

Karnataka crisis: Drama outside Mumbai hotel, Congress's Shivakumar retreats after protests

Agency
Mumbai July 10,

Senior Karnataka Congress leader DK Shivakumar was on Wednesday stopped from entering the five-star hotel in Mumbai to meet 10 rebel lawmakers after they sought police security as their supporters shouted "go back" slogans.

Shivram Hebbar, Pratap Gowda Patil, BC Patil, Byrati Basavraj, ST Somshekar, Ramesh Jarkiholi, Gopalaiyya, H Vishwanath, Narayan Gowda and Mahesh Kumutali had written the letter, saying they feel "threatened" as some leaders from their state would "storm" the Renaissance Mumbai Convention Centre Hotel in Powai.

"I have booked a room here. My friends are staying here. There has been a small problem, we have to hold negotiations. We can't go for a divorce immediately. There is no question of threatening, we love and respect each other,"

DK Shivakumar said outside the hotel, news agency ANI reported, as he attempted to meet the rebel MLAs.

Personnel of the Maharashtra State Reserve Police Force and Riot Control Police were seen outside the hotel as supporters of JD(S) leader Narayan Gowda also started coming in.

"Let Mumbai Police or any other force be deployed. Let them do their duty. We've come to meet our friends. We were born together in politics, we will die together in politics. They are our party men. We have come to meet them," Shivakumar said earlier, according to ANI.

The rebel lawmakers had said in their letter to the police that they do not want to meet the two leaders and asked the police to not to allow them to enter the hotel. "We have heard that Shri (HD) Kumaraswamy and Shri (DK) Shivakumar are going to storm the hotel premises and we feel threatened because of the same," they wrote in the letter

on Tuesday. "The MLAs are in the hotel and we have deployed adequate police personnel outside the hotel in the morning to look into any kind of law and order situation," Mumbai Police spokesperson DCP Manjunath Singe said.

Shivakumar's visit comes a day after Karnataka's wobbly coalition government received a breather after assembly speaker KR Ramesh Kumar rejected the resignations of eight lawmakers and asked five others to meet and convince him that their letters offering to demit membership of the House were indeed genuine. Kumar's decisions came as top Congress and Janata Dal (Secular), or JD(S), leaders scrambled to win back rebels whose withdrawal has endangered the alliance's thin majority in the Karnataka assembly.

Kumar, who returned to Bengaluru on Tuesday after an outstation trip, said eight of the 13 MLAs who resigned last week did not submit their letters in the prescribed format and would have to personally furnish fresh resignation letters.

The other five - including former state home minister

Ramalinga Reddy, seen to be a key leader of the rebel group - were asked to meet the speaker on Friday, when the assembly commences its monsoon session, and on Monday to convince Kumar that their letters were voluntary and had not been coerced.

All 13 MLAs - 10 from the Congress and three from the JD(S) - submitted their resignations to the speaker's office last week, threatening the government's slim majority in the 224-member assembly. Two independent MLAs withdrew their support to the state's Congress-JD(S) coalition government on Monday. A suspended lawmaker separately confirmed he would quit. Earlier, 12 lawmakers put in their papers on Saturday.

The strength of Karnataka's 224-member assembly will be reduced to 211 if their resignations are accepted. A party or a coalition would need 106 seats to form a government in such a scenario.

The Congress-JD(S) coalition will be left with 104 members while the BJP will have support of 105. The BJP is also likely to get the backing of two independents.

Pakistan news anchor shot dead over personal dispute: Cops

Agency
Karachi July 10,

A Pakistani news anchor was shot dead on Tuesday here, police said.

Muhammad Abbas, who worked for Bol News channel, was gunned down during a fight over a personal dispute in Karachi's Khayaban-e-Bukhari area on Tuesday night, police said, citing initial details.

DIG South Sharjeel Kharal said that friends of the deceased informed the police that he had a monetary

dispute with someone whose identity police had withheld. He added that a friend of the anchorperson, Khizar Hayat, also received two bullets in the same incident.

