



## No minister called up Madras High Court judge, says CJI Balakrishnan

**Maneesh Chhibber** Posted online: Sunday, Jul 05, 2009 at 0453 hrs

**New De lhi :** Chief Justice of India K G Balakrishnan said that no minister had called up Madras High Court judge R Reghupathy. A controversy had erupted following a reported disclosure by the judge that a Union minister had tried to influence him in a case.

Asked if the judge or anybody else had told him the name of the minister who had allegedly called up the judge to influence him to grant bail to a doctor-son duo in a fake mark-sheet case filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Justice Balakrishnan said: "No minister had called the judge. That is my information. It seems that one lawyer claimed that some minister was interested in the case. Then the judge told the lawyer that he was not interested in knowing if any minister was interested or not. The judge has written a letter to the Chief Justice (of the Madras High Court) and he is sending it to me."

While the CJI refused to elaborate, sources said that Justice R Reghupathy had also clarified the issue to the Madras High Court Chief Justice Hemant Laxman Gokhale. Reghupathy's letter also carries details of the entire incident, including his conversation with the lawyer who was appearing on behalf of Dr Krishnamurthy and his son Kiruba Sridhar, accused in the Pondicherry University fake marksheet case.

On June 29, Reghupathy created a flutter when he said in an open court that a Union Minister had tried to influence him to grant anticipatory bail to the two accused. Reghupathy wanted an unconditional apology from the lawyer. Reghupathy had also said he would write to the Prime Minister on the "pressure exerted" on him.

The very next day, the CJI had said that Ministers should refrain from contacting judges in matters pending in courts. "It is interference in the judiciary," Balakrishnan had said.

Union Law Minister M Veerappa Moily had said that the government wasn't in a position to do anything in the issue till the judge named the minister. While the judge didn't make public the name of the minister, former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa claimed on Thursday that it was Union Communications Minister A Raja who had "threatened" the judge. The AIADMK chief had said: "Though the judge refrained from naming the Union Minister, it does not require any super-human intelligence to conclude that it was none other than A Raja, who was also involved in telecom scam."

A public interest litigation (PIL) has also been filed in the Madras High Court, seeking a direction to the Prime Minister to take appropriate action against the minister by removing him from the Cabinet.