

!! Continuations from Page 1 !!

Parliament repeals controversial...

led the BJP to power in 2014. The laws are being repealed just before assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, where it was feared that farmer protests may dent prospects of the BJP.

However, the Samyukt Kisan Morecha (SKM) - the joint body of farmer unions leading the current protests - has refused to end the agitation and asked the government to immediately resume talks on six demands, including a legal guarantee for the procurement of crops at MSP.

The other demands were sacking and arrest of Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra in connection with the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, withdrawal of cases against farmers and building of a memorial for those who lost their lives during the agitation.

Just as Tomar introduced the repeal bill in the Lok Sabha around noon, MPs belonging to opposition parties trooped into the Well of the House demanding a debate. They held banners and raised slogans.

Speaker Om Birla said he was ready to allow discussion on the bill provided the protesting MPs go back to their seats and there is order in the House.

"You want a debate, I am ready to allow debate when there is order in the House. But if you come to the Well, how can there be a debate," he said asking the members to take their seats.

Birla said discussion is not possible when the MPs were standing in the Well holding placards.

Congress leader in the House Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury asked why there is no discussion taking place since the bill was listed for consideration and passage.

He accused the government of taking the House for a ride.

As opposition MPs continued to shout slogans, the Speaker put the bill to voice vote and declared it passed after treasury benches concurred with the proposal.

The members of TRS, DMK and TMC were in the Well during the passage of the bill. TRS MPs were holding placards demanding a uniform procurement policy and a National Food Grain Procurement Policy.

The MPs from the Congress, NCP, BSP and IUML were protesting while standing at their respective seats.

The BJP, which has an absolute majority in the House, had issued a three-line whip to party MPs to be present in the House on Monday for completing the important legislative business.

Birla adjourned proceedings the House till post-lunch session soon after.

Without taking away the existing mechanisms available to farmers, new avenues were provided for the trade of their produce, the copy of the Bill said, adding that the laws have been stayed by the Supreme Court of India.

"During the COVID period, the farmers have worked hard to increase production and fulfil the needs of the nation. As we celebrate the 75th Year of Independence 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the need of the hour is to take everyone together on the path of inclusive growth and development," the Bill said.

In Rajya Sabha, Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu rejected notices given by the Congress and other opposition MPs under rule 267 seeking setting aside of the business to discuss farmer issues and adjourned proceedings briefly as opposition members persisted with their demand.

But this was not before the House was informed of the passage of the repeal bill by the Lok Sabha and a copy of it being laid on the table of the House.

When the Upper House assembled, Tomar introduced The Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021.

Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge said the government was forced to take back the three farm bills after suffering setbacks in the recent by-polls and fearing its fallout on BJP's electoral prospects in the ensuing elections in five states.

He said over 700 farmers lost their lives during the protests over the farm bills in the last year.

But his speech was cut short for exceeding his allotted two minutes time by Deputy Chairman Harivansh who then gave the floor to Tomar.

The minister said the government could not convince the agitating farmers about the benefits of the three laws.

He also attacked the Congress for adopting "double standard" on the laws, as its own election manifesto talked about the need for reforms in the farm sector.

The prime minister, he said, showed a large heart by announcing the repeal of the laws on Guru Nanak Jayanti.

He said as both the government and the opposition parties are for the repeal of the laws, so there was no need for any discussion on the farm repeal bill.

But opposition MPs demanded a debate.

Amid slogan shouting, Harivansh put the repeal bill to voice vote and it was declared passed after treasury benches supported it.

Dola Sen and Nadimul Haque of the TMC rushed into the Well of the House when the voice vote was being taken to protest the passage of the bill without debate.

After the passage of the bill, the House proceedings were adjourned briefly.

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act is aimed at giving freedom to farmers to sell their produce outside the mandis.

The Farmers' Empowerment and Protection Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act is to provide cultivators the right to enter into a contract with agri-business firms, processors, wholesalers, exporters, or large retailers for the sale of future farming produce at a pre-agreed price.

The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act was implemented to remove commodities like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, onion, and potatoes from the list of essential commodities and also do away with the imposition of stock holding limits on such items, except under 'extraordinary circumstances'.

