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MONSOON SESSION: Modi misled the country on Chinese incursions in Ladakh, says Rahul

PM running away from discussion on China: Cong

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Congress MPs Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Shashi Tharoor and others stage a protest near Mahatma Gandhi statue demanding discussion over India-China border issue in Ladakh, during the ongoing Monsoon Session, at the Parliament House in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

The Congress on Tuesday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of running away from a discussion in Parliament on Chinese transgressions in Ladakh by not allowing Opposition parties to speak on the issue.

Though several Opposition members demanded a discussion on the issue in the Lok Sabha, Congress members were the first to walk out on being not allowed to speak in support of the Indian Army after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh made a statement on 'Transgressions on our border in Ladakh'.

After staging a walk-out, Congress members held a demonstration in Parliament and questioned the competence of the prime minister in the Lok Sabha when the defence minister made a statement on the Chinese transgressions.

There was a deliberate attempt to silence the Congress. We only wanted to send a message of solidarity to the Indian Army and we also wanted

this Government to be honest, accountable and transparent to the people of India," Gaurav Gogoi, deputy leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha told reporters here.

The main Opposition party wanted Singh to state in clear terms whether China had occupied Indian territory in Ladakh and specify a timeline when the government planned

to oust them.

"We are proud of the valour of our armed forces, but why is the prime minister missing? Why is the Prime Minister running away from giving an account of his failure to Parliament," Congress chief spokesman Randeep Singh Surjewala said. Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said it was clear from the defence minister's

statement that the prime minister misled the country on Chinese incursions in Ladakh.

"Our country has always stood up with our defence forces and will continue to do so. But when will you (PM) stand up against China? When will you reclaim our territory that China has occupied? Don't be scared of naming China," Rahul said on Twitter.

Bill to provide statutory status to aviation regulators passed

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Parliament on Tuesday passed a bill that seeks to improve India's aviation safety ratings, provide statutory status to regulatory institutions like the DGCA even as the Opposition accused the government of centralising powers in its hands and demanded a probe into the privatisation of airports.

Rajya Sabha passed the Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020, with a voice vote after a discussion, six months after the Lok Sabha cleared the legislation in March.

Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Puri said the "operating thrust" of the Bill was to provide statutory powers to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) and it was necessary for moving forward with the exponential growth of the sector.

He said the amendments were necessary as the growth

in civil aviation has thrown many challenges such as saturated airport capacity, lack of trained manpower, limited manpower capabilities.

The new amendments also provide the provision to raise the penalty for violation from up to Rs 10 lakh to Rs 1 crore. The last revision was made in 2007 from Rs 1,000-2000 to Rs 10 lakh. However, no change has been proposed in terms of imprisonment that is at two years in most cases, he said.

Rejecting the criticism on the privatisation of airports, Puri said since the privatisation of Mumbai and Delhi airports in 2006, the Airports Authority of India has received Rs 20,000 crore. This money has been utilised to develop airport infrastructure in other parts of the country, he said.

Initiating the debate on the Bill, Congress leader KC Venugopal accused the government of promoting crony capitalism by privatising airports in the name of developing them.

LS nod to Bill that removes stock limits on farm commodities

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Lok Sabha on Tuesday passed the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill that seeks to deregulate food items, including cereals, pulses and onion, amid strong protests from Opposition parties and a BJP ally who dubbed the move "anti-farmer".

Former Punjab deputy chief minister Sukhbir Singh Badal, a Lok Sabha member from Ferozpur, said farmers have "misgivings and doubts" on the Bill and two other legislations related to the farm sector.

"The Centre should withhold these legislations and work to address the concerns of farmers," Badal, the Akali Dal chief, said.