

DRI seizes 107 kg smuggled gold worth over Rs 30 crore

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The gold was allegedly smuggled into India concealed in containers of brass scrap. After it was sold in the local markets, the money was sent to Dubai via hawala, officials said

One of the biggest gold hauls; Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Mumbai Zone, busts a major crime syndicate, arrests seven who were allegedly instrumental in smuggling in 200 kg of gold, worth Rs 60 cr.

In what appears to be one of the biggest hauls of smuggled gold in the country, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Mumbai Zone, on Friday busted a major crime syndicate by arresting seven persons who were allegedly instrumental in smuggling around 200 kg of gold, worth Rs 60 crore, into India.

The gold was allegedly smuggled into India after being concealed in containers of brass scrap. After selling the gold in the local markets, the gang would send the money to Dubai via hawala, officials said. Of the 200 kg of gold smuggled in, the central agency seized 106.9 kg gold worth approximately Rs 30.12 crore, and cash worth Rs 1.81 crore from the possession of the accused.

The accused have been identified as Nisar Aliyar, 43; Shoeb Mehmood Zarodarwala, 47; Abdul Ahad Zarodarwala, 26; Manoj Jain, 32; Aaquil Fruitwala (age unknown); Shaikh Abdul Ahad, 32; and Happy Arvidkumar Dhakkad, 34.

According to DRI officials, they had received intelligence that a major syndicate involved in smuggling in gold from abroad was being operated from south Mumbai. The department also discovered that the syndicate was smuggling in the gold in various forms – gold discs, rods, ropes and wires of different sizes – which was being transported in vehicles.

Following the information, DRI sleuths intercepted a scooter and a sedan. A search of these yielded 30 kg gold in the form of two circular discs concealed inside the scooter, and 45 kg gold concealed inside the car in the form

of three circular discs, which were recovered. The total quantity of recovered gold was 75 kg, and it is estimated to be worth Rs 24.5 crore.

Abdul Ahad Zarodarwala and Shaikh Abdul Ahad are employees of Shoeb Mehmood Zarodarwala, and were found driving the car and the scooter respectively. Shoeb was found seated in the car.

The officials said that during interrogation, Abdul Ahad and Shoeb revealed that the recovered gold was part of the 200-kg consignment of smuggled gold they had received from someone called Nisar Aliyar.

They said they had been selling the smuggled gold in the wholesale market for a commission to one Raju, alias Manoj Jain. They said after selling the gold, they had sent Rs 12 crore to Dubai through Aaquil Fruitwala.

DRI officials then traced the other accused, Nisar Aliyar, Fruitwala, Jain, and Happy Dhakkad, who are all allegedly part of the gang.

Enquiries revealed Nisar had smuggled more than 200 kg of foreign-origin gold into India from Dubai by concealing it in containers of brass scrap. Apart from the 200 kg sent to Zarodarwala, Nisar also allegedly sold around 30 kg of the gold to Happy Dhakkad.

DRI officials searched the residences of the accused and recovered Rs 40 lakh in cash from Shoeb Mehmood Zarodarwala, and Rs 68 lakh in cash from Jain.

From Dhakkad's house, the officials recovered gold in cut form (cut from discs similar to those seized from the Zarodarwalas) weighing 20.4 kg, while 11.5 kg was found in the form of foreign-marked bars, without any supporting evidence of import. Also, cash amounting to Rs 44.5 lakh and Rs. 28.5 lakh was recovered from Dhakkad's residential and office premises, which appeared to be the sale proceeds from the smuggled gold.

“Dhakkad admitted that 20.4 kg of gold recovered from his premises was supplied to him by Nisar, and the remaining 11.5 kg of foreign-marked gold was procured from the market from different wholesalers, about whom he did not give any details,” a DRI official claimed.

“More than 200 kg of foreign-origin gold valued at Rs 60 crore has been smuggled by Nisar Aliyar into India by concealing it inside imported metal scrap. He sold part of the smuggled gold to Shoeb and Abdul Ahad Zarodarwala, and to Happy Dhakkad. After receiving the smuggled gold, Shoeb and Abdul Ahad Zarodarwala sold it to various customers on a commission basis, and Manoj Jain was one of them. The illicit money against the purchase of gold was routed to Dubai through hawala – Rs 12 crore of this money were transferred by Aaquil Fruitwala via hawala on behalf of Zarodarwalas, and the other purchasers of the gold,” the official said.

He said the DRI was on the lookout for others who may be involved in the syndicate.