

TRS protests re-allotment of prime land to film studio

The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) Wednesday staged protest against the Andhra Pradesh government's move to re-allot five acres of land to Padmalaya Studio, owned by veteran Telugu film actor G. Krishna.

Tension prevailed in the upmarket Jubilee Hills neighborhood as TRS leaders and workers tried to barge into the studio and clashed with the police.

The police arrested dozens of protesters, including TRS legislators Harish Rao and Ramalinga Reddy, who staged a sit-in in front of the studio.

The TRS leaders demanded that the government cancel the orders as the film studio was involved in real estate business.

Harish Rao alleged that the Congress government re-allotted the land to Krishna to use him for the election campaign to counter the challenge posed by super star Chiranjeevi, who is likely to launch a new party next month.

'The land belongs to Telangana people and the government can't gift it away,' said Harish Rao, whose party is fighting for separate statehood to Telangana region comprising 10 districts, including Hyderabad.

Padmalaya Studio of Krishna, a former Congress MP, was allotted nine acres of prime land in 1983 for construction of a studio at a concessional rate of Rs.8,500 per acre.

However, the land was not used for building the studio and instead half of the land was sold to Zee Telefilms and 14 other people in 2005 for a higher price.

Last year, the government issued notices to the studio and took back five acres of land valued at Rs.1.8 billion. However, in a u-turn the government earlier this month re-allotted the land to Padmalaya.

The ruling party is trying to rope in Krishna and his son and popular actor Mahesh Babu for the next year's election campaign to counter the Chiranjeevi factor. Krishna, who recently called on Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, hinted that he would campaign for the party.

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