

Rajasekhara Reddy not for confrontation with poll panel

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy Tuesday said he was not for confrontation with the Election Commission, which has issued notices to his government and a minister for alleged violation of the model code of conduct.

'We do not at all want to go against the Election Commission or look down at it. We have all the regards for the Election Commission, which is an important tool to run democracy,' he told a meet-the-press programme.

Denying that the government or Agriculture Minister N. Raghuvveera Reddy showed any disregard to the poll panel, he said they would submit their explanations. 'If there is any communication gap, the commission can seek explanation and we will submit our reply,' he said.

The poll panel Monday had issued notices to the state government and the agriculture minister on complaints by the opposition Telugu Desam party (TDP) and Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) that they violated the code of conduct which is in force in 10 districts ahead of the May 29 by-elections for four parliament and 18 assembly constituencies.

While the state government allegedly violated the code of conduct by taking certain decisions which can influence the voters, the minister made certain derogatory remarks against the commission for not allowing the government to conduct 'rythu chaitanya yatras' or the programme to create awareness among farmers in view of the coming crop season.

The Election Commission asked both the government and the minister to clarify their positions by May 14. It also summoned the chief secretary to [New Delhi](#) May 16.

The chief minister denied that the minister showed any disregard to the Election Commission. 'He only wanted the commission to allow the government to conduct the rythu chaitanyan yatras as it is a continuous programme aimed at creating awareness. The commission later permitted the government to conduct the programme,' the chief minister said.

YSR, as the chief minister is popularly known, also denied that the chief secretary wrote a letter to district collectors asking them not to take directions from the Election Commission.

The chief minister said all the development and welfare programmes in Telangana had come to a halt because of the elections but blamed Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) president K. Chandrasekhara Rao for this situation.

TRS MPs and legislators resigned en masse in March to protest the delay in granting separate statehood to Telangana region.

YSR did not agree with the TRS chief that the by-elections were a referendum on separate Telangana.

'It would have been referendum if the Congress party did not recognise the problem of Telangana. The party is seized of the matter and it will find the best possible solution. It will pursue its efforts for unanimity among political parties,' he said.

The chief minister said his Congress party was ready to constitute a second States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) to look into the demand for separate Telangana. 'We had promised this in our election manifesto and this was what formed the basis of electoral alliance with TRS in 2004.'

He blamed Chandrasekhara Rao for the delay on Telangana. 'Had he not opposed the second SRC, some solution would have come out by now,' he said.

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