

CENTRE APPOINTS SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR LOKPAL

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After a long delay, the Centre on Thursday constituted an eight-member search committee, to be headed by former Supreme Court judge, Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai, to recommend the chairperson and members of the anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal. The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, which envisages establishment of anti-graft body Lokpal at the Centre and Lokayuktas in States to look into cases of corruption against certain categories of public servants, was passed in 2013.

Former State Bank of India chief Arundhati Bhattacharya, Prasar Bharati chairperson A. Surya Prakash and former Indian Space Research Organisation head A.S. Kiran Kumar are the members of the search committee, according to an order by the Personnel Ministry.

Former judge of the Allahabad High Court, Justice Sakha Ram Singh Yadav; former Gujarat Police head, Shabbirhusein S Khandwawala; retired IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre, Lalit K Panwar; and Ranjit Kumar are the other members of the panel.

The step comes after the Supreme Court's order to appoint Lokpal at the earliest. The search committee was appointed by the selection committee, which comprises Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, leader of the largest Opposition party, which in this case was Congress's Mallikarjun Kharge, and eminent jurist Mukul Rohatgi.

Kharge absent

Mr. Kharge, however, is not a full-fledged member of the panel and he boycotted the selection committee meeting five times this year. He was not present at Thursday's meeting too.

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