

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
PAPER CLIPPINGS

ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ: DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: Speaker

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: The Hindu

ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 17/9/19

KAPC: 'Controversial' appointment made despite Speaker's request

A section within BJP to take up issue with Central leaders

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A politician abruptly replacing Karnataka Agricultural Prices Commission (KAPC) chairman and agriculture economist T.N. Prakash Kammaradi, whose term was yet to end, has stirred up a hornet's nest.

Aside from technical reasons, including the fact that the post is earmarked for a technical expert with knowledge of agricultural economics, it has also come to light that the new appointment was made despite a letter from Speaker Vishweshwara Hegde Kageri to Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa requesting him to keep Mr. Kammaradi in the post.

In a letter to the CM dated August 22, Mr. Kageri drew

his attention to the fact that only those with required technical qualifications and expertise in the field could be appointed to the post of KAPC chairman. Pointing out that Mr. Kammaradi's term was yet to be completed, he requested that he be kept in the position.

However, the appointment was made ignoring this request. This is learnt to have left several BJP leaders unhappy. Some grassroots-level functionaries are said to be planning to take up the matter with the party's Central leadership.

While farmers' organisations have come out in the open against such an appointment, several technical experts and bureaucrats too are concerned about this

"violation of the norms". They have pointed out that the KAPC chairman post is an independent one that has nothing to do with changes in political dispensation.

Some farmers' organisations are considering taking up a legal fight over the matter. The issue is also expected to be taken up by the Opposition parties when the State legislature meets for the winter session.

Karnataka was the first State in the country to set up such a commission. The KAPC has taken up several studies and works, including those related to calculation of cost of cultivation of crops on a scientific basis. It has also played a key role in evolving a model for agriculture price forecast.