

Dinakaran probe: jurists oppose member

Nagendar Sharma, Hindustan Times

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Top jurists on Monday opposed the inclusion of senior Supreme Court lawyer P.P. Rao in the three-member probe panel to inquire into the corruption allegations against Karnataka High Court Chief Justice P.D. Dinakaran.

“Rao had given legal opinion to Dinakaran in December when the judge had come to Delhi to meet him. It is a clear case of conflict of interest,” said former law minister and veteran lawyer Shanti Bhushan. “He must immediately voluntarily opt out of the probe committee, otherwise we will file a formal application for his recusal.”

Rajya Sabha chairman, Hamid Ansari, had named Rao to the probe panel, to be headed by Justice V.S. Sirpurkar of the Supreme Court. Andhra Pradesh High Court Chief Justice, A.R. Dave is the third member of the committee.

The probe panel was formed as part of the impeachment proceedings initiated against Dinakaran in Rajya Sabha last month.

Contacted for his response, Rao said, “He had called on me out of courtesy during one of his visits to Delhi, that is all.

Asked whether Dinakaran had sought legal advice from him, Rao said, “He is not facing any case that he would require such an advice. I had suggested to him, to ask for an inquiry under the Commission of Inquiry Act, on the allegations against him.” Dinakaran had sought appointments with many top lawyers, but succeeded in meeting only a few of them, HT has learnt.

Activists of the Campaign for Judicial Accountability, which first raised concerns about Dinakaran’s promotion to the Supreme Court, are understood to have already raised the issue with Ansari.

Former Supreme Court judge, Justice P.B. Sawant, who headed the panel that probed allegations against Justice V. Ramaswami, when an impeachment motion was moved against him in 1993, said Rao should opt out.

“If there is even an iota of doubt, it is better to avoid any further controversy,” he said.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Dinakaran-probe-jurists-oppose-member/H1-Article1-499094.aspx>