

PAPER CLIPPINGS

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# RS POLLS: BJP PICKS SURPRISE CANDIDATES

16/6/20



Eranna Kadadi



Ashok Gasti

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

IN a move that has surprised many, including those in the BJP, the party on Monday decided to field dark horses Eranna Kadadi and Ashok Gasti, party loyalists from North Karnataka region, as its candidates for the June 19 Rajya Sabha polls.

Kadadi, a Lingayat leader from Belagavi, and Gasti, a party loyalist and lawyer from Raichur, will file nominations on Tuesday.

The two leaders were not in the list the state core committee sent to the central leadership on Saturday. That had three other names, of sitting RS member Prabhakar Kore, former MP Ramesh Katti and hotelier Prakash Shetty.

Central leaders said the decision to field Kadadi and Gasti was taken in consultation with state leaders.

"Constant consultations were held even after the state core committee sent the list," BJP National General Secretary Muralidhar Rao told The New Indian Express on Monday.

The election of Kadadi and Gasti is now a mere formality. The BJP, with 117 members in the state assembly, can comfortably ensure their victory as each candidate requires 45 votes to win. Party sources said that both the leaders have been associated with the RSS and BJP for the last three decades.

The BJP, by picking workers from the grassroots rather than its established leaders, seems to have sent out a message that it will not ignore its loyal workers.

Meanwhile, leaders from the Congress and Janata Dal (Secular) persuaded 87-year-old former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda to contest the elections. He will be the JDS-Congress combine candidate, as the regional party needs Congress's support to send Gowda to the RS. He will file his nominations on Tuesday, while Congress candidate Mallikarjun Kharge filed his papers on Monday.

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## A no-contest for RS poll this time

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CONFIRMING Gowda's entry into the poll fray, his son and former chief minister HD Kumaraswamy said the JDS patriarch decided to contest the polls at the request of party legislators, Congress president Sonia Gandhi and several national leaders. "He has responded to everyone's hopes and ambitions. He will be the state's top representative in the Rajya Sabha," he said.

Gowda had unsuccessfully contested the 2019 Lok Sabha polls from Tumakuru as the JDS-Congress coalition candidate. If he wins the RS polls, it will be his second term in the House of Elders. In 1996, he was elected to the RS as the Prime Minister.

With the BJP deciding to field two candidates and the Congress extending support to Gowda, the election of contestants is likely to be unopposed. Chances of independent candidates contesting the polls are remote as they need signatures of a minimum 10 MLAs to file nominations, failing which it will be rejected during scrutiny. However, a clear picture will emerge on Tuesday, the last date to file nominations.

He (former PM H D Devegowda) has responded to everyone's hopes and ambitions. He will be the state's top representative in the Rajya Sabha

H D Kumaraswamy, former chief minister and JDS legislator

### MLC polls postponed

Elections to the four seats in the Legislative Council - two graduate and two teachers constituencies, which were scheduled to be held later this month - have been deferred due to the Covid-19 situation, the State Election Commission said on Monday. P3