

Renuka faces House steam over pre-cooked meal scheme (Indian Express)

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The Government on Monday came under attack from various political parties in the Rajya Sabha on a reported move by the Women and Child Development Ministry to provide pre-cooked food to school children under the mid-day meal scheme instead of the hot cooked food they get at present.

Taking note of a report published in The Indian Express on Monday, CPI(M) MP Brinda Karat sought to know from the Women and Child Development Minister Renuka Chowdhury to place the facts before the house. Brinda asked the minister to categorically state whether she was pushing for packaged food, to which Chowdhury shot back saying, "What does 'pushing for' mean Brindaji? I don't know what are you talking about." The matter was also taken up by the BJP's Arun Shourie and the NCP's Supriya Sule among others.

As reported in The Indian Express, the Planning Commission has expressed its strong reservations about packaged food being provided in the mid-day meal scheme instead of cooked food. It pointed out that in several states where packaged food was being given, supplies got centralised in the hands of large contractors who misused the scheme for their advantage.

Chowdhury dismissed any plans for a centralised system. "The question of centralising does not arise. We are looking at restructuring the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme). The implementation of the project lies in the hands of the state Governments and we have to put pressure on them to ensure that it's properly done," she said.