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Kejriwal resigns as Delhi CM, blames Mukesh Ambani, recommends assembly dissolution, fresh polls

PTI

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AAP chief recommends fresh polls; accuses Cong and BJP of 'colluding' with Mukesh Ambani.



• Arvind Kejriwal addresses his supporters with his resignation letter in his hand at Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) headquarters in New Delhi on Friday - AP

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal resigned Friday night after suffering a defeat in the assembly on the Jan Lokpal Bill and in a political gamble, he recommended dissolution of the assembly and holding of fresh polls.

Bringing an end to the 49-day roller coaster ride in power, during which he received bouquets and brickbats in equal measure, the Chief Minister and his cabinet met for one last time when it decided to resign and make the recommendation to Lt Governor Najeeb Jung, whose advice against the anti-graft bill he had defied in the assembly.

The two shared a good equation all along but on Friday, Kejriwal attacked Jung, saying he acts like a viceroy of the central government which thinks it is still a British Government.

Unconfirmed reports also speculated that he might contest the Lok Sabha elections against BJP's PM candidate Narendra Modi.

<u>Kejriwal was 'looking for an excuse to run away', says Cong; BJP 'ready' for fresh</u>
<u>polls (https://www.deccanchronicle.com/140215/news-politics/article/kejriwal-was-looking-excuse-run-away-says-cong-bjp-ready-fresh-polls)</u>

Earlier in the day, Jung had advised the Assembly against transacting the Jan Lokpal Bill which he said should have prior clearance of central government.

Straight from the cabinet meeting, 45-year-old Kejriwal, who came to power riding the crest of an anti-graft movement and was called an anarchist for his street protest as CM, drove to the AAP headquarters in Central Delhi, three kilometres away from the Secretariat and addressed his supporters in pouring rain when he announced his resignation.

"The Cabinet has decided to resign. We have recommended to the Lt Governor to dissolve the assembly and hold fresh elections," he told a cheering audience wearing AAP's trademark cap which welcomed his speech with a thunderous clapping.

It was the same place where he addressed the party workers when AAP won assembly seats during the elections. Later, Kejriwal went to meet the Lt Governor and handed over his resignation.

Kejriwal wrote his resignation letter addressed to the President apprising him of the resignation of his Council of Ministers.

"The Council of Ministers met this evening and decided to tender its resignation," Kejriwal wrote in the letter. "The Council also recommends dissolution of Delhi assembly and immediate conduct of elections to the Delhi Legislative Assembly. The same may kindly be accepted," he further wrote.

Kejriwal sent this letter to the President through the Lt Governor.

Meanwhile, LG has requested the Delhi government to function for another five days starting Friday.

"The LG has said that we have to remain in our positions till our resignation is accepted. He feels it will take five to six days i.e. till Wednesday or Thursday, the decision will be made," said AAP leader Manish Sisodia. The government will work for 4-5 days, we will do our share of work, he said.

Launching a blistering attack on Congress, on whose support he came to power, and the BJP accusing them of 'colluding' with Reliance chairman Mukesh Ambani to bring down the government two days after he filed an FIR against him on the gas pricing issue.

"The real face of BJP and Congress has been exposed. They did not allow the Bill (Janlokpal) to be introduced in the House. They defeated the bill because three days back because we lodged an FIR against Mukesh Ambani," he said.

Kejriwal said Ambani was running the Congress government for the last 10 years, saying 'Congress is his shop and he can buy anything whenever he wants'. He also did not spare Narendra Modi saying Ambani has been behind him for last one year.

"Where are Modi's riches coming from. He is flying by helicopter crisscrossing the country. He is addressing huge and expensive rallies. From where does he get money for all this."

High drama was witnessed in the assembly when Kejriwal defied Jung's advice and tabled the Bill which the BJP and Congress opposed stiffly. After uproarious scenes and two adjournments, the resolution seeking leave for introduction of the bill was put to vote and was defeated by 42 to 27 in a House of 70.

The defeat forced Kejriwal and his Cabinet colleagues into executing the threat he has been issuing last one week about his preparedness to quit if Lokpal is defeated. A reluctant politician, Kejriwal implemented some of the promises like slashing power tariff and free water and appeared on a confrontation with Congress by taking decisions that deliberately needled the outside supporter.

The 49-day tenure was also marked by controversies when his ministerial colleague Somnath Bharti went on a vigilante-style raid on an alleged drug and prostitution racket that earned the government adverse publicity.

Kejriwal told his party supporters that Congress opposed the Jan Lokpal Bill because he had acted against the corruption of Sheila Dikshit by filing cases against her, Union Minister M. Veerappa Moily and Ambani.

"They were ridiculing me saying I have only Anti-Corruption Branch but had Jan Lokpal Bill been passed half of them would have gone to jail. They conspired to defeat the government.

"After Ambani and Moily, (Sharad) Pawar's turn will come and then Kamal Nath. Because of this, Kejriwal has been removed. I am a small man. What is my status. I am not here for power," he said.

Kejriwal said his government brought down power rates and gave free water and drastically reduced corruption.

"We tried to work honestly but we are also human. People say we cannot govern. In 40 days, we brought corruption down and acted against Sheila Dikshit's corruption. They say govern, I want to say bringing corruption down is also governance," he said.

He told the crowd that his government was resigning and was proud to say that for Lokpal he would resign 100 times and sacrifice the CM's post. I will be fortunate to do it in the interest of the country.

The Chief Minister attacked the behaviour of MPs in Parliament on Thursday when pepper was sprayed and mikes were broken. Similar things happened in Delhi Assembly too.

"What BJP and Congress members did in the Assembly was a shame on democracy," he said.

"They say the Bill is not constitutional. Is breaking mikes constitutional. We are fighting for the nation, constitution and the people of the country. We will teach them a lesson. I am ready to sacrifice my life for the constitution. We will abide by the constitution that was made by people like Ambedkar."

"They say Parliament is a temple. Do you go to temple and break idols. Do you go to church and destroy the Bible", he said.

Before concluding his speech, he said, "I pray to God. We are small people. Kindly bless us and guide us. Give us an opportunity to sacrifice for the country".

In the December 4 assembly polls, AAP had made an impressive debut wining 28 seats and came to power by taking support of Congress which has eight MLAs after BJP refused to form the government citing lack of majority.

MLA Vinod Kumar Binny was expelled from AAP for anti-party activities while Independent legislator Ramvir Shokeen had withdrawn support from the government. The BJP had 31 seats while its ally Akali Dal had won one seat.

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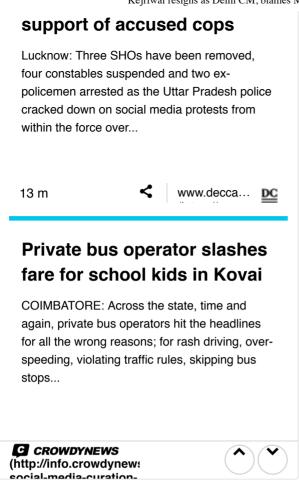
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