

Despite Customs vigil, gold seizures double in Kerala during last fiscal

The Calicut International Airport continues to report the highest number of gold seizure cases in the state.

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Gold seizure (2019-2020)

Gold seized

540.37 kg
worth
₹187 crore

Gold disposed of

149.66 kg
worth
₹55 crore

Cigarettes
worth ₹4.6
crore seized
and 513
cases
registered



Number of gold smuggling cases

802



Foreign
currency to
the tune of
₹6.49 crore
seized and
69 cases
registered

Indian
currency:
₹2.97 crore
seized and
six cases
registered

By Toby Antony

Express News Service

KOCHI: Gold seizures in Kerala touched a new high in 2019-2020, with the quantity almost doubling from the previous financial year. Despite higher number of seizures, the Commissionerate of Customs (Preventive) is, however, concerned about enforcement activities especially when the lockdown is lifted and passenger aircraft services resume with Covid-19 threat not fully contained.

The Commissionerate of Customs (Preventive), Kochi, seized 540.37 kg of gold worth Rs 187 crore during 2019-20 fiscal, compared to 251kg in 2018-2019. As many as 802 cases were registered in the state. "We have the highest number of cases from Kozhikode airport where strict vigilance was maintained to book the smugglers. There is a sharp increase in seizure and value compared to last year. For the past few years, the seizure is increasing rapidly," said Sumit Kumar, Commissioner, Commissionerate of Customs (Preventive), Kochi.

The Calicut International Airport continues to report the highest number of gold seizure cases in the state. As many as 232.2 kg of gold was seized from Karipur airport in the last fiscal.

In all, 465 gold smuggling cases were registered and 116 persons arrested. The Kannur airport, which was opened in 2019, witnessed 64 gold smuggling cases in which 47.1 kg of gold worth around Rs 17 crore was seized. The Customs also disposed of 149.66 kg of gold worth ₹55 crore during the last fiscal.

Cigarettes and currency smuggling

The Customs unit seized foreign currencies to the tune of Rs 6.49 crore in the last fiscal. As many as 69 cases were registered. Similarly, Rs 2.97 crore worth Indian currency was also seized in six cases during the period and 513 cartons of smuggled cigarettes worth Rs 4.6 crore were seized. However, the Customs department is concerned about checks at the airports in the post-lockdown period when airlines will resume operations.

“We may require advanced machines to check foreign travellers and Indian citizens returning from abroad. We have already asked the Centre to provide full-body scanner at airports. Other than that, we will require more number of X-ray scanners and dog squads in the airport. Before the lockdown was introduced, many of our officers had to remain in home quarantine after being engaged in Customs checking at the airport,” Sumit Kumar said.

Cochin customs

Customs House, Cochin, which has jurisdiction over Cochin Airport and nearby areas reported gold seizures to the tune of 200kg in last fiscal. However, the cumulative data of the number of seizures and cases are not yet available. Officials at the Customs House said that for the first time, Cochin Airport reported seizures of over 200 kg.

Source:<https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/kochi/2020/apr/19/despite-customs-vigil-gold-seizures-double-in-kerala-during-last-fiscal-2132110.html>