

Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) & Indian Coast Guard (ICG) interdict 218 kg heroin in mid sea drug bust off the coast of Lakshadweep Islands

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An operation was launched by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) after it developed specific intelligence over a period of several months that two Indian boats would be sailing from the coast of Tamil Nadu and would receive narcotics in huge quantity somewhere in the Arabian sea, during the second/third week of May 2022.

Accordingly, a joint operation of DRI with Indian Coast Guard (ICG) codenamed **Operation Khojbeen** was launched on 7th May 2022. Under the said operation, Coast Guard ship *Sujeet*, with DRI officials onboard, maintained a close watch near the Exclusive Economic Zone. After several days of continuous search and monitoring amidst very rough seas, two suspected boats “Prince” and “Little Jesus” were noticed moving towards India. Both the Indian boats were intercepted by officers of ICG and DRI on 18th May 2022, off the coast of Lakshadweep Islands. On questioning, some of the crew members in the said boats confessed that they had received heroin in huge quantity on high sea and that they had concealed it in both the boats. In view thereof, both the boats were escorted to Kochi for further proceedings.



Thorough search of both the boats was carried out at the Coast Guard District Headquarters at Kochi, which resulted in heroin recovery of 218 packets of 1 kg each. The seizure proceedings under the provisions of NDPS Act, 1985 are currently being undertaken by the DRI. Follow up searches are taking place at various locations and further investigation is in progress.



The operation was meticulously planned and executed by DRI and ICG and entailed extensive surveillance in the rough seas over a period of several days. Seized drug appears to be of high-grade heroin and its value in the international illicit market is estimated to be around **Rs. 1,526 crore**. In the recent past, ICG and DRI have undertaken some significant anti-drug trafficking operations.

This is the fourth major drug bust by DRI in the past one month. Earlier, DRI recovered **205.6 kg heroin** from a commercial import consignment of gypsum powder at the Kandla port on 20.04.2022, **396 kg of yarn (laced with heroin)** at Pipavav port on 29.04.2022, and **62 kg heroin** at Air Cargo Complex, IGI New Delhi on 10.05.2022, collectively valued at approximately **Rs. 2,500 crore** in international illicit market.

Since April 2021, DRI has seized more than **3,800 kg heroin** valued at approximately **Rs. 26,000 crore** in the international illicit market, including seizure of 3,000 kg heroin at Mundra in September 2021; 293 kg heroin at Nhava Sheva Port in July 2021; 34 kg heroin at Tughlaquabad, New Delhi, in February 2022, apart from the multiple seizures of heroin from air passengers. In addition, more than **350 kg of cocaine** valued at approximately **Rs. 3,500 crore** in the international illicit market was seized by the DRI during this period, including the largest haul of 303 kg Cocaine from a container at Tuticorin port in April 2021.

ICG on the other hand has recovered about 3 tons of narcotics worth approx. Rs. 6,200 crore in different operations in the past 3 years bringing the total drug haul till date to **Rs. 12,206 crore**. The notable cases

include apprehension of Sri Lankan boat *Shenaya Duwa* and *Ravihansi*, both of which were apprehended with drugs and arms viz. AK-47 and pistols, Iranian boat *Jumma*, Pak boat *Al Huseni* and *Al Haj* recently.

The joint crusade of ICG and DRI against transnational drug trafficking networks has been successful in disrupting the inflow of drugs in the country through maritime routes.

RM/MV/KMN

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