Press Release
13.11.2026

ED Arrests Saurabh Chandrakar, Promoter of Mahadev Online Book, after a Three-Year Pursuit; Special Court Grants Seven Days' ED Custody

Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has arrested Saurabh Chandrakar, co-owner and promoter of the Mahadev Online Book illegal betting syndicate, under Section 19 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) on 13.11.2026, with the permission of the Special Court (PMLA), Raipur. The Court has remanded him to ED custody for seven days till 19th November for further investigation. He is the first promoter of the syndicate to be brought back to India.

As per the facts of the case, Saurabh Chandrakar and another co-promoter Ravi Uppal operated “Mahadev Online Book” (various online betting websites) from Head Office in Dubai through a franchise of “betting panels” across India and the UAE. Player money went through bank accounts held in other people's names and left India through hawala. ED's main complaint of 20.10.2023 estimated the syndicate's earnings at about Rs. 450 crore a month.

Saurabh Chandrakar did not answer the summons issued to him by ED in September 2023 and continued to evade investigation by law enforcement agencies. On ED's application, the Special Court issued a Non-Bailable Warrant against him on 04.09.2023, and shortly thereafter, INTERPOL also published a Red Notice against him on ED's request. His challenge to the warrant was dismissed by the High Court of Chhattisgarh on 22.03.2025. He obtained a passport of Vanuatu while holding an Indian passport, and even claimed before the Special Court that he had given up Indian citizenship on 28.06.2022.

ED pursued his return through an extradition request issued by the Special Court to the Sultanate of Oman under the India-Oman Extradition Treaty, sent through diplomatic channels. The Court of Appeal, Muscat ordered his extradition on 08.10.2026. It rejected his plea on citizenship on the confirmation of the Embassy of India that he is an Indian national, and records that he was apprehended while departing through Muscat International Airport on a forged travel document. A team of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the nodal agency for such matters, brought him back from Muscat on 01.11.2026. The cooperation of the authorities of the Sultanate of Oman is acknowledged.

In this case ED has so far searched about 190 premises, seized or frozen about Rs. 2,000 crore and attached property now valued at about Rs. 3,500 crore, about Rs. 1,800 crore of it abroad, including 22 immovable properties in Dubai. It has filed six prosecution complaints against 116 accused. Saurabh Chandrakar is the fifteenth person arrested by ED in this case.

ED followed the money from panel operators through the Dubai Head Office to hawala handlers and share-market investors. It froze securities of about Rs. 236 crore held by Dubai companies in September 2023. In July 2026 ED arrested Vikas Garg, whose companies received about Rs. 940 crore of betting proceeds, of which about Rs. 766 crore went into the acquisition of the United States company Ebix Inc. ED has attached about Rs. 941 crore in that limb. Saurabh Chandrakar's wedding at Ras Al Khaimah in February 2023 cost about Rs. 200 crore in cash, with three chartered aircraft from Nagpur. ED traced that money through the Event Company, hotels and angadia firms, and the guest list it recovered identified the management of the syndicate.

In ED custody, Saurabh Chandrakar will be confronted with the statements of his associates, digital data and documents concerning his foreign entities and evidences of commission of offence of money laundering.

Further investigation is under progress.