

GTD violates direction of party, votes for Savadi

Claims no one from JD(S) spoke to him

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU**

Chamundeshwari MLA G.T. Deve Gowda on Monday created a flutter in the JD(S) when he violated the party's direction and voted in favour of Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi, who won the byelection to the Legislative Council on Monday.

At their legislature party meetings, the JD(S) and Congress had asked all their legislators to stay away from voting in the Council by-polls. With Independent candidate B.R. Anil Kumar retiring from the contest on Saturday, Mr. Savadi's victory was certain, but the election was held since the decision was taken after the last date for withdrawal of nominations.

On Monday, Mr. Gowda surprised his party colleagues as he walked into the polling booth escorted by Tourism Minister C.T. Ravi. He cast his vote and straight away headed to greet Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa and Mr. Savadi.

Admitting that he had voted, Mr. Gowda said he had no instructions from his party to abstain from voting. "As no JD(S) candidate is in the fray, I voted for Mr. Savadi. He is the State's Deputy Chief Minister and it is our duty for vote for him. People will not accept it if we do not vote for him."

Replying to queries on his maintaining a distance from JD(S) leaders, he said, "I am a JD(S) legislator representing Chamundeshwari. No one from the party spoke to me. I came directly to Vidhana Soudha for the election. As a legislator, I did not want to waste my vote," he said.

Former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy said he did not know why the JD(S) leader had gone against the party. "He is not under



G.T. Deve Gowda

'Wait and watch'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MYSURU**

BJP State president Nalin Kumar Kateel gave a cryptic response when asked about former Minister G.T. Deve Gowda's growing proximity to the saffron party.

"Wait and watch," said Mr. Kateel when asked about the possibility of Mr. Gowda joining the BJP in light of him voting in favour of Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi during the byelections to the Legislative Council held on Monday. When reporters asked whether another round of 'Operation Lotus' was on the cards, Mr. Kateel said the doors of the BJP were open to everyone. "But I would not like to call it Operation Kamala."

whether he is in our party or has joined some other party. He is making several statements. Let us wait and watch," he said.

Bypolls to the Council were necessitated by a seat falling vacant following the election of one Council member, Rizwan Arshad of the Congress, to the Legislative Assembly in the December Assembly byelections. This MLC bypoll was crucial for Mr. Savadi, who was not a member of the assembly or the Council. He is the current Deputy Chief Minister.