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Letter to Governor: KSE claims to have support of party leaders

Minister sticks to his stand; says he won't be cowed by statements of others

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Sticking to his stand on the issue of alleged violation of rules in grant of funds by Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa and his "interference" in the Ministry, senior BJP leader and Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) K.S. Eshwarappa claimed to enjoy the support of senior party leaders on the "just stand" he has taken.

Speaking to reporters in Mysuru on Friday, Mr. Eshwarappa, however, brushed aside the charge that his action of complaining to Governor Vajubhai R. Vala against the Chief Minister amounted to a "rebellion". "I am not a rebel. I have always been a loyal party-man," he said.

'Gross violation'

Mr. Eshwarappa had recently written to the Governor against allocation of funds to various MLAs and Bengaluru Urban Zilla Panchayat for taking up works falling under the RDPR Department without bringing the matter to his notice. This, he said, was in gross violation of The



K.S. Eshwarappa

Karnataka Government (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1977.

He asked whether Ministers were mere "postmen" to distribute funds allocated by the Chief Minister.

The Finance Department allocates funds to respective departments based on the approvals given in the Budget and the departments have to prepare an action plan to use the funds as per their discretion, he contended.

He alleged that a total of ₹1,299 crore, including ₹65 crore exclusively to Bengaluru Urban Zilla Panchayat, had been allocated directly by the Chief Minister in violation of the rules. "I had brought the matter to the

notice of the party leaders and based on their advice, the release of funds have been stopped by the department," he said.

Mr. Eshwarappa claimed that he had brought the matter to the notice of senior party leaders, including national general secretary Arun Singh, State unit chief Nalin Kumar Kateel, and national general secretary C.T. Ravi, and all of them had endorsed the stand he had taken on the issue of alleged violation of rules by Mr. Yediyurappa and advised him to stop the release of funds.

When his attention was drawn to Mr. Singh's reported observation that it was wrong to approach the Governor, Mr. Eshwarappa said Mr. Singh had stood by his stand on the grant of funds when the latter spoke to him. "If he thinks it was wrong to approach the Governor, I will speak to him and convince him," he said.

He also said he will not be cowed by the public statements made by a few Ministers and BJP MLAs seeking action against him. He said it was up to the party to decide whether he was right or Mr.

Yediyurappa. In fact, Mr. Eshwarappa claimed that a couple of Ministers and MLAs, who had held a press conference to hit out against him, had subsequently telephoned him and expressed support. "They claimed that they had to make such public statements due to certain pressures."

Contending that the issue he had raised was not a "personal" one between him and Mr. Yediyurappa, Mr. Eshwarappa said if such transgression of rules is permitted to happen, it may become a convention for others to follow.

Harking back to KJP

Fielding reporters' queries, Mr. Eshwarappa also recalled Mr. Yediyurappa's decision to quit the BJP and float a new political outfit - KJP.

He had been misled by a few people close to him and had floated the KJP. "He may have similarly been misled while making allocations under his department without bringing the issue to the notice of the Minister," Mr. Eshwarappa said.