

Panel finds fresh evidence of land-grabbing by Dinakaran

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NEW DELHI: Even as CJI K G Balakrishnan is holding a discreet inquiry into allegations of land-grabbing by prospective SC judge P D Dinakaran, Chennai's Forum for Judicial Accountability (FJA) has come up with more serious evidence of properties allegedly acquired by him and his immediate family members.

The highlight of the third and latest representation sent by FJA to the SC collegium on October 1 is his alleged modus operandi to acquire three prime plots in 2005 from Tamil Nadu Housing Board near the IT corridor of Chennai for his wife Vinodhini Dinakaran and daughters Amudha and Amirtha.

Violation of eligibility conditions

His parents-in-law, James Kuppuswamy and Paripoornam, were allegedly benami for his daughters. The plots that finally went to the daughters were originally applied for in the names of his parents-in-law. Since those plots of about 350 sq metres were meant for high-income group, it required the applicants to have an annual income of at least Rs 90,000. But the housing board allotted plots to Dinakaran's parents-in-law although his father-in-law's declared annual income was merely Rs 56,668 and his mother-in-law's was Rs 49,200.

Transfer of land within two days of allotment

The transfer of land from parents-in-law to daughters, made through a family settlement, violated the public house scheme meant for the benefit of those without property and in need of housing. The allotment itself was in violation of the one-plot-per-family rule.

Dinakaran's order helps his family get plots

Since his wife and parents-in-law were among the applicants for the housing board land near the IT corridor, Dinakaran should have declined to hear a case challenging the land acquisition. Yet, it was thanks to his order that the land acquisition was upheld and that in turn paved the way for the housing board to effect sales in favour of, among other allottees, his wife and parents-in-law. FJA called this a "gross abuse of office and subversion of justice".

Another shocking property transaction brought out by FJA is the purchase by his mother-in-law of a 4.5-acre bungalow in Ooty in August just around the time Dinakaran's name was cleared by the collegium to be elevated to the apex court from his current post of chief justice of the Karnataka high court. Though the market value of that property was Rs 8 crore and the government guideline value was Rs 3 crore, the transaction was grossly undervalued at Rs 33,75,100.

Even so, his mother-in-law, who retired as a school headmistress, and his father-in-law, who retired as a security officer, did not by their own admission have the resources to buy the Ooty and Chennai properties, FJA pointed out.

In its earlier representations, FJA had focused on the manner in which Dinakaran and his family, after he became a judge, allegedly fenced off over 300 acres of land in Kaverirajapuram village in Tiruvalluvar district (near Chennai). FJA had also sent balance sheets of the four companies through which Dinakaran and his family allegedly consolidated their hold over the fenced-off land which included 150 acres of government land meant for community use. FJA also alleged

irregularities in the properties owned by Dinakaran in the localities of Anna Nagar and Shenoy Nagar in Chennai.