



Press Release
18.04.2024

Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Ranchi Zonal Office has conducted searches in one of the cases of land scam being investigated under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 and arrested four accused persons namely Priya Ranjan Sahay, Irshad Akhtar, Antu Tirkey and Bipin Singh in case of Bhanu Pratap Prasad and Others. In addition, one person namely Afsar Ali has also been arrested and taken into custody after getting him produced in Special PMLA Court on the strength of Production Warrant. Hon'ble PMLA Court has remanded him to ED custody till 22.04.2024. In this case, another accused namely Md. Saddam Hussain is already in ED custody till 20.04.2024. All these 6 persons have been arrested for their role in forgery, tampering & fabrication of land records, thus changing the nature of lands which are designated as non-saleable under Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act (CNT Act), a legislation with objective to protect the land rights of tribal and marginalized communities. During investigation, active involvement of government officials of land revenue department located in Ranchi and Kolkata has also surfaced. Investigation revealed that some of the lands acquired through such falsification and forgery by the above stated accused persons are under illegal possession of Hemant Soren, Ex-C.M. of Jharkhand.

Earlier in the above case, Hemant Soren, Ex-C.M. of Jharkhand and Bhanu Pratap Prasad, a Revenue Official and custodian of original government records, were arrested for acquiring, possessing and concealing the proceeds of crime in the nature of an immovable property admeasuring 8.8 acres at Bariyatu, Ranchi. Prosecution Complaint was filed on 30.03.2024 against them and four other accused persons for their roles in aiding and abetting Hemant Soren in his unlawful acquisition and possession of the said property. The afore-said property worth Rs. 31 Crore (Govt. Value) was also provisionally attached by the ED. Subsequently, Saddam Hussain was arrested on 09.04.2024 for involvement in forgery and falsification of land records.

ED has initiated money laundering investigation in five cases of land scam with similar *modus operandi* on the basis of multiple FIRs registered by Jharkhand Police & Kolkata Police against several persons including government officials. Investigation revealed that a racket of land mafia is active in Jharkhand which is involved in tampering of the land records in Ranchi and Kolkata. Original land records of ownerships are either tampered or concealed to facilitate unlawful acquisition/possession/use of landed properties. Subsequently, on the basis of forged land records, such land parcels are sold to other persons. ED had earlier carried out 51 searches & 9 surveys in such cases and incriminating evidences like forged seals of Land Revenue Department, forged land deeds, records of distribution of Proceeds of Crime among them, photographs doing forgery, evidences of giving bribe to Government officials etc. were seized. Searches have resulted in recovery and seizure of Rs.1.25 Crore (approx.) of cash and further



freezing of Rs. 3.56 Crore worth of balance in bank accounts. In the cases of land scam, ED has provisionally attached tainted land parcels worth Rs. 266 Crore (Commercial Value). Further, 22 accused persons including Hemant Soren, Chhavi Ranjan, IAS (Ex-DC, Ranchi), Bhanu Pratap Prasad (Revenue Sub-Inspector), Amit Kumar Agarwal, Prem Prakash, etc. have been arrested so far and three Prosecution Complaints have been filed by ED in the cases of land scam presently under investigation. The findings of investigation including the land scam are being shared with the Government of Jharkhand from time to time vide 14 references made under section 66 (2) of PMLA.

Further investigation is under progress.
