

19 RAJYA SABHA MEMBERS SUSPENDED IN ONE GO

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Continuing protests: Opposition members protesting in the Rajya Sabha in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI-

Nineteen MPs were on Tuesday suspended from attending the Rajya Sabha for the remainder of the week for disrupting the House proceedings and demanding a discussion on price rise and a rollback of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on daily essentials.

The suspended MPs included seven from the Trinamool Congress, six from the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), three from the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS), two from the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and one from the Communist Party of India (CPI). Later, the House was adjourned for the day as the Chair appealed to the suspended members to withdraw from the House, but they continued to remain in the Well of the House.

This is the highest number of single-batch suspension following the suspension of four Congress members from the Lok Sabha on Monday for the rest of the Monsoon Session. Last November, as many as 12 MPs from Opposition parties were suspended for the entire Winter Session in the Rajya Sabha.

Those suspended are Sushmita Dev, Mausam Noor, Shanta Chhetri, Dola Sen, Santunu Sen, Abir Ranjan Biswas and Nadimul Haque of the Trinamool Congress; M. Mohamed Abdulla, Kanimozhi N.V.N. Somu, M. Shanmugam, S. Kalyanasundaram, R. Girirajan and N.R. Elango of the DMK; B. Lingaiah Yadav, Ravichandra Vaddiraju and Damodar Rao Divakonda of the TRS; V. Sivadasan and A.A. Rahim of the CPI(M); and Sandosh Kumar of CPI.

Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs V. Muraleedharan moved a motion to suspend 10 MPs in the Rajya Sabha. When it was adopted by a voice vote, Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh read out the names of 19 members who have been suspended for the rest of the week.

Scenes of ruckus

In the morning, the Upper House paid tributes to the soldiers martyred during the Kargil war. As soon as papers were laid on the table of the House, Opposition MPs stormed into the Well of the House demanding a rollback of the GST on certain essential goods. Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu, without even taking up the notices before him, adjourned the House till noon. The Deputy Chairman insisted they will be allowed to ask questions only if the Opposition members return to their seats. When the House assembled, similar scenes of ruckus continued. Deputy Chairman Harivansh adjourned the House for 15 minutes at 12.05 p.m. But even after that, the pandemonium continued and the Question Hour was taken up amid ruckus. There was a question on the changes in the GST slabs.

Many Opposition members wanted to ask supplementary questions on this, but the Deputy Chairman insisted that they will be allowed to ask questions only if the Opposition members go back to their seats. Mr. Harivansh warned the protesting members against showing placards, saying he will be forced to invoke Rule 256 and name the members if the ruckus continued.

When the House resumed at 2 p.m., MPs continued to be in the Well of the House and Mr. Harivansh said they were disrupting the House and not letting other MPs to speak. The MPs

were then suspended and the House adjourned for 15 minutes. When it resumed, the suspended MPs refused to heed to the Chair's appeals to leave the House, leading to another adjournment for one hour.

The House was finally adjourned until Wednesday.

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