

KERALA

Malabar Cements graft case: probe on

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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The State government on Wednesday informed the Kerala High Court that the investigation into a case registered in connection with the purchase of laminated polypropylene bags at Malabar Cements Limited at exorbitant rate was in progress.

In an affidavit, M.K. Gopakarishanan, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Vigilance and Anti-Corruption, Palakkad, said there were serious allegations against the petitioner and it was the bounden duty of the investigation agency to conduct fair investigation and submit a final report. The affidavit was filed in response to a petition filed by K.Muraleedharan Nair, former General Manager, Malabar Cements Limited, and an accused.

When the petition was taken up for hearing, Additional Director-General of Prosecution K.I. Abdul Rasheed submitted that if the investigation was interfered with at this stage, it would be against the well-established guidelines of the Supreme Court. The affidavit said the petitioner had been arraigned as an accused in the charge-sheeted four corruption cases pending trial before the Thrissur Vigilance Court.

The affidavit said it was revealed that the tender process initiated by officials of Malabar Cements Limited for the purchase of LPP bags from 2003-04 to 2006-07 was not transparent and fair.

As a result of a criminal conspiracy, the officials had eliminated other LPP manufacturing companies and confirmed the supply contract to Rishi Packers Limited, Mumbai, by enhancing the tendered quantity and paying considerably higher rates.

Malabar Cements had suffered a loss of Rs.4,20,35,135 resulting in a corresponding pecuniary gain to Rishi Packers Limited.

Managing Director S.S. Moni and the staff of the company had conspired together with the other accused and purchased the bags.

No valid reason had been given for disqualifying the six firms that participated in the tender process.

The managing director and the general manager without placing proper advertisement considered the offer of Rishi Packers and purchase order was placed. The tender process was found to be not transparent and competitive.

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