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# Cong, Centre spar as sedition cases double in 5 years

War of words in Lok Sabha over misuse of provisions

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Registration of sedition cases has almost doubled from 47 in 2014 to 93 in 2019, with few reaching the conviction stage, the government told the Lok Sabha, prompting the Opposition to allege misuse of the provisions.

Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy, responding to supplementaries during the Question Hour, said there was no direct involvement of the Centre in the registration of sedition cases as the matter was within the ambit of the state government.

He said that 47 cases of sedition were registered in 2014, 30 in 2015, 35 in 2016, 51 in 2017, 70 in 2018 and 93 in 2019.

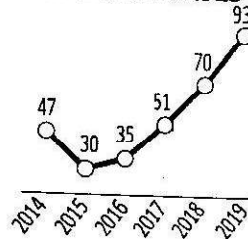
Congress member A Revanth Reddy sought details about the cases registered against climate activist Disha Ravi and against farmers involved in the violence in the national capital on Republic Day. Congress member Manish Tewari pointed towards the low conviction rate of sedition cases and accused the government of misusing the provision to curb free speech.

"In 2014, out of 47 cases registered, there was one conviction. In 2015, out of 30 cases registered, there was zero conviction. In 2016, out of 35 cases registered, there was one conviction. In 2017,



Minister G Kishan Reddy speaks in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. PTI

## SEDITION CASES



\*GOVT'S RESPONSE TO QUESTION IN LOK SABHA

out of 51 cases, there was one conviction. In 2018, out of 70 cases, there were two convictions. In 2019, there was one conviction out of the 93 cases registered," Tewari said.

## 'No right to lecture us'

Minister Kishan Reddy hit back and accused the Congress of "misusing" powers to imprison leaders such as Jayaprakash Narayan and L K Advani under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act and misusing TADA, the anti-terrorism law, in the 1980s.

"The Congress has no right to lecture us about misuse of laws... The Congress has no right to speak about democracy," the minister said.

He said no chargesheet has been filed yet in the Disha Ravi case which was still under investigation.