

# Sparks fly over charge that debate is RSS agenda

We are from RSS and are proud of it: Chief Minister Yediyurappa

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The allegation by Opposition Congress members that the special debate in the Karnataka Assembly on the theme 'one nation, one election' was part the RSS agenda triggered heated exchange between Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa and the protesting members.

The Congress members, who resorted to protest in the well of the Assembly against the need for discussing such a theme in the ongoing session, alleged repeatedly that the topic of the debate was an "agenda of the RSS".



Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa speaking to the protesting Congress members in the Legislative Assembly on Thursday. (SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT)

In a counter-attack, Speaker Visweshwar Hegde Kageri said, "Why are you bringing the name of the RSS here? Talk about us who are in this House and not the RSS."

Mr. Yediyurappa lost his cool towards the end of the day's session, when protests continued. He said, "What is that RSS agenda you are talking about? The Prime Minister of this country himself is from the RSS." He told Congress members that they

were "grounded throughout the country" because of such an attitude. "You are shouting here just because you have some 55 members [in the House]," he said.

Before winding up, he remarked, "Yes we are from the RSS. We are proud to say

that." Meanwhile, JD(S) members staged a walkout expressing dissatisfaction over they not getting an opportunity to speak. JD(S) member Handedappa Kashempur told reporters that they were not in favour of the theme of the debate. But they wanted to convey this by participating in the debate.

'Save money, time'

Earlier in the day, Mr. Kageri argued that if implemented, 'one nation, one election' would save a lot of money, time, and burden on human resources, and accelerate the progress of the country.

Amid protest by the Congress, Mr. Kageri read out his 18-page speech on the theme and said 600,000 expenditure was incurred on conducting the 2019 Lok Sabha election and elections to three States.

Elections were conducted

at one time for Parliament and State Assemblies from 1952 to 1967. But in the 1970s, State Assemblies were dissolved before the term and mid-term elections too were held for the Assemblies and the Lok Sabha in 1970s and 1980s onwards, he said.

The Speaker quoted statements made by various leaders supporting 'one nation, one election' and said frequent elections in one or the other part of the country adversely impacted the economy and development.

Mr. Kageri said at least five amendments had to be made to the Constitution for 'one nation, one election' to be implemented. Electoral reforms were the need of the hour to contain influence of money and caste in elections. He pointed out that there were 1,200 political parties in the country and of them 150 were active.