



प्रधान आयुक्त का कार्यालय, सीमा शुल्क ,अहमदाबाद

, "सीमाशुल्कभवन" पहलीमंजिल ,पुरानेहाईकोर्टकेसामने ,नवरंगपुरा ,अहमदाबाद- 380009.

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PREAMBLE

A	फ़ाइल संख्या/ File No.	: VIII/10-46/SVPIA-C/O&A/HQ/2025-26
B	कारण बताओ नोटिस संख्या-तारीख Show Cause Notice No. and Date	: VIII/10-46/SVPIA-C/O&A/HQ/2025-26 Dated: 13.10.2025
C	मूल आदेश संख्या/ Order-In-Original No.	: 203/ADC/SRV/O&A/HQ/2025-26
D	आदेश तिथि/ Date of Order-In-Original	: 30.01.2026
E	जारी करने की तारीख/ Date of Issue	: 30.01.2026
F	द्वारा पारित/ Passed By	: Shree Ram Vishnoi, Additional Commissioner Customs, Ahmedabad
G	आयातक का नाम और पता / Name and Address of Importer / Passenger	: Ms. Fatima Suaad Shabandri Miya House, Sultan Street, PO Bhatkal, Karwar, Karnataka-581320.
1	यह प्रति उन व्यक्तियों के उपयोग के लिए निःशुल्क प्रदान की जाती है जिन्हे यह जारी की गयी है।	
2	कोई भी व्यक्ति इस आदेश से स्वयं को असंतुष्ट पाता है तो वह इस आदेश के विरुद्ध अपील इस आदेश की प्राप्ति की तारीख के 60 दिनों के भीतर आयुक्त कार्यालय, सीमा शुल्क अपील)चौथी मंज़िल, हुडको भवन, ईश्वर भुवन मार्ग, नवरंगपुरा, अहमदाबाद में कर सकता है।	
3	अपील के साथ केवल पांच (5.00) रुपये का न्यायालय शुल्क टिकिट लगा होना चाहिए और इसके साथ होना चाहिए:	
i	अपील की एक प्रति और;	
i	इस प्रति या इस आदेश की कोई प्रति के साथ केवल पांच (5.00) रुपये का न्यायालय शुल्क टिकिट लगा होना चाहिए।	
4	इस आदेश के विरुद्ध अपील करने इच्छुक व्यक्ति को 7.5 % (अधिकतम 10 करोड़) शुल्क अदा करना होगा जहां शुल्क या इयूटी और जुर्माना विवाद में है या जुर्माना जहां इस तरह की दंड विवाद में है और अपील के साथ इस तरह के भुगतान का प्रमाण पेश करने में असफल रहने पर सीमा शुल्क अधिनियम, 1962 की धारा 129 के प्रावधानों का अनुपालन नहीं करने के लिए अपील को खारिज कर दिया जायेगा।	

BRIEF FACTS OF THE CASE:

Ms. Fatima Suaad Shabandri (Female), (hereinafter referred to as the said "passenger/Noticee"), W/o Ibji Mohammed Riyaz having residential address at Miya House, Sultan Street, PO Bhatkal, Karwar, Karnataka-581320, holding Indian Passport No. T4524658, arrived by Indigo Airways Flight No. 6E 76 from Jeddha to Ahmedabad on 29.04.2025 at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport (SVPIA), Terminal-2, Ahmedabad. On the basis of specific input from Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) officer, Ahmedabad, the passenger was intercepted by the officers of Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) officers, SVPIA, Customs, Ahmedabad while the passenger was attempting to exit through green channel without making any declaration to Customs, under Panchnama proceedings dated 29.04.2025 in presence of two independent witnesses for passenger's personal search and examination of his baggage.

2. The officers asked the passenger whether she was carrying any contraband/dutiable goods in person or in baggage to which she denied. The officers informed the passenger that they would be conducting her personal search and detailed examination of her baggage. The officers offered their personal search to the passenger, but the passenger denied the same politely. Then officers asked the passenger whether she wanted to be checked in presence of the Executive Magistrate or the Superintendent (Gazetted officer) of Customs, in reply to which the passenger in presence of two independent witnesses gave his consent to be searched in presence of the Superintendent of Customs. The passenger was asked to walk through the Door Frame Metal Detector (DFMD) machine after removing all the metallic objects she was wearing on his body/clothes. Thereafter, the AIU officers asked the passenger to keep his baggage into X-Ray Baggage Scanning Machine installed near the Green Channel counter at terminal 2 of SVPI Ahmedabad. The passenger kept her baggage into X-Ray Baggage Scanning Machine for scanning of her baggage. On scanning of her baggage, no suspicious image appeared on the screen of the X-Ray machine. Further, the passenger removed the metallic substances from her body such as mobile, small purse etc., and kept it in a tray placed on the table there and after that she was asked to pass through the Door Frame Metal Detector (DFMD) machine and while she passed through the DFMD Machine, no beep sound was heard indicating that nothing objectionable/dutiable was on her body/clothes.

