Credibility Test for CBI

Why in news?

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Corruption Charges on former finance minister has been debated in the parliament.

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What are the charges?

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- The CBI has filed a charge sheet against Former Union Minister P. Chidambaram, his son Karti Chidambaram and 16 others.
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- The charge sheet was filed on the ground that Foreign Investment Promotion Board approval was granted for investments made in Aircel by Global Communication Holdings Service.
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- A Mauritius-based subsidiary of Maxis, a Malaysian conglomerate was involved in the violation of norms.
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- Recently, this issue came on the eve of the debate in Parliament on a no-confidence motion against the Union government.
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What are the concerns with CBI actions?

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- Mr. Chidambaram is accused of cheating and bribery, and having exceeded his authority by clearing investments amounting to Rs. 3,200 crore.
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- But any investment above Rs. 600 crore needed the clearance of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.
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- For a case that essentially turns on documentary evidence, the CBI has taken

unusually long to come to this conclusion.
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- Mr. Chidambaram's statement on the FIPB approval was recorded in December 2014, and since then his son has been under the scanner.
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- The filing of a charge sheet against Mr. Chidambaram ends the uncertainty about the agency's intentions.
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What are the challenges before CBI?

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- The case which involves the charges against Mr. Chidambaram has been originally associated with 2G spectrum case.
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- Given that the main case against former Union Communications Minister relating to the Aircel-Maxis investment was thrown out at the pre-trial stage by the Special Court, the CBI has a greater burden of proof to discharge.
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- In this case Mr. Chidambaram has maintained there was nothing amiss about the FIPB approval, which was given only after being processed at various levels.
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- It may not be enough for the agency to prove that the Aircel-Maxis investment supposedly worth Rs. 180 crore actually had a value of Rs. 3,200 crore if the premium attached to it was taken into account.
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- It also has to establish a clear link between the FIPB approval and some payments received by companies said to be controlled by Mr. Karti.
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- In various instances the Special Judge before whom the charge sheet has been filed, has a record of not accepting theories of quid pro quo behind government decisions without sufficient evidence.
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- Thus the case against Mr. Chidambaram will be a test for the CBI not only on merits, but also in disproving the allegations of political vendetta.
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Source: The Hindu

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