

New Aadhaar-linked registry to fight benami

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New Delhi: Stepping up its crusade against benami properties, the Modi government is now planning to create a central registry — a database of all commercial and residential properties — which will be linked to Aadhaar. A software to facilitate this kind of database has been prepared and a pilot scheme has been launched in Rajasthan, Odisha and Karnataka.

The decision to create a central registry was taken after the Centre's demonetisation move. The step is being seen as part of the NDA regime's ongoing campaign against black money, and is aimed at identifying benami as well as illegally registered properties and curb flow of shady funds through this route.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has sought views of the Niti Aayog as well as the land reforms department of the rural development ministry in this regard. According to highly-placed sources, both the departments have suggested that all the states should be taken on board.

In fact, the land reforms department has developed a software with the help of National Informatics Centre (NIC) to facilitate linking of registration of all domestic as well as commercial properties with Aadhaar numbers. Rajasthan, Odisha and Karnataka have already tested this software on a pilot basis, sources informed this newspaper.

Once the software is adopted by all the states, it will help in porting the data related to registered and Aadhaar-linked properties to the central registry.

In addition to this, the provision of preparing a central registry may also be included in the Registration Act of 1908, which is currently being studied by a group of ministers (GoM).

The proposal to set up a registry of this kind has received a go-ahead from the Niti Aayog and comments from the states are likely to be invited soon, sources said. The PMO mooted the proposal after receiving feedback from various groups and stakeholders in the post-demonetisation scenario. Subsequently, the Niti Aayog was

asked to look into the possibilities of setting up a central registry of all domestic and commercial properties to be linked to Aadhaar.