

ALL EYES ON NAVA KERALA SADAS

Relevant for: null | Topic: Important Schemes & Programmes of the Government

To enjoy additional benefits

CONNECT WITH US

November 27, 2023 01:33 am | Updated 08:47 am IST

COMMENTS

SHARE

READ LATER

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan greets the public during a Nava Kerala Sadas meeting in Kozhikode on November 25, 2023. | Photo Credit: K. Ragesh

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his Cabinet colleagues are on a 44-day tour of the State to hear the public directly, interact with opinion leaders of different political hues, and allow elected representatives to flag the issues of their constituents directly with the Council of Ministers.

The high-profile [public outreach programme, titled “Nava Kerala Sadas”](#), which roughly translates as “People’s Assembly for a Modern Kerala”, kicked off in the Kasaragod district on Kerala formation day on November 1. It will conclude in the State capital, Thiruvananthapuram, on December 23.

Also read | [Nava Kerala Sadas will help formulate Kerala’s future: Pinarayi Vijayan](#)

The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) Opposition has boycotted the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government’s political odyssey from the corridors of power in the government secretariat to the town halls of the common folk.

The UDF has termed the Nava Kerala Sadas a thinly veiled pre-Lok Sabha election campaign masquerading as a mass contract programme, bankrolled by a depleted public exchequer and winched up by the State’s government machinery.

It has accused the government of creating a power vacuum in the capital by “abandoning the government secretariat” and going for a protracted jaunt across Kerala aboard a luxury bus.

Also read | [Nava Kerala Sadas an absolute failure, says Chennithala](#)

Not far away from the Nava Kerala Sadas venues, black flag protests, inter-party street violence, political rancour, and hard-edged partisan verbal tit-for-tats characterised the Cabinet’s progress.

Leader of Opposition V. D. Satheesan termed the Cabinet’s outreach elitist of scarce consequence. He alleged Mr. Vijayan remained inaccessible to the public. Nava Kerala Sadas appeared elitist compared to the late Chief Minister Oommen Chandy’s mass contact programme in 2013. “Chandy had received petitions personally from the public and delivered

relief hours on end,” he said.

In contrast, Mr. Satheesan alleged, Mr. Vijayan’s campaign to win the hearts and minds of the people of Kerala seemed limited to breakfast meetings with businesspersons and a few local notables.

Mr. Satheesan compared Nava Kerala Sadas to royal durbars held by colonial rulers. Only courtiers and royal retainers had access to the king. The public could only watch the royal spectacle mutedly and from afar.

Also read | [CM and Satheesan lock horns over use of local body funds for Nava Kerala Sadas](#)

The Congress averred that the government had scarce funds to disburse relief. It accused the administration of ferrying school children, teachers, party cadres, social welfare workers and government employees to show numbers at sparsely attended Nava Kerala Sadas venues. The party has also moved the court against the government’s decision to mobilise “own funds” of cash-strapped Local Self Government Institutions (LSGI) to underwrite Nava Kerala Sadas meetings.

Mr. Vijayan also came under fire for “defending” CPI(M) workers who “attacked” Congress black flag protestors in Kannur. It led to an acrimonious war of words between Mr. Vijayan and Mr. Satheesan. The LDF has accused Congress of fomenting anarchic street violence to retard the momentum of Nava Kerala Sadas. It saw a political victory in the decision of a few Congress-ruled LSGIs to allocate funds for Nava Kerala Sadas.

Also read | [IUML leader’s presence at Nava Kerala Sadas sparks row](#)

It also tom-tommed the presence of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) and Church leaders, traditionally aligned with the Congress, at Nava Kerala Sadas breakfast meetings and on the dais with Mr. Vijayan. The government also glimpsed optimism in IUML leader P. K. Kunhalikutty’s disavowal of belligerent street protests against the programme.

For one, Congress saw a moral victory in the High Court’s criticism of lining up students on the street or ferrying them to public venues for government programmes. (A video showing school children lined up on the road in Kannur, arguably under a harsh sun, as the luxury coach carrying the Cabinet swept by had drawn harsh public criticism).

Congress also fears that the LDF is using the Cabinet’s public outreach as a subtle political lure to blur the line between the opposing alliance to wring a political advantage in the Lok Sabha polls.

It is highlighting the State’s alleged LDF-made financial crisis, failure to disburse welfare pensions and dearness allowance to government employees, pending payments to paddy farmers, debt-driven farmer suicides, rubber sector crisis, seller inflation and corruption in mega infrastructure projects.

Nava Kerala Sadas is leaving a slipstream of positive and negative perceptions as it meanders on through the State and seems potent to set off a political churning in the coming days. It has strained, if not turned toxic, the government-Opposition relationship and underscored the need for civic and democratic discourse in politics.

COMMENTS

SHARE

[state politics](#) / [Kerala](#)

BACK TO TOP

Comments have to be in English, and in full sentences. They cannot be abusive or personal. Please abide by our [community guidelines](#) for posting your comments.

We have migrated to a new commenting platform. If you are already a registered user of The Hindu and logged in, you may continue to engage with our articles. If you do not have an account please register and login to post comments. Users can access their older comments by logging into their accounts on Vuukle.

END

Downloaded from [crackIAS.com](#)

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com