

News

Smart meter controversy: Karnataka High Court quashes private complaint against Minister KJ George



The case contained allegations that George and other BESCO executives rigged the contract process for the supply and installation of smart meters

A private complaint alleging that Energy Minister KJ George and senior Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCO) officials manipulated the tender process for the supply and installation of smart meters was dismissed by the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday [KJ George v. State of Karnataka and a connected matter].

Justice MI Arun gave the ruling on a plea filed by George to quash the case.

Similar petitions were also filed by former BESCO Managing Director D Mahantesh Bilagi and Director of Technical Department HJ Ramesh.

Due to Bilagi's tragic death in a car accident, the court today ordered that criminal charges against him be dismissed as well.

A private complaint report (PCR) against George, Bilagi, and Ramesh was ordered to be registered by an Additional City Civil and Sessions Court on July 23.

The instruction came on a complaint submitted by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) politicians, CN Ashwath Narayan, SR Vishwanath, and Dheeraj Muniraj, who accused George of getting into a conspiracy with BESCO officials to rig the smart meter tender process.

The complainants had alleged that this tender was undervalued, that the tender selection procedure undermined the pre-qualification requirements, and that statutory procurement standards were broken in favor of a pre-selected bidder.

Through the same July 23 ruling, special court judge Santhosh Gajanan Bhat ordered the registration of a PCR in the matter, and also asked a progress report from the Lokayukta Police on a complaint earlier sent by the BJP leaders to the Lokayukta citing irregularities in the smart meter tender.

The Court today quashed these trial court proceedings