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BJP Council members at a meeting with Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa in Bengaluru on Wednesday



I have received the blessing from the top leadership. JDS supremo H D Deve Gowda asked me to meet Yediyurappa and convey the message of partnership

Basavaraj Horatti, JDS MLC

HORATTI LIKELY TO BAG COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S POST

BJP's Pranesh may get Dy Chairman's position; JDS leader meets CM

Basavaraj Horatti for Council chairman?

There are indications that the BJP and JD(S) will join hands for the post of Legislative Council Chairman and Deputy Chairman. On Wednesday, JD(S) candidate for the Chairman post, Basavaraj Horatti, met Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa and sought the BJP's support.

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BANSY KALAPPA @Bengaluru

JDS MLC Basavaraj Horatti is likely to be the Chairman, while BJP's M K Pranesh may be elected as his deputy in the Legislative Council if everything goes according to the strategy drawn up by the two parties.

Pitching for his candidature, Horatti met Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Wednesday morning and requested BJP support. But later in the evening, after a meeting between BJP Council members and Yediyurappa, party Chief Whip in the Council Mahantesh Kavatagimath told *The New Indian Express* that they will decide on supporting Horatti at a later date.

The meeting, however, came to an agreement that Pranesh would be the party candidate for the deputy chairman's post, which

fell vacant after the death of JDS leader S L Dharme Gowda.

The alliance with the JDS will help the ruling party pass bills in the Upper House as it does not have a majority on its own. Though it is the single-largest party in the Council with 31 members, it still needs the support of 13 members from the JDS in the 75-member House. The JDS, during its meeting on Tuesday, had decided to stake claim for the chairman's post, in exchange for extending issue-based support to the BJP.

"Horatti is confirmed from our side," JDS leader H D Kumaraswamy told *The New Indian Express*. "But we will have to wait and see what the BJP decides," he added.

Confirming that he has got the blessing from the top leadership of the party, Horatti said, "Party supremo H D Deve Gowda

asked me to convey this message to Yediyurappa."

Asked about the recent unruly scenes that affected the image of the Council, Horatti said, "If I was the Chairman, I would have allowed such unruly scenes."

But the BJP still has a hurdle to pass before getting the chairman and deputy chairman of its choice in the Council, as the incumbent, Prathap Chandra Shetty, from the Congress is yet to be removed. The ruling party's previous two attempts at ousting Shetty have come a cropper. Party sources said that they will again move another no-confidence motion against Shetty when the nine-day-long legislature session begins on Thursday.

The sources said that they will first get the deputy chairman elected with the support of JDS as the position is vacant, and then back the regional party candidate for the chairman's post.

