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ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ: DEPARTMENT/SUBJECT: Parliament

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: Indian Express

ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 01/08/2019

Triple talaq Bill: Opposition outwitted by govt in House

16/8/19
RICHHA SHARMA @New Delhi

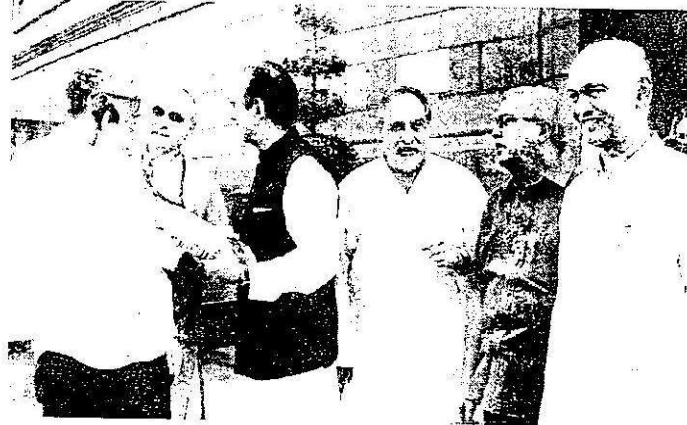
A day after the triple talaq Bill sailed through the Rajya Sabha, the Opposition parties on Wednesday claimed they were kept in the dark by the government and their members could not be informed.

However, some opposition members conceded that it was a poor coordination and lack of serious planning on their part that saw the contentious Bill getting passed. Besides some parties staging a walkout and some abstaining from voting, around 20 Opposition MPs were absent that helped the government get the Bill passed.

The Congress said no whip was issued for party MPs to be present in the House during the debate and voting on the triple talaq Bill. According to party sources, the Congress has sought explanation from its missing members. Vivek Tankha clarified that he was in Chhattisgarh as he had to appear in a court related matter and came to know about the Bill at 10 am Tuesday.

Pointing to the lack of efforts to devise a joint strategy, some non-BJP MPs called for introspection among opposition parties. "It is really embarrassing that the opposition didn't plan anything and the accepted the government's assurance for a select committee. Late listing of business can't be an excuse and wish they would have worked out the floor management better," said a Congress leader.

Some members cited how the opposition held meetings and



Congress leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma, BJP MP Rakesh Sinha, TMC MP Derek O'Brien and others during the Budget Session in New Delhi | SHEKHAR YADAV

AIMPLB MAY GO TO COURT

Unhappy with the triple talaq Bill being passed, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) said it might challenge the law in the SC. AIMPLB member and senior advocate Zafaryab Jilani said the Bill had several "loopholes". The Darul Uloom, Deoband, urged the President to return the Bill for reconsideration.

planned a strategy to take on the government during the passage of the Right to Information (Amendment) Bill last week.

Ghulam Nabi Azad, Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, told the Upper House that the Opposition gave a list of six Bills to the government for sending them to the select committee. The triple talaq Bill and amendment to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act were the two non-negotiable ones cited by the opposition.

"Since we were in the dark, we could not inform our MPs. So, my submission to the government is, on one side, you are

seeking a list from the Opposition of the Bills to be sent to select committees. But you don't come back; you bring it for passage and get it passed. You tell your members to be present and we remain under the illusion that this Bill is going to be referred to a select committee," Azad told the House.

Another Opposition leader said many members don't check the list of business and wait for the hard copy to reach them at 8 am on the same day. "This could be one of the reasons that many members didn't know that the Bill has been listed," said the leader.