

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## BBC India's 'foreign exchange violations' under ED scanner

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has initiated an inquiry into the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) India under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) for suspected violations.

It is learnt that the agency has also asked some BBC India officials to submit the documents which it has to scrutinise as part of the proceedings. On Thursday, one official appeared before the investigators.

The move came about two months after the Income-Tax Department in February surveyed the Delhi and Mumbai offices of the BBC, and allegedly uncovered multiple irregularities, including non-payment of tax on certain remittances that were not disclosed to the authorities as income in India.



ED has reportedly asked for submission of documents.

The surveys were carried out weeks after the BBC had released a two-part documentary *India: the Modi Question*, related to the 2002 Gujarat riots and situation of minorities in India. The I-T Department had then said that the income/profits shown by various group entities was not commensurate with the scale of operations in India.

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## Directorate of Enforcement (ED)

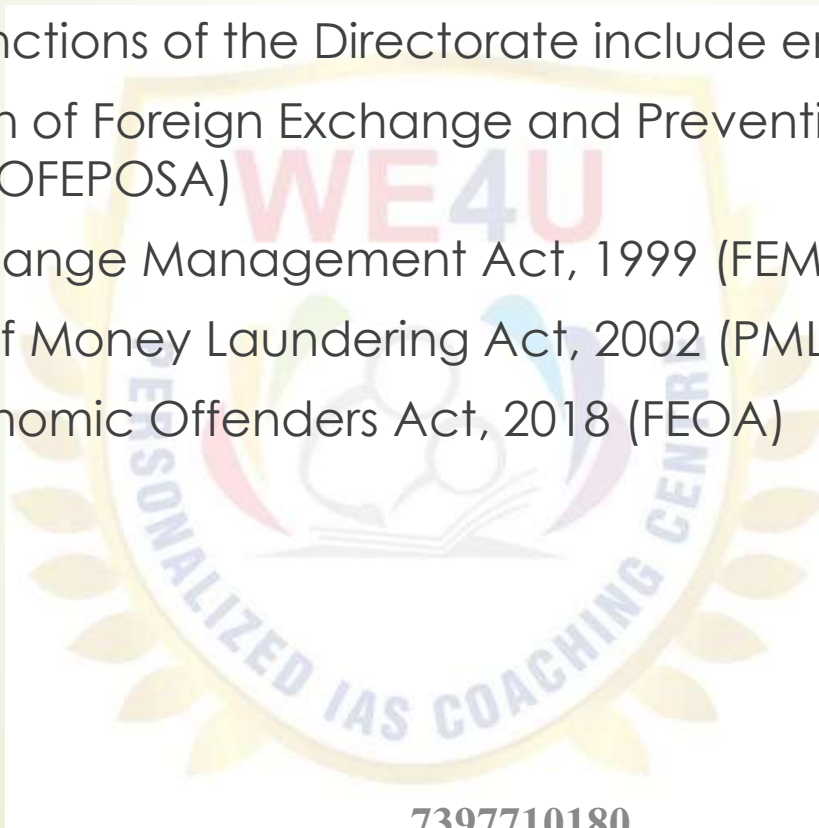
The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) is a multi-disciplinary organization mandated with investigation of offences of money laundering and violations of foreign exchange laws.

It functions under the Department of Revenue of the Ministry of Finance.

As a premier financial investigation agency of the Government of India, the Enforcement Directorate functions in strict compliance with the Constitution and Laws of India.

The statutory functions of the Directorate include enforcement of following Acts:

1. Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act, 1974 (COFEPOSA)
2. Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA)
3. Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA)
4. Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA)



## 'Lok Ayukta cannot probe selection of poll candidates'

A Division Bench of the Kerala HC has come up with the ruling in connection with 2014 LS polls; case relates to the selection of Bennet P. Abraham as the LDF candidate in Thiruvananthapuram

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOCHI

**A** Division Bench of the Kerala High Court has held that the Lok Ayukta cannot investigate matters relating to selection of candidates by political parties for contesting elections.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice S. Manikumar and Justice Murali Purushothaman made the ruling recently while allowing a petition filed by CPI leader Pannian Ravindran challenging the Lok Ayukta order holding that the complainant seeking a probe into the selection of Bennet P. Abraham as Left Democratic Front (LDF) candi-



**●●** We are unable to subscribe to the view of the Lok Ayukta that selection of candidate by a political party is a matter in which the public or the community at large has an interest

date in the Thiruvananthapuram constituency in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections was maintainable.

