

## **Coal scam: Replacement of officer was a routine affair, says CBI**

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**New Delhi:** Terming the replacement of its officer supervising some cases pertaining to the coal mining scam as a 'routine affair', CBI on Monday said he had completed his tenure and left because of 'family reasons' even though extension was offered to him.

Demanding a SIT probe into alleged 'blatant' interference by the Centre into the CBI probe, NGO Common Cause has highlighted in its petition before the Supreme Court that CBI officer who was supervising the investigation and who had filed its affidavit has been replaced.

"Ravikant who was the SP in some of the coal allocation cases has completed his tenure in CBI as SP. Extension was offered and even insisted upon but he agreed for only a year as DIG and himself sought to move out of CBI due to family reasons. He was relieved at the end of March," CBI spokesperson Dharini Mishra said.

A 1998-batch IPS officer of Odisha cadre, Ravikant was heading probe in several cases related to alleged irregularities in the coal mine allocation and joined Intelligence Bureau after leaving CBI.

In its interim application, the NGO submitted that the alleged 'blatant interference' by the government is not only unlawful and a criminal offence, it amounts to contempt of court and the same has to be probed by a special investigative team.

It alleged that the CBI was not fit to probe the scam, as the agency at the instance of the government has 'changed and diluted' a status report which it was to file before the Supreme Court.

The agency had termed the reported allegation as speculative but did not deny the alleged meeting where status report was purportedly toned down.