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Ahmedabad DRI seizes tobacco worth Rs 38 lakh guised as paan masala

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For long, this Ahmedabad-based exporting firm had been smuggling scented tobacco to Malaysia along with lime, catechu and crushed betel nut. They had been getting away by saying they're carrying paan masala, until the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Ahmedabad, on Tuesday busted the racket and seized tobacco worth Rs 38 lakh.

Based on a specific intelligence about the activities of the firm, Ahmedabad DRI officials intercepted the gang in Mumbai.

As per the DRI, the firm had been declaring tobacco as paan masala because exporting it to Malaysia would otherwise require them to acquire licence from the Malaysian authorities; the firm had no licence.

The gang would mix tobacco with various other ingredients and pack them in counterfeit pouches of famous gutkha brands and export them to Dubai from Malaysia. Further inquiry and probe revealed that one such container has already been cleared by the customs from Tughlakabad in Delhi and is about to set sail to Port Klang in Malaysia from Mumbai.

Ahmedabad DRI officials detained the consignment and handed over the case to Special Investigation and Intelligence Branch (SIIB), Tughlakabad, Delhi for further investigation, because the previous consignment was cleared by the customs there.

This month, DRI Ahmedabad has made quite a few seizures. Last week, officials had intercepted two passengers flying to Bangkok from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International airport (SVPI) for carrying foreign currency worth Rs 25.25 lakhs. Based on specific intelligence about an Ahmedabad-based gold smuggling syndicate attempting to siphon out a huge amount of foreign currency to Bangkok, the officials intercepted Parshottam Rajani and Rajkumar Tharwani, who were serving as middlemen for the smuggling syndicate.

Though they had initially denied possessing any foreign currency, a thorough checking of their uggage revealed they had concealed assorted foreign currencies like US Dollars, Euro and Thai Baht equivalent to Rs 25.25 lakh.

Earlier this month, the DRI had arrested a passenger from SVPI with 1 kg of smuggled gold. The man was carrying gold in the form of 24 carat raw gold chains and bangles.