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MPs pass bill to cut pay, seek MPLADS restoration

Swati.Mathur@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Lok Sabha on Tuesday unanimously passed a bill approving a 30% cut in MPs' salaries "to meet exigencies" arising out of the coronavirus pandemic even as opposition MPs clamoured for restoration of the MP Local Area Development Fund Scheme (MPLADS).

All opposition parties, and some fence-sitters, protested against the government's "unilateral" decision to freeze MPLADS and called it a "disservice to the people whose money it was". Congress MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said 83% of

MPLADS funds were spent on rural India, 15% on Scheduled Castes and 7.5% on tribals, all of whom would be deprived by the money being stopping. DMK's V Kalanidhi said the government should have, in light of the pandemic, laid out guidelines for spending MPLADS money instead.

TMC MP Saugata Roy said Rs 50 lakh he had sanctioned for a Covid hospital in his constituency was rejected because funds were stopped from the 2019-20 quota as well. NCP MP Supriya Sule questioned the Rs 20,000 crore Central Vista project over money for constituency development.