

AG urges Dinakaran to preside over court

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Justice P.D. Dinakaran

BANGALORE: Even as uncertainty continued over whether the Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court, P.D. Dinakaran, would preside over judicial proceedings from Monday, Advocate-General (AG) Ashok Harnahalli urged him to sit on the Bench and conduct the proceedings.

Justice Dinakaran has reportedly expressed unwillingness to sit on the Bench following a resolution passed by the Advocates Association of Bangalore asking him to refrain from attending or presiding over judicial proceedings until he is cleared of the allegations levelled against him.

High Court sources told *The Hindu* that when the Chief Justice conveyed his unwillingness, several High Court judges, who met him at his residence on Saturday evening, said they were also not willing to preside over court work. Their refrain was, "It is you today, it could be us tomorrow." Mr. Harnahalli, Additional Advocate-General K.M. Nataraj and State Public Prosecutor Pavin called on the Chief Justice and urged him to reconsider his decision.

Terming media reports disturbing, Mr. Harnahalli said: "By one stroke, the image of the judiciary as well as the Chief Justice is sought to be tarnished..." He said the allegations against Justice Dinakaran emanated from some members of the Tamil Nadu Bar and their veracity was so far not examined by members of the Bangalore Bar. Several allegations made in a representation to the Chief Justice of India, such as the colour of the number plate of Justice Dinakaran's official car, did not merit consideration.

Similarly, the allegation over speedy disposal of bail applications was absolutely without merit. Also, the Chief Justice and his family owning vast properties did not lead to an inference of doubtful integrity.

The AG said the Bar had a duty to protect the judiciary. Though it was the Bar's duty to bring to the notice of the Chief Justice of India any complaint about a judge, no judge could be publicly defamed on the basis of a representation. It was, therefore, not correct on the part of the Bar to request Justice Dinakaran not to participate in judicial proceedings. On Friday, the Karnataka State Bar Council passed a resolution reposing faith in the Supreme Court collegium and the Chief Justice of India, and asking them to take a decision on the matter expeditiously. It sought constitution of a mechanism to deal with complaints against judges of the higher judiciary.

Meanwhile, several advocates led by Subba Reddy and B.V. Ramamurthy on Saturday urged Advocates Association of Bangalore president K.N. Putte Gowda to convene a general body meeting to discuss the implications of the September 17 resolution.

They said the resolution was inappropriate.