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BJP, JD(S) close ranks to unseat Council chairman

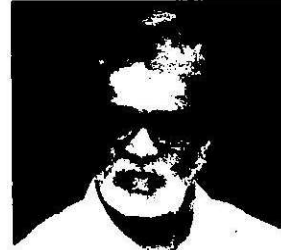
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The ruling BJP and the JD(S) are expected to come together to unseat the current chairman of Legislative Council K. Prathapchandra Shetty in the winter session, as the former has already moved a no-confidence motion against the Congress legislator.

Sources in both the BJP and the JD(S) confirmed the move. BJP sources said that the notice to move no-confidence motion had been given in the last week of November, and that leaders of both parties have had initial round of discussion on the issue. The winter session will begin on December 7.

BJP sources said the notice was given after the party felt that the chairman was "not acting neutral" and was providing undue advantage to the Congress. They also pointed out that the chairman had not allowed the vote on Land Reforms Bill on the last day of the monsoon session despite fervent appeal by the treasury benches. "The discussion on the Bill went into midnight and finally, the House was adjourned *sine die* without the Bill put into vote," sources said.

The support of the JD(S), which has 14 members in the 75-member House, is crucial to the BJP, which lacks number. While the BJP after a clean sweep in the recent elections to graduates' and



K. Prathapchandra Shetty

teachers' constituencies, has 31 members in the House, the Congress has 28 besides Mr. Shetty. There is one Independent member. On its part, the JD(S) had supported the Congress to defeat the Labour Reforms Bill, which was defeated on the last day of the monsoon session. "In the changing political scenario when the JD(S) sees the Congress as its principal opponent, it has decided to support the BJP's move. Though the Deputy Chairman is a JD(S) legislator, it is to be seen how power will be shared between the two parties. Both parties have not had final discussion. The no-confidence motion is expected to come on or after December 8," a JD(S) legislator said.

In June 2017, senior BJP leader D.H. Shankarmurthy, who was the Council chairman, had survived a trust vote against him moved by the Congress with the help of JD(S) support. He had prevailed by a margin of one vote. He had stepped down from the chair and participated in the vote as a member.