

DRI sleuths bust gold smuggling racket at air cargo complex in Mangaluru

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MANGALURU: Sleuths of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence have effected one of the biggest seizure of gold in this coastal city of the decade.

Based on a tip-off, DRI officials from Bengaluru and Mangaluru in a coordinate effort seized 5kg of gold valued at Rs 2 crore at the air cargo complex here on Monday. The officials' unraveled unique modus of smuggling of gold through air cargo complex at the old airport in Bajpe

The smuggled gold was concealed in five metal sprockets M/s Swaroop Mineral Pvt Ltd of Udupi had imported in the name of mining conveyor drive chain. The gold was deftly concealed inside heavy metal sprockets by way of a groove and gave only slight hint of tampering on physical examination. Scanning of said wheels added to suspicion and officers could retrieve the gold with help of local mechanic and lathe machine at Bajpe.

On examination by the authorized jeweller, five round plates weighed 4,995 grams by net weight after discounting the weight of aluminium coating was recovered. The gold pieces were found to be of 24 Karat purity and their current market value was estimated to be around Rs 2 crore. The DRI officers later seized the contraband gold under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, Shreyas K M, deputy director, DRI stated.

The active director of M/s Swaroop Mineral Resources Manohar Kumar Poojari involved in the case was arrested at Bengaluru on the same day in a coordinated effort by DRI Bengaluru. DRI Mangaluru officials nabbed Lohith Shriyan, person hailing from Ashoknagar looking after the logistics of smuggling. Further investigation in the case is in progress to unearth other members of the syndicate and investors in the case, Shreyas said.