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Deccan Herald

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Rebels who lose bypolls may get Council entry

BENGALURU, DHNS

Uncertain about the victory of some of the disqualified legislators in the December 5 bypolls, BJP is working on an alternative to get them inducted into Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa's Cabinet, in what looks like an effort to hedge their possible defeat.

According to BJP's poll managers, the party is facing a tough contest in at least five constituencies — Hunsur, KR Pet, Hoskote, Yeshwantpur and Kagwad. The BJP's candidates in these constituencies are disqualified MLAs — A H Vishwanath (Hunsur), Narayana Gowda (KR Pet), MT B Nagaraj (Hoskote), ST Somashekhar (Yeshwantpur) and Shrinant Patil (Kagwad).

In all, of the 15 constituencies facing bypolls, the BJP has fielded disqualified Congress and JD(S) legislators in 13 of them, and the party is going all out to ensure that all of them win. The BJP needs to win at least six out of the 15

to sail through with a simple majority in the Assembly.

While the BJP appears confident of winning the required number, the disqualified MLAs who do not make the cut will be inducted into the Cabinet apparently through the Legislative Council. "A list of MLAs loyal to the party has been prepared and they have been asked to be ready for a sacrifice, if it comes to that," a source said.

The BJP is keen on rewarding the disqualified legislators with ministerial positions as an acknowledgement of their role in helping the saffron party come to power.

According to sources, the JD(S) is putting up a tough fight in Hunsur and KR Pet, which have been the regional party's bastions.

In Hoskote, the BJP is wary of its rebel Sharath Bachegowda's growing popularity. When it comes to Yeshwantpur, the BJP feels JD(S) candidate T N Javaryi Gowda might have an edge due to the "sympathy" factor.

► Rebels, Page 6

BJP mulling Council route...

Rebels, from Page 1

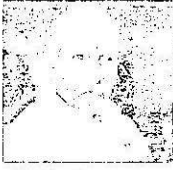
The Lingayat votes are crucial for the BJP in Kagwad, Atñani and Gokak segments of Belagavi. "That's why Yediyurappa sought to consolidate the Veerashai-va-Lingayat votes," a BJP leader pointed out.

The BJP is said to have promised deputy chief ministerial positions to Vishwanath and Ramesh Jarkiholi (Gokak).

Already, the BJP needs to take the Legislative Council route to accommodate Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi and Ranabennur's disqualified legislator R Shankar.

Taking the MLC route to make them ministers will mean a longer waiting time for the disqualified MLAs because getting incumbent MLCs to resign will lead to bypolls.

When asked about this, Kannada & Culture Minister C T Ravi told reporters, "It's too early to answer this question. But we have already publicly acknowledged that we came to power because of these MLAs."



B S Yediyurappa