

DRI arrests key accused in Rs 750 crore gold fraud case in Tamil Nadu

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HYDERABAD: In a significant arrest, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) sleuths caught a key accused in Tamil Nadu for his role in the Rs 750-crore imported gold fraud case.

Nagasiddu Sunil, who has been evading police for over nine months, was arrested in Pavoorchatram town in Tenkasi district on Monday and brought to Hyderabad on a prisoner transit warrant.

GOLD SOLD IN HYD

➤ The accused, Nagasiddu Sunil, who was working for Srikrishna Exim, imported duty-free gold

➤ The company was exporting bogus ornaments by declaring them as 'studded jewellery'

➤ The firm diverted imported gold into Hyderabad market

➤ Sunil used to collect the imported gold and deliver it to various jewellers in the city

➤ In May 2019, DRI conducted searches at the SEZ unit and other places in Hyderabad

➤ In an export consignment gold content declared was 19,374 gram, whereas the government-approved valuers said it was 565 gram

➤ Later, DRI seized 51.5kg of gold bullion valued at ₹16.7 crore, gold jewellery worth ₹3 crore, precious stones, semi-precious stones



Sunil was produced on Wednesday the Nampally criminal court, which remanded him in judicial custody. Sunil, who was working for Srikrishna Exim LLP, a unit of Hyderabad Gems SEZ in Raviryal near Shamshabad, was accused of diverting imported foreign gold and misdeclaration of exports.

“As per preliminary estimates, around 1,800kg of imported duty-free gold worth Rs 750 crore has been fraudulently diverted and sold in local markets by Srikrishna,” DRI sources said.

In a remand report filed in the economic offences wing court, DRI had said that Sunil had been avoiding arrest for the past nine months and hiding in various places in Karnataka, TN and Pune. The DRI sleuths tracked him in Pavorchatram, where he was hiding along with his wife and son, and arrested him. The accused was produced first in a Madurai court on Tuesday.

Sources said Sunil was sending money and paying tuition fee of his son. First, he went to Mannerhal in Karnataka to hide and then to Pune, the sleuths said.

DRI said Srikrishna Exim was importing huge quantities of duty-free gold, but passed it as gold manufactured in the SEZ and exported it.

DRI officials found that the company was exporting bogus ornaments — mostly made of semi-precious and colour stones with very little gold — by declaring them as 'studded jewellery'.

The firm was then diverting the imported gold into the domestic market in Hyderabad, the DRI said. Sunil used to collect the imported gold and deliver it to various jewellers in the city.

A probe into this scam began on May 3 last year after the DRI conducted searches at the SEZ unit and other places in Hyderabad. During the searches, DRI found in an export consignment that gold content declared was 19,374 gram, whereas the government-approved valuers' report said it was just 565 gram. The weight of semi-precious stones declared in the invoice was 2,060 gram, whereas the actual weight of the semi-precious stones was 20,850 gram. The total worth of jewellery to be exported was declared at Rs 5.45 crore, while the valuers' report put it at Rs 22 lakh.

During the searches, it was also found that Rs 6.1 crore worth excess gold was recorded in the stocks. Discrepancies were found in the stock statement and the stock. The gold thus generated was diverted to local markets and sold in violation of SEZ Act and Customs Act.