The repeal bill in Rajya Sabha was passed after Deputy Chairman did not give a ruling on a point of order raised by Tiruchi Siva of DMK.

"There was a supplementary list of business, which was taken up regarding the repeal of the farm bills. I do not want to go into the merits of the bill but without time being allocated, has there been any precedent of taking a bill without allocating time by way of bringing a supplementary," he asked.

Govt ready to...

and find ways for development of the country.

He asserted that the government is ready to discuss all issues and also answer all questions. The prime minister said the benchmark should be how the House functions and not how it is disrupted. Voices against government policies should be forceful but dignity of Parliament and the Chair should be maintained, Modi said.

He also urged people to stay alert in the wake of the new variant of COVID-19.

150 new COVID...

recorded a maximum of 48 new cases followed by 23 cases in Baramulla district.

There are 1,626 active cases in the UT, while the number of recovered patients stands at 3,30,579, the officials said. Meanwhile, with 34 new coronavirus infections, the total tally of covid cases in Ladakh surged to 21,528, out of which 21,047 people have recuperated from the disease, while the active cases surged to 268, officials said. All the 34 new corona cases were reported in Leh, they said, adding 15 patients were also cured and discharged from a hospital in Leh. During last fortnight, from 154 active cases on November 14, the active viral-load in the Union Territory surged to 268, including 246 in Leh and 22 in Kargil district on Sunday. Ladakh has registered 213 covid-related deaths -- 155 in Leh and 58 in Kargil -- since the outbreak of the pandemic last year, they said.

RO among 4...

Shafi Mir and two other beat officials were suspended for failing to act against forest damages in compartments NH 80 and 82 of Manigah Block.

Based on inputs and tip off received an enquiry was conducted into the matter.

On the findings of enquiry, the Range Officer, Block Officer and two beat officials were suspended and departmental enquiry has also been initiated against them.

J&K administration working...

feasibility of a ropeway for the yatra. "Once the feasibility report comes, we will move ahead," he said.

He said that the Jindal Foundation has done a survey for improving facilities at Shiv Kheri shrine in Reasi district. "We hope the work will start next month," he said. He said that the government is looking at creating a pilgrim tourism circuit of Mata Vaishnodevi, Shiv Kheri, Purmandal, Mansar and Surinsar lakes.

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor laid the foundation stone for the Tirth Yatri Niwas and Disaster Management Centre of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board at Majeen, near IMPARD, Jammu.

He congratulated the devotees of Shri Amarnathji; officials of the Shrine Board and the people of Jammu region for the ground-breaking ceremony of the Yatri Niwas.

With the foundation of the Yatri Niwas, we have fulfilled a long pending demand of all stakeholders, organizations associated with Shri Amarnathji Yatra, devotees from across the country and abroad, said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor expressed his desire to develop Yatri Niwas as a symbol of compassion, spirituality, service, peace and happiness.

Yatri Niwas is not merely a building. It needs to be developed as a centre for awakening of consciousness, a confluence of ancient philosophy so that the devotees can feel bliss and may begin their further Journey to Shri Amarnathji Shrine in South Kashmir with purity and perfection, the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor directed the officials of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board to establish a library for showcasing the spiritual and cultural heritage of J&K to the visiting pilgrims.

Work with greater commitment and dedication to provide safe and best-in-class facilities keeping in mind the faith of the devotees and the timeless tradition of Shri Amarnathji Yatra, the Lt Governor told the officials.

He said that a Yatri Niwas with a capacity of more than 3200 pilgrims is under construction at Chandrakot in Ramban, and the foundation for another Yatri Niwas with a capacity of about 2800 passengers was laid in the month of August this year in Srinagar.

The Yatri Niwas in Jammu will also open up new employment avenues for the local population, especially for the youth, he added.

Dharma has been the very essence of the Jammu region since ancient times. The morning breeze here is filled with the prayers just as all our Vedas, Upanishads, Shastras begin with a salutation to the almighty. Therefore, we are making dedicated efforts to serve all those who are starting their spiritual odyssey from the City of Temples, observed the Lt Governor.

Elaborating on the work being done to develop tourism in Jammu, the Lt Governor said that a pilgrimage tourism circuit connecting Mata Vaishno Devi, Purmandal- Utterbehni, Mansar-Surinsar and Shiv Kheri together is coming up, besides promoting the unexplored tourism potential of Jammu to attract more tourists.

