

TAMIL NADU

8.1 kg gold bars seized from omni bus

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TIRUCHI, MAY 04, 2018 00:00 IST

UPDATED: MAY 04, 2018 05:04 IST

DRI team arrests the 'carrier'

A Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) team seized 8.1 kilograms of gold bars smuggled from Sri Lanka and arrested the 'carrier' in the early hours on Wednesday. Acting on an intelligence information, the team intercepted an omni bus at Viralimalai toll plaza in neighbouring Pudukottai district and seized the gold bars found in the alleged possession of Syed Ahmed Khan (53).

The accused was smuggling the consignment valued at Rs. 2.59 crore to Chennai from Keezhakarai in Ramanathapuram district, said the sources. The team arrested Syed Ahmed Khan and conducted detailed inquiries before producing him before a Judicial Magistrate court at Tiruchi. He was thereafter remanded to judicial custody and lodged in the Central Prison at Tiruchi.

The seized gold bars have been kept in safe custody at the Tiruchi Customs Office. The DRI has registered a case following the seizure. The sources said the accused was a 'carrier' of the smuggled consignment. The DRI had seized six kilograms of gold bars that was being smuggled from Tiruchi to Chennai in a car in February and arrested three persons, including a housekeeping supervisor working on contract basis at the Tiruchi international airport.

A release from the DRI said the areas most vulnerable to smuggling were the stretches from Thoothukudi to Rameswaram and from Rameswaram to Vedaranyam. It is suspected that smuggling takes place using country boats and small fishing boats. The release further said apart from enforcement measures such as seizures and arrests, the DRI had also taken up the issues of smuggling and other customs matter at the policy level with Sri Lankan authorities.

Both administrations had firmly resolved to combat smuggling. Accordingly, Sri Lankan Customs and Navy had stepped up efforts to curb smuggling of gold, narcotics and other contraband. Sri Lanka had increased the rate of import duty of gold to 15 % (from the earlier rate of 10 %) in an attempt to curb smuggling, the release added.