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Lucky draw to determine seats for women councillors

Staff Reporter

Draw of lots to be held on Monday afternoon

KOCHI: The political fate of some of the senior councillors of the Kochi Corporation will be decided by a lucky draw on Monday.

The 37 seats reserved for women in general category and the one in the Scheduled Caste community category in Kochi Corporation will be selected from the 74 seats by drawing of lots at a function to be held at the Ernakulam Town Hall.

The strength of the Kochi Corporation council has been increased to 74 from the present 71. As per the women reservation Bill passed by the State Assembly, 50 per cent of the seats would go to women in the next elections. This excludes the seats reserved for SC/ST community women in the local bodies.

While the lucky draw will deny some men their favourite seats, which they had been nurturing for the past few years, it will also open doors of opportunity to women politicians too. Almost all the Corporation councillors including the leaders of the various political parties are expected to reach the town hall tomorrow to witness the lucky dip.

The lucky draw is also expected to change power equations in some political parties as they will have to find seats to ensure the presence of some of their senior men in the council.

At the same time, there are also some senior women councillors who won the corporation election by contesting from general seats.

This includes Shyamala S Prabhu of the BJP and Melly Joy and Asha Pious of the CPI (M).

Mercy Williams, Kochi Mayor, became the part of the political history of the Kochi Corporation by becoming its first woman Mayor.

This was possible as the post of Mayor was reserved for a woman during the last election. However, the post of Kochi Mayor would become an open seat in the next election. The Mayor posts reserved for women last time will be unreserved this time.

Some of the senior CPI (M) councillors may not be contesting the ensuing election if the party insists on its two-term clause. As per the guidelines followed by the CPI (M), a party member who has been elected to a post for two consecutive terms may have to keep out of the race next time. If the guideline is strictly adhered to this time, Deputy Mayor C.K. Manisankar, Development Standing Committee chairman M. Anilkumar, Tax Appeals Standing Committee chairman K.V. Manoj and Welfare Standing Committee chairman T.K. Shamsudheen will not be in the fray.

A few women councillors of the party including Uma Antony, Ms. Joy and Ms. Pious may also opt not to contest the election this time if the guidelines are closely followed.