

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
PAPER CLIPPINGS

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RS APPROVAL TO FARM
BILLS BY VOICE VOTE
BAD FOR DEMOCRACY

^{2/3} Three farm sector reform legislations the Centre steamrolled in Parliament led to political convulsions, as NDA ally Shiromani Akali Dal pulled out of the Modi ministry and the Rajya Sabha witnessed shocking voice voting amid ruckus. With the Chair disallowing division—the actual counting of votes—the opposition called it a murder of democracy. For, the strength of the treasury benches in the Rajya Sabha is rather wobbly unlike their brute majority in the Lok Sabha. Also, the critical line taken by parties that have normally voted in favour of the NDA in the Rajya Sabha, like the AIADMK and the BJD, suggested possible erosion in support if those parties walk the talk. Yet, the Chair refused to order division citing the bedlam, which began after he extended the day's sitting to let the Bills pass without evolving a consensus on doing so. The situation turned ugly when motions to refer the Bills to a select committee were rejected by voice vote and demands for division disallowed, as the Chair said it could be done only if all members return to their seats. Unruly members heckling him and some of them tearing up official papers added to the day's nastiness. In the end, the Chair got the ayes to let two Bills sail through, but the exercise didn't carry the conviction one would get from actual voting on such important legislations meant to revolutionise agronomics and impact the future of farmers. While the unruly behaviour of members cannot be condoned, neither can sidestepping division by accepted. The Chair could have easily adjourned the House for the day and taken up the matter on Monday. His tearing hurry to wrap up the day's business was of the banana republic kind and not the participative democracy India has been proud of.

The three Bills replace ordinances issued in May—at the height of the pandemic—to increase farmers' revenue by reducing middlemen, allowing contract farming and ending arbitrariness in the management of essential supplies. Ironically, the sudden ban on onion export last week, perhaps to eliminate the tuber's influence on the big Bihar elections in November, was just the kind of arbitrariness the legislative initiative sought to purge.