



Press Release
11.05.2024

Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Ranchi has arrested three accused persons namely Sanjeet Kumar, Md. Irshad and Tapas Ghosh in case of Bhanu Pratap Prasad and Others- one of the cases of land scam being investigated under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 on 9/5/2024. These 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 surfaced. Sanjeet Kumar and Tapas Ghosh worked as contractual employees at the Registrar of Assurances, Kolkata. The original records maintained at Kolkata which were identified to be forged and tampered have been produced upon the order of Hon'ble Special Court (PMLA), Ranchi for forensic examination. Investigation also 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.

ED initiated 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.

ED 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 55 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.1.27 Crore (approx.) of cash and further freezing of Rs. 3.56 Crore of bank accounts' balances. In the cases of land scam, ED has provisionally attached tainted land parcels worth Rs. 266 Crore (Commercial Value). Further, 25 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.

Earlier in the said case, Hemant Soren, Ex-C.M. of Jharkhand and Bhanu Pratap Prasad, a Revenue Official at Ranchi 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, Afshar Ali, Priya Ranjan Sahay, Bipin Singh, Antu Tirkey and Irshad Akhtar were also arrested for their involvement in forgery and falsification of land records.

Further investigation is under progress.
