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DRI seizes smuggled gold weighing 24.8 kg

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The yellow metal concealed in various domestic appliances and gadgets was smuggled through Chennai Airport, the statement said



The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) in a span of four days seized 24.8 kg of smuggled gold valued at Rs 8.58 crore, the agency said. In a statement issued on Friday, the DRI said it had seized 24.8 kg of smuggled gold valued at Rs 8.58 crore in a span of four days.

The intelligence agency also seized other smuggled items such as electronic goods and cigarettes. The DRI literally struck gold on Thursday when it seized 17.9 kg smuggled gold valued at Rs 6.24 crore from the premises of the smuggling syndicate.

The yellow metal concealed in various domestic appliances and gadgets was smuggled through Chennai Airport, the statement said. The DRI officials also seized smuggled Apple iPhones, smart watches, USB chips and others valued at Rs 1.1 crore and foreign currency valued Rs 33 lakh.

According to the statement, the syndicate worked in coordination with the mastermind in Malaysia. The syndicate members would identify genuine passengers returning from Malaysia, Singapore and Dubai and convince them to carry the electronic or other gadgets in which the gold is concealed to Chennai.

At the Chennai airport, the members of the syndicate would collect the items from the passengers. Six persons have been arrested in this connection. On Monday, the DRI officials rummaged a flight at the airport here and seized 5.72 kg of gold valued at Rs 1.97 crore. The gold was concealed in deep hollow of a seat.

At the Tiruchirapalli airport on Monday, the DRI officials seized 1.13 kg gold valued Rs 37.41 lakh attempted to be smuggled into the country by a group of passengers from Malaysia. The DRI also arrested the kingpin who landed in Tiruchirapalli airport by the next flight.

DRI busts smuggling racket, seizes 17.9kg gold worth Rs 6 crore

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CHENNAI: Officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence on Thursday busted a major gold smuggling syndicate in the city, raiding a hideout at an undisclosed location and another at Mannady near Parry's, and seizing 17.9 kg of foreign-origin gold worth Rs 6.24 crore.

Six people including the kingpin of the racket, his aide and two carriers were arrested and a Toyota Innova, a Hyundai Creta and a Honda Amaze, used to transport the smuggled goods to the den in Mannady were seized.

The gold had been smuggled into the city through the airport from foreign countries using carriers and air passengers, DRI said. It was concealed in domestic appliances and gadgets like home theatres and microwave

ovens and taken to the Mannady hideout where the contraband was to be later extracted, a DRI official said.

The sleuths also found a large number of iPhones, smartwatches, USB chips, solid state storage devices, camera lenses and cigarettes worth Rs 1.1 crore, all smuggled in and intended for sale in the black market. Indian and foreign currency amounting to Rs 33 lakh, believed to be from the sale of smuggled gold and other goods, was seized.

DRI officials suspect that the cash was to be routed back through hawala channel. "Interrogation of the apprehended people reveals that the syndicate had been working in co-ordination with a mastermind in Malaysia," an official said.

The modus operandi of the syndicate was simple, he said. Passengers returning to India from places like Dubai, Singapore and Malaysia would be identified by gang members. He/she would then approach the passenger and coax him/her to carry these appliances and gadgets to India. On landing at Chennai airport, the passenger's job would be to hand the goods over to an earmarked person in the airport parking lot for a small fee. Almost all of the passengers approached by the syndicate members would seem like genuine travellers, making the chances of Customs officials getting suspicious remote, the official said.

On February 18, a DRI team had seized 5.72 kg gold worth Rs 1.97 crore from a plane at Chennai airport. The gold was concealed inside the hollow of a seat in the plane. On the same day, the agency's officials also seized 1.13kg of gold worth Rs 37.41 lakh from a group of passengers arriving at Trichy airport from Malaysia.

Further investigations are on, a DRI official said.