

# **BRAVERY AWARD TO SHRI BALA MURUGESAN R**

On specific intelligence that a syndicate involved in the smuggling of gold from Sri Lanka into India through Mandapam coast would attempt landing in the shore area near Mandapam fishing harbor, a team of officers including Shri Bala Murugesan R and Shri Kamatchi Anand K ventured into sea in a Rigid Inflatable Boat (RIB) of Indian Coast Guard to keep vigil in the sea during wee hours of the night During patrolling, the RIB got stuck in the corals, necessitating paddling of the boat for further navigation.

After a few hours - at around 02.00 hours of February 8th, 2023-a blue-coloured fishing boat with three persons was spotted and intercepted around 170 metres away from the sea shore near Mandapam Fishing Harbour. Even through the fishing boat was 5-6 ft higher than the RIB. the team of DRI officers managed to get onboard and intercepted the smugglers, On thorough examination, one GPS device was recovered from the fishing net of the boat, which was found locked at specific coordinates. Showing presence of mind, the officers understood that the device location was possibly the place where the contraband had been dropped and sought reinforcements.

Next morning, scuba diving and snorkeling team of Indian Coast Guard joined the search operation. Shri Kamatchi Anand jumped inside the sea along with the divers while Shri Bala Murugesan rendered assistance to them from the fishing boat. With persistent efforts of the team, a parcel was retrieved from the seabed, which contained 17,740 grams of foreign origin gold valued at Rs. 10.17 crores. Six accused, including the kingpin who had coordinated the smuggling activity from across the border were also arrested during the entire operation.

DRI commends the commitment of Shri Bala Murugesan R and Shri Kamatchi Anand K by presenting them with DRI's Veerta Prashasti Patra 2023.