### Illegal gratification

The complainant, Shamnad A., alleged that Mr. Abraham was selected on receiving illegal gratification by party leaders.

The Bench observed

that the selection of candidates was an internal affair of the political party and the party selected its candidates as per its constitution, political principles, policies, winnability, etc. "Once the candidate is set up by the political party, then, on the date of poll, the public exercise their electoral right for any of

the candidates in the fray. Therefore, we are unable to subscribe to the view of the Lok Ayukta that selection of candidate by a political party is a matter in which the public or the community at large has an interest," the court observed.

When the petition came up for hearing, Ranjith Thampan, senior counsel for the petitioner, contended that allegations levelled by the complainant against the CPI State leaders would not amount to maladministration and the complaint in respect of selection of candidate for election to the parliamentary constituency was not maintainable.

The **Lokayukta** is the Indian Parliamentary Ombudsman, executed into power, through and for, each of the State Governments of India.

It is an anti-corruption authority. The object of Lokayukta system in a state is to make investigation of grievances, allegations against public servants.

Maharashtra was first in this respect with its Lokayukta body established in 1971.

Appointment:

The lokayukta and upalokayukta are appointed by the Governor of the state. While appointing, the governor in most of the states consults (a) the chief justice of the state high court, and (b) the leader of Opposition in the state legislative assembly.



## Modi recalls ancient Tamil inscription on democratic politics

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Greeting Tamilians on the occasion of *Puthandu*, the Tamil New Year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi harked back to ancient Tamil culture and the various references to democratic politics in it, stating that an over 1,100 year old inscription from Tamil Nadu talks about rules for a local body, including provisions for disqualifying a member.

He was speaking at a function to mark the occasion, at the residence of Union Minister L. Murugan, where Telangana Governor Tamsil Soundarajan was also present.

"India is the world's oldest democracy. It is the mother of democracy. There are numerous historical references to this. An important reference is in Tamil Nadu," he said.

He added that Tamil Nadu's Uthiramerur, an inscription around 1100-1200 years old, gives a glimpse of democratic values in the country. "The inscription

found there is like a local constitution for the gram sabha. In this, it has been told how the Assembly should run, what should be the process to elect the members. Not only that, in that era, they had decided how a member would be disqualified," he said.

"As a country, it is our responsibility to take forward this culture and tradition but we all know what happened earlier. Now I have been given this responsibility," he said.

Speaking of his deep regard for Tamil Nadu and its people, Mr. Modi spoke at length about his visit to Jaffna in Sri Lanka, and being the first Prime Minister of India to do so.

He also spoke of the successful organisation of the "Kashi-Tamil Sangamam" held in his Lok Sabha constituency of Varanasi.

Referring to Sangam literature, he said, "It is there that we hear of descriptions of various kinds of millets or Shri Anna, which our government is also promoting."

The Uttaramerur inscription, dated around 920 A.D. in the reign of Parantaka Chola [907-955 A.D.], testifies to the historical fact that nearly 1,100 years ago, a village had an elaborate and highly refined electoral system and even a written constitution prescribing the mode of elections.

The inscription gives astonishing details about the constitution of wards, the qualification of candidates standing for elections, the disqualification norms, the mode of election, the constitution of committees with elected members, the functions of those committees, the power to remove the wrongdoer, etc. The villagers even had the right to recall the elected representatives if they failed in their duty.

### ► Sabha and Ur

- Uthiramerur had two village assemblies: **Gram Sabha** and **Ur**.
- Sabha was exclusively a Brahmin assembly, while the Ur was made up of people belonging to all classes.
- Sabha managed land sales, endowment fund for dredging a tank, and assigned duties to the Ur for managing deserted land.
- Sabha assembled in the hall of the local temple and was summoned through beating of the drums.
- The inscriptions contained references to **variyaars**, the executive officers subordinate to the Sabha.

- The executive powers were given to committees called **Variyams** during the Chola king Parantaka I's reign (907–955).
- Each variyam constituted 6 to 12 members, depending on the importance of its functions.
- The first inscription (dated 919 CE) described the rules for electing committee members.
- The second inscription (dated 921 CE) described some amendments to these rules to make them more practical.



- The inscription lays down the qualifications for a nominee, including ownership of tax-paying land, residence on self-owned land, age between 35 and 70 years, knowledge of mantras and the Brahmanas, and not being associated with certain offenses or activities.
- The candidates were selected via **Kudavoloi** (pot of palm leaf tickets) system.
- The tenure of a committee member was 360 days.
- Anyone found guilty of an offense was immediately removed from the office.

**THANK YOU**