Durga Bhawan, a high utility pilgrim-centric facility at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine is under construction. Study for the restoration of Shiv Kheri is being done and work on it will begin soon. We are also exploring the feasibility of a ropeway at Shri Amarnathji Shrine, the Lt Governor informed.

The Lt Governor expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for inclusion of rejuvenation of Purmandal and Utterbehni in the PRASAD scheme.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor, along with the members and officials of the SASB performed Bhumi Pujan rituals for the new facility.

Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to the Lt Governor, speaking on the occasion, reiterated commitment of the UT Administration to provide comfortable and modern facilities to the devotees of Shri Amarnathji.

In his address, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary highlighted J&K Government's initiatives to improve the facilities for the visiting pilgrims. Once completed, the new Yatri Niwas would accommodate more than 3000 pilgrims, he added.

Chander Mohan Gupta, Mayor JMC expressed gratitude to the UT administration and Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board for the Yatri Niwas catering to the needs of the devotees and other stakeholders.

Rahul Singh, Addl CEO SASB, in his welcome address, informed about the recent developments made by SASB for facilitating Shri Amarnathji Yatris.

Bharat Bhushan, DDC Chairperson Jammu; Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary, HUDD; Sanjeev Verma, Commissioner Secretary to Government, Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment; Mukesh Singh, ADGP Jammu; Dr Raghav Langer, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Ramesh Kumar, CEO, SMVDSB; Anshul Garg, DC Jammu; former legislators, PRI representatives, religious heads and a large number of people from various communities attended the foundation laying ceremony.

CS directs universal...

travellers will be sent for home quarantine of 7 days and re-tested on the 8th day, whereas, the COVID positive patients will be sent to institutional quarantine centres for 15 days and their samples will be sent for genome sequencing at ICMR designated testing laboratories.

It was emphasized that de-boarding from international flights must comply with the COVID appropriate behaviour (CAB) and set protocols and a special COVID helpdesk is forthwith established at the Srinagar airport. Besides, Secretary, Disaster Management was asked to monitor the situation and submit a daily report for timely intervention of the concerned agency.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon the Health Department to establish genome sequencing facilities at Government Medical Colleges, Srinagar and Jammu to fast-track the detection of Omicron variant and other mutations.

Moreover, district administrations of Budgam and Srinagar were asked to establish government quarantine centres and further explore arrangements for paid quarantine facilities for institutional quarantine to deal with any emergent situation.

The Health and Medical Education Department was asked to conduct equipment audit to establish functionality of COVID related infrastructure including COVID dedicated hospitals, ventilators, Oxygen supported beds, and Oxygen plants. The Department was directed to ensure readiness of manpower and machinery to cater to a peak caseload of at least 7500 patients per day and firm up the inventory of oxygen supply and medicines.

Further, the Chief Secretary directed the Deputy Commissioners to enhance testing rate and contact tracing for positive patients to trace infection trajectory and establish micro-containment zones at an early stage. Additionally, the Deputy Commissioners were directed to reduce the daily reported cases through strict enforcement of CAB, COVID SOPs and protocols, and micro-containment zones.

J&K statehood will...

will be delimited, the elections will be followed soon after, he said.

Meanwhile, Omar Abdullah said people of Jammu and Kashmir are being punished due to the collective failure of the Centre and local administration by withholding the region's statehood.

Reacting to a statement of BJP leader Ashok Koul, the former chief minister said the Centre and the UT administration failed to protect the people and manage the security situation. "So the people of J&K will be punished, by having our statehood withheld, because of the collective failure of the Union Government & the J&K administration? They fail to protect people, they fail to manage the security situation & the rest of us are punished. What an idea sir ji!" Omar tweeted.

12 Opp RS...

or "abuse" of the rules of the Council by "persistently and willfully obstructing the business thereof."

"That this House takes cognizance and strongly condemns the utter disregard to the authority of the Chair, complete abuse of the rules of the House persistently thereby wilfully obstructing the business of House through their, unprecedented acts of misconduct, contemptuous, unruly, and violent behaviour and intentional attacks on security personnel on the last day of 254th Session of Rajya Sabha (Monsoon Session) ie August 11, 2021, thereby lowering the dignity of and bringing disrepute to this August House," the resolution read.

