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LOKAYUKTA DISMISSES PLAINT AGAINST SIDDU, KJ GEORGE

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THE Karnataka Lokayukta has dismissed a complaint against former chief minister Siddaramaiah and former minister KJ George, but not against BBMP officials in connection with embezzlement of funds pertaining to Indira Canteens in Bengaluru.

Ganesh Singh, a resident of Shastri Nagar, had filed a complaint with the Lokayukta alleging that the then chief minister Siddaramaiah, then minister for large scale industries KJ George, and BBMP of-

ficials, including IFS officer Manoj Ranjan, created false bills with regard to the consumption of food at Indira Canteens in Bengaluru. Even before construction was completed, they approved bill payments to the tune of Rs 11.72 crore to two companies.

Lokayukta Justice Vishwanatha Shetty said the allegations against Siddaramaiah and George were "bald" and that the complainant had not provided any evidence in support of his claim.

The preliminary inquiry report noted that although Indira Canteens were set up during

the tenures of Siddaramaiah and George, they were established by a cabinet decision. BBMP is the implementing authority while the accounts department of the corporation approved bills related to the canteens.

However, stating that the BBMP accounts department had to answer for allegations of embezzlement of government money, the Lokayukta kept the complaint against Ranjan pending, and also passed an order impleading BBMP commissioner. He has directed that both the BBMP commissioner and Ranjan give statements by July 15.