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SURPRISE PICK

BJP bags Palike; Goutham Kumar mayor, Raju deputy

RAKSHITHA R
BENGALURU, DHNS

The BJP on Tuesday won the mayor and deputy mayor posts at the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike amid some drama. Making a clean sweep, the party wrested power from the Congress-JD(S) coalition which held the reins for four consecutive years.

M Goutham Kumar, two-time BJP corporator from Jogupalya Ward (No. 89), was elected as the 55th mayor of Bengaluru while C R Rammohan Raju, a BJP corporator from Bommanahalli, was chosen his deputy.

Emerging as a dark horse in a tough fight between two top contenders of BJP, Goutham sprung



New mayor M Goutham Kumar (left) and his deputy CR Rammohan Raju after winning the elections on Tuesday. DH PHOTO/S K DINESH

a surprise with his selection as BJP's mayoral candidate. Goutham defeated Congress candidate R S Sathyanarayana by a simple majority and became the first mayor of

Bengaluru with North-Indian roots.

A commerce graduate, Goutham belongs to the minority Jain community. Goutham's family moved from Hajivas in Beawar district of Rajasthan and settled down in Siruguppa in Ballari 1946. They later shifted to Bengaluru. The family runs the Vijay Kumar Kavarlal Jain Junior College in Siruguppa.

Goutham is the youngest of five brothers and two sisters and his wife Rekha is a home-maker. His daughter studies in Class 12 while the son is in Class 5.

Goutham faced anxious moments when 'rebel' candidate Padmanabha Reddy filed his nomination. He heaved a sigh of relief when Reddy backed out minutes before the voting in a dramatic turn of events.

A loyal BJP worker, Goutham has been associated with the RSS since a young age. Climbing the political ladder, Goutham worked at various levels of BJP's youth wing and the Bengaluru unit of the BJP. In fact, he was an aspirant for a ticket from Shantinagar during the last Assembly elections.

Sharing his plans for the city soon after being elected as mayor, Goutham said he would focus on ensuring a complete ban on plastic and decongesting the city's roads.

Raju, the new deputy mayor, is a corporator from Bommanahalli and a native of Bengaluru. A diploma holder in civil engineering, Raju has been an active worker in various ranks of BJP for several years.

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High drama marks BJP's mayoral win.

SANDESH MS &
MANOJ SHARMA
BENGALURU, DHNS

There was high drama inside the chamber of BJP councillor Padmanabha Reddy an hour before the mayoral polls on Tuesday.

Reddy, who had filed his nomination for the post, was urged to withdraw from the race at a closed-door meeting held by Chikkaballapur BJP MP B N Bachhe Gowda, Bengaluru BJP MLAs Uday Garudachar, S R Vishwanath, Satish Reddy and former MLA Muniraju, who tried to convince him about the party's decision.

Half an hour after the meeting, Revenue Minister R Ashoka, along with party general secretary Ravi Kumar, Bengaluru South MLA Krishnappa and Bengaluru Cen-

tral MP P C Mohan, arrived at Padmanabha Reddy's cabin to address the media.

Soon after he sat on the chair, Ashoka moved the name board of Reddy aside, categorically conveying the decision of the party.

"We had asked two people to file nominations for the mayoral post. This decision was taken as a precautionary measure so as not to lose out to the opposition. However, our first choice was Goutham Kumar. Padmanabha Reddy will withdraw his nomination."

Goutham Kumar was subsequently elected the mayor.

Later, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa attributed the triumph at BBMP to state BJP president Nalin Kumar Kateel. Speaking to reporters in Mysuru, he said it was the first victory under Kateel.



Revenue Minister R Ashoka greets new mayor M Goutham Kumar and deputy mayor C R Rammohan Raju after the BBMP mayoral elections at the Kempegowda Council Hall

In Bengaluru on Tuesday. BH PHOTO/S K DINESH

Interestingly, BSY had on Monday remarked that he had no role in the selection of the mayoral candidate and that it was up to Kateel.

No buzz for Cong, JD(s)

Contrary to the dramatic turn of events on the BJP side, there was no buzz among former coalition partners Congress and JD(S). Ramalinga Reddy, Soumya Reddy and K J George were seen casually moving

around Congress ruling party leader Abdul Wajid's chamber.

A handful of JD(S) corporators were at a closed-door meeting at Nethra Narayan's chamber.

However, despite the stand-off by JD(S) members over the fight against the BJP, Manjula N Swamy from Laggere wards and K Devadas from BTM Layout wards boycotted the elections, saying the polls were being held in an unconstitutional

way that cost two votes for the coalition candidates.

Whip issued

According to Congress and JD(S) corporators, a whip was issued by the respective high commands to cast their votes for R S Sathyanarayan (Congress) who was nominated for the mayoral post and Gangamma (JD-S) who was nominated for the deputy mayor's post.