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PLAYING POLITICS?

BJP MLCs quit House panel probing ruckus

Committee chief rejects Vishwanath's letter

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
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TWO BJP MLCs have resigned from a five-member committee set up by the Legislative Council Chairman Prathapchandra Shetty to inquire into unruly scenes on the floor of the Council on December 15.

While BJP MLC A H Vishwanath submitted his resignation to the House committee on Friday, the other party member S V Sankhanur said he had emailed his resignation letter. In the evening, Vishwanath received a response from MLC Marithibbe Gowda, who is the leader of the committee, saying that there is no provision under the law for a member to resign from the committee. It remains to be seen how BJP MLCs will respond to this. With both the members resigning, the committee will have no representation from the saffron party.

Apart from the two BJP MLCs, the Shetty-constituted committee has Congress members B K Hariprasad and R B Thimmapur and JDs MLC Marithibbe Gowda, who

heads the committee.

After resigning, Vishwanath said, "A House committee should be appointed in consonance with rules and after taking leaders of the parties in the House into confidence. But these norms were not followed."

A senior House member, requesting anonymity, said that in any five-member committee, the quorum is three and even if two members resign the panel can continue.

But BJP MLC Ayanur Manjunath said, "If the chairman is concerned about fairness, he has to ask the BJP to replace the two MLCs who have resigned with two other members from the party."

The resignations come a day after Ayanur Manjunath wrote to Prathapchandra Shetty, challenging the appointment of the committee and asking it to be cancelled. He also questioned the chairman's fairness in appointing members to the committee.

He pointed out that the House committee cannot be constituted suo motu and the House's consent has to be taken. Quoting from the rules and traditions of the House, he said that leader of BJP in the House Kota Srinivas Poojary or party chief whip Mahantesh Kavathimath should have been consulted and the names for the committee members taken from them. He questioned the constitution of the committee and selection of members.

The next meeting of the panel is scheduled after 20 days.

A copy of the letter that was sent by panel chief Marithibbe Gowda