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SC forms panel to probe
Hyderabad 'encounter'

It will complete investigation in 6 months

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
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The Supreme Court on Thursday set up an inquiry commission, led by its former judge V.S. Sirpurkar, to probe the circumstances of the police 'encounter' killing of four accused in the gang-rape and murder of a veterinarian in Hyderabad.

A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad A. Bobde, asked the commission, which includes former Bombay High Court judge Rekha Baldota and retired CBI Director D.R. Karthikeyan, to complete the investigation in six months.



Justice V.S. Sirpurkar (retd.)

The court, meanwhile, stayed the proceedings in the Telangana High Court and the National Human Rights Commission into the incident. The commission

will sit in Hyderabad. "We are of the considered view that there should be some inquiry," the CJI said.

The Telangana government, represented by Mukul Rohatgi, welcomed an impartial probe. "I [the Telangana government] have no problem... There is no difficulty... A magisterial inquiry has also been ordered," Mr. Rohatgi said.

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Incidentally, the Telangana government said it had registered an FIR against the dead accused for attempting to murder policemen who escorted them to the crime scene where they met with their death.

"We don't think your trial for non-existing dead accused will take you anywhere," CJI Bobde drily dismissed the submission.

The accused - Mohammed Arif, Chintakunta

Chennakeshavulu, Jollu Shiva and Jollu Naveen - were taken to the scene of the crime around 60 km from Hyderabad in the early hours of December 6 for a reconstruction of the crime scene. The Telangana government stuck to its version that the accused had snatched weapons and tried to kill the policemen to escape custody. The posse retaliated and the four were killed in the cross-firing.