

Govt's role in coalgate probe suspect, SC told

Hindustan Times, New Delhi, April 16, 2013

An application was moved before the Supreme Court on Monday seeking probe by a SIT into the alleged interference by the Centre into the CBI probe of the coal block allocation scam. Moved by NGO Common Cause, the application has stated the CBI wasn't fit to probe the scam and that the government's law officers had on March 12 attempted to mislead the court by claiming the status report wasn't shown to the government before it was filed in the SC.

The bench headed by Justice RM Lodha had directed the CBI director to file an affidavit undertaking the status report submitted to the court on March 8 was "vetted by him and not shared with political executives" and the same would be followed in future.

Meanwhile, the CBI is planning to engage a private counsel to submit its director Ranjit Sinha's affidavit in the SC over the issue. The affidavit has to be filed before April 26 as per the direction given by the SC.

The agency also denied that one of its officers supervising some cases pertaining to the coal mining scam was transferred. The agency clarified that Ravikant, the officer in question and deputy inspector general of the agency completed his tenure and left because of family reasons even though an extension in tenure was offered to him.

"Mr Ravikant who was the SP in some of the coal allocation cases has completed his tenure in CBI as SP. Extension was offered and even insisted upon but he agreed for only a year as DIG and himself sought to move out of CBI due to family reasons. He was relieved at the end of March," CBI spokesperson Dharini Mishra said.

The BJP on Monday demanded the resignation of law minister Ashwani Kumar over the issue. "We are saying that the law minister should resign and, more importantly, an SIT should be constituted," BJP spokesperson Meenakshi Lekhi said.