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ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: Deccan Herald ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE : 14/12/2019

State Assemblies to discuss defections, disturbances in Houses

ON
14/12/19

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NEW DELHI, DHNS

Amid defections and poaching of MLAs making headlines in various states, the Lok Sabha secretariat will deliberate with state legislatures over the "role of speaker" and the 10th Schedule that has provisions as to disqualification on ground of defection.

A perusal of suggestions given by state legislatures shows that the legislative Assembly and council of TRS-ruled Andhra Pradesh want to discuss "Anti-Defection Law—The need to reform", while Bihar also seeks to discuss "10th Schedule of the Constitution and the role of speaker".

The two-day conference of Presiding Officers of legislative bodies in India, which is being held in Dehradun from December 18, will also take stock of the declining number of working days in various state Assemblies and the possible remedial measures.

The Lok Sabha has suggested deliberating over the "need to lay down rules for setting minimum number of sittings and sessions of Legislature," according to the documents. Bihar has listed the topic "decreasing interest of legislators in Legislative Assembly" while Rajasthan has made a direct suggestion "increase the number of sittings of legislatures."

Ideally, any state Assembly should have 90 working days of a session in

a year. According to a 2014 report by PRS Legislative Research about the functioning of 31 Assemblies, the Haryana Assembly had held 10 sessions since 2009 till March 2014, meeting for a total of 54 days—an average of 11 days per year.

Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh sat for a fewer days than Haryana. The Kerala Assembly sat for an average of 50 days per year, while Tamil Nadu Assembly convened for 44 days. The Assembly in Goa sits for 26 days a year on an average. The Gujarat Assembly had during 2007-2012 sat for a total of 157 days—an average of 31 days each year. In most state Assemblies, bills are passed without any discussion or very little discussion.