

Jaiprakash Gupta & Shantanu Gupta

While investigating a case against Care Health Insurance Limited (CHIL), under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the Enforcement Directorate (ED) came across a legal opinion of the Senior Advocate Shri. Arvind Datar on an alleged ESPO scam. The ED promptly issued a summons to the advocate to appear before it. It issued a similar summons to the senior Supreme Court Advocate Shri. Pratap Venugopal, who incidentally was an independent director of the said company. When there was an uproar against the summons, the ED withdrew them, fearing a backlash. The issue was taken up before the Hon. CJI by the Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association (SCAORA). He was requested to take suo motu cognizance of the overreach of the ED despite the clear mandate of Sections 132 and 134 of Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam protecting lawyer-client communications from disclosure. The Association emphasized that such summons to the lawyers was ‘impermissible transgression of S.....