

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
PAPER CLIPPINGS

ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ: DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT:

Parliament

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER :

Deccan Herald

ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE : 27/07/2019

Congress walks out of LS over Gov's deadlines

Democracy under threat in Karnataka: Adhir

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Friday staged a walkout from Lok Sabha protesting against Karnataka Governor Vajubhai Vala's move to set a deadline for Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy to prove his majority on the floor of the state Assembly.

Adhir Chowdhury, the leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, raised the issue in the Lower House of Parliament during Zero Hour and accused the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party of hatching a conspiracy to destabilise the opposition parties' governments in several states.

"Imagine, you issued a ruling to us (in the Lok Sabha), but President (Ram Nath

Kovind) comes and tell you that it would happen or would not happen. You would not feel good," Chowdhury said, addressing Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. "You enjoy autonomy. The Speakers of the Legislative Assemblies in the states too enjoy autonomy."

He was apparently trying to draw a parallel with Governor Vajubhai Vala's communication to Karnataka State Assembly Speaker K R Ramesh Kumar, setting deadlines for Kumaraswamy government to prove majority.

"There is a conspiracy being hatched to destabilise elected governments in several states across India, one by one," he alleged even as the BJP MPs protested against what

he said.

Birla did not allow Chowdhury to speak further and rather moved to start the next item on the list of business. The Congress MPs then staged a walkout from the House.

Earlier, as soon as the Lok Sabha assembled for the day at 11 am, Chowdhury rose to speak on the political situation in Karnataka.

"Democracy is under threat in Karnataka," he said, but Birla did not allow him to continue and rather moved to start the proceeding of the Question Hour.

The MPs of the opposition Congress, Dravida Munnethra Kazhagam and Trinamool Congress then trooped into the well of the House and start-

ed raising slogans against the BJP-led government at the centre. Birla said that when the issues related to West Bengal had been raised in the Lok Sabha, then the MPs had expressed the view that the state issues should not be discussed in the House.

"Honourable Member, Please don't touch. He is my staff," the Speaker told one of the MPs protesting near his podium, apparently asking him to desist from getting close to an official of the Lok Sabha secretariat.

He, however, later assured the Opposition MPs that he would consider allowing them to speak on the issue during Zero Hour.

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