

RGIA fifth-most susceptible airport for gold smuggling across the world

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HYDERABAD: A whopping 28 kg of gold worth Rs 9 crore has made RGIA the 5th most susceptible airport for gold smuggling across the world. This, after a total of 44 cases were registered pertaining to the same where 15 passengers were arrested in the first five months of the year.

The spike in the number of such cases has left officials wondering as to why there were so many numbers of cases coming in especially when there is such a strict vigilance by customs officials and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials.

As per officials, passengers seem to be flying to the city from different parts of the world like Singapore, Dubai, Bangkok and other countries. While some are doing it out of greed for commissions involved, others are falling prey by indulging in smuggling of gold as they are sometimes unaware of the rules.

As per officials, the role of passengers is limited to bringing the gold to the city airport by accepting the commission. After this, the receivers play the main role which involves the exit of smuggled gold from the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA).

It is only after arresting the passengers smuggling the gold do officials get to know about the receivers and residents in the city who obtain the gold.

“Some notorious gang members indulge in operating gold smuggling from Bangkok, Singapore, Dubai and Qatar having contacts with the city residents. During the questioning of accused, it was revealed that some city persons who are settled in different countries around the world have joined forces with smuggling gang members and operate illegal activities. The gang members offer huge commission to passengers for transporting the gold illegally and the receivers for conducting a smooth exit of smuggled gold from the airport,” say the customs officials.

WhatsApp tracking



KEY INCIDENTS OF SMUGGLING AT RGI AIRPORT

October 10, 2018

Air India employee arrested by DRI officials for involvement in gold smuggling. Officials seized 4.19 kg gold bars worth ₹1.34 crore.

January 20, 2019

DRI officials arrested a passenger for illegal possession of gold, seized gold worth of ₹66 lakh

January 30, 2019

DRI officials arrested a passenger and seized two gold bars weighing around 2 kg and worth ₹66 lakh

March 19, 2019

Customs officials arrested a passenger at RGI for smuggling 800 gm gold

March 25, 2019

Customs officials arrested two passengers for smuggling 688 gm gold

May 9, 2019

Two persons who were carrying 3 kg gold worth of ₹1 crore were arrested and the gold seized

The DRI and Customs officials said that when a passenger lands with luggage at the airport, the team of customs, who keep a vigil on suspects, come to know of gold smuggling by observing the body language, way of talking, their mannerism etc. By end of the day, the passengers are also to be checked at scanners while the customs department get all information of all arriving and departing passengers. The air intelligence and other informer system include tracking their WhatsApp messages, has also helped investigations.

More difficult to trace the masterminds

Despite busting many rackets of smuggling, officials are still clueless about the main gangsters responsible for pumping in money into the system. This is because these masterminds operate through middlemen, who are responsible for monitoring passengers and receiving the gold, on their behalf. Investigators may succeed in identifying the middlemen but have a tough time identifying masterminds in Singapore, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar and Bangkok