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Hold floor test, Nath tells Governor

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOVAL

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath on Friday requested Governor Lalji Tandon to hold a floor test in the Assembly session starting from March 16, on a date fixed by the Speaker. He also asked the Governor to use his "good offices with the Union Home Minister" to ensure the release of 19 MLAs "held captive" in Bengaluru.

In a letter submitted to Mr. Tandon at the Raj Bhavan here, Mr. Nath said, "We expect that the enquiry on the resignations submitted by the BJP, allegedly of the captive Congress MLAs, is

completed early." Resignations of 19 of the 22 rebel MLAs were conveyed by former BJP Minister Bhupendra Singh from a Bengaluru resort to the Speaker on Tuesday. So far, the Speaker has served notice on 13 of them, asking them to appear before him and attest to having resigned of their own accord.

In these disturbing circumstances, wrote Mr. Nath, the very edifice of democracy was in danger.

"Trust of a transparent democratic process seems lost. It merits full investigation and enquiry, so that persons responsible for derailing the democratic insti-

tutional process are exposed and punished," he said.

They would not leave any stone unturned to "ensure the triumph of democracy and the legislative process, to uphold the Constitution and the values enshrined therein," Mr. Nath assured the people.

In the letter with the subject, 'Horse trading of MLAs by the Bharatiya Janata Party', Mr. Nath detailed instances of "unethical and illegal acts of the BJP".

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Pointing to the first attempt on the intervening night of March 3 and 4, he said the "the midnight leading to whisking away of MLAs to Bengaluru is in public domain." Detailing the second attempt on March 8, he wrote that the BJP had whisked away the 19 Congress MLAs in three chartered aircraft to Bengaluru.

He also described the submission of their resigna-

tion by the BJP to the Speaker as an "utter shock" and "most unusual act and conduct", as none of them were present to tender their resignation. He alleged this demonstrated the BJP's complicity in the "entire conspiracy and illegal actions". Mr. Nath said it also raised questions of constitutional propriety, legislative procedure and transparency.