

CAMP
BHOPAL

4 February 2010

PRESIDING OFFICERS' CONFERENCE CONCLUDES

The Seventy-Fourth Conference of the Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies in India which was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha, Smt. Meira Kumar in the Chamber of Madhya Pradesh Vidhan Sabha on 3 February 2010, concluded today.

At its Business Sessions on 3rd and 4th February 2010, the Conference deliberated on three agenda items of parliamentary interest, namely, (i) Self-assessment by the Legislature for enhancing its Relevance; (ii) Creation of Smaller States: A National Perspective; and (iii) The Role of Speaker in the Administration of Legislature.

The two-day in-depth deliberations by the Conference commenced on 3 February 2010 with discussion on the subject 'Self-assessment by Legislature for Enhancing its Relevance', in which as many as 16 Presiding Officers participated in the discussion.

Carrying forward the fruitful deliberations on the items on the Agenda, the Conference took up the subject of "Creation of Smaller States – A National Perspective." In total, as many as 17 Presiding Officers participated in the discussion.

The participants were unanimous in their view that nothing is more sacrosanct than the unity and integrity of the country. A common refrain amongst the participants was that the clamour for creation of more and more States might tend to weaken the very edifice of the federal structure of our country. In keeping with the present scenario, the broad view, which emerged, was that the matter needs to be discussed threadbare at the National Level with the active involvement of all the political parties.

During the discussion on the last subject which innately relates to the functions of the Presiding Officers, as many as 12 Presiding Officers participated in the discussion. There was consensus by far among the participants that Speaker has to play a crucial role in administering the Legislature and its Secretariat. In his capacity as the Presiding Officer of the House, he has to uphold the provisions of the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure and at the same time act as the mediator between the Government and the Opposition. As administrative head of the Secretariat, he has to ensure its independence and impartiality. The Speaker has the onerous responsibility of ensuring on the one hand that the aspirations of the people are fulfilled through their representatives; on the other hand the Speaker has to develop and preserve healthy traditions and conventions of parliamentary institutions in general and parliamentary practices and procedures in particular.

Tomorrow, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Shivraj Singh Chauhan, will inaugurate a Symposium on *Urgency in addressing the Needs of Environment and Conservation of Wildlife*. Besides the Presiding Officers, Members of Parliament from Madhya Pradesh and Members of the Madhya Pradesh Vidhan Sabha will participate in the Symposium.