

VB arrests owners of Mittal Traders for misappropriating panchayat funds amounting to Rs. 82 lakh

VB books three Panchayat officials, Sarpanch for embezzlement

Chandigarh April 12 :

Punjab Vigilance Bureau today arrested Surinderpal Mittal and his son Vineet Mittal proprietors of Mittal Traders Sangrur for misappropriating funds of Gram Panchayat Jheorheri, SAS Nagar district to the tune of Rs. 82 lakh in lieu of supplying 2,474 reinforced concrete (RCC) benches in connivance with department officials.

Disclosing this here today a spokesperson of vigilance bureau said in this regard FIR No. 2 dated 20-2-2018 had already been registered against Surinderpal Mittal, Vineet Mittal, Jeetpal Mittal of Mittal Traders along with BDPO Jatinder Singh Dhillon, Panchayat Secretary Ravinder Singh, Gram Sarpanch Gurpal Singh and DDPO Gurwinder Singh u/s 409, 420, 465, 467, 471, 120-B of IPC and 13 (1) (d), 13 (2) of Prevention of Corruption Act at VB police station SAS Nagar. Further investigations in this case were under progress and the accused to be produced in the special court tomorrow.

Revealing the facts he added that the above mentioned panchayats officials have issued ordered to the controversial firm for supply of 2474 RCC benches at a cost of Rs. 82 lakh in January 3, 2017 but these benches were not supplied to the village panchayats and all the accused including Mittals have misappropriated funds in connivance with each other. "The accused panchayat officials have issued two cheques amounting to Rs. 41 lakh each from the account of gram panchayat Jheorheri to the Mittal Traders on January 3, 2017 but both the bills were submitted on January 24 and January 25, 2017 to the panchayat", he added.

The spokesperson further informed that the gram panchayat and concerned officials have omitted the necessary procedure to float tenders to procure huge quantity of benches but they called quotations for the same from private firms. The Mittal Traders submitted their quotation to the panchayat along with two others firms – TR Traders Sangrur and Quality Sports and Stationary Stores Sangrur on January 20, 2017 but all the owners of these three firms were related to each other. During investigations it was found that Mittal Traders and other firms have no unit or experience to manufacture RCC benches but the officials called quotations from the accused firms based at Sangrur city.

He added that it was also noticed that the accused officials have not prescribed any specifications and quality for the controversial procurement. Even no prior permission was obtained from the appropriate authority for the same. In addition to this no demand was sought from the concerned village panchayats under the Block Panchayat Samiti Kharar to supply them such benches. "The accused officials have not entered these benches in the stock register of Samiti and no record was found to issues such benches to the concerned panchayats", he pointed out.