



DRI detects 13 kg foreign-origin gold worth around Rs. 19.41 crore and dismantles a gold smuggling syndicate in Gujarat; three arrested

Network ran through Ahmedabad and Surat airports, with an illegal melting unit in Vadodara with support from a Dubai-based financier

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The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has dismantled an organised gold smuggling syndicate that brought foreign-origin gold into India through Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, Ahmedabad, and Surat International Airport. Three persons have been arrested under the Customs Act, 1962.

Acting on specific intelligence, DRI officers kept the suspects under surveillance and carried out coordinated searches over 42 hours beginning 16 October 2026. The operation uncovered the full chain of the racket: smuggling by air passengers, hand-over to handlers, illegal melting, and sale through a jewellery outlet. It exposed dealings involving **13.017 kg foreign-origin gold valued at approximately Rs. 19.41 crore**, and three persons have been arrested.

Preliminary investigation revealed smuggling of gold into country through passengers using ingenious concealment methods. These included thin gold wires coated with rhodium, gold embedded in the inner linings of trolley bags, and gold paste concealed within the bags' inner shells. After arrival, the gold was allegedly handed over to handlers outside the airports and routed through intermediaries to an illegal gold-melting facility in Vadodara. The melted gold was subsequently supplied to a jewellery shop in Ahmedabad for sale against cash.



Illegal gold melting facility



Rhodium coated wires



The coordinated operation led to the seizure of around **890 grams gold** and the recovery of incriminating evidences relating to **6.41 kg illegally melted gold**. Further searches at the jewellery shop resulted in the recovery of undocumented foreign-origin gold bars and records relating to dealings involving around **5.8 kg smuggled gold** routed through a separate handler linked to the syndicate's main financier based in Dubai.

The operation exposed the interconnected roles of passengers, handlers, intermediaries, the gold-melting facility operator and the jewellery trade channel in facilitating the movement and disposal of smuggled gold. The handler/financier, the operator of the melting facility and other key persons were identified during the investigation. Three persons have been arrested under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962.

The operation underscores DRI's focused efforts to dismantle organised gold-smuggling networks by targeting every link, from concealment and airport movement to melting, financing and sale in the domestic market.

KT/KMN

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