be rightly said to be the managers of the parties within the legislatures.

Both the ruling as well as opposition parties appoint their whips and certain duties are common to the whips of all parties. But Government Chief Whip has some very important duties. The most important duty is mapping out the time of the session, coordinating, monitoring and management of the business of the Government. Another important function of the Government Chief Whip is to constantly feel the pulse of the House and to render an account of the same to the Leader of the House/Government. The Government whips also act as an important communication link between the leader of the House and the Members of the ruling party and also keep in close touch with the whips of the other parties on matters concerning the business of the House as also on many other matters relating to the House as a whole.

Whips of the opposition parties have an equally important role. They supply their members with all important information and ensure the presence and participation of members of the respective parties in the House specially during important discussions and voting. They play an equally important role in maintaining the standard of debates at a high level in the Parliament/Legislatures. They also interact with the presiding officers and the secretariat of the concerned House on behalf of their parties and members to ensure efficient coordination vis a vis the complex requirements of parliamentary procedures, practices and conventions.

In view of the important role of the whips, the idea of organizing an All India Whips Conference was conceived to provide the whips a suitable forum for periodical meetings and mutual exchange of views amongst the whips in Parliament as well as State Legislatures. The details of the 13 All India Whips Conferences so far held, are given below :-

Sl.No. Date Venue

First September, 1952 Indore

Second 15-16 January, 1955 Mysore

Third 24-25 September, 1956 Srinagar

Fourth 24-25 October, 1962 Mumbai

Fifth 4-6 January, 1966 Bangalore

Sixth 4-6 October, 1967 Shimla

Seventh 21-23 September, 1969 Chennai

Eighth 3-4 November, 1972 Bhopal

Ninth 27-28 October, 1983 Shimla

Tenth 26 November, 1988 Delhi

Eleventh 17-19 January, 1994 Bangalore

Twelfth 21-22 August, 1997 Srinagar

Thirteenth 4-5 February, 2005 Hyderabad

After the deliberations, the conference makes recommendations on improving the functioning of the parliamentary system in our country. The recommendations are adopted unanimously by the conference and are pursued by the Union Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs for implementation at the centre as well as in the States.

The 14th All India Whips Conference was inaugurated by Hon'ble Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Vice President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha today, the 4th February, 2008 morning in the Central Hall of Maharashtra Legislature, Mumbai. Hon'ble Shri Harshvardhan Patil, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Maharashtra, welcomed the delegates and made the introductory remarks. Hon'ble Shri Krishnarao Rakhmajirao Desai alias Babasaheb Kupekar, Speaker, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, Shri Shivajirao Bapusaheb Deshmukh, Chairman, Maharashtra Legislative Council and Shri Vilasrao Deshmukh, Chief Minister of Maharashtra also addressed the gathering in the inaugural session. The inaugural session of the conference was presided over by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, who also addressed the delegates and the other distinguished invitees.

After the inaugural session, the conference was apprised about the status of implementation of the recommendations of the 13th All India Whips Conference. Then, the conference broke into 2 groups for plenary sessions, general discussions and recommendations on the agenda items. The

deliberations in the plenary sessions will continue tomorrow also. There are 7 items on the Agenda for discussion in the conference and a list of the items on the agenda is at [Annex](#).

After detailed deliberations, the recommendations of the conference will be presented and adopted in the valedictory session in the afternoon on 5th February, 2008. Hon'ble Shri Somnath Chatterjee, Speaker, Lok Sabha will deliver the valedictory address.

105 delegates including Ministers of Parliamentary Affairs in the States, Leaders/Chief Whips/Whips in the two Houses of Parliament and in the Legislative Assemblies/Councils of the States/UTs are participating in the conference. In addition, 14 Secretaries/other officers from various States are also attending as observers.

ANNEXE

Agenda Items

14th All India Whips Conference

1. Review of Implementation of the recommendations of the 13th All India Whips Conference.
2. The increased role and accountability of Whips in the context of coalition Governments.
3. Frequent Disruption in Lok Sabha / Rajya Sabha and Assembly Sessions and the need for maintaining the sanctity of
the Question Hour.
4. Need for research / study support to Members of Parliament/Legislatures.
5. Setting aside one full day in a week exclusively for General discussion on issue raised by Members.
6. Membership in Committees that conflict or are perceived to conflict with the private interests of the legislators.
7. Introduction of information technology in day to day functioning of Parliament and State Legislatures and reduction in
use of paper to save environment.