

JUSTICE DINESH SHARMA TO HEAD THE UAPA TRIBUNAL RELATED TO BAN ON PFI

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Dinesh Kumar SharmaRAVI PARASHAR

The Centre has appointed Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma of the Delhi High Court as the presiding officer of the tribunal for the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), related to the ban on the Popular Front of India (PFI) and its associates.

Once an organisation is banned under the provisions of the UAPA, a tribunal is set up by the government to adjudicate whether there are sufficient grounds for the decision. The office memorandum, issued by the Department of Justice in the Law Ministry on October 3, mentioned that Justice Sharma's time as head of the UAPA tribunal will count as "actual service". Chief Justice S.C. Sharma of the Delhi High Court appointed Justice Sharma to head the tribunal that will examine the ban.

"Chief Justice of Delhi High Court has nominated Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma, Judge, to be appointed as the Presiding Officer of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal in the matter of Popular Front of India (PFI) and its associates or affiliates or fronts including Rehab India Foundation (RIF), Campus Front of India (CFI), All India Imams Council (AIC), National Confederation of Human Rights Organisation (NCHRO), National Women's Front, Junior Front Empower India Foundation and Rehab Foundation, Kerala for the purpose of adjudicating whether or not there is sufficient cause for declaring these organisations as unlawful," said the Law Ministry memorandum.

According to procedure, the Union Home Ministry requests the Law Ministry to name a sitting judge of a High Court to be the presiding officer, and the Law Ministry, in turn, requests the Chief Justice of the High Court concerned to recommend a name. The Home Ministry will now issue a formal notification naming Justice Sharma as presiding officer.

On September 28, the Ministry of Home Affairs had issued a notification declaring "the PFI and its associates or affiliates or fronts as an unlawful association with immediate effect". The National Investigation Agency as well as the Enforcement Directorate had alleged that the PFI was engaged in raising and collecting funds from abroad and transferring them to India through "clandestine and illegal channels".

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