

Deccan Herald

NGO wants SIT to oversee CBI's coal probe work

New Delhi, April 15, 2013, DHNS:

The Supreme Court should order a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into 'unlawful interference' by the Centre into the on-going CBI investigation into the coal allocation scam, the NGO 'Common Cause,' a co-petitioner in the coal allocation case, has demanded.

The NGO also sought an inquiry into the 'dilution' of the CBI's status report allegedly at the instance of the Centre.

"The blatant interference is not only unlawful and a criminal offence, but it also amounts to contempt of court.

A status report which was to be filed in the court was changed and diluted at the instance of the government which had no business in influencing the investigation," an application filed by advocate Prashant Bhushan said.

In its plea, the NGO alleged that the law officer had tried to mislead the court on March 12 by claiming that the report was not shared with any political executive.

The court had then directed the CBI director to file an affidavit in this regard.

As reports emerged about vetting as well as dilution of the status report, the NGO urged the court to appoint a couple of retired judges or investigators to supervise the team of CBI investigators on a day-to-day basis, as the apex court had done in the case of Sahara Vs Sebi by appointing Justice B N Agarwal.

"In fact, Law minister Ashwini Kumar had summoned the CBI director for a meeting to discuss the status report. In the said lengthy meeting, the full status report was discussed and altered to dilute the initial findings of the CBI.

The CBI director allowed the report to be diluted at the instance of the government. In a separate meeting, PMO officials had also discussed and vetted the status report," Bhushan alleged. The Bench said the matter would be heard as per the fixed schedule on April 30.