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Cabinet expansion: The ball is still in Yediyurappa's court

Process delayed with names of party old-timers yet to be finalised for inclusion

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Though the delay in Cabinet expansion in Karnataka is attributed to the busy schedule of the BJP central leadership, it is learnt that it is more because of Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa being unable to finalise the names of BJP legislators to be included in the Cabinet.

"Both the new entrants to the party and the old-timers will have to be included in the Ministry. However, the Chief Minister is yet to finalise the names of the old-timers to be included," said a source in the party's central unit.

Denying that the central leadership was either too busy or reluctant to hold consultations with Mr. Yediyurappa on Cabinet expansion, the source said that the top brass would readily do so as soon as he finalised the names of the BJP old-timers to be made Ministers. "The onus on finalisation of ministerial probables is on the Chief Minister. As he is yet to complete that process, the ball is still in his court," a central leader said.



Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa was received by a host of BJP leaders on his arrival from Davos at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru on Friday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

At the same time, he expressed optimism about the time required for finalisation of the names, maintaining that it would be possible to complete the process within the next three days, as had been announced by the Chief Minister.

Accommodating MLAs

Meanwhile, sources denied reports that the party high command had insisted upon including only six of the 11 newly elected MLAs in the

Cabinet. "We will have to include all 11 migrants who won in the Assembly by-polls. However, if the Chief Minister wants, he can convince one or two to drop their demand for a ministerial berth. The central leadership is okay with including all 11," a source said, while making it clear that there was no question of accommodating the defeated defectors and those who did not contest the polls.

The sources also made it

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A BJP CENTRAL UNIT SOURCE

clear that the party high command had not instructed or insisted upon dropping any incumbent Ministers to remove caste and regional imbalances. It may be noted that the State Cabinet will have more representatives from the Lingayat community and Belagavi district with the inclusion of the newly elected MLAs. Sources said it was not possible to rectify this as the party was obliged to give representation in the Cabinet to migrant MLAs in recognition of their help in government formation.

BSY: Ministry expansion in three days

12/5/11/20
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
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Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Friday said the ministerial expansion would happen in the next three days. The Chief Minister is under pressure from leaders who switched loyalty to the BJP and later got elected to the Legislative Assembly on the party ticket to induct them into the Ministry.

"The expansion will take place in the next three days," Mr. Yediyurappa told reporters soon after his arrival at the Kempegowda International Airport here from Davos where he attended the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum.

He denied that the party high command wanted the inclusion of only six or seven newly elected MLAs into the Ministry as against all the 11 defectors from Congress and the Janata Dal (S) who won in the recently held Assembly bypolls. But he indicated that only the victorious defectors would get ministerial opportunity, by saying that presently accommodating those who had lost the polls was not on the agenda.

Meanwhile, former Ministers A.H. Vishwanath and R. Shankar, who lost the bypolls, demanded that even the defeated among the migrants be accommodated in Ministry.