

Ambareesh skips birthday bash after poll defeat

Defeat in the Karnataka assembly poll has forced Kannada film actor and central minister M.H. Ambareesh to give up celebrating his birthday, usually a grand show with fans and friends in attendance.

Ambi to his friends and 'rebel star' to his fans, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Ambareesh of the Congress party would have celebrated his 57th birthday Thursday cutting a huge cake and receiving garlands and bouquets from friends and fans.

But the defeat in the Srirangapatna constituency, close to Mysore, in the state assembly polls held earlier this month has stunned him.

He left for Malaysia with his wife Sumalatha, a former film actor, and son Abhishekh Gowda hours after the results were announced Sunday.

Ambareesh was elected to the Lok Sabha in the 2004 polls from the Mandya constituency of which Srirangapatna is a part. He had secured maximum votes in Srirangapatna where, however, he was defeated this time by over 5,000 votes.

There was opposition to his nomination from Congress leaders there who considered him an outsider as he hails from neighbouring Maddur taluk.

Several leading Kannada film stars had campaigned for Ambareesh but all their charisma failed to impress the voters who elected a Janata Dal-Secular candidate contesting for the first time.

This was Ambareesh's second attempt to enter the Karnataka assembly. He had lost some years ago in Ramanagara, close to Bangalore.

He has, however, been elected to the Lok Sabha four times from Mandya.

A handful of die-hard fans did come Thursday morning to Ambareesh's house in the upscale J.P. Nagar locality but went back disappointed after being told that the star was still away in Malaysia.

'The defeat has really hurt him. He had also lost an assembly elections in Ramanagara constituency many years ago. But that was in the beginning of his political career. This defeat has not shocked him, but surprised him,' said a film director close to the actor.

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