

Punjab vigilance wants FIR: Hiring of 1,150 teachers under cloud

The UT administration's recruitment of 1,150 government school teachers in January–February 2015 was compromised with question papers having been leaked to select candidates, the Punjab Vigilance Bureau (VB) has found.

On Friday, the VB wrote to UT education secretary Sarvjit Singh and the inspector general of police Tejinder Singh Luthra giving details of the Chandigarh link of the scam asking for the registration of a case and further probe into the matter.

The VB is probing a recruitment scam in Punjab government departments with Panjab University (PU), Chandigarh, entrusted with conducting the selection tests.

Half-a-dozen selection tests of Punjab government are under the VB's scanner. Three FIRs have been registered and more than 30 people have been arrested in the scam.

The VB has found that the question papers of the selection tests for recruitment of Junior Basic Teachers (JBT), Trained Graduate Teacher (TGT) and Nursery Trained Teacher (NTT) were leaked to at least 25 candidates, all of who were selected and are now serving in government schools in the city.

VB officials claim that these candidates, all from two districts of Haryana, were taken in a mini-bus by one conduit to Lucknow, where the question papers were leaked. There could be other candidates who managed to access the question papers through other conduits, officials add.

PU conducted these tests on the behalf of Chandigarh administration over two days in January and February last year.

More than 45,000 candidates appeared for the tests. Of those selected, almost a thousand teachers joined Chandigarh schools in July 2015.

“We had noticed an unusually high number of selected candidates from Haryana. But it was thought that since the number of applicants from Haryana was almost six times the applicants from Punjab, it was showing up in the result,” said Sarvjit Singh.

2 modules discovered

VB has discovered two modules of the scam: one run by Mithilesh Pandey, in Lucknow, and another by Suresh Yadav in Najafgarh, Haryana. The two are on the run.

The Chandigarh link was revealed on Thursday when VB was questioning one Satinder Hooda, a Mani Majra resident of Manimajra, who was in touch with Pandey.

Hooda and his wife Poonam were selected as teachers allegedly using leaked question paper. He named four other candidates who were also leaked the paper.

VB officials told UT police that Pandey's man Naresh Yadav (already arrested) got in touch with a Sonapat resident, Brijender Nain to find candidates appearing for teacher tests.

Nain got 25 willing candidates from two coaching centres in Sonapat and the deal was struck at `7 lakh per candidate.

Another conduit Pradeep Kumar a resident of Hisar (arrested) has also admitted to 'finding' at least eight candidates for the Chandigarh Teachers Test from Haryana. Pradeep, however, was the conduit for Suresh Yadav, the kingpin of the Najafgarh module of the scam.