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High drama as
police detain

Minister

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The Karnataka political crisis spilled over to the streets of Mumbai with the detention and later forced departure of Water Resources Minister and Congress trouble-shooter D.K. Shivakumar, who had arrived in the financial capital to meet the 10 rebel Congress-JD(S) legislators on Wednesday morning.

Mr. Shivakumar was in Mumbai to convince the rebel MLAs to return to the party fold. The MLAs have submitted their resignations to the Speaker and moved to Mumbai, allegedly at the behest of the BJP, threatening the stability of the Congress-JD(S) coalition government.

As Mr. Shivakumar attempted to breach the police's security blanket to meet the legislators staying in Hotel Renaissance, he was held back and asked to wait on the road opposite the hotel by the Powai police led by ACP Milind Khetle.

He was eventually detained and taken to the Kalina campus of Mumbai University.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

High drama as police
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He was accompanied by former Mumbai Congress presidents Milind Deora and Sanjay Nirupam and other party workers. After three hours of drama outside the guest house on the campus, Mr. Shivakumar was taken to the airport for a flight back home late in the evening. He was being "forced to leave under pressure by unknown forces", he said.

The police said its action was based on the complaints of the rebel MLAs even as it was forced to impose prohibitory orders under section 144 of the Cr.P.C, restraining gathering of four or more persons.

Prior to this, it was hours of drama outside the Mumbai hotel with Mr. Shivakumar staying put, despite pouring rain and insisting that he be allowed to go inside as "he had a room reserved in his name."

BJP supporters, meanwhile, shouted slogans asking Mr. Shivakumar to go back. As Mr. Shivakumar displayed his hotel booking confirmation, a letter from the hotel was also being circulated that said his reservation was cancelled due to "some emergency."

"I have come to meet my friends who I have been associated with for three to four decades. They are un-

happy with us for some reason. It does not mean all is over," he said, insisting on a meeting.

Meanwhile, speaking to the media from inside the hotel, the rebel MLAs refused to meet him. MLA Ramesh Jarkiholi said, "We do not want to meet him. We are firm and four more will join our group," he said.

Another MLA S.T. Somashekhar said: "Friendship and politics are different. We will meet you (Shivakumar) later in Bengaluru but not today. We will not be able to see you in an embarrassing position. Please go back. You have played a vital role in moulding our political career."

Complaint to police

In their complaint to Police Commissioner Sanjay Barve, the legislators had claimed they feel 'threatened' and do not wish to meet the Minister, who must be "stopped from storming into the hotel."

Signed by the 10 MLAs, the letter said: "We have heard that Mr. Shivakumar and others are going to storm into the hotel. We feel threatened by the same. We do not want to meet him. Kindly request help in the matter and do not allow them to enter the premises."