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DRI sleuths bust attempt to smuggle gold at Mangaluru International Airport

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MANGALURU: Directorate of Revenue Intelligence sleuths on receipt of specific intelligence busted an attempt to smuggle gold in to the country by concealing it inside an aircraft that landed at Mangaluru International Airport (MIA) on Wednesday. The aircraft that arrived at MIA from Mumbai was earlier used by the airline on an international run between Dubai and Mumbai and the sleuths during a thorough search of the aircraft recovered 2.16-kg of gold worth Rs 66.67 lakh.

Vinayak Bhat, deputy director, DRI, Mangaluru said based on the information, DRI officers conducted thorough rummaging of the aircraft under suspicion, which arrived here from Mumbai. Prior to this journey, this aircraft was

Deployed between Dubai and Mumbai. During an intensive search operation conducted with assistance of technicians of the airline, officers on suspicion opened the oxygen mask panel on the top ceiling of the aircraft's front toilet.

Inside the panel, gold bars wrapped in socks were discovered. On opening the socks, two gold bars of 1-kg each and a single tola bar of 116.640 grams were found. The total weight of gold bars so recovered was 2116.640 grams and their current market price was assessed at about Rs. 66.67 lakh. DRI officers seized the gold for contravention of the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 as they were being illegally smuggled into the country, Vinayak Bhat said.

Preliminary investigation revealed that gold was originally concealed by a passenger during the aircraft's international run from Dubai to Mumbai and it was supposed to be retrieved by a domestic passenger during one of its subsequent journeys. Further investigation along with lookout for smugglers behind the scene is underway. The event assumes importance as it happens to be first incident of gold smuggling attempted through MIA after the election period is over.