

West Bengal: DRI arrests man, seizes gold bars worth Rs 8 crore

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The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has arrested one person and busted a racket smuggling gold from China to India through the Nathula border in Sikkim, sources said.

Acting on specific intelligence, DRI, Siliguri officers recovered 27 kg of gold bars of foreign origin, valued at Rs 8.62 crore.

“One person travelling in a Renault Duster was intercepted near Payel Cinema hall, Sevoke Road, Siliguri at about 8.15 am after a night-long operation. He was caught when the smuggled gold bars were being carried from Nathula to Siliguri by Sonam Topgay Bhutia of Gangtok, Sikkim who is engaged in the business of export of handicrafts items and cane furniture to China through the Nathula border.

Bhutia is the President of Nathula Border Trade Welfare Association. A travel pass issued by the government in his name was also recovered... which bears entries showing that on 20.9.2018 he had been to China after crossing Nathula border and entered India the same day,” said a DRI officer.

Aside from the gold, sources said DRI officers also seized Rs 10 lakh and the accused’s car.

During interrogation, it was revealed that the seized gold was supposed to be delivered to some in Siliguri by the accused, the officer said, adding Bhutia was arrested under provisions of the Customs Act, 1962.

In the current financial year, in the region spread over West Bengal and the north-eastern states, DRI has seized 281.6 kg of gold and gold jewellery, valued at close to Rs 85.51 crores, smuggled from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan and China.