Leaders of the 12 opposition parties unitedly condemned the suspension and termed it as "unwarranted and undemocratic" and said this was done in "violation of all the Rules of Procedure of Rajya Sabha".

"The motion moved by the Government for suspending the members in regard to the unfortunate incident that occurred in the previous session is unprecedented and violates the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the Council of States (Rajya Sabha)," a joint statement signed by leaders of the opposition parties said.

The signatories of the statement are -- Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge and other members of the Congress, DMK, SP, NCP, Shiv Sena, RJD, CPI(M), CPI, IUML, LJD, JDS, MDMK, TRS and AAP.

Asked about the suspension, Joshi said the Opposition has been continuously disrupting the house but on August 11, the last day of the Monsoon session it "crossed all limits".

"They manhandled marshals, tried to attack the security staff...MPs from opposition parties danced on the Secretary General's table. The opposition has the right to disrupt but is this the way to disrupt", Joshi told reporters.

Joshi on Monday wrote to Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu, noting that the 12 suspended members caused irreversible disgrace to the House and demanded "exemplary remedy which will not only act as deterrence but also restore the credibility of Parliament".

Narrating in detail the incidents, the minister in the letter dubbed their behaviour as "unlawful, criminal and contemptuous".

"The 254th Session of Rajya Sabha would indeed be counted as most reprehensible and shameful session in our Parliamentary history," Joshi said about the Monsoon session.

"These unfathomable circumstances demand exemplary remedy which would not only act as deterrence against any such future unruly and violent incidents but also endeavour to restore the credibility of Parliament in the eyes of its electorate. It is our bounden duty to set the highest standard of personal and professional conduct and any deviation therefrom should invite strictest measures," Joshi said.

Justifying the action against the MPs, top government sources said during the Monsoon session the Opposition broke many conventions of protests and adopted a violent approach.

The opposition did not even allow Prime Minister Narendra Modi to introduce his Council of Ministers after a reshuffle-cum-expansion exercise, they said.

Reacting to her suspension, Chaturvedi tweeted "If speaking for farmers, against privatisation that goes against people, sells family silver for sarkari PR calls for suspension, then I ask: how weak are you to not be able to answer on basis of parliamentary democracy? Will continue to speak for people inside & outside the parliament." She further tweeted "even the rules don't permit carrying forward taking action from one session to another. Rule 256."

Accusing the BJP government of indulging in "dictatorship", TMC's Sen alleged that it was "attacking the Constitution and democracy".

The last day of the Monsoon Session had witnessed chaotic scenes with marshals being called in as Opposition members had protested over various issues and demanded a discussion on the farmers' agitation and the Pegasus snooping row among other matters. The entire Monsoon session was washed out due to the opposition protests. The government had accused the Opposition of not only creating unruly scenes in the well of the House but also accused some of them of manhandling a woman marshal in the House.

The Opposition had alleged that additional people were called in and some leaders were attacked. As soon as the House assembled at 3:10 PM after two successive adjournments, Raja Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh, who was presiding the session, permitted Joshi to move the motion.

Immediately after the proposal was moved by Joshi, Deputy Chairman declared the motion to be adopted by a voice vote amidst the protest of the opposition parties. He declared the 12 members as "suspended for the remaining part of the current session" and adjourned the House till Tuesday. Though Rule 256 has been used in the past as well to suspend MPs of the Upper House, this is probably for the first time 12 MPs have been suspended for the entire session. The Rule was last used in July this year to suspend Santanu Sen. Prior to that, the rule was used to suspend 8 MPs - Syed Nasir Hussain, Ripur Bora, Rajeev Satav (all Congress), Derek O'Brien, Dola Sen (TMC), Sanjay Singh (AAP), KK Raghesh and Elamaram Karim (both CPM) in September last year. It was used to terminate Sabir Ali and Subhash Prasad Yadav on April 23, 2010, and April 28, 2010, respectively. In March 2010, 7 SP MPs were suspended using the same rule. Prior to 2010, the rule was used sparingly in 198