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ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: Kannataka Legislative Council Session

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With caution, lawmakers attend monsoon session

Bengaluru: Covid-19 weighed on the minds of state lawmakers as they attended the first day of the monsoon session of the legislature on Monday, wearing masks, face shields and gloves.

But contrary to expectations of a very low turnout, the numbers of legislators were decent, and staggered arrivals ensured there was no crowding. The usual energy and hurried movement of officials and staff were missing and at times, the assembly wore a deserted look.

In the assembly, 139 members out of 223 turned up on the first day. The Upper House registered attendance of 49 out of 75. In the legislative council,

opposition members outnumbered those on the treasury bench: 30 to 18.

Glass partitions were installed between chairs inside the halls. The session began with a condolence message for 16 people. Legislators from across party lines lamented about the pandemic's impact on everyone's lives. "When I think about the deaths, including the demise of Ashok Gasti, who didn't enter the Rajya Sabha again after taking the oath, I see how inhuman the virus is. Gasti's wife and daughter, who are both positive for the virus, could not attend the funeral," Sid-daramaiah said during his condolence speech.

The former chief minister shared his own experience of



WELCOME SIGN: Contrary to expectations of a low turnout, the number of attendees was decent on the first day of the session

fighting the disease after almost all his family members tested positive. "That is the reason I say that those who have escaped this virus should remain safe by practising social distancing, wearing a mask and sanitising hands.

Those who have contracted the virus must remain calm and fight it," he said.

The U.P. MLA Araga Jnanendra said the death of former Bhadravathi legislator Anand Gowda was a wake-up call for public rep-

resentatives. "Death is incidental, but dying because of Covid-19 is not. Somewhere, I believe that Gowda's death could have been prevented through adequate precautionary measures," he said.

Initially, the assembly attendance was poor — only 70 members arrived in the morning — but it picked up as the proceedings progressed.

Deputy chief minister CN Ashwath Narayan, ministers Basavaraj Bommai, K Gopalai-ah, Shashikala Jolle and Prabh-uh Chavan and around 30 MLAs were absent as they had tested positive. Many MLAs aged above 70 and those con-sidered particularly vulnera-ble to the effects of Covid-19 were exempted from attendin- the session.