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Yatnal speaks again of leadership change, his aspiration to become CM

BJP leaders censure the senior MLA for speaking out of turn and creating confusion repeatedly

KARNATAKA BUREAU
 BENGALURU/BELAGAVI

Senior BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, a known dissenter to Chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa, yet again not only hinted at leadership change in the State by Sankranthi, but also expressed his aspirations to become Chief Minister.

His statement at Vijayapura on Friday has gained significance in the light of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's proposed visit to the State, including to Vijayapura around Sankranthi, when Mr. Yediyurappa hopes to get a green signal for the much-delayed Cabinet expansion.

Shah's visit
 Stating that there will be a "big change" probably be-

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D.V. SADANANDA GOWDA, Union Minister

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BASANAGOUA PATIL YATNAL, BJP MLA

fore Mr. Shah's visits to the State, Mr. Yatnal also hinted at his aspirations. "Every year, the sun changes his path and shines on the northern hemisphere on Sankranthi. In Karnataka, the sun will shine on north Karnataka and the era of wholesome development of this region will begin," he said.

Answering a question as to whether he hoped he would be appointed the Chief Minister, he said, "Who said I cannot be the Chief Minister? I could be if it is my destiny."

Openly expressing the aspiration to be the Chief Minister is rare in today's BJP, when the central leadership prefers low profile leaders,

a senior BJP leader observed.

While Mr. Yatnal's previous utterances on leadership change had gone without any censure, on Friday, a host of senior BJP leaders reacted sharply. Union Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda, speaking in Bengaluru, said, "Mr. Yatnal is only an MLA, not the party presi-

dent to talk on leadership issues. He better stop making such statements for his own good." However, Mr. Yatnal hit back at Mr. Gowda, pointing out that he was a Union Minister in Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Cabinet, much before Mr. Gowda became one. "This shows who is senior to whom," he said.

N. Ravikumar, general secretary, BJP Karnataka, said Mr. Yatnal seems to be upset

that he has not been made a Minister and was speaking out of that frustration. "General secretary in-charge of party affairs Arun Singh and party president Nalin Kumar Kateel have clearly said there will be no change in leadership in the State. Despite that Mr. Yatnal has been creating confusion time and again. His in-

discipline is being observed by the party leadership," he said. However, there is as yet no response from Mr. Kateel.

Meanwhile, Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president D.K. Shivakumar, speaking to mediapersons in the city, also hinted at change during Sankranthi. "A new time will come after Sankranthi. Let us see what all happens," he said.

Yatnal speaks again of leadership change
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