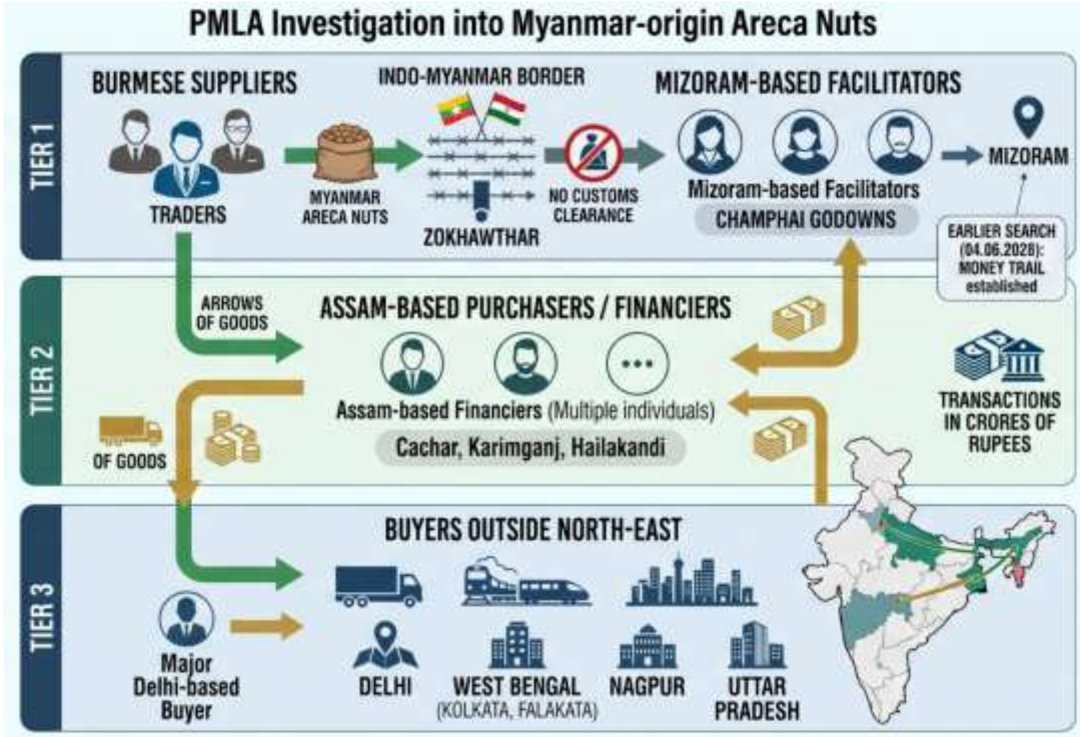
PRESS RELEASE
06.08.2026

Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Aizawl Sub-Zonal Office has conducted search operations under Section 17(1) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 on 05.08.2026, at ten (10) residential/business premises linked with Jakir Hussain, Kabir Hussain, Anjan Kumar Paul, Pinku Paul, Romi Jain, Anowar Hussain, Khalil Uddin and Dipankar Deb, located in Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj (Sribhumi) districts of Assam and in Delhi, in connection with investigation into an organised network engaged in cross-border smuggling of Areca nuts from Myanmar into Mizoram and their onward sale and distribution to purchasers/financiers based in Assam and Delhi.

ED initiated investigation on the basis of FIR registered by ACB, CBI, Imphal against unknown public servants and private persons, pursuant to directions issued by the Hon'ble Gauhati High Court vide order dated 16.07.2024 in PIL No. 5/2022. The FIR/PIL alleged large-scale smuggling of Areca nuts from Myanmar into Champhai, Mizoram, using fraudulent e-way bills and forged documents, despite owners not being GST registered. E-way bills amounting to approximately Rs.86.25 Crore under CGST and Rs.251.19 Crore under SGST were found to have been issued during F.Y. 2021-22 to 2023-24, with Zokhawthar emerging as a major transit point.

ED investigation has revealed a layered, three-tier structure used for smuggling and sale of Myanmar-origin Areca nuts. At the first tier, Burmese suppliers handed over consignments of Areca nuts, without customs clearance, to Mizoram-based facilitators at godowns established at Champhai, near the Indo-Myanmar border. These facilitators, namely Smt. Lalhnemi, Smt. Zosangpuii, Zonunsanga and others arranged onward supply of the smuggled Areca nuts to a group of purchasers/financiers based in Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi districts of Assam. Bank analysis has revealed that transactions in Crores of rupees were conducted between the parties.

At the third tier, the Assam-based financiers further sold Areca nuts, or routed sale proceeds, to purchasers/financiers based outside the North-East. Romi Jain, proprietor of M/s Ganpati Traders, Delhi, was found to have conducted huge transactions with Silchar and Mizoram based entities involved in the illegal smuggling of Areca nuts. Investigation has revealed that Myanmar-origin Areca nuts procured through this chain were ultimately supplied to buyers situated in Delhi, West Bengal (including Kolkata and Falakata), Nagpur and Uttar Pradesh.



Earlier, search action under Section 17 of PMLA was conducted on 04.06.2026 at nine (9) premises in Champhai, Mizoram, covering persons/entities engaged in procurement of smuggled Areca nuts from Burmese suppliers. Financial analysis of the bank accounts covered during the said search, read together with statements recorded under Section 50 of PMLA of the Mizoram-based facilitators, established a money trail leading to the persons at Silchar and Delhi.

During the course of the current search and recording of statements under Section 17 of PMLA, several persons admitted to having remitted the aforesaid amounts to the Mizoram-based facilitators and entities towards purchase of Burmese-origin Areca nuts, corroborating the money trail already established during investigation. It also emerged that multiple bank accounts had been opened and operated in the names of persons other than the actual beneficial owners, apparently to route and layer the sale proceeds of the smuggled Areca nuts. These persons paid Mizoram-based facilitators money for using their bank accounts and business permits including GST registrations for Burmese-origin Areca nut trade. They arranged for purchase of smuggled Areca nuts from Myanmar and sold them to purchasers all across the country through the businesses of Mizoram-based facilitators.

During the search operations, signed blank cheques, property documents and other incriminating documents relating to the money trail of the Proceeds of Crime, digital devices and mobile phones containing incriminating material were recovered and seized.

Further investigation is under progress.