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Deve Gowda's maiden RS speech cut short to 9 mins

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FORMER Prime Minister and JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda, who was making his maiden speech in the Rajya Sabha on Sunday on the issue of the farm Bills, was asked to wind up just three minutes into it.

He was repeatedly asked by Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh to conclude, even as many members from the NDA benches were heard interrupting the former PM to wrap up.

After several reminders, Deve Gowda (87) finally finished about nine minutes into his speech after which Harivansh Narayan Singh allowed the next speaker.

"What is the point in being upset?" Gowda asked. Speaking to *TNIE*, he said, "The whole system looks like it is going to collapse. Our democratic system seems to have reached a dead end. What was the need to hurry with the Bill? We could have been allowed more time to discuss this very important issue. How can there be voting when the House was not in order?" he questioned.

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'Country loses by curtailing speech'

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RECALLING his days in the Lok Sabha in 2004, when the UPA government, led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, was in power, he said, "I remember I spoke at length for about one-hour-ten-minutes. We had three seats then — M Shivanna from Chamarajnagar, Veerendra Kumar from Kozhikode (Kerala) and myself."

Reacting to the development, former Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy told *TNIE*, "The government would have been exposed if they had allowed the former PM to speak, because he was speaking with wisdom. Therefore, the treasury benches were heckling him. If the system does not have time for a farmer leader of the stature of Deve Gowda, then the loser is not him, but the country. Remember, the Union minister of the NDA, Harshraj Kaur Badai, has already resigned on the issue of the farm Bill."