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No nod for contempt case against Bhushan

A-G says lawyer expressed regret

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal has declined consent to a request to initiate contempt proceedings against advocate Prashant Bhushan for his "prima facie contumacious" tweets concerning a visit made by the Chief Justice of India to the Kanha National Park in Madhya Pradesh, saying the lawyer later expressed his regret for the error on Twitter.

Mr. Venugopal's letter was addressed to advocate Sunil Kumar Singh, who had complained about Mr. Bhushan's tweets to the eflect that the CJI had committed "an act of impropriety in accepting facilities of the State of Madhya Pradesh during his visit to the Kanha National Park while a case pertaining to the disqualification of certain members of the Legislative Assembly of the State was pending betore him".

Mr. Venugopal, in his let-

ter to Mr. Singh on November 8, said the tweets were "wholly unwarranted, improper, devoid of legal basis and prima facie contumacious".

Mr. Venugopal said the CJI was one of the highest constitutional functionaries. The CJI was a State guest, and was entitled to receive protocol facilities and appropriate security.

Mr. Venugopal said he was "initially of the mind to grant consent to initiate contempt", but Mr. Bhushan, learning that a request has been made before the Attorney-General for consent and realising his mistake of connecting the facilities provided to the CJI to the "survival of the government", tweeted his regret on November 4. On the same day, the disqualification case in the top court was withdrawn by the petitioner, through senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for having become infructuous.