



## **Press Release**

**28.03.2022**

Enforcement Directorate (ED) has conducted search operations on 24.03.2022 across the Union Territory of J&K in the Arms license case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 against serving/ retired bureaucrats, officials and arms ammunition dealers.

ED initiated money laundering investigation in the said case on the basis of FIRs dated 16.08.2018 registered by the Special Crime Branch of Central Bureau of Investigation, Chandigarh.

Searches have been conducted at 11 different locations including residential premises of Sh. Rajeev Ranjan IAS (former DC, Kupwara), Sh. Itrat Hussain KAS (former DC Kupwara), Ravinder Kumar Bhatt KAS (former ADC Kupwara), Tariq Ather and Gajan Singh (both former judicial clerks at Arms Section, DC Office Kupwara). Residential premises of 6-arms dealers of J&K viz. Amarnath Bhargava (Varun Armoury), his brother Mukesh Bhargava (Bhargava Gun House), Surjeet Singh (Deshmesh Armoury), Mohinder Kotwal (Mohinder Kotwal Arms & Ammunition), Manohar Singh (Swaran Arms & Ammunition) and Devi Dayal Khajuria (Khajuria Arms) were also searched by the ED officers.

Searches were conducted till late night on 24.03.2022 wherein various incriminating documents in the form of property documents and loose papers revealing transactions between the arms dealers/ brokers and Government officers/ officials have been recovered and seized. Also, cash amounting to Rs. 1.58 Crore, 1.76 kgs of gold valuing Rs. 92.30 lakhs (approx) and digital exhibits have been seized during the course of search operation.

The searches conducted were in furtherance of investigation being conducted in the said case wherein it was revealed that bulk issuance of arms licenses has taken place in Jammu and Kashmir between 2012 and 2016 which saw over 2.78 lakh arms licenses issued to various defense and paramilitary personnel by flouting the prescribed guidelines and due procedure in lieu of illicit monetary consideration which was paid to the Government officers/ officials through arms dealers/ brokers and proceeds of crime were generated by conspiracy between Government officers/ officials and Arms dealers and Arms brokers which is a criminal misconduct under Prevention of Corruption Act.

Initial estimation of Proceeds of Crime generated in this case is to the tune of Rs. 40 Crore.

Further investigation in the case is under progress.