Digitisation drive: Land records to be linked to Aadhaar

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In order to further push digitisation and fight against black money, the Centre has asked all state governments' revenue departments to register all land records online and link Aadhaar numbers to each of these transactions, including existing land records. Senior officials said, "Once the state authorities are able to link all PAN with Aadhaar numbers to the land record databases, the investigation officials and tax department can make searches to match property values with annual income declared and tax return files."

Under the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016, that came into force last November, the government can now confiscate property without paying any compensation to the buyer if they find any discrepancies.

Sources said this will put an end to old malpractices of fraud and embezzlement in land transactions. Moreover, it will also ensure the role of various middlemen is diminished and bribes to revenue officers is eliminated. Once complete, this will be a valuable step in catching those with benami properties across the country, the official added.

The official said the states' revenue departments have already firmed up a proposal to this effect whereby it may become mandatory for land-owners to furnish their Aadhaar numbers and get it duly verified. For, new owners it was already made mandatory to furnish the Aadhaar and PAN at the time of property registration.

Real estate is the most popular means to park unaccounted money, and is considered the hub for generation of black money where a large number of Benami transactions take place. Experts believe the Amendment Act will further reduce black money transactions, thereby adjusting prices as per the set land value, making it accessible for buyers to buy a property without hassles. States like Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are among the states whose land revenue departments are in the process of linking Aadhaar with land records and making it complete digitised.

The Maharashtra government is already in discussions with the National Informatics Centre to link the land records and property ownership with the Aadhaar number of the owner. For instance in Uttar Pradesh, the Noida administration has already digitised the physical records of over 16,000 institutional, industrial and commercial properties.