

SUNDAY INTERVIEW

'I HAVE TO RESIGN, BUT NEED CLARITY ON CHARGES AGAINST ME'

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THE Legislative Council on Tuesday witnessed unruly scenes over the no-confidence motion against Council Chairman K Prathapchandra Shetty, a Congress MLC who was elected chairman in 2018 when the Congress-JDS coalition was in power. BJP has accused Shetty of acting in a partisan manner and rejecting its notice to move a no-confidence motion against him. "The presiding officer's ruling can be wrong, but there is a system to question it. Where is the system in Vidhana Soudha when DyCM and Law Minister, who were supposed to have controlled the situation, resorted to such measures," asked Shetty, while talking to *The New Sunday Express*. Excerpts:



Is it possible to just leave when they ask me to? I will defend my actions as I have done everything as per rules
K Prathapchandra Shetty,
Council Chairman

What are your views on what occurred in the House on Tuesday?

It should not have happened. Not everyone will be a legal expert or an authority on the subject and a ruling may be right or wrong. It will be correct 99 per cent of times, but can also be wrong sometimes. There is nothing wrong in the ruling given by me. But, if it is wrong, there is a system to appeal against it. They should have appealed it at an appropriate forum and not resorted to oppressive measures in the house.

Didn't it bring disrepute to the House known for meaningful discussions?

Yes, but who is responsible for it? If a member commits a mistake it is blown out of proportion. Why no one is questioning what the DyCM and cabinet ministers did on that day (Tuesday)? We cannot justify such actions by anyone. The Deputy Chairman was occupying the chair in violation of the rules. Under

what provisions was he made to sit there? It is a big crime if some members pulled him (out of the presiding officer's chair), but what about their (BJP members') actions?

The charge is: How can you decide on the no-confidence motion notice against you?

The provision in the rule is very clear. Any day after 14 days (after receiving the notice), it should be included in the agenda. Once it is included and supported by ten members, it is deemed to be approved by the House. After that the motion can be moved any day within the next five days. When the resolution is being moved, the Chairman cannot preside over the proceedings. However, when the subject is not included in the agenda, there are several instances of chairman presiding over the session. Even (DH) Shankarmurthy (former chairman and BJP leader) did it. He was sitting among members when the resolution was moved, but that was not the situation

here. The question here is that the application should have been in order, and since it was not, it was sent back with a note. There is a provision to present the application again. When the issue was referred in the House, I said a decision will be taken after consulting legal experts.

BJP wants you to resign saying you do not enjoy majority support in the House as JDS is not backing Congress, but BJP, on no-confidence motion.

When the BJP gave the notice, what was its number? (BJP has 31 members). Was it a majority? JDS made its stand clear and gave it in writing only after the House was adjourned sine die. On December 12, 2018, when I was elected Chairman, Congress strength in the House was 37 and it had a majority on its own. On December 19, though Congress had a majority and could have elected its own member as Deputy Chairman, it gave the post to JDS as it was a coalition partner. Till that day didn't we have a majority and the moral stand?

Now that JDS has made its stand clear, will you resign?

I have to resign, and I am not saying I won't. But I need clarity as they have projected it as a big mistake by me. Is it possible to just leave when they ask me to? I will defend my actions as I have done everything as per rules, and they are raising charges against me. They have to give a fresh application or go to the court.

But, BJP is blaming Congress for the mess.

I am confident of defending myself in any forum at any time. Congress has only shown its concern for the council chairman and never told me to do anything out of line.