

Gold smuggling racket busted, two more held in Gujarat

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Last week, the DRI had arrested seven members of the gang, including the kingpin, , and seized around 106 kg of smuggled gold, worth Rs 32 crore.(HT File / Photo used for representational purpose only)

Two more key members of an international gold smuggling racket, which was busted last week, were arrested by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) from Gujarat on Sunday. Last week, the DRI had arrested seven members of the gang, including the kingpin, Dubai-based businessman Nasir Aliyar, and seized around 106 kg of smuggled gold, worth Rs 32 crore.

The two arrested accused, Chetan Sojitara, 31; and Kalpesh Nandha, 34 — both residents of Jamnagar — were brought to Mumbai on transit remand. Nandha, one of Aliyar's frontmen, had floated two companies, Al Ramz Metal Scrap Trading and Blue Sea Metal, as fronts to carry out smuggling activities. Sojitara, proprietor of Prachi Impex, allegedly facilitated the import of brass scrap from Dubai. The gold from Dubai was concealed in brass scraps being imported to India in containers, said DRI officers. "Both of them were involved in helping Aliyar smuggle gold from Dubai to Jamnagar in Gujarat, and then to Mumbai," said a DRI officer.

According to DRI officers, Aliyar owns call centres and firms in Dubai, Saudi Arabia and the USA. After the smuggled gold would reach India, Aliyar's conduits in Mumbai would sell it. Aliyar, who hails from Kerala, would himself visit Mumbai to oversee the operations. Later, the money obtained would be siphoned off to Dubai in dirhams, via a hawala operator who has a currency exchange centre in Agripada. Ultimately, the money would reach Aliyar.

The racket had smuggled in nearly 200kg of foreign-origin gold, worth nearly Rs 60 crore, from Dubai into India in the past three to four months.