

LOKPAL OF INDIA
Plot No.6, Institutional Area, Phase-II
Vasant Kunj, New Delhi - 110070

Complaint No. : 138/2023

Date : March 28, 2024.

Coram : **Shri Justice A.M. Khanwilkar**
Chairperson

Shri Justice Sanjay Yadav
Judicial Member

Shri Sushil Chandra,
Member

Shri Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi
Judicial Member

Shri Pankaj Kumar
Member

Shri Ajay Tirkey
Member

ORDER

Perused the complaint.

2. The complaint is against some officials of the National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property, Lucknow (NRLC) for various irregularities and acts of corruption in the execution of a preservation project/contract between NRLC and Nagpur Improvement Trust (NIT), Nagpur. The complainant has also alleged irregularities and acts of corruption in the purchase of goods/services in the NRLC Office.

3. Some of the allegations made in the complaint are as follows:-



- i. That one employee being in service as Senior Conservation Assistant in NRLC, Lucknow was also appointed as Project Incharge in the UP State Museum on a contract basis. It is alleged that this appointment is illegal and improper.
- ii. That another employee being in service as Senior Conservation Assistant has been appointed as Incharge for the project of Nagpur Improvement Trust (NIT) where there is a contract between NRLC and the Government of Maharashtra. The complainant has alleged that this appointment is also illegal and improper.
- iii. In respect of an official working as a Storekeeper in NRLC, the complainant has alleged that the same person is also working as a supplier of essential items in the project.
- iv. That against certain openings/ vacancies which were meant to be filled up only through those unemployed persons who had undergone six months of training by NRLC, serving employees of NRLC have been appointed, which is in violation of the rules.
- v. That in violation of the extant rules and despite not having the requisite qualifications and work experience, a retired official has been appointed for the Nagpur Improvement Trust Project. It is also alleged that this person did not apply for this project and the joining letter given by the said appointee is forged and an amount of Rs.40,000/- per month has been drawn by some officials in the name of this appointee. Further, it is alleged that with the intention of siphoning off this amount, the attendance shown is forged.
- vi. That three persons by the names: (1) Akshata Haste (2) Saurabh Kumar and (3) Anuradha Bhandarkar were shown to be present during the various periods even though these persons were not present at work. In addition, it has been alleged that one of the public servants was shown to be present at the project site in Nagpur even though he didn't go there.
- vii. That the storekeeper did not follow GFR 2017 and relevant guidelines for the procurement of material for field projects.
- viii. That the software developed by NIC for Stores has still not been deployed. So also, procurements made through GeM are compromised. It is also alleged that there are irregularities in the contract for housekeeping/ cleaning of office premises.



4. The complaint was considered by the Full Bench of Lokpal on 17.07.2023. By an Order of that date, the Full Bench Lokpal of India had directed to refer the complaint to the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) for making a Preliminary Inquiry under Section 20(1)(a) of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 and submitting the Preliminary Inquiry Report within a period of six (06) weeks, i.e. **on or before 28.08.2023.**

5. After getting few extensions, the CVC submitted Report of the Preliminary Inquiry vide their letter dated 07.02.2024, enclosing therewith O.M. dated 25.01.2024 of the Ministry of Culture, annexing summary of the Inquiry Report. On examination of the Report, some discrepancies were noticed which were pointed out to the Ministry of Culture. Ministry of Culture rectified those discrepancies and submitted revised Report of the Preliminary Inquiry vide their letter dated 07.03.2024, which is under consideration of this Bench.

6. It has been informed by the Ministry of Culture that a Fact-Finding Committee was constituted to enquire into the allegations made in the complaint. The Committee perused all the relevant files and documents and obtained the comments of the officers/employees of NRLC against whom allegations have been made. On the basis of inquiry conducted by the Fact-Finding Committee, it has been found that the allegations levelled in the complaint are not substantiated, except appointment of one Shri Uma Shankar Lal as Project Associate Level-I on which the Fact-Finding Committee has not offered any comment because this case has already been taken up by the CBI for investigation.

7. In view of the fact that none of the allegations against the named public servants could be substantiated and in one case CBI has already taken up investigation, this Bench is not inclined to take any further action in the matter.



8. The complaint is accordingly closed and disposed of.



(Court Master)