

## No question of Sidhu resigning over road rage case, says Punjab CM

Maintains that Govt could not have taken u-turn in SC without new evidence

Chandigarh, April 15: Scotching speculation that Local Government Minister would be resigning from the state cabinet in view of the Supreme Court case against him, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Sunday said there was no question of asking the minister to quit.

The Chief Minister pointed out that the Supreme Court had stayed Sidhu's conviction in the road rage case in 2007 and was yet to pronounce its verdict on his petition challenging the high court order. The question of the minister resigning, merely because the state government had repeated its stand of 30 years in the case before the Supreme Court, did not arise, he added. "There was neither any impediment in Sidhu's induction into the cabinet nor in his continuation now, in view of the stay on his conviction", said the Chief Minister.

The categorical clarification from the Chief Minister came amid reports suggesting that Sidhu had been asked to resign, and also in the wake of the demand from the Opposition that he should step down.

While reiterating that his government could not have changed its stand in the apex court in the case against Sidhu, the Chief Minister once again expressed the hope that the judge would take cognizance of Sidhu's contribution to the society and the country in deciding the case.

Captain Amarinder Singh described the recent developments in the matter as unfortunate, but maintained that his government had taken the only legally tenable stand in the Supreme Court.

Reacting to reports suggesting that the government had deliberately not supported the minister in the apex court, the Chief Minister pointed out unless the prosecution received new inputs, it was not legally possible for it to add a new element to its arguments.

As the state prosecution, the government's lawyers had stated a certain viewpoint in the trial court as well as the High Court, he noted, adding that, in the absence of any fresh evidence, there was no way of changing that stand before the Supreme Court.

Speaking totally from a legal viewpoint, the prosecution is duty-bound to go by the facts and stick to the same, said the Chief Minister. Taking a U-turn from the stand taken by the government in the trial and high courts was not an option for the government, he added.