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Pell-mell in Assembly over Yatnal's controversial remarks on Doreswamy

Opposition protests result in CM cutting short his reply on motion of thanks to Governor's address

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Bharatiya Janata Party MLA and former Union Minister Basanagouda Patil Yatnal's controversial remarks - describing centenarian H.S.

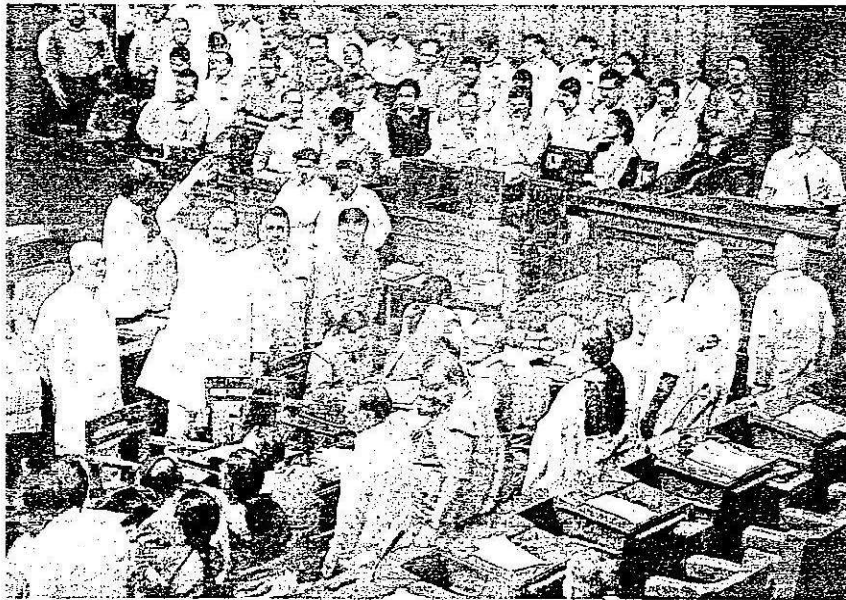
IN THE LEGISLATURE

Doreswamy as a "fake freedom fighter" and "Pakistan agent" - created ruckus in the Legislative Assembly on Monday with both the Opposition Congress and Janata Dal (Secular) members staging a dharna in the well of the House seeking permission to discuss the issue.

The protest by the Opposition came in the way of Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa replying to the debate on motion of thanks to the address by Governor Vajubhai R. Vala to the joint session. The Chief Minister had to wind up and restrict his reply to 15 minutes as nothing could be heard in the din.

Speaker Vishveshwar Hegde Kageri adjourned the House twice before finally adjourning for the day as the Opposition members refused to withdraw their protest.

Earlier, Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah raised the issue of "derogatory" remarks by Mr. Yatnal soon after the House paid tri-



Members of the Congress and Janata Dal (Secular) staging a protest in the Legislative Council in Bengaluru on Monday. - V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

butes to three dignitaries who died recently. But the Speaker said he would consider providing permission to Mr. Siddaramaiah after completion of the Chief Minister's reply as listed in the day's agenda. However, Mr. Siddaramaiah insisted that the issue be taken up before the Chief Minister's reply as it was a serious matter that amounted to breach of Constitutional provisions.

"It is a matter that amounts to contempt of the

House as a BJP MLA has insulted the freedom fighter," Mr. Siddaramaiah said, and urged the Speaker to use his discretionary powers to allow him to raise the issue.

However, Law Minister J.C. Madhuswamy appealed to the Speaker to stick to the pre-decided agenda, while Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai and Kannada and Culture Minister C.T. Ravi too endorsed his views.

The Speaker asked the Chief Minister to commence

his reply, but this angered the Opposition members who trooped into the well of the House and began their protest. They shouted slogans against those violating Constitutional provisions.

After lunch, the Opposition Congress members continued to remain in the well of the House demanding the Speaker to allow discussion on the matter using his discretionary powers under Rule 363 of the House. The Speaker asked Mr. Siddara-

maiah to submit a notice seeking detailed discussion.

He said the issue was not an emergency one as leaders of the ruling and Opposition were trading charges about Mr. Yatnal's remark for the past one week.

Mr. Siddaramaiah insisted that the matter was serious and significant. Mr. Yediyurappa too suggested the Congress members should give in writing seeking a discussion on the the matter.

Amidst of all these, RDPR Minister K.S. Eshwarappa urged the Speaker to suspend Mr. Siddaramaiah from the House for calling Prime Minister Narendra Modi a "mass murderer" in the past.

As Congress members refused to withdraw their protest and continued slogans against the government, the Speaker conducted the proceedings of the House and asked the Minister to table Bills. A total of eight Bills were tabled amidst slogans and counter-slogans by the Opposition and ruling party members.

With Congress members continuing to protest before the Chair, the Speaker adjourned the House for the day. Mr. Kageri said the House would discuss about the Constitution and its relevance on Tuesday and Wednesday.