

hindustantimes

Monday, January 16, 2012

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi, August 29, 2011

First Published: 23:13 IST(29/8/2011)

Last Updated: 23:14 IST(29/8/2011)

PM okayed BJP's Lokpal draft but not put to vote: BJP sources

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh prevailed upon his cabinet colleagues to accept a draft resolution prepared by BJP on Lokpal issue on Saturday but the government left the main opposition perplexed when it was not put to vote and only a sense of the House was taken. Sources said the Leader of the House in Lok Sabha Pranab Mukherjee, Kapil Sibal and Law Minister Salman Kurshid had a discussion with the Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Arun Jaitley on the wording of the resolution. However, Jaitley walked out of the meeting when Mukherjee and Sibal got into a heated debate on the issue.

Later, when the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Sushma Swaraj saw Anna Hazare's associate Arvind Kejriwal saying on television that government had informed him that BJP was reluctant to vote on a resolution on Lokpal issue and the three demands being raised by Team Anna, she lost her cool.

BJP decided to take the matter to Mukherjee and later Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Swaraj even asked the government what this new "panga" (problem) is.

During the meeting, Deputy Leader of BJP in Rajya Sabha S S Ahluwalia prepared a draft resolution and showed it to Singh who liked it.

The draft was passed to Jaitley, senior BJP leader L K Advani and Mukherjee.

However, according to sources, Sibal and Khurshid walked in at this moment and showed a draft they had prepared. This "long draft" appeared too complicated to Singh who insisted Ahluwalia's draft is fine.

Mukherjee suggested some changes including use of the term "appropriate mechanism" for putting lower bureaucracy under Lokpal.

It was agreed this resolution would be read out by Mukherjee and then passed with a voice vote.

However, Mukherjee seems to have surprised the opposition when he read out the resolution, followed by thumping of desks and adjournment of the House by the Chair. This process was followed in both Houses.

In Lok Sabha, Mukherjee did not use the word resolution but did so in Rajya Sabha.

The letter written by Prime Minister Singh to Hazare also says a "resolution" was passed by Parliament endorsing his demands. But BJP sources said this happened as the letter was written before the "Sense of the House" was taken.

Though BJP leaders are not speaking on record on the issue and saying it is closed chapter, they maintain that only a Sense of the House was taken and it was not a resolution.

"A resolution is put to vote. The Chair asks for ayes and noes and then announces that it has been passed. None of this was done," a senior BJP leader said.

Asked why BJP did not oppose, a senior party leader and MP said "if Anna Hazare and his team were okay with it, we had no issue. After all, the main concern was Hazare ending his fast. We were fully supporting him and his demands."

The "resolution" read as follows:

This House discussed various issues relating to a strong and effective Lokpal.

This House agrees in principle on the following issues:

- A) Citizen charter
- B) Lower bureaucracy to be under lokpal through an appropriate mechanism
- C) Establishment of Lokayuktas in the states

And further resolves to transmit the proceedings to the Department-related Standing Committee for its perusal while formulating its recommendations for a Lokpal Bill.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/739375.aspx>

© Copyright © 2011 HT Media Limited. All Rights Reserved.