

Want probe by SC-monitored SIT, says PIL

New Delhi, Fri Oct 05 2012, 03:34 hrs

Calling the ongoing CBI probe as “partial” since it does not investigate into the role of senior ministers, politicians and other high functionaries of the Central and state governments, a fresh PIL was on Thursday filed in the Supreme Court, demanding a court-monitored SIT probe into the coal block allocation row.

“Investigation of CBI at the instance of CVC is partial and does not cover the full magnitude of the coal scam. The alleged conspiracy in blocking the policy of competitive bidding and the manner in which the screening committee functioned need to be investigated thoroughly, which involves senior ministers, including the highest executive office of the country,” read the PIL.

It has been filed by NGO Common Cause, along with some members of the civil society like former CEC N Gopalaswami, former Navy chief L Ramdas, former Cabinet secretary T S R Subramanian and others.

The PIL has asked the apex court to quash the entire allocation of coal blocks to private companies made by the Centre from 1993 onwards.

The petitioners alleged allotment of coal blocks was non-transparent, unfair, in violation of rules and procedures. The petition alleged that the Central government had allocated scarce natural resource to a select few private companies at throwaway prices in a completely arbitrary and non-transparent manner, thus causing a huge loss to the public exchequer.

“While the sword of the introduction of competitive bidding was kept hanging, captive coal blocks were allotted to companies/cronies at breakneck speed, many of whom were not even eligible or had no real need of coal, and most of whom had links with politicians or ministers,” said the PIL filed through counsel Prashant Bhushan.

Citing CAG report, it said the allocation between 2004 and 2010 caused a windfall gain of Rs 1.86 lakh crore to private companies, making it a bigger scam than 2G spectrum scam.

The alleged irregularities in coal block allocations has come under judicial scrutiny with the SC issuing a notice to the Centre on another PIL.