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Opposition stonewalls Bill to amend labour law

BENGALURU, DHNS

day after successfully piloting the Industrial Disputes and Certain Other Laws (Karnataka Amendment) Bill in the Legislative Assembly, the state government on Saturday suffered a major setback with the combined opposition of Congress-JD(S) defeating the bill in the Legislative Council.

Only 14 MLCs voted in favour of the Bill while 26 MLCs voted against it. Further, some of the BJP leaders also opposed the bill much to the embarrassment of the state government.

Tabling the Bill in Council, Labour Minister A Shivaram Hebbar highlighted the provisions under the new amendment and sought support from the members. However, the Opposition Congress and JD(S) opposed the Bill citing anti-labour stand and demanded that the Bill be withdrawn.

The new amendment will only make those establishments, which employ 300

or more persons, seek the government's nod for closure, retrenchment or layoff. Further, worker thresholds will be increased from 10 to 20 in units which use power and from 20 to 40 in factories that do not use power.

Even as the Opposition was rallying against the provisions of the Bill, leaving the government shocked, BJP MLC Ayanur Manjunath also opposed the government's move. Several opposition leaders, led by S R Patil, demanded that the Bill be either withdrawn or referred to the Joint Selection Committee. When the government refused to heed to the demand, the opposition demanded the division of votes. At one point, chief whip of the Opposition M Narayanaswamy tore the bill and demanded the chairperson to allow the division of votes.

The government had no alternative than to heed the demand. Twenty-six MLCs voted against the Bill and thereby defeating a major move of the government.