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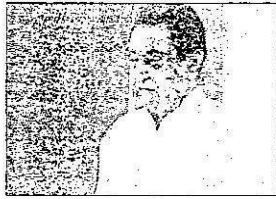
ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: *Deccan Herald* ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE *21/3/2020*

Cong loses MP as Kamal Nath govt falls

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ಕುರಿತು
Curtains came down on the political drama in Madhya Pradesh, with Chief Minister Kamal Nath resigning on Friday morning at a press conference, hours before the floor test deadline set by the Supreme Court.

The collapse of the 15-month-old Nath govern-



Kamal Nath

ment, triggered by the resignations of 22 Congress MLAs, paves the way for the BJP to re-

turn to power. Indications are that Shivraj Singh Chouhan could be back as chief minister for a fourth time. Chouhan is the front runner for the post, though BJP leader Gopal Bhargava said the high command will decide on the name.

Instead of facing an inevitable defeat in the Assembly, the CM chose to tender his resignation to the Governor at 1 pm.

> Kamal Nath, Page 3D

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Kamal Nath, from Page 1
27 21/3/20

Before that, Nath addressed the media at his residence, where he spoke about his government's achievements and lambasted the BJP for buying his MLAs to topple the government.

"The people of Madhya Pradesh will never forgive the BJP for the conspiratorial manner in which it toppled a democratically-elected government enjoying majority with inducements and threats," he said.

Before Nath's press meet, Speaker N P Prajapati announced accepting the resig-

nation of BJP MLA Sharad Kol. He had also accepted the resignation of 16 rebel MLAs hours after the Supreme Court directed the Nath government to undergo a floor test by 5 pm on Friday.

Six ministers' resignations were accepted four days ago. Two seats were already vacant due to the death of a BJP and a Congress MLA.

Thus, a total 25 seats in the 230-strong Assembly have fallen vacant. The BJP has the support of 106 MLAs while the Congress strength has been reduced to 92. Among other MLAs are four independents,

two BSP and one Samajwadi Party. The BJP needs to win at least 10 seats in the bypolls to maintain majority in the House. Hailing the fall of the government, BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia, who orchestrated the defection, said it is a victory of the state's people.

"Politics should be a means to serve the people but the state government had strayed from this path," he tweeted.

Chouhan tweeted, "Truth has triumphed", which forced the MP Congress to retort, "BJP wins, people lose."

Troubles for the Kamal Nath government began on March

3 when the senior Congress leader accused the BJP of horse-trading. He alleged that Rs 25-35 crore was being offered to MLAs to switch sides.

Four MLAs, including an independent, went missing the next day but the government's crisis managers could bring them into the party fold. However, before a wary Kamal Nath could heave a sigh of relief, 19 MLAs owing alliance to Jyotiraditya went incommunicado.

When they were traced to Bengaluru, Jyotiraditya resigned from the Congress and joined the BJP, deepening the crisis for the government.