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Rebels derail coalition plan; BJP for vote today

Cong Leaders Queue Up To Pacify Reddy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Two days after CM HD Kumaraswamy declared in the assembly that he would seek a trust vote, the JD(S)-Congress combine found itself on the backfoot once again on Sunday as a rebel MLA flew off to Mumbai after showing signs of coming around in marathon meetings with the CM and senior Congress leaders. Smelling blood, opposition BJP insisted that the Kumaraswamy government prove its majority in the assembly on Monday or step down.

Congress leaders, led by water resources minister DK Shivakumar, had virtually ambushed housing minister and rebel MLA MTB Nagaraj at his home at 2.30am on Saturday, followed by nearly 15

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hours of successive meetings with chief minister Kumaraswamy, Congress legislative party leader Siddaramaiah and others. Nagaraj had said that he would remain in Congress but hours later, the MLA said there was "no question of going back" and boarded a special flight to join the other rebels in Mumbai.

Having lost another flight risk, Congress intensified efforts to pacify disgruntled MLA and former minister R Ramalinga Reddy amid speculation that his daughter Sowmya and another Congress MLA, Anjali Ninbalkar, were set to resign, putting paid to the ruling partners' hopes of saving the government. Around noon, working president of the state Congress, Eshwar Khandre, and senior leader HK Patil landed

FIGHT ON AFTER SURPRISE FLIGHT

9.30am After a crack-of-dawn visit from DK Shivakumar on Saturday and chats with ex-CM Siddaramaiah & CM Kumaraswamy, Cong MLA Nagaraj refuses to withdraw resignation

10.30am Flies out of Bengaluru to join other rebel MLAs in Mumbai

11am Congress calls a meeting of the legislature party at 9am on Monday

11.30am Rebels Ramesh Jarkiholi and R Shankar receive Nagaraj at Mumbai airport

12 noon BJP chief BS Yeddyurappa asks CM to seek trust vote on Monday or quit

1pm CLP leader Siddaramaiah holds meeting with party MLAs put up at Taj Vivanta

2pm CM Kumaraswamy meets DKS, both later visit Congress MLA B Nagendra who is in hospital with a "heart ailment"



MTB Nagaraj leaves for Mumbai on a chartered plane. Photos of BJP's R Ashok at HAL airport triggered allegations that BJP had engineered the move. Nagaraj said Ashok didn't accompany him: "He might have come to Mumbai for some work; he didn't come with me"

2.30pm Cong's HK Patil, Eshwar Khandre meet MLA Ramalinga Reddy

6pm Siddaramaiah and other leaders also meet Reddy to persuade him to withdraw resignation

Vote in House after SC decides?

The HDK government's best bet would be for the speaker to put off the trust vote until after the Supreme Court decides on the rebel MLAs' petitions as this will buy it more time to bring them around. That would, however, plunge the assembly into stalemate as opposition BJP has refused to let the House function until a trust vote is held. **P5**

up at Reddy's residence. Later in the day, Siddaramaiah, Shivakumar, Mallikarjun Kharge, deputy chief minister G Parameshwara and AICC general secretary KC Venugopal too called on him.

Reddy, however, refused to comment after the meetings, only saying he would not spe-

BJP's K'taka hand is now gen secy

BJP joint general secretary (organisation) BL Santosh, an RSS pracharak familiar with poll dynamic of Karnataka, was elevated to general secretary on Sunday, in a sign of the party's growing interest in the south. Santosh worked in Karnataka for eight years before he became national office-bearer in charge of southern states in 2014. **P5**

ak politics until July 15, the day he has been asked by the speaker to appear before him on his resignation as MLA.

Among other calls by the ruling allies was a hospital visit by Shivakumar and CM Kumaraswamy.

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Crucial CLP meet at city 5-star today

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hey visited Congress MLA B Nagendra who was admitted with a heart ailment. Nagendra is said to be on the list of members who might quit. To check further desertions, Congress legislature party (CLP) leader Siddaramaiah has called for a CLP meeting at 9am on Monday at Taj Vivanta where the party has sequestered its MLAs.

Seizing upon the opportunity, opposition BJP said Kumaraswamy must seek a vote of confidence on the floor of the House on Monday. The assembly cannot transact any business until the CM proves his majority, state BJP chief BS Yeddyurappa said. "The speaker should set aside all transactions and ask the CM to prove his majority since he has no moral right to continue in office," Yeddyurappa said.

The coalition partners, however, are looking to delay the trust vote by a day or two.

Last week, SC had directed speaker KR Ramesh Kumar not to take any decision on the disqualification or resignation of the MLAs until July 16

until after the Supreme Court pronounces its verdict on an appeal filed by the 15 rebel MLAs. On Friday, the apex court had directed speaker KR Ramesh Kumar not to take any decision on the disqualification or resignation of the MLAs until July 16.

Abhishek Manu Singhvi, counsel for Kumar, had argued that the Supreme court cannot give direction to the speaker on resignation of MLAs. He also alleged that the rebel MLAs have been resigning to join BJP, in lieu of ministerial positions. Should the Supreme Court leave it to the speaker to take a call, the coalition hopes to buy time to convince the rebel MLAs to change their stance.

A TEMPLE RUN,



AN ALL-OUT EFFORT: PWD minister HD Revanna undertook a temple run in two districts on Sunday. Right: Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah met MLAs at a hotel in Bengaluru

Bengaluru/Udupi: PWD minister HD Revanna sought divine intervention to keep the floundering coalition government intact as he undertook a temple run in two districts on Sunday. Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah, meanwhile, met MLAs at a hotel in Bengaluru to ensure they were on the same page ahead of a possible trust vote.

Revanna's temple tour began in Anegudde (Kumbhasi), Udupi district, and concluded with a visit to Lord Ganapathy in Southadka, Dakshina Kannada