# Rule 267 of the Council of States

## Why in news?

The Opposition's demand for a 'Short Duration Discussion' under Rule 267 to take up the Manipur issue was declined in Rajya Sabha.

## What is Rule 267 in the Rajya Sabha?

- Rule 267 of the ***Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States*** gives special power to a Rajya Sabha member to suspend the pre-decided agenda of the House.
- This comes with the approval of the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
- Under this rule, Rajya Sabha MPs can give a *written notice* to suspend all listed business and discuss an issue of importance the country is facing.
- If an issue is admitted under Rule 267, it signifies it's the most important national issue of the day.
- Also, the government will have to respond to the matter by replying during the discussions under Rule 267.
- No other form of discussion entails suspension of other business.

## Why has Rule 267 been a contentious issue?

- Recently, 12 MPs from 8 opposition parties including Leader of opposition submitted notice under Rule 267 demanding suspension of business in the upper house to discuss Manipur issue.
- Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, the ex-officio chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, declined the notice under 267 saying he will accept the notices on merit.
- The Opposition has complained that none of its notices under Rule 267 are being taken up.
- The last time a discussion under Rule 267 was accepted was in November 2016 when Md. Hamid Ansari was the chairperson.
- It was summoned to discuss demonetisation.
- After 2016, no notice under Rule 267 had been allowed by the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
- M Venkaiah Naidu (predecessor to present Chairman) also did not accept any discussion under Rule 267 during his five-year tenure from 2017 to 2022.

*Not a single notice under the rule 267 moved by the Opposition has been accepted in the last Winter Session of the Parliament.*

- **Precedence -** The Chairman's rulings constitute precedents which are of a binding nature.
- There were 11 instances between 1990 up till 2016 that this rule was invoked for various discussions.

## What is Rule 176?

- **Short Duration Discussion -** Rules 176-179 of the Rajya Sabha explains about the short duration discussion.
- **Rule 176 -** Any member can raise discussion on a matter of urgent public importance and may give notice in writing to the Secretary-General specifying clearly and precisely the matter to be raised.
- If the Chairman is satisfied, that the matter is urgent and is of sufficient public importance to be raised in the Council at an early date, he may admit the notice and fix the date for discussion.
- **Mandates -** The notice should be accompanied by an explanatory note stating reasons for raising discussion on the matter in question.
- Provided further that the notice should be supported by the signatures of at least two other members.
- **Time -** The time for discussion under Rule 176 should not exceed two and a half hours.
- The matter can be taken up immediately, within a few hours or even the next day under Rule 176.
- However, there is no formal motion or voting shall be held under a short-duration discussion.

*On the first day of the monsoon session while the Opposition wanted to discuss Manipur under the Rule 267, the government was 'keen and agreeable' for discussion under Rule 176 said the RS Chairman.*

## What are the other ways for MPs to question the government?

- There are other ways to question the government and seek a response other than Rule 267 and Rule 176.
- **Question Hour -** MPs can ask questions related to any issue during the Question Hour in which the concerned minister has to provide oral or written answers.
- **Zero Hour -** Every day, 15 MPs are allowed to raise issues of their choice in the Zero Hour.
- **Special Mention -** An MP can even raise it during Special Mention where Chairman can allow up to 7 Special Mentions daily.

**References**


1. IE - Manipur discussion not allowed in Rajya Sabha under Rule 267
2. IE - Rule 176 vs Rule 267: What Govt agrees to, what Opposition demands

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