

The Statesman

CBI to engage private lawyer for director's affidavit before Supreme Court

15 April 2013

Press trust of India

NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL: Unhappy over the exceeding of brief by the Additional Solicitor General before the apex court on the coal blocs allocation scam, the CBI is likely to engage a private counsel to submit Director Ranjit Sinha's affidavit before the apex court.

Official sources said the Additional Solicitor General, appearing for the agency, had told the Supreme Court on 12 March that the report in the alleged irregularities in coal mine allocation has not been shared with anyone. However, the sources claimed no such briefing given to the law officer. The sources said such a statement became embarrassing for the agency after news reports claimed that the contents of the status report were shared with Law Minister Ashwani Kumar and officials of the PM's Office. The agency, which has termed the reports as speculative, did not deny the alleged toning down of the status report at the instance of the Law Minister or the officials of the PMO. Following the embarrassment, the agency has decided to hire a private lawyer to file the affidavit by the CBI Director as directed by the Supreme Court by 25 April. On 12 March, after the submission of the CBI counsel before the Supreme Court that the status report in the coal scam had not been shared with anyone, the apex court had directed the CBI Director to file an affidavit that the status report submitted by the agency was "vetted by him and not shared with political executives" and the same will be followed in future.

The agency filed a status report on 8 March with regards to its probe in the alleged irregularities in the coal allocation scam which was heard by the apex court on 12 March.

Meanwhile, the CBI today dismissed as a "routine affair" the replacement of the officer who was overseeing the probe in the coal scam. On the transfer which was questioned by the NGO Common Cause in its submissions before the Supreme Court, the agency said IPS officer Ravikant had completed his tenure with the CBI and left because of "family reasons" even though extension was offered to him. Demanding a SIT probe into an alleged "blatant" interference by the Centre into the CBI probe, the NGO has highlighted in its petition that the CBI officer, who was supervising the investigation, has been replaced.