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Gurgaon reports three property frauds a month

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(Source: Hindustan Times, New Delhi) By Faizan Haider, Hindustan Times, New Delhi

April 04--When Jaiprakash, a scientist from Hyderabad, came to Gurgaon to check on his property after a gap of six months, he found someone else living there. The new 'owner' of the two-storey house in Palam Vihar had bought it for R60 lakh from a local property agent, who is now absconding. Three more unsuspecting property owners fell prey to similar frauds in the past month.

The police said property grabbing is big business in Gurgaon and there are at least three cases of such frauds reported from this city every month.

In fact, criminals have given up less lucrative crimes such as robbery and extortion and are turning to land-grabbing in a big way.

"It's pretty much like a replay of the film Khosla ka Ghosla. There are gangs in Gurgaon who conduct meticulous surveys of properties, identify vacant plots and flats whose owners don't live in the city or are non-resident Indians," said Alok Mittal, joint commissioner of police, Gurgaon.

"Faking property documents, they sell it to a third party, posing as owners. If a property is sold twice over, they make enough money to keep them going for a year. By the time the owner realises that his property has been sold, these criminals are out of the scene," the officer said.

Businessman Madan Lal Grover, 42, was almost duped in one such deal.

"I had decided to buy a property in Sohna for R2 crore. When the so-called owner of the property, a Delhi resident, met us at the registration office, she presented a voter ID card, which turned out to be forged," he said.

Grover said he contacted the police. "Otherwise, I would have lost R2 crore."

There are at least 10,000 plots lying vacant in Gurgaon, with more than 5,500 in DLF City alone.

"In 2010, we received 37 such complaints where someone posing as the owner of a property tried to sell it to an unsuspecting buyer. This also involves 12 cases where the same property has been sold twice over. While in another 25 cases, the registration was done by posing as the owner," Mittal said.

These 37 cases of property fraud involved transactions of at least R200 crore.

"We can get the property back for the original owner and in cases where the property has been sold twice. But it is difficult to get the money back.

The buyer needs to be cautious while purchasing a property," Mittal added.

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