

CBI TAKES OVER CASES AGAINST PARAM BIR SINGH

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The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has taken over the probe into five cases registered against former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh in Maharashtra following the Supreme Court's directive.

Four cases pertain to allegations of extortion, cheating, wrongful confinement, kidnapping for ransom and other offences. One case was registered by Maharashtra Police under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, Protection of Civil Rights Act and the Maharashtra Police Act, besides various provisions of the Indian Penal Code.

On March 24, the top court had ordered the central agency to take over all the five cases against Mr. Singh. The apex court had said, "We are of the view that the State itself should have allowed CBI to carry out the investigation. We are of the *prima facie* view that there is some concerted effort which needs investigation by the CBI. What is the truth, who is at fault, how does such a scenario come to prevail is something which investigation must get into. CBI must hold an impartial inquiry into all these aspects. We do not want the investigation to be influenced by the observation of this court."

The Supreme Court had also granted relief to Mr. Singh on November 22, 2021, and directed Maharashtra Police not to arrest him in all the cases, saying if he was hounded for filing cases against police officers and extortionists, "what could happen to a common man".

Five FIRs

The first FIR against the suspended IPS officer is related to extortion in Thane in April 2021; a police inspector, Bhimrao Ghadge, alleged that Mr. Singh had asked him to extort money from a person.

Two FIRs were registered against Mr. Singh in Mumbai and Thane by a developer named Shyamsunder Agarwal, alleging that Mr. Singh falsely implicated him and his nephew Sharad and extorted money.

The fourth FIR is by businessman Ketan Tanna and others also alleging that Mr. Singh threatened him and extorted money. The fifth case is by a hotelier, Bimal Agarwal, who also accused Mr. Singh of extortion.

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