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## Assembly clears bill allowing Lokayukta to recuse from case

## Oppn largets govi over present status of anti-graft watchdog

BENGALURU, DHNS 1813/10

The Legislative Assembly on Tuesday passed a Bill that allows the Lokayukta to recuse from hearing or roots in the infamous case Cealing any case or complaint and hand it over to any of the et within the Lokayukta that Upa Lokayuktas.

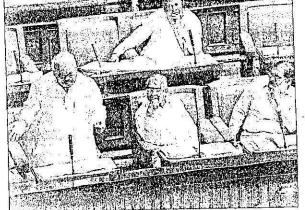
During passage of the Bill, the Opposition came down heavily on the government over the present status of the anti-corruption watchdog. Justice P Vishwanath Shetty is the current Lokayukta with Patil are Upa Lokayuktas.

provision for the Lokayukta to refer or transfer any cases or complaints or matters etc to anyone of the Upa Lokayuktas,

if he feels disabled to hear or consider or in any manner deal with such cases,"Law Minister JC Madhuswamv said.

The amendment has its involving an extortion rackrocked the state in 2015.

Former Speaker K R Ramesh Kumar was not impressed with the Bill. "We had a State Vigilance Commission, which was replaced by the Lokayukta when Ramakrishna Hegde was the CM. Is Justices N Ananda and B S the Lokayukta benefitting at all? Has it served the purpose "The Bill seeks to make a for which it was created? Why have something just for decoration?" Kumar said, urging the government to come up with a "comprehensive legis-



Former speaker K R Ramesh Kumar speaks at the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday.

lation" to tackle corruption.

The Lokayukta, in its present form, has become toothless. Kumar said. "Those in the All India services, especially in the Forest department, are involved in rampant looting. The corrupt are roaming free whereas the non-corrupt are having to hide."

The Siddaramaiah-led Congress government created the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) and this was seen as an attempt at weakening Lokayukta anymore. "Those the Lokayukta. "Those who were trapped (by Lokayukta) became more prominent. On top of this, we brought ACB. They contradicted each oth- sanctity," he saio.

## No raids in the past three vears: CM

The Lokayukta has not conducted a single raid in the last three years, Chief Minister & SYedivurapos. told the Assembly in a written reply. "Investigation powers that the Lokavukta police had under the Prevention of Corruption Act have bear given to the ACB. As a result the Loka rulata it not conducted any reliain the last three years," the chief minister said.

er," Kumar said. JD(S) : ... ber Shivalinge Gowda onic there was no respect for 8 working under Lokayukar and the same sub-irrspectors. The less a separate cadre is created. I'm not sure it'll have the series