Hayat was shifted to a private hospital but he succumbed to his wounds. Jinnah Post Graduate Medical Centre (JPMC) Executive Director Seemin Jamali confirmed that Abbas had been brought dead to the hospital. She said that the anchorperson sustained multiple bullet wounds on chest and abdomen.

SpiceJet technician dies in freak accident at Kolkata airport

Agency
Kolkata July 10,

A SpiceJet technician was killed after the landing gear door of the aircraft he was working on got "accidentally shut" at the Kolkata airport on Wednesday, a senior official said.

The incident took place

around 1.45 am.

"The technician was carrying out maintenance on the landing gear of the Bombardier Q400 plane when the landing door accidentally got closed and he got stuck there," said the official at the Kolkata airport.

SpiceJet has still not issued any statement on the incident.

After wage code, labour safety on Cabinet table



Agency
New Delhi July 10,

The Union Cabinet could consider clearing the Occupational, Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, also known as the OSH Code, when it meets on Wednesday, Hindustan Times learns. It's a clear indication that the Narendra Modi government, in its second term, is ready to push ahead with labour reforms.

If cleared by the Cabinet, this will be the second major labour reform approved by the government. It cleared the Wage Code last week that contained "provisions of minimum wages and payment of wages to cover employees in both the organised and unorganised sectors", unlike the current Minimum Wages Act and the Payment of Wages Act that apply only to employees engaged in certain kinds of jobs.

Government officials who spoke on condition of anonymity said the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) administration is very keen that both bills be introduced and passed in the ongoing Budget Session of Parliament.

The OSH code will cover 400 million workers in the organised and the unorganised sectors and encompass provisions from around 13 labour laws, including the Factories Act, the Mines Act, the Dock Workers Act, the Working Journalists and other Newspaper Employees Act, and the Cine Workers and Cinema Theatre Workers Act. India's labour laws are complex and cumbersome and the government's plan is to simplify them into four codes: wages; OSH; industrial relations; and social security.

For instance, according to government officials, the OSH Code will ensure that provisions pertaining to 622 sections in 13 laws will now be simplified and covered by just 134 sections.

A draft of the OSH Code that was circulated by the government last year said that it will now be mandatory for employers not just to provide a safe working environment, but also to have annual medical examinations for all employees. The code also says that women working in mines should be provided creches for children under the

age of six. The code also suggests showers or bathing places and locker rooms with separate ones for women mine workers. The code empowers every employee to demand information.

"This government increased the maternity leave for women. This code will help increase the number of women in the workforce," said a person directly involved in the framing of the code who asked not to be identified.

"The biggest difficulty with our labour laws is that the multiplicity of labour laws has been a nightmare for employers and employees. As our economy evolved and the labour force grew, the government kept adding new laws without considering that contradictions might arise with older laws. So 2014-19 saw a repeal of over 10 laws seen as redundant. The remaining 35 or so have been rationalised into four codes. What this attempts to do is fantastic but the devil lies in the details," said Santosh Mehrotra, a professor of economics at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Education Minister inspects school and teacher education colleges

DIPR
Imphal July 9,

Education Minister Thokchom Radheshyam and officials of Directorate of Education (S) today inspected the Tamphasana Girls Higher Secondary School, Imphal; Hindi Teachers Training College and Dhanamanjuri College of Teachers Education at D. M. College Campus.

At Tamphasana Girls Higher Secondary School, Imphal, the Minister said that the students performed exceedingly well in the Higher Secondary Examination (HSE)-2019 with pass percentage of 92.36% compared to 54.9% in 2018. With the high performance in the HSE, there has been an increase in demand for admission to the school, he added.

Th. Radheshyam also stated that maintaining proper infrastructure of the school is essential towards bringing a quality education. He said that the increase in student intake capacity has also increased the pressure on existing infrastructure and added that four additional classrooms will soon be constructed.

The Minister was also highlighted on the need of a proper toilet facility for the hostel students. He assured that a temporary toilet will be



setup within one or two months at the ground floor of the hostel building. The school has been playing an important role in imparting girls' education in the State. It is one of the best government schools of Manipur and for the country as well, he added.

