



Press Release
17.01.2025

Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Raipur Zonal Office has arrested Kawasi Lakhma (MLA) on 15.01.2025 under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 in **Liquor scam case of Chhattisgarh**. He was produced before the Hon'ble Special Court (PMLA), Raipur and the Hon'ble Court has granted ED custody of Kawasi Lakhma for 6 days i.e. till 21.01.2025. Kawasi Lakhma was the Excise Minister in the state of Chhattisgarh during the material period of liquor scam.

ED initiated investigation on the basis of FIR registered by ACB/EOW Chhattisgarh under various sections of IPC, 1860 and Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 in the said Liquor scam in the State of Chhattisgarh.

ED investigation revealed that Kawasi Lakhma was aware of the complete affairs of the Excise Department including liquor scam, yet he did nothing to stop the illegal and unauthorized operations. He played an important role in policy change which led to introduction of FL-10A license in the state of Chhattisgarh. He was an integral part of the syndicate and actively assisted the syndicate by maneuvering process and procedures as per their direction. Investigation conducted has revealed that Kawasi Lakhma was receiving not less than Rs 2 Crore per month out of Proceeds of Crime (POC) being generated out of the liquor scam. Investigation conducted by ED has been able to collect evidence linking the use of POC obtained by Kawasi Lakhma in construction of immovable properties.

ED investigation has revealed that the corruption in liquor scam (which took place between 2019 to 2022) was resorted to in multiple ways:

- PART-A Commission:** Bribe was collected from the “various distillers” on the basis of “each Case of liquor procured from them by the CSMCL (State body for purchase and sale of liquor)”.

- PART-B Kacha liquor sale:** Sale of unaccounted kacha off-the-books Country Liquor. In this case, not even a single rupee reached the State Exchequer, and all the sale proceeds were pocketed by the Syndicate. The illegal liquor was sold from State-run shops only.

- PART-C commission:** Bribes taken from distillers to allow them to make a cartel and have fixed market share.

- Commission from FL-10A** License Holders who were introduced to earn in foreign liquor segment also.

ED investigation has revealed that Chhattisgarh Liquor scam resulted in massive loss to the State Exchequer and filled the pockets of the beneficiaries of the Liquor Syndicate with more than Rs 2100 Crore of illegal POC.

Earlier, Anil Tuteja, Ex-IAS officer, Arvind Singh, Trilok Singh Dhillon, Anwar Dhebar and Arun Pati Tripathi were also arrested by ED in the matter.

Further investigation is under progress.