

HC sets deadlines for holding polls to city corporations

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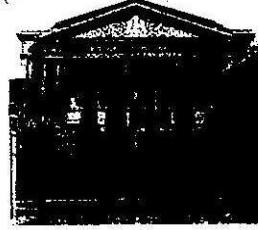
Taking note of the delay in holding elections to various local bodies, the High Court of Karnataka on Thursday set deadlines for delimitation of wards, fixing caste-based reservation, publication of voters' lists, and announcing the calendar of election for Hubballi-Dharwad, Belagavi, and Kalaburagi city corporations.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka and Justice S. Vishwajith Shetty issued the directions while hearing a PIL petition initiated *suo motu* by the court on the issue of violation of constitutional provision owing to non-holding of elections to several local bodies despite expiry of tenure.

Reservation of wards

In case of Belagavi City Corporation, the Bench gave two months to the government to notify reservation of wards while directing the State Election Commission (SEC) to announce the calendar of events within 45 days after the publication of the final voters' list.

For Kalaburagi City Corporation, the Bench directed the government to complete the process of delimitation of wards and fix reservation within two months thereafter. Also, the Bench directed the SEC to make public the final voters' list in three months after completion of delimitation of wards and announce the elec-



tion schedule within 45 days from the publication of the electoral rolls.

Similarly, the Bench also directed the government to complete the process of delimitation of wards in Hubballi-Dharwad City Corporation within six weeks and fix reservation for wards within two months thereafter. The SEC has also been directed to finalise the voters' list in three months from delimitation and issue the calendar of election within 45 days from publication of the electoral rolls.

Meanwhile, the Bench asked a single judge Bench at the Dharwad Bench of the High Court to take up for hearing petition related to Ballari City Corporation ward reservation out of turn and decide at the earliest on an application filed by the government for vacating stay on reservation notification.

Earlier, the SEC pointed out to the court that apart from these city corporations, the elections for 10 city municipal councils, six town municipal councils, and two town panchayats spread over 10 districts are still pending owing to pendency of petitions before the court.