

PRESS RELEASE

SBS Officials Arrested by Vigilance

1. Sikkim Vigilance Police have arrested on 27th August two officials of State Bank of Sikkim in a case of bank fraud in which the said bank has been duped to the tune of Rs 5 lakhs allegedly by some private persons in active conspiracy with the bank officials.
2. Miss Deepika Chettri, presently Zonal Manager of SBS and posted at Namchi and Mrs Geeta Sherpa, a clerk posted at SBS, Secretariat Branch, Gangtok have been arrested on the charge of siphoning off Rs 5 lakhs from the SBS Headquarter Branch through a cheque taken from a cheque book which was not issued to any account holder.
3. According to Vigilance, one cheque for Rs 5 lakhs was shown issued by one account holder in the name of one Ajay Kumar Gupta who, in turn, is shown to have endorsed it in the name of one Sanjay Kumar. The account holder was shocked at the way the SBS had allowed the fraudulent withdrawal of Rs. 5 lakhs from his account and demanded his money back from the bank. The bank seeing no option refunded the amount later on to the account holder and decided to later on fix responsibility after conduct of an internal enquiry on the person responsible for the fraud.
4. During Vigilance investigation, it surfaced that Miss Deepika Chettri was the passing officer of the concerned cheque and Mrs Geeta Sherpa was the then teller clerk who had made entries in the computer. Sri Man Dorjee Tamang is cashier who had made the payment. He is presently undergoing treatment at STNM Hospital.
5. During Vigilance investigation it is very clear seeing the cheque that signature of the account holder on the cheque does not tally with his specimen signatures available with the bank. Ms. Deepika Chettri, however, as passing officer allowed passing of the cheque with the intention to cheat/defraud the bank of Rs. 5 lakhs and Cashier Man Dorjee Tamang also allegedly made payment to one Sanjay Kumar who had been endorsed this cheque by one Ajay Kr. Gupta without verification. Vigilance investigation has revealed that Ajay Kumar Gupta and Sanjay Kumar are fake names and the investigation points out towards a conspiracy between some bank officials who have cleared this cheque and made it appear that some person with fake have withdrawn the money. Teller Mrs. Geeta Sherpa was also a part of the conspiracy in having this cheque

cleared . Investigation shows that these officials have cooked up a story of fake names of Ajay Kumar Gupta and Sanjay Kumar to hoodwink their Board of Directors as none of the above officials exercised due diligence in verifying the signature of the account holder and proper identity of the payees.

6. SBS later on refunded the money to the account holder from the bank treasury fund but failed to punish any official by fixing responsibility. Further, some bank officials to avoid getting caught also tore 3 nos of pages from Cheque Book Issue Register of SBS headquarters which was regularly maintained on a daily basis. This seems to have been done to destroy evidence. Vigilance Police has seized these registers and files and continuing its efforts to pinpoint as to who were the people that destroyed evidence by tearing pages in the Cheque Book Register.

7. Vigilance Police has taken Police remand for..... days in r/o Ms. Deepika Chettri and Mrs. Geeta Sherpa from the Court and interrogation of the accused is continuing. Mr. Man Bdr. Dorjee who is also one of the accused will be questioned after he recovers from ill health.

8. During the investigation, it has also been revealed by a few bank officials in their statement that some other cases of cheating/forgery/fraud have also taken place during the last few years. Vigilance appeals in public interest to the Board of Directors to take very strong action against the culprits who are found responsible during their internal enquiry.

9. Further, members of the public are also informed that they should lodge complaints with Vigilance against any bank official who cheats/defrauds them. Supervisory senior officers of bank are also requested to tighten up their internal monitoring system and also take action against any middle men who takes money from members of public for arranging bank loans as Vigilance is receiving complaint regarding the same.

(Akshay Sachdeva, IPS)
Director Vigilance