

Stringent Act slapped on 15 accused of gold smuggling

By [Abhishek Sharan](#), Mumbai Mirror | Jun 15, 2019, 06.00 AM IST



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DRI detains 13 of them in a case involving seizure of 185 kilogrammes of precious metal allegedly smuggled from Dubai.

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has put 13 alleged members of an interstate goldsmuggling racket, which it busted in March-April for bringing in 185 kilogrammes of the precious metal from Dubai in a camouflaged form to evade payment of customs duties, in preventive detention under provisions of the COFEPOSA (Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act). The COFEPOSA was also invoked on two other wanted accused in the case, DRI sources said. Detentions under COFEPOSA require a confirmation from an advisory committee, headed by a high court judge, within three months, a DRI source said. “Later, every three months, a detainee can apply for a review of his case,” a source said.

Beginning March 28, DRI said it seized the smuggled gold and arrested seven people who were allegedly involved in the operation. Subsequently, it arrested six more. “We are looking to track gold worth 90 kg more that is suspected to have been stashed in Kerala by a wanted accused,” said the source. The 13 arrested men are accused of performing separate roles linked to the smuggling – those who were part of bringing in the gold from Dubai to Jamnagar in Gujarat by a ship in the garb of metal scrap, to those from whom the precious metal was seized, to those who were supposed to buy the consignment, the source said.

The gold was concealed in the form of discs, wires, rods and ropes. According to the source, it was bought in Dubai from an unidentified Pakistani national, at a rate cheaper than in India, and was allegedly meant to be sold to city-based jewellers.

The DRI is verifying allegations that the racket was involved in smuggling gold worth around 3, 000 kg since 2016, another agency source said. “Upon receiving specific information, DRI’s Mumbai Zonal Unit intercepted two vehicles, a scooter and a car and seized 75 kg of gold in the form of circular discs, painted

with black paint on the surfaces,” the source said. “Later, follow-up searches conducted at offices and residential premises of the perpetrators resulted in recovery of the rest of the gold.

“The DRI probe has identified Nisar Aliyar, who runs business from Dubai and USA, as the alleged planner of the smuggling operation, wherein the consignment was unloaded in Jamnagar, Gujarat, then brought to Mumbai and camouflaged as metal scrap as cover cargo for declaring to customs.

“After arresting the 13 men, the DRI moved a proposal before COFEPOSA’s Screening Committee to detain them under the act in view of their smuggling activities. After the committee approved the DRI proposal, the 13 men were placed under COFEPOSA’s preventive detention on May 17,” the source said.

The COFEPOSA empowers authorities to detain people who commit crimes related to smuggling of foreign exchange and gold. The act allows for the preventive detention of an accused for a maximum of one year.