PRESS RELEASE
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Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Panaji Zonal Office, has conducted search operations at nine premises located in Goa, New Delhi, and Gurugram under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, including the premises of the Sarpanch and the Secretary of Arpora-Nagao Panchayat, in connection with an ongoing investigation against SaurabhLuthra and others.The searches form part of an investigation into alleged money-laundering activities linked to the owners of the nightclub **Birch by Romeo Lane, Arpora, Goa**, where a tragic fire incident occurred, resulting in the death of 25 persons.

ED investigation initiated on the basis of two FIRs registered by the Goa Police, which contain certain scheduled offences under the PMLA. The searches have revealed serious irregularities in statutory compliance, including the procurement of licences on the basis of forged documents and the continued operation of commercial activities despite the absence of mandatory approvals from competent authorities.

During the course of the search operations, it was revealed that the entity operating Birch by Romeo Lane generated revenue amounting to Rs22 Crore (approx.) during FY 2023–24 and FY 2024–25. This revenue, prima facie, suspected to constitute Proceeds of Crime, as the club was functioning without the necessary statutory licences and on the basis of forged No Objection Certificates/licences from various departments. Evidence relating to foreign remittances routed through group entities was also unearthed during the searches, and possible contraventions of relevant laws are being examined.

Further investigation revealed that funds amounting to crores of rupees, generated from the illegal operation of the establishment, were diverted to personal bank accounts of individuals as well as to accounts of other group entities. Various incriminating documents and digital devices relevant to the investigation were recovered and seized during the searches. In addition, bank accounts of persons and entities suspected to be involved in holding Proceeds of Crime have been frozen under the provisions of the PMLA, 2002.

The investigation is also focused on examining any possible corruption angle and subsequent laundering of Proceeds of Crime by other persons involved (two such persons having been recently arrested by the Goa Police).

Further investigation is under progress.