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# Eshwarappa episode points to trust deficit, divisions deepening in BJP

Some leaders believe situation is similar to the one that prevailed during 2008 BJP rule

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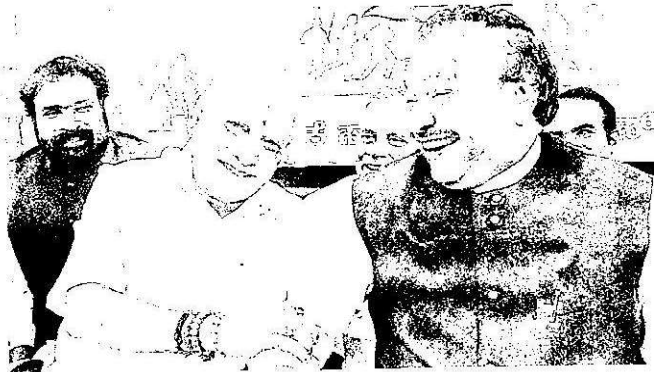
The unprecedented action of BJP senior leader and RDPR Minister K.S. Eshwarappa of complaining to the Governor against the alleged interference in his department by Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa has not only kicked up political dust in the ruling party but also indicated that divisions in the party is getting further deepened.

Some leaders in the party believe the situation is similar to the one that prevailed during the BJP rule in 2008 whose performance was marred owing to infighting between the pro- and anti-Yediyurappa camps.

Mr. Eshwarappa has raised serious issues such as interference in administration, violation of norms related to division of powers between Ministers and the Chief Minister, nepotism, and indiscriminate release of funds from outside the budgetary allocation. He has also alleged violation of norms related to the Panchayat Raj Act.

## No alternative

But party insiders admit that the issue goes beyond these technical contentions as it is a clear indication of the party facing trust deficit again. It is also



A file photo of B.S. Yediyurappa and K.S. Eshwarappa in a jovial mood at a party meeting in Bengaluru.

an indication of "leadership vacuum", the party having no suitable alternative for the 78-year-old Mr. Yediyurappa, observed another leader. He pointed out that there was no cohesion between the party old guards and those who came from other parties.

Though this is not the first time that Mr. Eshwarappa has rebelled against Mr. Yediyurappa, a long-time senior associate who hails from his own district, the timing of the rebellion – just ahead of the bypolls to the Lok Sabha and the Assembly and when yet again there are murmurs of a possible leadership change – has led to anxiety within the party.

On his part, Mr. Yediyurappa has so far desisted from commenting on the issue, while his supporters have launched a counter-attack at Mr. Eshwarappa. But it is interesting to note that none of the prominent Ministers from among the party old guard, barring R. Ashok, who is identified with the Yediyurappa camp, has come to the defence of the Chief Minister.

Referring to this, party insiders felt this was an indication of factional politics becoming active again or an attempt by the old guard to clip the wings of Mr. Yediyurappa.

Already, the issue has provided enough fodder for the Oppo-

## We will look into the issue after polls: Arun Singh

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BJP national general secretary Arun Singh, who is in charge of party's State affairs, has maintained that RDPR Minister K.S. Eshwarappa should have resolved the issue over alleged interference of the Chief Minister in his department through mutual talks instead of approaching the Governor.

Mr. Singh told reporters in New Delhi that the issue could have also been raised at party forum. Making it clear that the party is now busy with the elections to State Assemblies and bypolls, he said the high command would take up the issue after these elections.

sition Congress to launch an attack at the government and the Chief Minister. The Opposition is unlikely to keep quiet unless some of the issues mentioned in the complaint are looked into since the complaint is submitted to the Governor.