

CT No. 08/2025

Directorate of Enforcement vs Lalit Kumar Sahdev & Ors.

ECIR DLZO-I/04/2021

DLCT11-000132-2025

15.02.2025

Fresh complaint under Section 44 and 45 of Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002 filed. It be checked and registered.

Present: Sh. Atul Tripathi, Ld. Special PP for ED.

Documents of the present complaint case filed on record.

Heard on the point of cognizance and perused the file.

The facts in brief are that on the basis of source information about illegal possession of Ivory Trophy and illegal trading of the same in violation of the Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972, matter was taken up by CBI. A team was constituted including officials of CBI, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and independent witnesses to lay the trap.

During the trap, CBI officials reached at the shop of Lalit Kumar Sahdev who had shown two ivory trophies made of Elephant tusks. CBI official T. D. Tripathi and Satyabir Singh acted as buyers of the said trophies. After the deal was settled for

purchase of the said trophies, wild life inspector A. Pragatheesh inspected the said trophies and confirmed their genuineness. CBI team revealed their identity to Lalit Kumar Sahdev (A-1) and Vijay Kumar Chauhan (A-2) who could not produce any document to prove the legal possession and trading of the said items which were made from elephant tusk. Ms. Ankita Naik witnessed the illegal possession of ivory trophies by Lalit Kumar Sahdev. Lalit Kumar Sahdev and Vijay Kumar Chauhan were arrested. CBI filed a complaint for the offence punishable under Section 120-B IPC and u/s. 51 r/w Section 40, 49 and 49B of Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972 and filed the charge-sheet on 31.08.2019.

On 29.01.2021, the present ECIR was registered for investigation under Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002. During the course of investigation statements of Shubham Tomar and Ms. Ankita Naik were recorded under Section 50 of PMLA 2002. Statement of accused Lalit Kumar Sahdev was recorded under Section 50 of PMLA in which he stated that he was possessing two ivory trophies just for polishing them on the instructions of Neeraj Nigam (since deceased). Lalit Kumar Sahdev knowingly assisted Neeraj Nigam in dealing with proceeds of crime i.e. two ivory trophies and further he is projecting the possession of ivory trophies as legitimate by claiming that his role is restricted to just polishing of ivory trophies. Statement of Vijay Kumar Chauhan was also recorded

wherein he admitted that he took part in selling the trophies. Statement of Ms.Pratiksha Nigam wife of Neeraj Nigam was recorded wherein it was revealed that Neeraj Nigam was the owner of the said trophies and Neeraj Nigam had handed over the said ivory trophies to Lalit Kumar Sahdev for sale.

It is stated that ivory trophies seized by CBI is considered "Proceeds of Crime" under Section 2 (1)(u) of PMLA 2002 read with Section 2 (1)(v) of PMLA 2002 as it was obtained through criminal activities related to a scheduled offence.

It is stated that accused Lalit Kumar Sahdev was directly involved in possession of the Proceeds of Crime and he was knowingly a party and actually involved in using the same to generate further proceeds of crime through criminal activities. Accused Vijay Kumar Chauhan aided accused Lalit Kumar Sahdev in dealing of proceeds of crime in the form of two ivory trophies. He searched for desirous buyers for the said items so that they can be sold to generate further proceeds of crime. Neeraj Nigam was directly involved in acquisition of the proceeds of crime as defined under PMLA and he was knowingly a party and actually involved in the process and actively connected with the proceeds of crime including its generation, possession and attempted to use them. However, accused Neeraj Nigam expired on 14.07.2019.

I have examined the complaint filed by Enforcement Directorate against the accused persons. I have also given due consideration to the documents and statements of witnesses.

In my opinion, there is sufficient material to proceed against the accused persons and accordingly cognizance is taken for the offence of money laundering under Section 3 punishable u/s 4 of PMLA 2002.

Let both the accused persons Lalit Kumar Sahdev and Vijay Kumar Chauhan be summoned for the next date i.e. 12.03.2025.

IO is directed to prepare copies for both the accused persons and to remain present on the next date.

(Anju Bajaj Chandna)
Principal District & Sessions Judge-
cum-Special Judge (PC Act) (CBI),
Rouse Avenue District Court
New Delhi/15.02.2025