

NATION, CURRENT AFFAIRS

Hyderabad: 2kg gold seized, smuggler yet to be identified

DECCAN CHRONICLE.

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The Air India flight (AI 952) from Dubai to Hyderabad had landed at RGIA on Wednesday morning.



Officials recovered the smuggled gold under a seat in the aircraft before it left for Visakhapatnam. (Representational Image)

Hyderabad: Directorate of Revenue Intelligence officials seized about 1.916 kg of 99.5 per cent pure gold from an aircraft that arrived at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport from Dubai on Wednesday. Officials recovered the smuggled gold under a seat in the aircraft before it left for Visakhapatnam.

The Air India flight (AI 952) from Dubai to Hyderabad had landed at RGIA on Wednesday morning. DRI officials were acting on a tip-off that the gold was smuggled into the aircraft as soon as it landed at Shamshabad. When they checked the craft, they found about 1.916 gm gold concealed under a seat. The seized gold is worth `63 lakh. However, the passenger who smuggled the gold is yet to be identified.

The officials said that the modus operandi adopted by smugglers was similar to the recent gold bars that were smuggled from Sharjah to Hyderabad.

“The AI 952 flight was about to leave to Vishakhapatnam and then it becomes a domestic run. The aides of the smugglers would have collected the during the domestic run of the gold, they need not clear the customs and immigration checking and walk through the Green channel. But, we did not gave that chance and seized the gold. A case has been registered and further investigations are on,” said an official from DRI.

In the earlier incident, the gold was caught in Hyderabad, during the sixth-leg (Sixth destination) travel of the flight. The flight from Sharjah came to Tiruvananthapuram and then carried passengers to Ahmedabad, Indore, Delhi and others places and came to Hyderabad, and the passenger along with the two kg gold was caught, said the official.

DRI

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Some photos emailed

Hyderabad: The breach into gold smuggling network and special focus on their activities seems to have yielded a positive result for the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) sleuths as they seized 62 percent more gold in 2018 than what they managed to do the previous year. This year in January alone, DRI teams seized 7.3 kilo gold from the smugglers in two Telugu states.

On Wednesday, DRI team found two kilo gold bars abandoned by an unknown smuggler inside the Air India's flight from Dubai to Hyderabad. DRI team seized the gold but the offenders have not been arrested. It was the second case of gold seizure by the DRI at RGI Airport in the year 2019. Prior to this, on January 20, DRI team arrested a gold carrier from Delhi working for a Chennai gang at the RGI Airport and seized 1.99 kilo gold concealed by him in his shoes. DRI also arrested four members including two Hyderabad based jewellers and seized 3.3 kilo gold smuggled into the country from Myanmar in January.

DRI attributes the recent increase in gold seizures to surge in gold prices and also the instability in market due to ongoing US-China trade war. "There from 2017 to now there has been a 10 percent surge in gold price. Currently gold is selling at around Rs 33.7 lakh per kilo rate. Also due to US-China trade war, the volatile market situation pushes people towards investing in gold and that also increased gold smuggling activity," said a DRI official.

In the given situation, both DRI and Customs Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) sleuths are keeping a close watch on the activities of smugglers.

In 2017, DRI's Hyderabad Zonal Unit, that has jurisdiction over the two Telugu states and Odisha, 13 cases of gold smuggling

and seized 24 kilos of gold. In 2018, DRI sleuths booked, 17 gold smuggling cases and seized 42.78 kilo gold. In 2019 so far three cases were booked and 7.3 kilos gold was seized.