

Opposition withdraws stir in Maharashtra assembly

The Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) opposition Thursday agreed to withdraw an all-night sit-in at the state assembly after Deputy Chief Minister R.R. Patil assured them to have their grievances redressed Friday morning.

The irate opposition members, who boycotted the house proceedings for most part of the day, earlier resolved on a sit-in to voice their grievances pertaining to the conduct of the house business and against Deputy Speaker Pramod Shende.

The opposition members allege that the deputy speaker turned a 'deaf ear' to their persistent demand for a 'poll' in the house on the department-wise budgetary demands, and then declared it as 'passed' after the opposition staged a walkout.

Patil called on the angry legislators squatting on the assembly porch late Thursday evening and assured them that the deadlock would be resolved in their joint meeting with Speaker Babasaheb Kupekar and Chief Minister Vilasrao Deshmukh.

BJP member Devendra Phadnavis told IANS that the opposition felt it was futile to participate in the house proceedings with the members not being allowed to speak, not getting replies to their queries on the budgetary demands from the ministers, and the business being pushed through without proper debates.

A decision to revoke or mitigate Tuesday's unprecedented one-year suspension of six assembly members for unruly behaviour is likely to be taken in Friday's meeting as a goodwill gesture, sources said.

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