

Tax authorities attach benami properties worth Rs. 3,500 crore

The Finance Ministry on Thursday said that due to the Income Tax Department's intensive efforts, provisional attachment had been made in more than 900 cases of 'benami' properties worth more than Rs. 3,500 crore.

"The department is committed to continue its concerted drive against black money and action against benami transactions will continue to be intensified," the Ministry said in a statement.

Earlier, the department had stepped up action under the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act that provides for provisional attachment and subsequent confiscation of benami properties. The Act also allows for prosecution of the beneficial owner, the benamidar and the abettor to benami transactions, which may result in rigorous imprisonment up to seven years and a fine up to 25% of fair market value of the property.

Dedicated units

The department had set up 24 dedicated Benami Prohibition Units under its Investigation Directorates all over India in May 2017, to ensure swift action in respect of benami properties, the Ministry said.

In five of the 900 cases, provisional attachments of benami properties amounting to more than Rs. 150 crore had been confirmed by the Adjudicating Authority, it said. 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.

In another case, post demonetisation, two assesseees were found depositing demonetised currency into multiple bank accounts in the names of their employees and associates to be ultimately remitted to their bank accounts, the Ministry said, adding that the total amount attempted to be remitted to the beneficial owners was about Rs. 39 crore.

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