

## Miffed Yeddyurappa wants his name dropped from temple prayer

An embarrassed Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa Thursday directed the endowment department to leave out his name from a customary prayer being recited in temples since Tuesday for the welfare of the state.

A cabinet meeting here discussed a controversial circular, issued by the Hindu religious institutions and endowment commissioner Monday to state-run (muzrai) temples directing priests to include the chief minister's name along with that of the state (Karnataka) in the worshipful prayer.

'Though the chief minister was not involved in such a decision, he has asked Muzrai Minister Krishnaiah Shetty to modify the circular and ensure the ritual was performed only in the name of the government for the well-being of the people in the state,' Karnataka Home Minister V.S. Acharya told reporters after the cabinet meeting.

Following the earlier circular, the priests had started chanting hymns by including Yeddyurappa's name in the Sanskritised Kannada version of the prayer and worshipping the presiding deity to bless the state with peace, prosperity and happiness.

As per muzrai records, a whopping 34,000 Hindu temples are located across the state. The temples are maintained by the department with state funding to the tune of Rs.6,000-10,000 a year depending on the size, location and their age.

Defending the earlier circular, Acharya told IANS later it was not the first time such a circular was issued, as similar notifications were brought out during the previous Congress and Janata Dal governments.

'It is not new. Such circulars were issued in the past when a new government was formed. Even when former Congress chief minister S.M. Krishna assumed office, the temples were directed to conduct prayers and perform prayers for the welfare of the state and its people.

'Since Yeddyurappa did not want any controversy or be misunderstood, he has asked Shetty to re-issue the circular without his name being invoked in the ritual prayer,' Acharya said.

The circular, however, came under attack from the opposition Congress, which accused the first Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in the state of propagating Hindutva through temples by asking priests to invoke Hindu gods in the name of the chief minister.

( © IANS / India eNews)