

JHARKHAND ASSEMBLY PASSES BILL TO RAISE RESERVATION IN GOVT. JOBS TO 77%

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: State Legislatures - structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these

Chief Minister Hemant Soren inside the Jharkhand Assembly on Friday. PTI/PTI

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Friday asserted that his party, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), would come to power in the State with a bigger majority in the next Assembly polls.

Mr. Soren is facing corruption charges in the alleged illegal mining scam. He made this statement after the JMM-led coalition called for a special Assembly session and passed two key Bills — the Jharkhand Reservation (Amendment) Bill for filling vacant posts and services and the Jharkhand Definition of Local Persons and for Extending the Consequential, Social, Cultural and Other Benefits to such Local Persons Bill, 2022.

The Jharkhand Reservation (Amendment) Bill proposes to raise the reservation for STs, SCs, EBCs, OBCs and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in government jobs from the present 60% to 77% in the State. The Jharkhand Definition of Local Persons Bill proposes to use 1932 land records to determine people's domicile status. Mr. Soren termed the legislations as “*suraksha kavach* (safety shield)” for the people of the State “who foiled conspiracies by the Opposition”.

The Bill states that the population of tribals is on a decline and policy intervention was needed.

Tribal bodies in the State have been demanding that the last land survey conducted by the British in 1932 be used as the basis for defining locals as against the currently accepted cut-off of 1985. When the proposals in the Bill come into effect, people whose ancestors were living in the area before 1932, and whose names were included in that year's land records will be considered local residents of Jharkhand.

As soon as the Bill was passed, JMM workers across Jharkhand began celebrations with firecrackers and abir, dancing to the beats of 'dhol', 'nagar' and 'mander'.

BJP criticises move

The opposition BJP accused the JMM-led ruling coalition, of rushing the Bill, without a debate, to gain political mileage as nothing was going to happen till the Centre approved it.

Speaking to mediapersons, Mr. Soren said that they (the BJP) “think they would end our political career by putting me in jail by levelling fake accusations but neither our image will be tarnished nor will our political power decrease”.

The Enforcement Directorate has summoned Mr. Soren for questioning for the second time on November 17. Earlier on November 3, the CM had skipped appearance before the ED and dared it to “arrest him, if he had committed any wrong”. Mr. Soren had also alleged that the summons against him was a part of a “conspiracy to destabilise his government.”

“Currently, we have the support of 52 MLAs, but next time we will come (to power) with (support

of) 75 (legislators),” he added.

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