

Government of India
Ministry of Finance
Department of Revenue
Central Board of Direct Taxes

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PRESS RELEASE

Income Tax Department steps up actions under Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act : Benami properties of more than Rs. 3500 crore attached

The Income Tax Department has stepped up actions under the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act (the 'Benami Act'), which came into force w.e.f 1st November, 2016. The Act provides for provisional attachment and subsequent confiscation of benami properties, whether movable or immovable. It also allows for prosecution of the beneficial owner, the benamidar and the abettor to benami transactions, which may result in rigorous imprisonment up to 7 years and fine upto 25% of fair market value of the property.

The Department had set up 24 dedicated Benami Prohibition Units (BPUs) under its Investigation Directorates all over India in May, 2017 to ensure swift action in respect of Benami properties.

Due to intensive efforts undertaken by the Department, provisional attachment has been made in more than **900 cases** of properties under the Act. These include plots of land, flats, shops, jewellery, vehicles, deposits in bank accounts, fixed deposits etc. The value of properties under attachment is more than **Rs. 3500 crore** including immovable properties of more than **Rs. 2900 crore**.

In five cases, the provisional attachments of Benami properties, amounting to more than **Rs. 150 crore** have been **confirmed by the Adjudicating Authority**. In one such case, it was established that a real estate company had acquired about 50 acres of land, valued at more than Rs.110 crore, using the names of certain persons of no means as *benamidars*. This was corroborated from the sellers of the land as well as the brokers involved. In another case, post demonetization, two assesseees were found depositing demonetized currency into multiple bank accounts in the names of their employees, associates etc. to be ultimately remitted to their bank accounts. The total amount attempted to be remitted to the beneficial owners was about Rs. 39 crore. In yet another case, a cash amount of Rs. 1.11 crore was intercepted from a vehicle with a person who denied the ownership of this cash. Subsequently, no one claimed ownership of this cash and it was held to be benami property by the Adjudicating Authority.

The Department is committed to continue its concerted drive against black money and action against Benami transactions will continue to be intensified.

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