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HC: Stop posting officers for 'monetary considerations'

Bench urges CJ to initiate *suo motu* proceedings against govt.

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In an unprecedented order, the High Court of Karnataka has urged the Chief Justice to initiate *suo motu* proceedings against the State government to put an end to the "pernicious practice" of posting officers "for monetary considerations and reasons other than public interest".

A Bench of Justice R. Devdas passed the order on March 15 taking note of "high-handedness" of the tahsildar and the assistant commissioner (AC) of Bengaluru South taluk, who acted contrary to the law even when an issue related to grant of a parcel of land, value of which is worth several crores of rupees, was *sub judice* before the High

Court. "This court should take judicial notice of the fact that such high-handed action on the part of the respondent-authorities [tahsildar and AC] could not have happened if the authorities were sensitive enough about their powers and functions," the court observed.

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HC wants end to postings for money

"The obvious disregard may have been occasioned due to the fact that postings are given to such sensitive offices, not on merits or with public interest in mind," the court observed. "It is obvious that the respondent-authorities are fearless of the consequences of being in conflict with the law. Such officers are emboldened by the fact that they are protected by the government."

Pointing out that "every now and then the citizens of this State are given to understand that plum postings are assigned for monetary considerations," the court said,

"Such news and information are published in national newspapers, magazines, television channels and social media."

"Such allegations are even levelled by the Opposition leaders and social activists... against the heads of the departments, Ministers and Chief Minister."

The court also observed that "there cannot be two views that if an officer shells out money to get a plum posting, he would employ every means possible to recover the money he has invested and make every effort to make money for future

needs and therefore, this forms the vicious circle of corruption."

"Time has come for this court to step in to find out the truth of the fact and direct the State to put in place regulations to check the tentacles of corruption from taking stranglehold of society. Therefore, this court would urge that the Chief Justice may take note of the observations and take up *suo motu* proceedings against the State government to put an end to the pernicious practice," observed Mr. Justice Devdas in his order.