2G Verdict Dents CBI’s Reputation

What is the issue?

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CBI’s reputation has taken a serious damage as the trial court judge in the 2G case had criticised it for incompetence.

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What makes the case high-profile?

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- The 2G case rocked the telecom sector and played a major role in allegations about massive corruption against the UPA.
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- The case involved enquiry into the 2008 spectrum allocations by the telecom ministry at throwaway prices, which was supposedly with immoral intentions.
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- The alleged scam was touted to be the biggest in India’s history and the CAG report estimating a notional loss of Rs 1.76 lakh crores to the exchequer.
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- 16 people that included high profile politicians, bureaucrats and many business executives of India’s top telcos were on trial.
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- Significantly, in 2012 the Supreme Court had cancelled all the spectrum licences allocated as it was convinced of procedural irregularities.
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- Recently, all the members on trial were acquitted due to lack of conclusive evidence and the judgement also questioned the CBI’s resolve in case.
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How has CBI’s prosecution fared?

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- Despite the strong case, as the CBI had failed to establish the criminality of

any of the accused, it has affected the credibility of it as an institution.
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- Significantly, the court itself noted that while the CBI's start in the case was good, the prosecution steadily deteriorated and became directionless.
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- Notably, the prosecution even refrained from signing documents and replies before the court, thus robbing the whole process of any credibility.
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- Though the CBI has stated that it will appeal against the verdict in the Delhi High Court, the damage to its image has already been done.
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What lies ahead?

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- The verdict is confusing as the accusations regarding the pricing of the spectrum as well as the arbitrariness in allocations remain unresolved.
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- It is now up to the CBI to substantiate its claims with proper supporting evidences in higher courts to resolve the case and restore its reputation.
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- The judgment underscores the need for much greater maturity and case-building capability on the part of the CBI.
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- It also highlights the case for making the CBI genuinely independence so as aid it acquire credibility among the larger public.
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Source: Business Standard

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