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ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT: Other state matter

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Chandrababu faces FIR heat in land scam

Completely new angle in the Amaravati land row as it pertains to deals after capital project was in place

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NARA Chandrababu Naidu is in the dock. The three-time chief minister has been linked to what has now come to be known as the 'Amaravati land scam', which involved aggregation of thousands of acres for the proposed capital of the divided state of Andhra Pradesh.

The Crime Investigation Department (CID) of Andhra Pradesh is learnt to have registered an FIR against Naidu for various procedural irregularities with regard to decisions taken in relation to the capital city project. As chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, Naidu held dual capacity as he was also the Chairman of the AP Capital Region Development Authority.

The case, which throws up a completely new angle in the Amaravati land scam, has been registered under Section 120 B (conspiracy) and Sections 166, 167 and 217 of the IPC, read with Prohibition of

Assigned Lands Alienation Act of 1977 and the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act. A former minister in Naidu's Cabinet, P Narayana, has also been named in the FIR and summons to appear before the CID have been issued to both. Naidu served two terms as chief minister of the undivided Andhra Pradesh and the third as CM of the divided AP after bifurcation from 2014 to 2019.

One of the major charges against

Naidu pertains to alienation of "assigned lands", which form part of the aggregated 25,000-30,000 acres. According to the investigations done thus far by the AP government agencies, approximately 500 acres of assigned land had been purchased by different persons after the announcement of the capital city.

The crux of the charge in this case is that the AP government later issued a GO granting one-time ex-

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emption allowing alienation of such lands purchased by non-assignees for the capital project. Thus, they would stand to gain from the model prepared by the Naidu government under which 1,450-1,500 sq yards of de-

**Expanding scope
tied to more probe**

Whether the scope of the FIR against Naidu will be enlarged to invoke provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act will depend on further investigation

veloped commercial and residential plots would be given for every acre surrendered. The "returnable plots" have also been allotted to those who purchased and surrendered the assigned lands, primarily given to SCs and STs.

It is understood that even a formal sanction of the Cabinet has not been obtained before the GO in question was issued. File notings by bureaucrats that such a decision would be in contravention of law were reportedly ignored. "It is possible that those in power take certain decisions with bonafide intentions, even if they are proved wrong. But, in this case, the end beneficiary is known prior to grant of exemption. Hence, the conspiracy," a source explained.

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Amaravati land scam: SC yet to lift probe stay

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THE Amaravati land scam hit national headlines in September last year after the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) filed an FIR against the former advocate general of AP, Dammalapati Srinivas, in which daughters of the second senior most judge of the Supreme Court, Justice N V Ramana, have also been named. Within hours, the AP High Court imposed a gag order on publication of the details of the FIR and

also suspended further investigation into the scam. The Supreme Court subsequently lifted

the gag order but is yet to pass an order on the plea of AP government for lifting the stay on the investigation.

The previous FIR was essentially about purchase of land prior to the capital's announcement. It alleged that Dammalapati Srinivas "entered into a criminal conspiracy" with various purchasers, including the judge's daughters, and bought lands in different mandals of Vijayawada and Guntur with "clear knowledge that they would fall within the capital region". The transactions allegedly took place between August and December, 2014.

