

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ವಿಧಾನ ಸಭೆ, ಸಂಶೋಧನಾ ದಾಗೂ ಉಲ್ಲೇಖನಾ ಶಾಖೆ
KARNATAKA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY RESEARCH AND REFERENCE BRANCH

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
PAPER CLIPPINGS

ಶಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: *Other State matter*

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: *The Hindu*

ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE *8/6/2021*

Resort booked as Cong. MLAs check in

Party has ring-fenced legislators there

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The Gujarat police on Sunday booked the manager of a resort in Rajkot where the Congress has lodged some of its MLAs to protect them from poaching by the ruling BJP ahead of the June 19 Rajya Sabha election.

After the resignation of its three MLAs, the Opposition party has taken its MLAs to different places.

So far, eight MLAs of the party have resigned amid allegations of use of money and horse-trading in the run-up to the election to four seats.

The Congress's strength has now come down to 65 in the 182-member Assembly.

Many shifted

The party on June 7 shifted 21 of its MLAs to a resort on Abu Road in Rajasthan.

After the resignation of three MLAs, the party had shifted its legislators to three resorts in Rajkot, Ambaji in Banaskantha district and Anand to thwart any attempt at "poaching" by the BJP, which has fielded three

candidates, though it lacks the number to ensure their victory.

In Rajkot, a police complaint was filed against the resort on Sunday for alleged violation of lockdown norms as hotels and resorts are shut due to the COVID-19 epidemic. "We have lodged the First Information Report against the owner and manager of Neelcity Resort where Congress MLAs are staying. They have been booked for flouting the lockdown notification by opening the resort," said University Road Police Station Inspector R.S. Thakar.

According to a party leader, 21 Congress MLAs are camping at a resort in Abu Road where a few more will go from north Gujarat on Monday. Abu Road is in Sirohi district of Rajasthan, which shares its border with Banaskantha in Gujarat.

Gujarat Congress president Amit Chavda said that instead of fighting the pandemic, the BJP government was busy using its machinery to poach the MLAs of other parties.