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**3 ministers resign ahead
of UP cabinet expansion**

LUCKNOW, DHNS: Three Uttar Pradesh ministers on Tuesday resigned ahead of the much-awaited state cabinet reshuffle on Wednesday reportedly after signals that they might be dropped.

According to sources in the BJP, the ministers, who have sent their resignations to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were Rajesh Agarwal, Anupama Jaiswal and Swati Singh. Unconfirmed reports said that three more ministers, Mukut Bihari Verma, Chetan Chauhan and Archana Pandey had also resigned.

It was not clear if their resignations were accepted. A government spokesman refused to confirm or deny the resignations. Sources, however, said that there could be some more resignations ahead of the reshuffle.

Rajesh Agarwal, who held the finance portfolio, in his letter to Adityanath, cited health issues and age as reasons for resigning. "I have already crossed 75 and therefore I am resigning in keeping with the party policy," Agarwal said.

The other two ministers, according to the sources, were told to put in their papers. The BJP and RSS were not happy with their performance. The chief minister had recently hinted that performance would be the key factor in the cabinet.

Sources said that as many as 17 new ministers might be included in the state cabinet. Currently, the strength of the Yogi cabinet is 43. Adityanath also held a meeting with some senior RSS leaders here on Tuesday. Sources said that the BJP and the RSS wanted the CM to keep the caste equations in mind while expanding the cabinet.