

I-T raids in Chhattisgarh make glaring revelations

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RAIPUR, 23 NOVEMBER

The raids of Income Tax (I-T) Department have revealed how a Deputy Collector (DC) and a promotee IAS officer were not only calling the shots but were also deciding the posting of top ranking IAS and IPS officers in Chhattisgarh.

Income Tax Department in its 997-page chargesheet against IAS officer Anil Tuteja, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's Deputy Secretary Saumya Chaurasiya and 13 others has exposed how much influence accused officers and their lackeys including Anwar Dhebar, brother of Raipur Mayor Ejaz Dhebar were wielding.

In one of the conversations retrieved, Anil Tuteja is suggesting Saumya Chaurasiya, an officer of Deputy Collector rank, to remove then Principal Secretary Gaurav Dwivedi, now Prasar Bharati CEO, from the CM Secretariat and replace him with Subrat Sahu, who is Additional Chief Secretary now.

"Gaurav ko Panchayat de do. Subrat ko PR and Energy with home and PS to HCM," the WhatsApp chat between the two officers reads. Tuteja, a Joint Secretary rank officer in the state government, further requested Saumya to get the notesheet recommending removal of former Text Book Corporation MD Ashok Chaturvedi from the service.

I-T sleuths have also recovered multiple chats including one with businessman Vijay Budhia indicating that Rs 5 crore was received from Chaturvedi at the behest of Tuteja and Chaurasiya. Later, Tuteja



denied any role in bribe money collection and said that since Chaturvedi was a tainted officer he (Tuteja) didn't wish to meet a personal like him.

IT raids had also recovered sensational conversation between Tuteja and others during the raids conducted between 27 February and 3 March, 2020 indicating that Anil Tuteja and Alok Shukla, key accused in notorious Naagrik Aapurti Nigam (NAN) scam, not only actively participated in constituting the Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe their role in the scam but also 'unofficially' vetted, influenced, and changed its draft report on many occasions to weaken the case against them.

It is worth mentioning that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) furnished stunning conversation among the accused in a sealed envelope in its Special Leave Petition filed in the Supreme Court last year.

"Both the senior IAS officers, in connivance with the successive chiefs of prosecuting agency namely EOW-ACB Chhattisgarh, one very senior law officer in the High Court of Chhattisgarh, mem-

bers of the SIT and the intervention of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, have weakened the offense of corruption against them by procuring favorable report from the prosecuting agency and threatening the witnesses," Additional Solicitor General Tushar Mehta had told the SC on behalf of the ED.

"Even the content of the SIT report was changed at the behest of prime accused (Shukla and Tuteja) and the draft report of SIT was unofficially vetted by the prime accused with the help of his advocates. This happened on many occasions unabatedly," the ED added.

The new government decided to constitute an SIT on January 3, 2019 despite a charge-sheet by the probing agency EOW-ACB had already been filed in the court. The investigating officer of the EOW-ACB Sanjay Devasthale was suspended the very next day.

Both the officers are accused of embezzling crores of rupees in the purchase and transportation of rice. The scam was unearthed in March 2015 during an ACB raid in the premises of Naagrik Aapurti Nigam.

