

## **DRI busts int'l gold smugglers**

**New Delhi:** The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has busted an international gold smuggling syndicate operating from Chennai, arresting four persons and recovering 20.6 kg gold valued at around Rs 7 crore.

In the Chennai case, four

persons were arrested, including the kingpin of the syndicate, on Monday. Officials also seized Rs 21 lakh in cash and a BMW car used for delivery of the consignment.

The four accused have been remanded to judicial custody. TNN

# Gang busted, Rs 6.9 crore smuggled gold seized

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CHENNAI: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) busted a gold smuggling racket and arrested four men including the kingpin from a hideout at Choolaimedu in the city on Tuesday. They seized 20.6kg of gold worth 6.88 crore, 21 lakh in cash and a BMW car from them.

The kingpin, identified as Aulthan Syed Ibrahim, had engaged many carriers to smuggle gold into Tamil Nadu through smaller airports where customs checks are less. The others in custody are Ahamed Harris, 37, S Abdullah, 43 (both from Chennai) and Ahamed Akram, 28, a native of Ramanathapuram. DRI officials believe Ibrahim had engaged people also to smuggle gold from Sri Lanka to Tamil Nadu by sea.

DRI sleuths have been keeping a watch on the suspects for two weeks. The arrested men were remanded in judicial custody on Tuesday. DRI sources said Ibrahim assigned people to smuggle gold especially from the Middle East. "Once smuggled in, the gold would be transported in imported, expensive cars which often escape routine police checks," said an official.

‘Spurt in gold smuggling activities’

A statement by Directorate of Revenue Intelligence said the gold seized on Tuesday had come to Chennai from Dubai via Mumbai. Due to strong demand for gold during the festival season, and possibly due to the steep rise in gold prices in the last quarter, there has been a spurt in the activities of organised gangs indulging in smuggling of gold into India, it said.

"In 2017-18, Customs had seized 3,223 kg of gold valued at 974 crore, an increase of 103% from 1,422 kg valued at 472 crore seized in 2016-17," a senior DRI official said. The agency's intelligence inputs indicated that a large part of the domestic gold market was being served by illicit smuggling of gold.