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Cabinet expansion on Wednesday, says CM after Delhi visit

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THE much-awaited cabinet expansion will in all likelihood happen on Wednesday, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa said after his arrival from New Delhi late on Sunday evening.

"I will induct seven ministers into the cabinet. Since January 14 is Sankranti festival, we will have the oath-taking ceremony on January 13 afternoon," the CM said. Sounding confident, he said the names cleared for induction will be approved, but added that there may be one or two changes. "Everything will be finalised tomorrow (Monday)", he said.

In a full cabinet of 34 ministers, Yediyurappa now has 27. Among those in the ministerial race are MLAs Umesh Katti, N Munirathna, M P Renukacharya, Aravind Limbavali, Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, and S R Vishwanath. Three MLCs — C P Yogeshwar, M T B Nagaraj and R Shankar — too are aspiring for ministerial berths. Another MLC, A H Vishwanath, too was in the race, but his hopes were dashed when the Karnataka High Court, on November 30, barred him from becoming a minister until at least May this year.

Earlier in the day, the CM,



Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa and Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Sunday | EXPRESS

who made a surprise visit to the national capital, met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda and discussed state politics including cabinet expansion and finalisation of candidates for the upcoming bypolls for two assembly and one parliamentary seats.

Emerging from the meeting, the CM was optimistic about getting the final nod from the central leadership for the cabinet rejig in the state. "On the cabinet expansion, there was a detailed discussion. You will get good news soon," Yediyurappa told reporters in New Delhi. The CM stressed that this was the last meeting on the issue of cabinet expansion with the BJP top brass. "A 101 per cent, this is the last meeting. They are going to clear the names as soon as possible," he maintained. P4

Names for bypolls to be cleared soon: CM

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STATING that the central leadership has assured its full support, Yediyurappa said, "I am happy with the discussion...we will wait for their instructions." Yediyurappa also said he was told to send the names of the candidates for bypolls at the earliest for clearance and added that the leadership has asked him to ensure the party's victory in all three seats. Final names of candidates for the upcoming assembly bypolls will be cleared as early as possible because there was "positive, fruitful and satisfactory discussion", he noted.

Party general secretary in charge of Karnataka, Arun Singh, was also present in an hour-long meeting held at Shah's residence in Delhi.

Bypolls are scheduled for Maski and Basavakalyan assembly segments and Belagavi Lok Sabha constituency. While Maski fell vacant due to the resignation of sitting Congress MLA Pratap Gouda Patil in 2019, the bypolls to Basavakalyan and Belagavi seats have been necessitated due to the deaths of their representatives B Narayan Rao and Suresh Angadi, respectively, due to Covid.

Asked about the steps taken to check the spread of Covid-19 in the state, the CM said, "In Karnataka, the situation is under control. We are taking all precautions." The CM returned to Bengaluru on Sunday night.