



Press Release
04.06.2026

ED conducts searches at 9 premises in Champhai, Mizoram in Myanmar Areca Nut Smuggling and Money Laundering case involving proceeds of crime of over Rs.970 Crore

Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Aizawl Sub-Zonal Office conducted search operations under Section 17(1) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 at 9 premises in Champhai, Mizoram on 04.06.2026. The searches were conducted at the residential and business premises of Smt. Lalrempari, Smt. Lahnemi (Proprietor, M/s Rem Rem & Beki Store), Sangneihvela (Proprietor, M/s SNV Store), Thangkhanmunga (Proprietor, M/s CS Store), Rothuamluia (Proprietor, M/s NS Enterprises), Lalremmawia (Proprietor, M/s S&R Hardware Store), Laldua (Proprietor, M/s JH Family Enterprise), Zonunsanga (Proprietor, M/s Mami Store), and Smt. Zosangpuii.

ED initiated investigation on the basis of FIR registered by the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB), CBI, Imphal in connection with a large-scale smuggling racket involving dry areca nuts illegally imported from Myanmar into India through Champhai, Mizoram. The FIR was registered pursuant to directions issued by the Hon'ble Gauhati High Court vide order dated 16.07.2024 in PIL No. 5/2022. The scheduled offences are punishable under Sections 120B, 420, 467 and 471 of the Indian Penal Code, which are scheduled offences under Part A of the Schedule to the PMLA, 2002.

ED investigation revealed that Burmese nationals smuggled dry areca nuts across the Tiu River into India without customs clearance at Zokhawthar and Champhai, and handed over consignments to local facilitators at the border. The local facilitators stored the smuggled areca nuts in godowns at Champhai and coordinated their transportation to Vairengte at the Assam-Mizoram border. The operations were financed by Silchar (Assam) based traders and financiers who remitted large sums through banking channels into the accounts of the Mizoram-based facilitators. Payments to Burmese suppliers were made in Indian currency and subsequently converted into Burmese currency through money exchangers operating near the border. The investigation further revealed that e-way bills amounting to Rs.251.19 Crore (SGST) and Rs.86.25 Crore (CGST) were fraudulently issued in Champhai district during the period 2021-2024 for movement of areca nuts, using forged plantation certificates and false customs clearance documents, despite the plantation owners not being registered under GST.

Statements recorded from various persons under Section 50 of the PMLA established that local facilitators received commissions of Rs.2 to Rs.15 per kilogram for procurement, transportation, escorting, and customs-release-related activities. A key element of the modus operandi was the use of local persons as front claimants before Customs authorities to secure provisional release of seized consignments, with payments of Rs.20 Lakh to over Rs.1 Crore made towards Customs release proceedings per seizure. In several seizure cases, unrelated Bills of Entry were fraudulently submitted before Customs authorities to project smuggled areca nuts as legally imported goods. Analysis of the bank accounts of the accused persons revealed that Proceeds of Crime aggregating over Rs. 970 Crore were routed through multiple accounts over the period 2013 to 2025.

During the course of the search operations, incriminating documents, including title deeds and property documents pertaining to immovable properties held in the names of accused persons and their family members, business records, and electronic devices including mobile phones were seized under the provisions of the PMLA, 2002.

Further investigation is under progress.







