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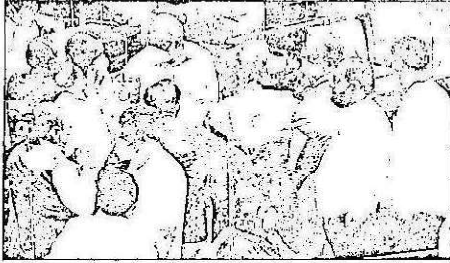
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Council set for stormy session over report

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Bengaluru: The legislative council is likely to witness another stormy session as chairman K Pratapchandra Shetty has decided to stay on despite BJP members' fresh attempt to move a no-confidence motion against him. The session will begin on Thursday.

A special house committee's interim report on the December 15 ruckus in the house is also expected to generate a lot of heat as it reportedly indicts former law & parliamentary affairs minister JC Madhuswamy and deputy chief minister CN Aswath Narayan. While the chairman wants the council to accept the report, BJP members have decided to op-



ADDITIONAL CLASS: Two factors are at play: Interim report on the December 15 house ruckus and BJP bid to remove Shetty as the house chair

pose it, claiming it is invalid.

"The ruling party has categorically stated that the panel has no validity since it was constituted by Shetty unilaterally. There is no question of allowing anybody to table it in the house," said Mahantesh Kavatigimat, senior BJP MLC and government's chief whip in the council.

Both Shetty and Congress members are pushing for action against those

responsible for the ruckus, alleging that BJP members committed serious offences by asking the then deputy chairman SL Dharmegowda to occupy the chair before the chairman's entry that day.

Constitutional experts said that if the house accepted the interim report and recommended action against BJP members, it would have serious consequences. "It would mean disqualifying

them from being legislators and holding any office. A serious offence also calls for prosecution," said law professor Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu.

Even before the panel submitted the interim report, Shetty had reportedly complained to governor Vajubhai Vala about the incident and the latter had taken a serious note of it. It is believed that this prompted chief minister BS Yediyurappa to take away the portfolio of law & parliamentary affairs from Madhuswamy and reassign it.

"I don't know why my portfolios were changed, but I reiterate that the government and I have not committed any mistake. That day (December 15) we thought the chairman would not come and hence we asked the

deputy chairman to preside over," Madhuswamy said.

Shetty had earlier hinted at resigning after JD(S) officially extended support to BJP's bid to oust him. But he has now decided to take call after the January 29 election for the deputy chairman's post. "My priority is to ensure that the election process is duly completed. As far as the house committee is concerned, it has been constituted in accordance with law and its interim report will be tabled," he said.

BJP members have given two fresh notices for a no-confidence motion. Shetty is expected to announce his decision, whether he accepts or rejects them, on February 2. "We urge him to resign earlier on moral grounds," said BJP member N Ravikumar.