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Did the BJP's original plan on controversial Bill backfire?

Both Congress and JD(S) were ready to oppose anti-cow-slaughter Bill in Council

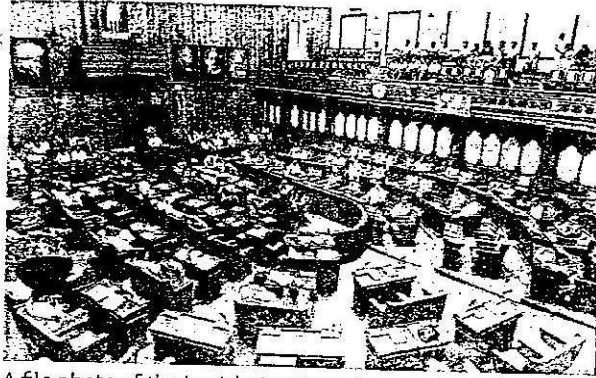
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The ruling BJP in Karnataka, which had tabled and passed the controversial Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill, 2020, in the Assembly, showed no inclination to present it in the Council on Thursday.

As the Bill was in the day's agenda, Council Chairman K. Prathapchandra Shetty asked the ruling party to present the Bill for discussion. However, Floor Leader Kota Srinivas Poojary said it could be taken up on Friday.

Following this, Congress members led by their leader S.R. Patil insisted that it should be taken up as it had been listed. However, the ruling party members dodged the subject and instead raised their demand for no-confidence motion against the Chairman.

When contacted, Mr. Poojary said they did not



A file photo of the Legislative Council.

present the Bill on Thursday assuming that the session would continue on Friday as scheduled earlier.

'BJP sensed defeat'

However, Congress leaders said the BJP, sensing defeat, tried to postpone presenting the Bill. They claimed that the party did not have majority in the House when the Bill was supposed to be presented.

"It is a surprise that the

ruling party that had presented the Bill in a hurried manner in the Assembly and got it adopted refused to present it in the Council despite being allowed to do so," S.R. Patil, Leader of the Opposition, told *The Hindu*.

Alleging that the party had sensed that the Bill would be defeated by the combined Opposition, Mr. Patil said, "We were prepared to vehemently oppose the Bill and had decided to demand that it be referred to a joint select committee for a

detailed study." Sources said although the BJP was prepared to present the Bill till the House was adjourned for lunch, they changed their plan after realising that the Opposition Congress and the JD(S) had come together to defeat the Bill.

"They had come prepared wearing saffron shawls in the first half. However, by late afternoon they pretended that they would not take it up. This was an attempt to mislead us. They assumed that following their pretence to not present the Bill, the Opposition would rest assured without minding about full attendance in the House," said Congress member B.K. Hariprasad.

However, the Congress had discussed with JD(S) leaders and had garnered their support. "The JD(S) agreed to go with us on this issue. And all our 36 members were present in the House as against the 30 BJP members. Hence, they backed off," he said.