

RS saw 82% productivity in first week of Budget Session

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NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Lok Sabha may have been hit by disruptions over the Opposition's demand for a separate discussion on farmers' issues but the Rajya Sabha in the first week of Budget Session has clocked a productivity rate of 82.1%.

Against a total scheduled sitting time of 20.34 hours, the Upper House lost 4.14 minutes to disruption by Opposition members on February 2 and brief adjournment the next day.

However, MPs sat for an extra 33 minutes beyond the business hours, especially on February 5 to conclude the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address in which 50 MPs from 25 parties had participated.

The government is scheduled to reply on Monday 10.30 am after the House takes up Zero Hour and Question Hour, which has been suspended between February 3 and 5 to enable 15-hour discussion on the motion of thanks. Last week, eight Zero Hour and seven Special Mentions were made. Discussion on the General Budget for

2021-21 will be taken up next week for which 10 hours have been allotted.

On Monday, the government has also listed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, seeking to replace an Ordinance aimed at merging JK cadre with AGMUT cadre, for passage after the reply to the motion of thanks. It is to be seen whether the Opposition would press for a voting on any of the 118 amendments it has submitted.

Between February 2 and 5, the Lok Sabha has functioned for 158 minutes only as Congress-led Opposition

staged protests demanding a separate discussion on farmers' agitation and related issues. On February 1 when the Budget was presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Lok Sabha met for 113 minutes. The Opposition in Lok Sabha did not want to club the discussion on farmers with the debate on Motion of Thanks and it resulted in a stalemate. BJPMP Locket Chatterjee moved the motion of thanks in the Lower House but could not start her speech.

However, the Opposition in Rajya Sabha took a divergent view and allowed the debate on the motion of

thanks after the government agreed to increase the debate time from 10 hours to 15 hours.

Even Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and Chief Whip Kodikkunnil Suresh agreed to the debate on the motion of thanks after the government proposed increasing the discussion time but Congress MPs were up in arms against. Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi was also said to be not in agreement with going ahead with the motion of thanks without a separate discussion on farmers issues.