

Council ruckus: Did not follow no-trust procedure, admits BJP

Just because ruling party was in tearing hurry, House rules couldn't be ignored, says Congress



A file picture of the ruckus that ensued in the Legislative Council on Tuesday over the passing of a no-confidence motion against the Chairman | EXPRESS

BANSY KALAPPA @Bengaluru

Tuesday's dramatic events in the Council may have led to much heartburn and name-calling, but a few BJP leaders admit, albeit anonymously, that the fracas was an "embarrassment for the party", and "wholly avoidable".

The BJP and Congress almost came to blows after Council Chairman Prathap Chandra Shetty's entry was blocked and his deputy was made to occupy the Chair.

Sources said Shetty, a Congressman, had volunteered to resign before the House was reconvened on Tuesday, but was advised by senior party leaders not to do so as the House needs to follow due procedure. It is said that Shetty again offered to resign after Tuesday's showdown, but was dissuaded.

Procedure mandates that a notice is served 14 days ahead, and the motion listed to be taken up in the House. "There is no reason why procedure should not be followed just because some ruling party members are in a tearing hurry," Congress leaders maintain.

One BJP leader admitted to the anomaly. "The embarrassment for the party and House was wholly avoidable. Our party had to only ask the Chairman to take up the no-confidence motion, as the Congress has lost majority. There was no need to place the Deputy Chairman on the seat. Everyone agrees that Chairman Shetty's conduct has been satisfactory."

Another BJP legislator said, "On Tuesday, the Council leadership was wrongly taken over by inexperienced persons in the BJP and JDS, who don't have much knowledge of procedures and rules. Instead of trying to wrest control of the House, they could have followed procedure, maintained gentlemanly conduct and pressed the Chairman to take up the motion."

With concerns being raised in the BJP about the anti-cow slaughter bill, Parliamentary Affairs Minister JC Madhu Swamy had said a few days ago that they were prepared for the crucial bill not being passed in the Council, should the JDS turn hostile, and instead, get it passed again in the Assembly.

Saffron party was scared of cow bill going to select panel

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THE ruling BJP's apprehension over Anti-Cow Slaughter Bill being referred to the Select Committee is said to be one of the reasons for the party's insistence on taking up the no-confidence motion against the Legislative Council chairman first, before the House went ahead with other subjects listed for the day.

The tussle over the no-confidence motion led to unprecedented and unruly scenes, forcing adjournment of the House within 40 minutes of convening and without transacting any business on Tuesday.

"We were aware of the Congress' plans to get the bill referred to the Select Committee after it was tabled in the Council. Once that is done, the government would not be able to issue an ordinance," said a senior BJP leader.

"If the bill is defeated, it can again be taken back to the Assembly and passed, or an ordinance can be issued. But the Congress wanted to get it referred to the Select Committee," he said.

The bill was earlier passed in the Assembly and was to be tabled in the Council on Tuesday. After the Council was adjourned sine die, the government has decided to issue an ordinance.

Congress members too

said that they were planning to demand that the chairman refer the bill to the select committee.

"The idea was to allow all the stakeholders to have a discussion. This is the worst piece of legislation and can be misused. Aspects of the bill need to be looked into in detail in consultation with all the stakeholders, including farmers," said senior Congress leader and ML B K Hariprasad.

"They are trying to thrust their political agenda on the people," he said, and accused BJP members of trying to prevent the Council Chairman from entering the House.

Leader of Opposition in the Council R Patil said that Governor Vajubhai Veerappa should take action against BJP members for their unruly conduct. "The Deputy Chairman can sit in the chair only when the chairman directs him when the chairman is not present. But on Tuesday, the chairman was present in his office. BJP members only made Deputy Chairman sit in the chair, but a lowered the dignity of the House," he said and demanded that the BJP members should be disqualified.

BJP MLC Ravi Kumar accused the Chairman of indulging in a partisan manner and alleged that he is consulting the Congress spokesperson for a legal opinion.

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