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GVMC told to stop construction of high-rise building

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Land was allegedly regularised in violation of rules

Special Officer Urban Land Ceiling has asked the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) to cut its water supply, revoke its building permission and stop all construction activity at the site being developed into a high-rise apartment complex by Clover Associates near R.K. Beach. The action was initiated after the Principal Secretary (Revenue) had directed the district Collector to launch prosecution proceedings against the persons concerned in the alleged land scam and also asked the local police or CID to conduct an investigation. The alleged scam concerns the regularisation of ULC (urban land ceiling) land measuring 8,329 sq. m., under survey number 1011 in Waltair Ward, near the prime location of R K Beach, in favour of two private parties and a contended 'fictitious' cooperative society. The alleged irregularities were first exposed by *The Hindu* in a report dated February 15. The ULC land was regularised in favour of Kasi Naga Kanaka Brahman, P. Venkatapathi Raju and a society by name Sri Rama Cooperative Building Society by the Revenue Department in Hyderabad vide four GOs 455, 256, 398 and 424, despite the then district Collector A.K. Singhal's written communication to the government, suggesting that the two

individual parties were trying to regularise the lands in their favour by furnishing fraud property tax pass books and that the association was a fictitious one. His claim of 'fraud pass books' was supported by certificates issued by the then GVMC N. Srikant and Mukesh Kumar Meena.

The land was later sold to Clover Associates by the parties for development.

GVMC Commissioner V.N. Vishna has also initiated an independent enquiry. He informed *The Hindu* that if the investigation proved the charges and correlates with the district Collector's and ULC Department's finding, he might exercise the option of revoking Section 450 of the HMC Act of 1955. Convenor of Forum for Better Visakha E.A.S. Sarma has written to the Chief Minister asking him to give permission to start prosecution against the persons directly or indirectly involved in the issue under Section 19 of the Prevention of Corruption Act – 1988.

- ***Principal Secretary asks Collector to prosecute persons involved in the land scam***
- ***GVMC Commissioner also initiates independent enquiry into the matter***