

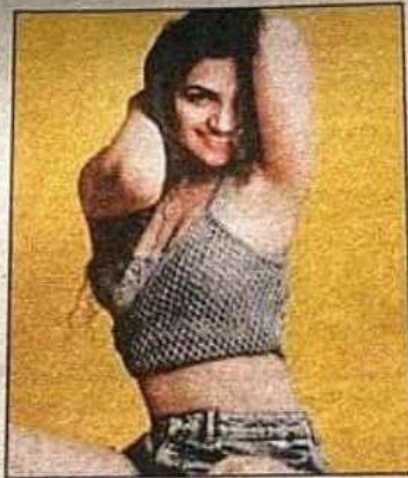
GST inspector-turned-model under ED scanner in ₹264cr TDS scam

VijayV.Singh@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: GST inspector-turned-actor Kriti Verma recorded her statement with the ED in a money laundering case where an income-tax official had allegedly siphoned off Rs 264 crore by using the login credentials of his seniors.

Businessman Bhushan Patil, who was in a relationship with Verma, a former Big Boss and Roadies Xtreme participant, is one of the key accused in the case. The ED says much of the illegal funds was channelled to Patil's account and a part was used to buy properties, including some in Verma's name.

Verma denies the allegation, saying Patil transferred around Rs 1 crore into her account as payment for a dance performance before they got together. As a "responsible citizen", Verma helped the agencies by providing relevant information against the accused,



Key accused Bhushan Patil had used part of the scam money to buy property, including some in Verma's name, ED says

the person added.

Verma says she entered into a relationship with Patil after meeting him during a dance show at the end of 2020, after the offence was committed. She claims she separated within six months after learning about the fraud. The ED has provi-

sionally attached their assets.

The fraud is said to have been "orchestrated" by I-T inspector Tanaji Mandal Adhikari along with Patil. Adhikari, who was then senior tax assistant, gained the confidence of officials and found out their log-in credentials and passwords. He used them to clear actual and bogus TDS refund claims to an account of Patil's company. From November 2019 to November 2020, Adhikari had cleared 12 fraudulent TDS refunds amounting Rs 264 crore.

Adhikari was even promoted as I-T inspector in 2021. He was exposed when a bank to which the cheated amount was transferred from a government account raised a red flag. In January 2022, the CBI registered a cheating case, naming Adhikari, Patil and four unknown persons. Verma was not named in the CBI FIR. Subsequently, the ED registered a laundering case based on the FIR.

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