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RS bypoll: Congress, JD(S) in quandary over nominee

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Bengaluru: With the last date for filing a nomination for the lone seat to the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka scheduled for December 2, the opposition Congress and JD(S) are in a quandary over its choice of candidate. Polling will be held on December 12.

KC Ramamurthy filed his nomination as the BJP candidate on Friday, indicating either the saffron party is supremely confident it will muster the numbers in the bypolls to ensure his victory, or simply in a show of false bravado. MLAs elect Rajya Sabha members, but since the results to the 15 bypolls seats

will be declared only on December 9, none of the parties are certain of their numbers in the assembly.

With numbers uncertain, Congress and JD(S), who were planning on fielding a consensus candidate, are undecided, although the names of bigwigs HD Deve Gowda, Mallikarjun Kharge and M Veerappa Moily are all doing the rounds.

At present, the BJP with 105 MLAs has a majority in the legislative assembly comprising a total 207 members. Congress and JD(S) together have 100. The others are a BSP member and an independent.

However, after the bypolls, the strength of the House will increase to 222. The BJP must therefore win

“The RS bypoll seat is not reserved for the BJP and we are aware we need to put up a fight. But, our party is confident of winning more than the required number of assembly seats in the byelections

KC Ramamurthy | BJP
CANDIDATE



seven seats in the bypolls to retain its majority (of 112). This will guarantee it another RS seat. The opposition though it looking to upset the apple cart.

“The recent developments in Maharashtra have suggested the BJP is on the downside,” JD(S)

supremo HD Deve Gowda told TOI. “The bypolls can tilt the balance in favour of the opposition. As for putting up a consensus candidate, much depends on what the Congress wants to do.” The JD(S) though has already collected nomination forms from the secretariat.

Congress functionaries said the party high command is in favour of a consensus candidate and deliberations are on to select the candidate. “There is no question of giving the BJP a walkover,” said Congress Rajya Sabha member GC Chandrashekar.

MK Vishalakshi, secretary of the assembly and the returning officer for the Rajya Sabha elec-

tion, confirmed all 15 bypoll winners can vote in the Rajya Sabha poll, provided they take oath before December 12.

There is the possibility of speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri delaying administering the oath to favour the BJP if it falls short of the numbers in the bypolls. However Chandrashekar said, “If the speaker is not available there is always the deputy speaker. We are also ready to move court to get the election postponed.”

The RS bypoll was necessitated by the resignation of Ramamurthy, who quit as a Congress MP and joined the BJP.