

15mh-DRI

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Mumbai: Directorate of revenue intelligence (DRI) officials on Monday intercepted a taxi, part of a cab aggregator, and found 15kg amphetamine hidden in two water filters. It was being taken to the Vashi post office to be sent to South Africa. The narcotics are worth Rs 15 crore, said DRI officials.

The DRI arrested Shiva Sharma (38), a Thane resident and Ugochi Chikelu (35), a Nigerian national, from his rented flat in Khargar, Navi Mumbai. Sharma, who owns the cab was with a driver in the car. Sharma said that it was Chikelu's consignment. Sharma told the DRI that on May 4 and May 6 too he had sent consignments on Chikelu's instructions.

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Nigerian, cab driver held for smuggling 15 kg of drugs

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Sharma (L) and Chikelu became friends over a period

By **Somendra Sharma**

Seizure valued at Rs 3 crore; duo used to send drugs abroad, say DRI officials.

The sleuths of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) busted a racket involved in smuggling amphetamine drugs out of India through the filters of water purifiers. The agency seized 15 kg of the banned substance worth Rs 3 crore. The police arrested two people — a Nigerian national and a driver attached to a ride-hailing firm who helped in the transportation of the drugs — on Tuesday.

Those arrested have been identified as Ugochi Chikelu, 35, currently residing at Kharghar in Navi Mumbai, and Shiva Kumar Sharma, 38, a resident of Diva in Thane. Acting on a tip off, DRI officials intercepted a vehicle driven by Sharma at Belapur in Navi Mumbai on May 13 and recovered three bags from the boot of the car. Some 14 cardboard boxes of a purifier company, containing parts of water filters laden with white coloured crystalline substance, were recovered. “A test revealed that the crystalline substance was Amphetamine,” said an agency official.

Sharma confessed that Chikelu had given him the consignment. The Nigerian was arrested in Kharghar.

“Sharma told us that Chikelu had asked him to get the consignment delivered to an address through a local post office. He also said that he had received such consignments from Chikelu twice this month. Chikelu told us that he came to know Sharma two months ago when he had booked his car through a ridehailing app. He then developed cordial relationship with him. Chikelu admitted to have smuggled drugs out of India twice through Sharma by using fabricated PAN and Aadhaar cards. He would use Indian Postal Service for exporting the consignments,” said the official.