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Warning of suspension for House ruckus angers opposition MLAs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A communiqué has warned Karnataka MLAs that they could be suspended if they tried to disrupt the governor's address to the joint session of the legislature next month.

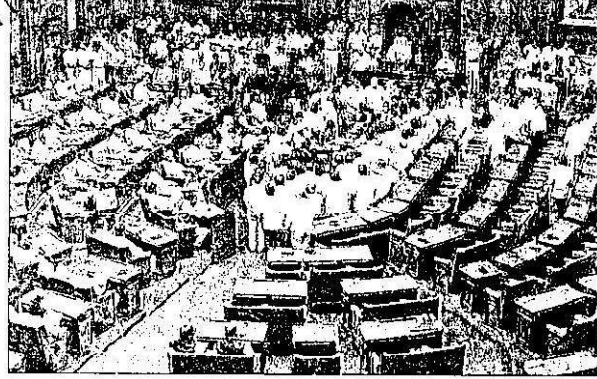
The message, issued by the secretaries of Karnataka legislative assembly and council in the form of a bulletin, comes in the wake of the ruckus created by the opposition in the Kerala and West Bengal assemblies. Though it's a routine exercise, it has angered Congress

POLITICS & POLICY

and JD(S) legislators, who allege the BS Yediyurappa government is trying to curtail their freedom of speech and right to protest.

The two parties have been itching to confront the six-month-old BJP government over various issues, and they see the upcoming session in the legislature as a great opportunity to ratchet up pressure.

Governor Vajubhai Vala will give a speech to the joint session on February 19. The secretaries of the assembly and council have cited Rule 26 of the House to issue the suspension warning for any disruption. "This is against the freedom of expression of



HOUSE MEET: Governor Vajubhai Vala will address a joint session on February 19. Officials want to ensure order during his speech

MLAs. We will not allow our rights to be curbed. If I am speaking in the assembly, it is the voice of the people, and not mine. The speaker should act as per the Constitution," Congress's Siddaramaiah, who is the opposition leader in the assembly, said.

This week, Congress-led opposition MLAs blocked Kerala governor Arif Mohammed Khan's path as he arrived in the assembly. They held placards with the messages "Call back governor" and "We resist CAA". Karnataka council secretary K R Mahalakshmi said the latest directive to maintain order was a routine exercise. "The rule is regularly quoted by the secretariat when putting out the bulletin on the

governor's address. There is absolutely nothing new in this; it's a routine affair," Mahalakshmi said.

Assembly secretary MK Vishalakshi said: "The assembly only asks MLAs to maintain decorum and urges them to not disturb the governor while he is addressing the joint session."

Instances of a serious disruption during the joint session in Karnataka have been rare.

Meanwhile, a committee of presiding officers has been formed to look into Schedule 10 (anti-defection law) and the speaker's powers. It is headed by Rajasthan speaker CP Joshi; Karnataka speaker Vishveswar Hegde Kageri and Odisha speaker SN Patro are the other members.

Vishwanath plans tell-all on 'Op Lotus'

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Mysuru: It was Congress which triggered the so-called Operation Lotus, former minister AH Vishwanath claimed on Thursday, offering a curious tidbit from a tell-all book he is planning on the political manoeuvres that unseated the Congress-JD(S) ruling alliance last July.



NEW CHAPTER: AH Vishwanath is writing his eighth book

"It (the book) will be a piece of history. I want to narrate why Operation Kamala [Lotus] unfolded. There is a false assumption that BJP is behind this. Actually, Congress caused Operation Kamala. I want to write everything in detail," he said.

Vishwanath, a former JD(S) state president, was among the 17 legislators who walked out on the coalition, leaving it without adequate numbers in the assembly and tipping the power tussle in Karnataka in BJP's favour. BJP is accused of orchestrating the defections through Operation Lotus, a claim it has repeatedly denied.

The 17 defectors were later disqualified as legislators. Fifteen of them, including Vishwanath, contested the

assembly byelections on BJP tickets in December. Thirteen won; Vishwanath and MTB Nagaraj were the only ones who lost. Vishwanath, who wants to become a minister in the BS Yediyurappa government, denied that his planned book was a bid to force BJP's hand. "I have spoken with Yediyurappa about my induction. That has nothing to do with my writing," he said.

He didn't say when he would release the book. He added: "There's a perception that 15 MLAs quit for money. It's not true. I wanted to reveal everything in this book. Operation Kamala was launched by Congress. I want to disclose how the episode unfolded."