

Maharashtra Governor's nod to CBI to prosecute ex-CM Ashok Chavan

In a major embarrassment to the opposition Congress, Maharashtra Governor CV Rao here on Thursday accorded sanction to the CBI to prosecute former chief minister Ashok Chavan in the Adarsh Society scam.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), through its letter dated October 8, 2015, sought the governor's sanction to prosecute Chavan under Section 197 of the Criminal Procedure Code after "fresh incriminating material" was allegedly found against Chavan.

Chavan is currently a Lok Sabha member from Maharashtra and chief of the state unit of the Congress party.

CBI included a report by a two-member Commission of Inquiry, comprising Justice J.A. Patil (retd) and former chief secretary P. Subramanian, besides Bombay High Court observations in a criminal revision application filed in 2014.

Accordingly, Rao granted the sanction to prosecute Chavan under Section 197 of CrPC and Sections 120-B and 420 of the Indian Penal Code in the Adarsh Cooperative Housing Society case.

The Maharashtra cabinet, at a meeting last week presided over by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, recommended to the governor to accord the sanction.

In its report, the commission of inquiry had indicted four former chief ministers – Chavan, late Vilasrao Deshmukh, Sushilkumar Shinde and Shivajirao Nilangekar-Patil, also revenue minister at the relevant time – besides several top bureaucrats and other officials for their role in the high-profile scam.

The commission was set up in January 2011. However, its report and recommendations were rejected by the then Congress-Nationalist Congress Party government in December 2013.