

Benami Transactions in Madhya Pradesh



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In recent years, Madhya Pradesh has seen a rise in Benami transactions, particularly within its tiger reserves. The Income Tax Department's Benami Prohibition Unit (BPU) has identified and attached properties linked to these illegal transactions in the Pench Tiger Reserve, area known for its biodiversity and tourism.

Benami Transactions Overview

Benami transactions involve purchasing property in someone else's name to conceal the true ownership. Under the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act 2016, such practices are illegal. Beneficial owners are the individuals who ultimately benefit from the property, while Benamidars hold it nominally.

Pench Tiger Reserve Context

Pench Tiger Reserve straddles Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. It covers an area of approximately 1,179.63 km² in Madhya Pradesh. Known for its rich wildlife, it is also a popular tourist destination, famously linked to "The Jungle Book."

Recent Discoveries

The BPU has detected three Benami transactions within the Pench Tiger Reserve. These involve land for two resorts and a planned resort, all acquired illegally through tribal proxies. The total value of these properties is around Rs 4 crore.

Legal Framework

In Scheduled Tribe areas of Madhya Pradesh, selling tribal land to non-tribals is prohibited. Only leasing is permitted without district collector approval. This legal framework aims to protect tribal land rights.

Enforcement Actions

The IT Department has attached the three identified properties under the amended Benami law. This move marks step in curbing illegal land transactions in sensitive ecological zones.

Wider Implications

The detection of these transactions could set a precedent for future investigations. With many resorts under scrutiny, further actions may follow as the IT Department expands its focus on tribal areas.

Statistics of Attachments

Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of Benami properties attached in India, exceeding 1,400. The total estimated value of these properties ranges from Rs 900 crore to Rs 950 crore, denoting the scale of the issue.

Future Outlook

With ongoing investigations, the IT Department is likely to uncover more Benami transactions in the region. The focus on protecting tribal land rights and preserving ecological integrity remains paramount.