

Cabinet takes ordinance route for cow slaughter Bill

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THE Karnataka cabinet on Monday passed the Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill 2020, as an ordinance. It will now go before the Governor to be promulgated. The government had failed to pass the Bill in the Upper House due to lack of support.

This is the first time this issue has been taken up as an ordinance. As ordinances are effective for only six months, the government has to take it up in legislature before the deadline.

The contentious anti-cow slaughter Bill has an uncertain future, as it is yet to be approved by the legislative council, where the government knows it does not have the numbers. The BJP has 31 members and the Congress has 29. The JDS, with 14 members, has said it will not support the Bill. With the farm bills too, the government had to take the ordinance route before it got the support of the JDS and passed it in the Council.

Once the Act comes into effect, there will be a blanket prohibition on slaughter of cows in the State. The Bill provides for stringent punishment for those who indulge in smuggling, illegal transportation, atrocities on cows and their slaughter, and proposes a maximum of seven years' imprisonment and a fine of Rs 5 lakh for the offenders.

However, abattoirs will continue to function and consumption of buffalo meat will not be prohibited. Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister JC Madhu Swamy said, "The anti-cow slaughter law is not new. We have had it for decades. Previously, there was a ban on

slaughter of cows until the age of 13. We have extended it with the intention that older cows should not be left out. Since the prohibition does not extend to buffaloes, there is no ban on beef consumption."

Noting that the Centre's objections on the BJP government's anti-cow slaughter Bill of 2010 had been addressed, Animal Husbandry Minister Prabhu Chauhan said the earlier one prohibited the slaughter of buffaloes, but the present bill only prohibits the slaughter of buffaloes up till the age of 13. In a

statement released by his office, he said the cow is the root of India's culture, faith and farmers' livelihood.

With concern raised in legislature about aged and unproductive cows and male cattlehead, the government said it will consider building 'Goshalas' (shelters).

Expressing concern over the decline in the number of cows, he called on everyone to rise above politics to work towards the growth of cattle assets. "Opposing the Bill just for the sake of politics and misleading the public is intolerable," Chauhan claimed.

Citing the 2019 cattle census, Chauhan said that 2.38 lakh cows are slaughtered every year. Even a day's delay would lead to slaughter of 662 cows, he said. "If it continues at this pace, we aren't far from a time when cows will only be read about in books," he claimed.

He said that despite resistance from the Opposition in 2010, the BJP government had got the controversial Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill passed, that proposed to replace the Karnataka Prevention of Cow Slaughter and Cattle Preservation Act, 1964.

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Prabhu Chauhan,
Animal Husbandry
Minister