

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
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'Parties consulted on winter session'

Parliamentary affairs minister Pralhad Joshi tells TOI's Akhilesh Singh the decision to call off the winter session was taken after consultations with senior members from most political parties who were not in favour of being in Delhi for the session. Excerpts from the interview:

The opposition says it was not consulted. Did consultations take place and what was the response of the main parties?

■ Consultations with all major political parties were done before taking the decision to call off the winter session and parties making it an issue are doing so with a political motive. Leaders were unanimous that the Covid situation in the national capital was grim and the session be avoided. Leaders like Ghulam Nabi Azad, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury (Congress), Sudip Bandopadhyay (TMC), Ram Gopal Yadav (SP), T R Balu and Tiruchi Siva (DMK) and a few others agreed that the session should be clubbed with the budget session in January. Congress and TMC are raising the issue because of their internal situation as some leaders want to



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impress their bosses. Let the floor leaders deny that there was no consultation. We also spoke to YSRCP and other regional parties. I have two questions: When the monsoon session was taking place in September, most of these parties were questioning it and sought an early conclusion. Second, many MPs from these parties are not coming to Delhi to attend even committee meetings. Conversations are highly sensitive and it not ethical to go into details.

Even if the Covid situation was bad in November, it is better now. Could a short winter session not be called since the opposition is making it an issue?

■ There has to be some gap between two sessions and there should be some time to take up business. The next session is approaching and we have to prepare for that. A session should not happen only to satisfy an irresponsible opposition party coming up with a fancy idea. Let me tell you about Con-

gress leaders. The whole issue brings to the fore the differences within the party. I am asking Jairam Ramesh, has he confirmed from Azad and Chowdhury that there was no consultation? I doubt if they are on talking terms. Leaders like Ramesh insult their own party leaders to appease their bosses. He just wants to show loyalty to his leadership.

Congress says the government is avoiding issues like farm laws due to which the winter session was called off?

■ Congress should look at its performance in polls as it is facing a drubbing across the country at every level. Discussions are going on with farmers and we are confident that they (farmers) will understand that changes made in the laws are in their interest.