

## No business ties with YSR's family, says Karnataka minister

Karnataka Tourism Minister and industrialist G. Janardhan Reddy has denied the Telugu Desam Party's (TDP) allegations that he had business ties with the family of the late Andhra Pradesh chief minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy.

Janardhan Reddy -- who with his elder brother Revenue Minister G. Karunakara played a key role in the dissident movement against Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa -- offered to undergo 'any punishment' if the opposition TDP proved its allegation that he or his Obulapuram Mining Company (OMC) invested money in Sakshi, a Telugu daily and television channel owned by Rajasekhara Reddy's son Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy.

He admitted an 'emotional attachment' with the family but stated categorically: 'Late YSR (as the chief minister was known by his initials) and his son have not invested even a single paisa in my business nor I have invested anything in their business interests.'

'If Chandrababu Naidu (TDP president) can prove his allegation that I have given money to Sakshi, I am ready to undergo any punishment on the roads of Hyderabad,' the Karnataka minister told a news conference here.

The minister, whose family has huge mining business in the two states, denied allegations that his firm was indulging in irregularities in mining iron ore.

Threatening defamation cases against Naidu and two Telugu dailies, he said: 'I will surrender my mining company and quit politics if Naidu proves his allegations.'

The TDP has alleged that the late YSR as the chief minister had done many favours to OMC, which was indulging in several irregularities in the mining area in Anantapur district bordering Karnataka.

Though the allegations had been proved false three years ago by various committees, Naidu had raised the issue again because YSR was dead, Janardhan Reddy said, adding that the Andhra Pradesh leader was committing contempt of court by raising a matter that was pending in court.

Janardhan Reddy, whose parents hail from Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh, also denied the TDP charge that he was the 'money power' behind YSR's MP son Jaganmohan Reddy.

The powerful industrialist, who had almost brought down Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Karnataka last week, claimed that his relations with YSR were like father-son and above politics.

'We are sentimentally and emotionally attached with YSR's family. These relations started 20 years ago and are above politics as we come from two different parties,' he said.

He said he came in contact with YSR through Srinivas Reddy, managing director of OMC, who comes from Kadapa district and is closely related to YSR's family. 'It was on the advice of YSR that I decided to set up the Brahmini steel plant in Kadapa district. He wanted me to set up an industry to provide employment to one lakh people,' he said.

He announced that YSR's son along with Chief Minister K. Rosaiah would inaugurate the steel plant

in October 2010. The factory will provide employment to 10,000 people in the first phase.

The Andhra Pradesh government on Nov 10 formed a three-member committee to look into the alleged irregularities by OMC.

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