

Koda's wife to fight Jharkhand assembly poll

Geeta Koda, the wife of former Jharkhand chief minister Madhu Koda who faces charges of laundering Rs.2,500 crore, will fight the upcoming assembly poll from her husband's constituency under the banner of Jharkhand Navnirman Morcha (JNM), the outfit said Monday.

Geeta, who insists her husband is innocent, will fight the assembly poll that starts Nov 25 from Jagannathpur seat, which was represented by Koda till May this year, JNM said in a statement.

Koda quit the assembly seat after he was elected to the Lok Sabha from Singhbhum in this year's elections to parliament.

Koda first became a legislator from Jagannathpur seat as a BJP nominee in 2000. In 2005, he won the seat as an independent.

Geeta will fight the election under the banner of JNM, which has announced the names of five candidates to contest the polls. The JNM has been floated by supporters of Koda and is not a registered political party.

The five-phase assembly polls begin Nov 25. The votes will be counted Dec 23.

According to sources close to Koda's family, the decision on Geeta fighting the assembly polls was finalised here Saturday while she toured her husband's Lok Sabha constituency.

'My husband is innocent and he is being implicated,' Geeta told people in Singhbhum.

Geeta has been galvanising support for her husband and visiting temples to pray for her husband's well-being. On Friday, she sacrificed 11 goats at a temple in Rangarh district, about 40 km from here.

Koda's father Rasik Koda also maintains his son is being implicated for political reasons.

'He (Koda) wanted his people to fight 25 assembly seats in the polls. He is a victim of political conspiracy,' Rasik had told reporters at his village Patahatu in West Singhbhum district.

On Oct 9, the ED filed a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) against Koda, three more former ministers as well as his associates Vinod Sinha and Sanjay Chaudhary. Vikas Sinha, brother of Sinha, was Saturday sent to ED custody for 10 days.

According to sources, Vikas has admitted to sending Rs.40 crore abroad for Koda.

Koda, who was admitted to Apollo Hospital here Nov 3 after complaining of severe stomach ache, was discharged Sunday and was interrogated by the Income Tax (IT) and ED officials.

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