

No time limit for probe into CD-gate: HM

Special Investigation Team has complete freedom to probe all angles, says Bommai; May file FIR if necessary

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

HOME Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Thursday said the government has not set any time limit for the Special Investigation Team (SIT) to complete the probe into the sleaze CD episode which had led to the resignation of Ramesh Jarkiholi as minister.

Bommai, however, said the SIT has been told to complete the investigation at the earliest.

The government ordered a probe by the SIT after Ramesh had claimed that the CD was fake and there was a political conspiracy against him. He even alleged that the CD had damaged his reputation.

"The government has given complete freedom to the SIT to probe all aspects and we cannot set any time limit for the completion of the probe. However, we have directed the SIT to complete the investigation at the earliest as we have to inform people about what happened," the minister said.



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Basavaraj Bommai, Home Minister



The preliminary probe will be taken up based on Ramesh's letter and if the SIT deems it fit, it can register a First Information Report (FIR) based on the findings during the initial probe and continue further investigations.

On March 3, Jarkiholi resigned following the controversy, but Bengaluru-based RTI activist Dinesh Kallahalli -- who had accused the BJP leader of exploiting a woman -- withdrew the complaint.

Meanwhile, six ministers secured a temporary injunction from a city civil and sessions court, restraining the media from telecasting or publishing any defamatory content against them. The ministers said there was a big political conspiracy to tarnish their image and had urged the government to probe it.

The government on Wednesday decided to constitute the SIT headed by Additional Commissioner of Police (West) Soumendu Mukherjee to investigate all the aspects of the case.

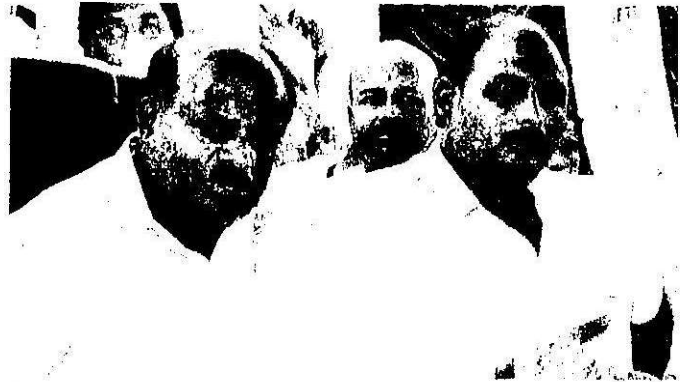
Investigation is just eyewash: HDK

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

FORMER Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy on Thursday said the State Government's decision to set up a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the sleaze CD episode, which had led to the resignation of Ramesh Jarkiholi as minister, was mere eyewash. The JDS leader told reporters here that the government will get a report from the forensic lab stating that the CD is fake, and wrap up the case. Nothing will come out of the SIT probe, he said.

"Against whom will they conduct an investigation. No culprit has been booked or punished by these agencies in the past," he said, referring to an officer who allegedly swindled ₹20 crore from the Ramanagara-Channarayana Development Authority and is now with Bangalore Development Authority.

Kumaraswamy said that Ramesh Jarkiholi, who was earlier with the Congress, is aware of who is behind the CD incident, but added that no one should use the issue to gain political mileage as it could send



Former chief minister H D Kumaraswamy addresses the media in Mysuru on Thursday | UDAYSHANKAR 5

a wrong message to society. The "recent ugly incidents" would have made Jarkiholi realise that "it would not have happened if he (Kumaraswamy) was in power", he added.

He also downplayed the meeting between former JDS MLA Madhu Bangarappa and Congress leader Siddaramaiah. "They might have developed a strong relationship as the JDS-Congress coalition had fielded Madhu in the 2018 Lok Sabha bypolls," he quipped.

Referring to the ₹500-crore grant announced for the Vokkaliga Development Corporation in the recent budget,

he said, "There is no mention of when the fund will be released... it could take years."

In his native Haradanahalli, Kumaraswamy said the State Government has ordered an SIT probe to protect itself, and that the CD row had demoralised the state's politicians. Referring to BJP MLA Basavangouda Patil Yatnal's statement that 23 more CDs are to be released, he said the government should put an end to the issue. He also slammed the ministers for approaching court to restrain media organisations from publishing or airing any defamatory material.