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## SC judge recuses himself from disqualified MLAs' case

Another Bench of apex court to hear the case next Monday

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
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The Supreme Court hearing of petitions filed by several disqualified MLAs from Karnataka challenging their ouster from the State Assembly under the anti-defection law was a non-starter on Tuesday with one of the judges on the Bench, Justice M. Shantanagoudar, using himself from the case.

Justice Shantanagoudar said his conscience does not allow him to hear the case. He hails from Karnataka. The

Bench was led by Justice N.V. Ramana and also had Justice Ajay Rastogi.

On the urging of senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the former legislators, another Bench will hear the case next Monday.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who appeared for former Speaker Ramesh Kumar, urged Justice Shantanagoudar to stay on. However, after a brief discussion among the judges, Justice Ramana, the lead judge, said Shantanagoudar was

decision to bow out.

The former legislators, including Pratapgouda Patil and A.H. Vishwanath, had approached the apex court jointly and separately. Their petitions have arraigned the then Speaker, Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah, State Congress president Dinesh Gundu Rao, and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy as the respondents. The petitioners have urged the court to set aside the former Speaker's decision to disqualify them.