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# GP polls won't affect Cabinet expansion, says BSY

## Will examine if it influences rural voters: poll panel

BENGALURU, DHNS

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Monday said the gram panchayat elections will not come in the way of expanding or reshuffling his Cabinet.

The model code of conduct for the local polls kicked in from Monday itself amid

uncertainty on what the BJP central leadership will decide on Yediyurappa's Cabinet.

"Wait for two days," Yediyurappa said when asked if his Cabinet will be expanded in the month of December.

Yediyurappa said that the gram panchayat elections were as crucial as Lok Sabha and Assembly polls. "They

are important to strengthen the party organisation," he said. "Six teams under state BJP president Nalin Kumar Kateel are travelling to prepare for the polls," he said.

"Although there is no party symbol in the gram panchayat elections, naturally people know which candidate is backed by who. That's why BJP is giving more importance to these polls," Yediyurappa added.

According to State Election Commissioner B Basavaraaju, it was a "rare thing" to expand the Cabinet when the code of conduct is in force. "There are no specif-

ic guidelines for it. We have to examine it separately. When the government wants to expand the Cabinet and if it refers to us, we will look into it," he said.

The guidelines, he said, were aimed at preventing rural voters from being influenced. "We have to examine whether such decisions influence voters," he said. He did not have clarity when asked whether inducting MLCs MTB Nagaraj and R Shankar, both of whom have represented rural constituencies, would influence voters.

Meanwhile, Yediyurappa rejigged appointments to

some state-run companies after legislators are said to have thrown a tantrum on what they were initially given. Raibag MLA Duryodhana Aihole, who was nominated as chairman of Dr BR Ambedkar Development Corporation a few days ago, was appointed chairman of Karnataka Adijaambava Development Corporation.

Mayakonda MLA N Linganna will now head Dr Babu Jagjivan Ram Leather Industries Development Corporation Ltd, after Haveri MLA Neharu Olekar was shifted to the Karnataka SC/ST Commission.