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Council: BJP, JD(S) strike pact

Horatti to be Chairman when the seat falls vacant

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

In a coming together of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Janata Dal (Secular), the former has now decided to support a JD(S) candidate for the post of the Chairman of the Legislative Council when the seat falls vacant, while settling for the Deputy Chairman's post for a party candidate.

Senior JD(S) member Basavaraj Horatti, who has lobbied hard for this al-

liance, will be the JD(S) candidate for the Chairman's post, while BJP member M.K. Pranesh will file his nomination papers for the Deputy Chairman's post on Thursday morning, sources said.

High command's word

A decision to this effect was taken by the BJP high command on Wednesday, after the former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda spoke to BJP national president J.P.

Nadda over the matter, sources said.

Apart from support to several crucial Bills, including the contentious Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill, 2020, which the JD(S) had earlier opposed, several other issues "more than what meets the eye" were part of the understanding, said a senior BJP leader.

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BJP, JD(S) strike pact

Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa held a meeting of BJP MLCs on Wednesday and announced the candidature of Mr. Pranesh, who is from Chikkamagaluru and RSS stable, for the post of the Deputy Chairman. "We have moved a no-confidence motion against Council Chairman K. Prathapchandra Shetty. But that can be taken up only by a Deputy Chairman, a post that has fallen vacant after the death of S.L. Dharme Gowda. Once Mr. Pranesh is elected as Deputy Chairman, we will take up the no-confidence motion as per due process of law and depose Mr. Shetty. The BJP will later support JD(S) candidate for the Chairman's post," a senior BJP leader said. "I am the senior-most member of the Council and members of the House have expressed

their wish to elect me as Chairman," Mr. Horatti said.

CM unhappy?

"Given that the JD(S) has always been thought of as a contingency plan if there is a threat to the government's stability with leadership change, the Chief Minister is not very happy with the alliance, especially the way it panned out at the high command level, and not through him," a BJP leader said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Shetty is yet to take a final call on whether to resign or face the no-confidence motion. Sources said he might opt for resigning after polls to Deputy Chairman's post. Interim report by a special legislature committee that probed into the pandemonium in the Council on December 15 is expected to be tabled in the House.