

The CID (Crime), probing the [bitcoin](#) extortion case, today moved a sessions court in [Ahmedabad](#) with a plea that former BJP MLA Nalin Kotadiya be declared as an absconder.

The CID stated that clinching evidence has been found against Kotadiya, who it said, could not be traced despite intense efforts.

The court of [Additional Sessions Judge](#) P J Tamakuwala has reserved its order on the plea.

The investigators requested the court to declare Kotadiya as an absconder under Section 82 of the CrPC in the case in which several persons, including a [superintendent](#) of police and an [inspector](#) of the local crime branch, were arrested.

The CID said it had faxed an arrest warrant, issued against Kotadiya by the same court on May 17, to police commissioners across [Gujarat](#) and even outside the state.

Surat-based builder [Shailesh Bhatt](#) had alleged that policemen from [Amreli](#) had kidnapped him and his business partner [Kirit Paladia](#) from Gandhinagar on February 9 and extorted bitcoins, which were in possession of Paladia.

Bhatt had also alleged that Kotadiya was involved in the conspiracy to extort bitcoins worth over Rs 9 crore.

Kotadiya was later booked under various sections of the Indian Penal Code for kidnapping and extortion after his alleged role emerged during investigation.

The CID (Crime) application stated that police visited Kotadiya's houses in [Amreli](#) and [Dhari](#) as well as several other places, including a gaushala (cow shelter) and a farm house, to track him down but to no avail.

The [Bureau of Immigration](#) had also issued a look-out notice against the former MLA so that he does not fly out of the country, the CID said.

[CID lawyer Sudhir Brahmhatt](#) said the investigators also scanned the call detail records (CDRs) of two [mobile phones](#) of Kotadiya and contacted several persons to whom the calls were made from those numbers.

However, the recipients of the calls denied having any knowledge about Kotadiya's whereabouts, he said.

The CID, in its plea, said that a well-thought conspiracy was hatched to commit the crime by those arrested and others.

"Though Kotadiya's name was not mentioned in the FIR, his involvement emerged during the investigation," it said.

Kotadiya had represented [Dhari](#) in [Amreli](#) district.

He was denied ticket by the BJP to contest the 2017 Assembly elections.

[Bitcoin](#) is a type of digital money that is issued and normally controlled by its developers and used and accepted among the members of the [virtual community](#).

The Centre had said it did not recognise [bitcoin](#) or any other crypto-currency as legal tender in [India](#).

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