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## BJP to offer Council Chairman's post to JDS for support in Upper House?

BANSY KALAPPA @Bengaluru

WILL BJP offer the chairman's post in the Legislative Council to JDS in exchange for the regional party's support in the Upper House? This is the issue that is being hotly discussed within BJP circles, and a crucial meeting between party MLCs and Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Wednesday will take a final decision on this.

JDS sources said that the party too has discussed this possibility, but will wait for the Wednesday's meeting between BJP Council members and the CM before committing itself.

The BJP, which has twice sought to 'remove' present Council Chairman from the Congress,



Prathap Chandra Shetty, will again try to replace him when the legislature session commences on Thursday. BJP General Secretary and MLC Ravi Kumar said, "We will decide on Council Chairman and Deputy Chairman posts, considering that we have issued notices for no-confidence motion twice."

On the chairman's post being offered to JDS, he said the issue will be discussed with the CM on Wednesday.

The BJP with 31 members is the single-largest party in the Council and also enjoys the support of an independent member. The JDS has 13 MLCs and both parties together with 45 members will have a clear majority in the 75-member

House. The Congress has 29 members. There is a single vacancy with the passing away of then Deputy Chairman and JDS member Dharme Gowda.

The fight over the removal of Shetty had led to ugly scenes between ruling and opposition party members, during the last session. BJP Chief Whip Mahantesh Kavatagimath said, "Wednesday's meeting is crucial as the decision on election to the Deputy Chairman's post too will be taken."

If the Chairman's post is offered to JDS, the frontrunner will be Basavraj Horatti. The BJP, which will then put up a candidate for the Deputy Chairman's position, has many front-runners, including Ayanur Manjunath, Sashil Namoshi and Kavatagimath.