

Justice Sirpurkar heads 3-member Dinakaran impeachment panel

Sunday, Jan 17, 2010

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NEW DELHI: Supreme Court judge V.S. Sirpurkar will head a three-member committee that will investigate the grounds for impeachment of Karnataka Chief Justice P.D. Dinakaran whose removal from office has been sought jointly by 75 Opposition members in the Rajya Sabha on corruption and land-grabbing charges.

Justice A.R. Dave, Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court and eminent jurist P.P. Rao are the other members of the panel constituted by Rajya Sabha Chairman Hamid Ansari. The panel was notified late on Friday.

The notification said: "The Committee, constituted under sub-section (2) of Section 3 of the Judges [Inquiry] Act, 1968, would make an investigation into the grounds on which the removal of Mr. Justice Paul Daniel Dinakaran Prem Kumar, Chief Justice of Karnataka, is prayed for." Normally, the panel would be expected to submit its report in six months.

Under the Constitution, judges of the Supreme Court and the High Court can be removed from office only through impeachment in Parliament.

MPs from the Bhartiya Janata Party, Left Parties, Samajwadi Party, Janata Dal (United), Akali Dal and the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam were among those who submitted, during the winter session of Parliament, a notice of motion to Mr. Ansari to start impeachment proceedings against Mr. Dinakaran. Mr. Ansari had admitted the motion on December 17.

Allegations

The allegations made against the judge include "possessing wealth disproportionate to the known sources of his income, land-grabbing, entering into benami transactions, undervaluation of his property, illegal encroachment on government and public property to deprive Dalits and the poor of their livelihoods."

He has also been accused of "abuse of judicial office" to pass "dishonest judicial orders" and to "take irregular administrative actions."

Mr. Dinakaran has denied the allegations and claimed they were "baseless and incorrect."

The last such inquiry panel set up was in March 2009 for the removal of Justice Soumitra Sen of the Calcutta High Court.

<http://www.hindu.com/2010/01/17/stories/2010011758940100.htm>