The Principal of Tamphasana Girls Higher Secondary School, Smt. A. Sangeeta Devi stated that the student intake capacity for the current academic year has increased by 100 students and overall total student capacity is around 1700. She also said that each class has student strength of 100 each. The Minister also suggested

that there is a need to increase the number of section from four sections to five sections.

The Minister later inspected the Hindi Teachers Training College and Dhanamanjuri College of Teachers Education both located at D. M. College Campus. He said that teachers are one of the important constituent of education system. They play a major role in imparting education to the young minds. He said that it is important that the quality of training is improved at teachers' education center, which is also one of the main priorities of the government for the teachers. With regard to the

visit at the Hindi Teachers Training College, he said that Hindi is used as a common language for communication across the country. He said it will be beneficial to impart the basic knowledge of Hindi which will be helpful for those who travel outside the State in communicating with others.

And therefore the importance for the quality training of the trainers at the colleges is important to prove better education for Hindi to the people. He also sought the support of every stakeholder in any developmental steps being taken up for the betterment of education sector.

India seeks ISIS-like focus from UNSC on Pak-based terrorists

Agency
Washington July 10,

India on Tuesday sought to push the UN Security Council to not stop at proscribing terrorists and terrorist groups such as the Pakistan-based D-Company, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Toiba but follow up by granting them a "similar degree of interest" as it did to "denude" the Islamic State.

Participating in a UNSC discussion on linkages between organized crime and international terrorism, Indian Permanent Representative to the UN Syed Akbaruddin also called for the world body to start collaborating its counter-terrorism efforts with the Financial Action Task Force, saying the Paris-based watchdog has been "playing a significant role in setting global standards for preventing and combating money laundering and terrorist financing".

India has felt frustrated by the lack of on-going and committed collective action to degrade these sub-continental terrorists and entities as was undertaken by the UNSC to tackle the Islamic State (IS or ISIL, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant). The UNSC did not stop after simply proscribing the outfit.

"They worked together to shut off ISIL's main source of revenue, smuggling of crude oil (it drew from production facilities it had captured in Syria and Iraq)," a person

familiar with the case India made at the open debate said on background. The collective effort also focussed on persuading Turkey to prevent its territory from being used for trading the crude for refined oil.

"The success of collective action to denude ISIL is a pointer that the Council's focussed attention can and does yield results," the Indian permanent representative said. "A similar degree of interest in addressing the threats posed by proscribed individuals, such as Dawood Ibrahim and his D-Company, as well as proscribed entities, including the Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Toiba, listed as affiliates of Al-Qaeda, under the 1267 sanctions regime, will serve all of us well."

All three entities have been on the UNSC's sanctions list for the year now, recently joined by Masood Azhar, the founder head of Jaish-e-Mohammad. But they have remained largely free to conduct their business, collect donations, seek recruits, run sprawling training camps and spray out terrorist operations across the border in India and Afghanistan.

India's frustration over Pakistan is shared by a growing number of countries, and New Delhi will be hoping to tap into it to increase the pressure on Islamabad. Akbaruddin did not name Pakistan, but as has become

India's practice at the United Nations in recent years, he left enough clues on the floor. Speaking about D-Company, he said it has been involved in gold smuggling, counterfeit currency, as well as arms and drug trafficking "from a safe haven that declines to acknowledge even his existence". That's Pakistan, which has sheltered the Mumbai don, Dawood Ibrahim, after he fled India following the 1993 Mumbai bombings.

India's suggestion for the UNSC to collaborate with FATF also had a decidedly Pakistani context. The watchdog, which monitors terrorist financing money laundering, has put Pakistan on a grey-list of countries that it assesses have weak or compromised financial systems. It has been dissatisfied with corrective measures undertaken by Islamabad and may advance it to the black-list of most egregious offender countries. The UNSC will gain a better understanding of the terrorism problem through this collaboration, it has been argued. The UNSC point of contact could be the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, which, according to its webpage, "carries out the policy decisions of the Committee, conducts expert assessments of each Member State and facilitates counter-terrorism technical assistance to countries".