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Did CM strike first by seeking trust vote?

Some believe his decision stole the BJP's thunder by denying it a chance to move a no-confidence motion

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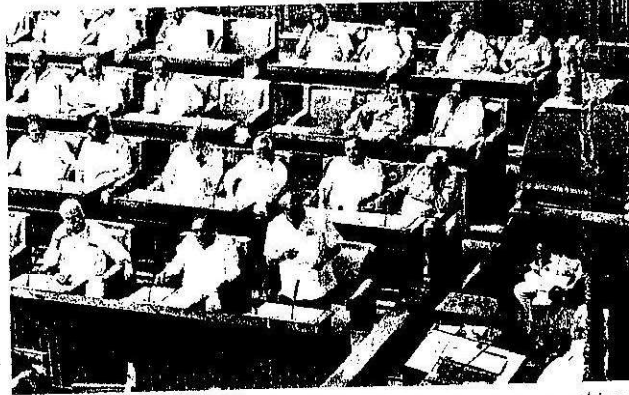
After resignations by 16 legislators and withdrawal of support by two Independents, Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy seems to be keen on making the first strike at the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party by moving a motion on trust vote in the Legislative Assembly next week.

The question is what made the Chief Minister announce the decision to move the trust vote in the current political circumstances, in his opening remarks at the session on Friday.

'Sense of fear'

Some believe that he stole the BJP's thunder by announcing the decision to seek trust vote. It has denied an opportunity to the BJP to move a no-confidence motion. A couple of Congress leaders believe that by announcing the decision to seek a trust vote, the Chief Minister has created a "sense of fear" among the State BJP's top brass and forced them to keep their flock together for the next couple of days. The Chief Minister is confident of getting the support of a few Congress MLAs who have resigned, sources claimed.

With both the Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) having



Standing his ground: Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy speaking in the Legislative Assembly on Friday. *K. MURALI KUMAR

issued whips to their respective members to attend the session without fail, it is said that the motion on trust vote would become a sort of a weapon for the governing parties. Assembly Speaker

IN THE LEGISLATURE

K.R. Ramesh Kumar could disqualify the MLAs who abstain from the session during voting on the trust motion. "The trust vote will provide substantial evidence to disqualify absentee MLAs," a top Congress leader said.

While one leader said he was not sure if the Chief Minister would indeed carry out his announcement on seeking the trust vote, unless a constitutional authority directs it, another leader said, "It all depends on the Speaker's privilege on fixing time." Moreover, it is believed that the Chief Minister might take his next decision on the trust vote depending on the Supreme Court's ruling on Tuesday.

'No key policy decisions' Mr. Kumaraswamy said he would not take any major policy decisions, given the current political stalemate. The session has been called for discussions on the demands of various departments and pass the Finance Bill which involves an expenditure of ₹2.34 lakh crore during 2019-20. Since the government has taken a vote on account for four months, the passing of the Finance Bill by the House will be the real test for the government.

Rebel Congress, JD(S) MLAs skip day one of session

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
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Rebel MLAs of the Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular), who have tendered resignations from the membership of the Legislative Assembly, did not attend the session on Friday.

The party has issued a whip to all its members to attend the session from July 12 to 26 without fail.

Beside rebel members staying in Mumbai, members such as Ramalinga Reddy (BTM Layout) and R. Roshan Baig (Shivajinagar), N. Nagaraju (Hoskote), and K. Sudhakar (Chickballapur), who have tendered

resignations, skipped the session.

However, Anjali Nimbalkar (Khanapur), S. Ramappa (Harihar), Medical Education Minister E. Tukaram (Sandur), who had skipped the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting on Tuesday, attended the session. Kaneez Fatima, who had abstained from the CLP meeting, did not attend. Sources in the Congress said she had informed the CLP leader Siddaramaiah about her inability to attend the Friday's session.

After paying condolences to former members of the House, the Speaker adjourned the Assembly till Monday.

The Chief Minister sounded confident of winning the trust vote and was prepared to respond to all charges of the Opposition on the floor of the House. Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah too said the coalition would win the trust vote. By seeking the trust vote, the Chief Minister has made a right move, the Congress leader said, and added that the trust vote

would eliminate the prolonged uncertainty in the government.

If the Speaker allows moving a motion on the trust vote, then the debate on it would provide the government an occasion to defend its record and respond to the Opposition charges. It may be recalled that Mr. Kumaraswamy won the trust vote soon after he formed the government in 2018.