

Missing MPs irk Rajya Sabha chairman Ansari

'Is there a virus around,' asked an irked Rajya Sabha chairman Hamid Ansari Tuesday when the MPs against whose names the first six questions of the day were listed failed to show up, leading to the queries lapsing.

'Yes, there is,' he added for good measure.

To deal with this situation, the Rajya Sabha is mulling a rule change that will prevent a question from lapsing if the MP who posed it is not present in the house when it comes up.

'This situation is being addressed,' Ansari said Monday when two questions he called could not be asked as the MPs who had asked them played truant.

Under the rule change being considered, if an MP is not present in the house when his question comes up, it will become the property of the house and any other member can pose it, an official said.

Under the present rule, the question lapses if the MP who posed it is absent.

During the current session of the Rajya Sabha, which began Nov 19 and will conclude Dec 21, at least two to three questions have been lapsing daily due to the non-availability of MPs.

The malaise affects the Lok Sabha too. Last Monday, 34 MPs with questions listed against their names were not in the house, forcing the virtual collapse of question hour because of the missing members.

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