

India's tax department raids BBC offices in Delhi, Mumbai

February 14, 2023

Online Desk: Officials of India's income tax department today carried out a "survey" at the premises of BBC offices in New Delhi and Mumbai as part of an investigation into alleged tax evasion. The officials were inspecting the accounts of BBC's business operations in India, our New Delhi correspondent reports quoting an income tax official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Police sealed off BBC New Delhi building and half a dozen officers were stationed outside the office — which occupies two floors — to prevent people from entering or leaving, according to AFP report.

A BBC employee based in the office told AFP that the tax raid was in progress and that officials were "confiscating all phones". "There is government procedure happening inside the office," an official said, declining to disclose their department. India's Income Tax Department could not be reached for comment by AFP.

Last month, the broadcaster aired a two-part documentary alleging that Modi ordered police to turn a blind eye to sectarian riots in Gujarat state, where he was premier at the time. The violence left at least 1,000 people dead, most of them minority Muslims. India's government blocked videos and tweets sharing links to the documentary using emergency powers under its information technology laws.

Government adviser Kanchan Gupta had slammed the documentary as "hostile propaganda and anti-India garbage". University student groups later organised viewings of the documentary despite campus bans, defying government efforts to stop its spread. Police arrested two dozen students at the prestigious Delhi University after stopping a screening there.