

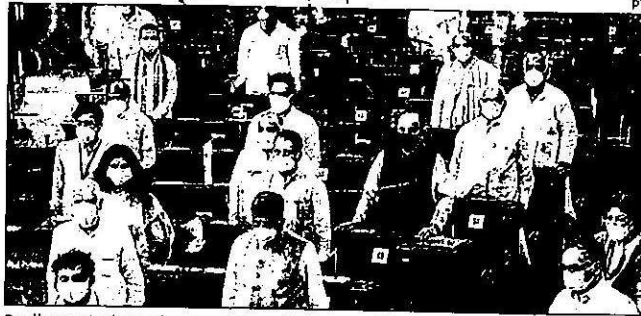
Oppn raises unemployment, economy during Zero Hour

Objects To Scrapping Of Question Hour

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Matters raised by members on Monday in Lok Sabha during the three-hour proceedings on the first day of the monsoon session, being held amid the pandemic, were just not limited to Covid-19, but also included issues concerning their respective states and constituencies.

Since there was no Question Hour, members raised various issues during the curtailed 30-minute Zero Hour. The issues ranged from unemployment, state of the economy and drug-trafficking to inclusion of Bhojpuri, Rajasthani and Bhoti languages in 8th schedule of the Constitution, religious conversion in Jharkhand, plea for giving Punjabi language a status of one of the official languages in J&K and student suicides in Tamil Nadu, allegedly triggered by NEET exams.



Parliamentarians observe silence during an obituary reference in Rajya Sabha on the opening day of Monsoon Session of Parliament in New Delhi on Monday

DMK leader T R Baalu said 12 medical aspirants from rural background had committed suicide in Tamil Nadu and added that they had passed their Class 12 through the state board but NEET exam was based on CBSE syllabus. Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury sought to raise the issue of India-China border tensions, but Speaker Om Birla asked him to raise it in the meeting of the Business Advisory Committee.

Several opposition members also objected to the government's motion to do away with Question Hour and private members' business during the session, saying the Question

Hour is recognised as an essence of parliamentary democracy as it gives members an opportunity to seek answers to various burning questions from the executive. AIMIM member Asaduddin Owaisi even demanded division of votes against the government's motion on not having Question Hour. The Speaker, however, did not accept his demand. Reacting to the opposition's demand, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi cited the decision by some non-BJP-ruled state assemblies, and said in the last five years, 60% of Question Hour in Rajya Sabha and 40% in Lok Sabha was wasted.

25 MPs, many Parl staff test Covid-positive

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Twenty-five MPs and several staff members of Parliament tested positive for the novel coronavirus on Monday, the first day of the monsoon session, with some members announcing their status and one even denouncing the tests as inaccurate.

Anyone entering Parliament House complex had to be Covid-negative. Tests conducted between September 12 and 13 returned positive in the case of 17 Lok Sabha and eight Rajya Sabha MPs on Monday while the number for staff could not be ascertained.

Among Lok Sabha MPs, 12 were from BJP, two from YSR Congress and one each from Shiv Sena, DMK and RLP. Among the eight Rajya Sabha MPs who tested positive, two each were from Congress and BJP and one each from AIADMK, AAP, TRS and AITC.

Sources said 56 people tested positive during the RT-PCR tests conducted by ICMR in the Parliament House complex. These included media persons deputed to report proceedings. New Delhi MP Meenakshi Lekhi said on Twitter, "After the routine Parliament test for Covid and genome test, it's confirmed that I have tested positive for the virus. I am currently in good health and spirits."

RLP MP Hanuman Beniwal, however, rubbished the report on his "re-infection" and called it "false". He said he had tested positive for coronavirus in August and had recovered from it, and that two RT-PCR tests had shown him as having recovered. His case could possibly be one where a recovered patient continues to have the virus though it no longer infects him.

Beniwal said he would request Speaker Om Birla to have the matter investigated since the new report triggered panic among his family and constituents. BJP's Ladakh MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal also said on Twitter that he had tested positive for coronavirus and advised those who had come in contact with him to self-isolate.