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Yediyurappa likely to again push for Cabinet expansion this weekend

But BJP high command may not decide on it till Amit Shah's State visit on January 15-16

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

The State executive of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), to be held in Shivamogga over the weekend and to be attended by Arun Singh, party general secretary in-charge of Karnataka, is expected to again turn into a platform for Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa to push for a Cabinet expansion/reshuffle. However, a resolution to the long-pending issue may not materialise during the two-day meet, party sources said.

"Union Home Minister Amit Shah is scheduled to visit the State on January 15-16, on an official visit. Given that he will also be meeting party leaders in the State during his visit, the Chief Minister is unlikely to be given the green signal for the Cabinet exercise before this meeting," a senior leader said.

A section of the party believes that the Cabinet exercise is now intricately linked to the question of leadership in the State. "The high command is yet to take a call on the issue and only after that decision will the Cabinet issue be resolved," a party strategist speculated.

Meanwhile, Mr. Yediyurappa has politically asserted himself by saying that he "would complete the full term". This came in the wake of statements made by dissident MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, who has been hinting at a leadership change. Mr. Yatnal has also demanded a legislature party meeting to discuss all issues threadbare.

According to sources, Mr. Yediyurappa is upset over the party's inaction against Mr. Yatnal. "Despite a series of statements undermining the Chief Minister, the party has not even served him a show-cause notice," a close associate of Mr. Yediyurappa said. The Chief Minister's camp is expected to lodge a complaint against Mr. Yatnal over his remarks, and the subject is likely to come up at the State core committee meeting to be held in Shivamogga as well, sources said.

This is Mr. Arun Singh's second visit to the State after taking over as the party's Karnataka in-charge. During his previous visit, he was reportedly flooded with complaints from party old-timers about Mr. Yediyurappa's style of functioning.

Shivamogga to host BJP meetings for two days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
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The State unit of BJP will hold a two-day special meeting in Shivamogga on Saturday and Sunday. The party's State core committee and the executive committee will also meet as part of the event in the home town of Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa.

BJP national general secretary Arun Singh, who is in charge of party affairs in Karnataka, Mr. Yediyurappa, Union Ministers, Cabinet Ministers, and the party's district unit presidents are to attend the meeting.

Shivamogga Lok Sabha member B.Y. Raghavendra has extended a video invitation on social media to senior party leaders visiting the city as part of the meeting. "About 25 years

ago, the State executive committee of the party's youth wing met in Shivamogga. This is the first important meeting being held in the city after so many years," he said.

The party's Shivamogga district unit has made arrangements for the meetings at PES Institute of Technology. Major traffic joints in the city have been decorated with saffron buntings.

Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj K.S. Eshwarappa, at a press conference in Shivamogga on Friday, said the party would take up an important subject for discussion at the State executive committee meeting, to be held on the second day. However, he did not reveal the subject.