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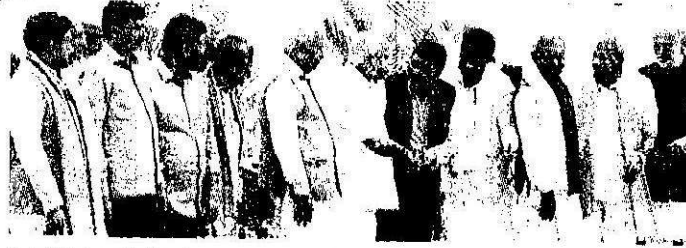
BSY cabinet now has the power of 10

Portfolio allocation by Saturday, says CM Yediyurappa; race hots up for plum posts

ANUSHA RAVI @Bengaluru 11/12/2020

TWO months after they were re-elected from their seats on BJP tickets after their disqualification, 10 MLAs were inducted into the B S Yediyurappa cabinet on Thursday. Instrumental in the collapse of the JDS-Congress coalition government and bringing B S Yediyurappa-led BJP government to power in Karnataka, the newly-inducted ministers are likely to get their portfolios by Saturday.

S T Somashekhar, Ramesh Jarkiholi, Anand Singh, Dr K Sudhakar, Byrathi Basavraj, Shivaram Hebbar, B C Patil, K Gopalaiiah, Narayana Gowda and Shrimanth Patil, who were MLAs of the Congress and JDS, had been disqualified from the current Assembly by



Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa congratulates the new ministers of his cabinet in Bengaluru on Thursday, as Governor Vajubhai Vala looks on | NAGARAJA GADEKAL

then Speaker Ramesh Kumar for anti-party activities. After securing relief from the Supreme Court, they contested the December 5, 2019 bypolls on BJP tickets and won.

Visibly tired due to the continuous attempts to pacify old-time BJP legislators, Yediyurappa said there won't be delay in allocation of portfolios. "By Saturday, we will sort

out allocation of portfolios for the new ministers. We will not delay it further. I will visit New Delhi, if possible, given the tight schedule," the CM said.

In an informal cabinet meeting soon after the oath-taking ceremony on Thursday morning, Yediyurappa is said to have told the new ministers that he had kept his end of the bargain.

■ With the CM having announced that there will be no more Deputy CMs, Ramesh Jarkiholi now wants everything that arch rival D K Shivakumar had — portfolio, room in Vidhana Soudha and bungalow

■ Athani MLA Mahesh Kumathalli, who had been left out in the Cabinet expansion, has been promised "some other big responsibility".

■ Of the 27 ministers, excluding the CM, over 40% are from Bengaluru and Belagavi districts; 13 districts have no representation

Race on to bag B'luru devpt ministry

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OF the total 11 'turncoat' MLAs who won the bypolls, only Athani MLA Mahesh Kumathalli has been kept out of the cabinet.

"The Chief Minister will take a decision on portfolios. Many incumbent ministers hold additional portfolios and those need to be re-allocated too," said Deputy Chief Minister Dr Ashwath Narayana. With 10 more ministers, the strength of the Karnataka cabinet now stands at 28. Six more berths are vacant. Yediyurappa's initial plan to induct 13 ministers hit a roadblock after the speculated induction of CP Yogeshwar, who lost the Assembly election, met with severe opposition from sitting MLAs who also raised the issue of skewed regional representation.

"The CM will work out a balanced cabinet and will consider

our request. Our demand was to give representation to Kalyana Karnataka region in the cabinet. We are happy that the people who helped our party come to power have been made ministers," said Shorapur MLA Raju Gowda, who had been leading a group of disgruntled lawmakers.

While all others took oath in the name of God, Yellapur MLA Arabail Shivaram Hebbar took oath in the name of God, his parents and voters of his constituency. Hirekerur MLA B C Patil took it a notch higher by adding the name of Jagatjyoti Basaveshwara in his oath. The Glass House at Raj Bhavan was packed as Governor Vajubhai Vala administered the oath of office to the new ministers in the presence of the Chief Minister.

"I am very happy to take oath as minister. Because of the work of party colleagues and voters' bless-

ings, I have been elected as MLA for the third time and have become a minister. I thank them. The CM has kept up his promise." ST Somashekhar said.

With the cabinet expansion sorted out for now, portfolio allocation will be next on the agenda for the government. Sources in the party indicated that Ramesh Jarkiholi is now adamant on the Water Resources or PWD ministry as he is miffed over his aide Kumathalli not being made a minister and a Deputy CM post being denied to him.

The hottest race, however, is for the Bengaluru Development ministry with seven ministers from the city. Newly inducted MLAs Gopalai-ah, Byrathi Basavraj and S T Somashekhar are vying for the coveted portfolio — one that Deputy Chief Minister Ashwath Narayana and Revenue Minister R Ashok are also in line for.