

CPI for probe into CIA funding of Kerala journalists

The Communist Party of India (CPI) Friday demanded a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into allegations that a section of Kerala journalists were being funded by the CIA.

CPI state secretary Veliyam Bharghavan told reporters: 'Either the CBI or RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) should inquire about the alleged funding of some Kerala journalists by the CIA (US' Central Intelligence Agency). It is now clear that there is a media syndicate in Kerala that plants false stories.'

His comments come close on the heels of the statement by state Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan that he would get in touch with the central government to get more details about the alleged funding.

On Monday, Achuthanandan told the state assembly that there were 'intelligence reports' to indicate that some Kerala journalists were on the payroll of the CIA.

The Communist Party of India-Marxist state secretary Pinnarayi Vijayan had first brought up the issue last week saying there was a media syndicate in Kerala that planted stories in papers and aimed to destroy the party.

Thursday, he raised the issue again and said it was K.M. Shahjahan, former private secretary to Achuthanandan (2001-06), who was behind the 'false propaganda against the party'.

'Many people are asking why I am repeating Shahjahan's name time and again. I have to say it because he has been a troublemaker and has been ousted from the party,' said Vijayan.

Vijayan said the CPI-M was fully aware of who all constitute the media syndicate.

At a public meeting in Kannur Thursday night, Achuthanandan said certain newspapers had unleashed a personal attack on him for the past nine-and-a-half months, since he took over. He did not name any newspaper.

'They have not even spared my family members,' said Achuthanandan.

In the media circles here it is apparent that the newspaper responsible for attacking Achuthanandan the most belongs to a close aide of Vijayan. Reports indicate that the issue is again going to cause ripples in the CPI-M, which is already a divided house with Vijayan and Achuthanandan at opposite ends.

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