Thereafter, the officers, in presence of the panchas, asked the passenger whether she has concealed any substance in her body, to which she replies in negative. After thorough interrogation by the officers, Ms. Fatima accepted that she is hiding two capsules each covered with white plastic tape inside her rectum and the capsules contain gold paste and chemical in semi solid form. The officers, then lead the passenger to the washroom located near belt No. 2 of arrival hall, terminal 2, SVPI Airport, Ahmedabad and the passenger came out of the washroom with two capsules wrapped in white colour plastic.

2.1 The officers informed the panchas that the capsules recovered from Ms. Fatima contains semi solid substance comprising of gold and chemical mix, which required to be confirmed the contents of the capsules and also to be ascertained its purity and weight. For the same, Shri Kartikey Vasantrai Soni, the Government Approved Valuer was contacted, who informed that the facility to extract the gold from such semi solid substance comprising of gold and chemical mix and to ascertain purity and weight of the same, is available at his shop only. Accordingly, the officers, the panchas and the passenger visited his shop situated at 301, Golden Signature, Behind Ratnam Complex, Nr. National

Handloom, C.G. Road, Ahmedabad-380006 in Government vehicle. Shri Kartikey Vasantrai Soni, the Government Approved Valuer weighed the said 02 capsules of semi solid substance comprising of gold and chemical mix on his weighing scale and informed that it was weighing 416.10 grams (weight inclusive of white plastic tape). The Photograph of the same is as under: -



2.2 Thereafter, the Government approved valuer Shri Kartikey Vasantrai Soni started the process of converting the said semi solid substances concealed in the said capsules into solid gold. After completion of the procedure, Government Approved Valuer informed that 1 Gold bar weighing 374.900 grams having purity 999.0/24Kt. is derived from the above mentioned 02 capsules containing gold paste and chemical mix.



After testing the said gold bar, the Government Approved Valuer confirmed that it was pure gold. Shri Soni Kartikey Vasantrai vide certificate no. 128/2025-26 dated 29.04.2025 certified that the gold bar is having purity 999.0/24kt, tariff

value is Rs. 35,82,484/- and Market value of Rs. 37,26,506/-. The value of the gold bars have been calculated as per the Notification No. 28/2025-Customs (N.T.) dated 23.04.2025 (gold) and Exchange Rate Notification No. 25/2024 dated 18.04.2025 (Exchange rate).

2.3 The method of purifying, testing and valuation used by Shri Kartikey Vasantrai Soni was done in presence of the independent panchas, the passenger and the officers. All were satisfied and agreed with the testing and Valuation Certificate given by Shri Kartikey Vasantrai Soni and in token of the same, the Panchas and the passenger put their dated signature on the said valuation certificates.

3. Accordingly, gold bar having purity 999.0/24 Kt. weighing 374.900 grams, derived from the semi solid substance comprising of gold and chemical mix recovered from Ms. Fatima was seized vide Panchnama dated 29.04.2025, under the provisions of Customs Act 1962, on the reasonable belief that the said gold bar was smuggled into India by the said passenger with an intention to evade payment of Custom duty and accordingly the same was liable for confiscation under Customs Act 1962 read with Rules and Regulation made thereunder. A statement of Ms. Fatima was recorded on 29.04.2025, under Section 108 of the Customs Act, 1962, wherein he interalia stated that:-

- (i) She is a house wife;
- (ii) She had gone to Jeddah from CSMI Airport on 13.02.2025. After residing there for more than 2 months she returned on 29.04.2025 via Indigo Flight No.6E76 from Jeddah (JED) to Ahmedabad (AMD) at SVPI International Airport, Ahmedabad
- (iii) She confessed that she had concealed two said semi-solid gold paste capsules in her rectum and returned India by Indigo Flight No.6E76 scheduled from Jeddah to Ahmedabad on 29.04.2025. The said gold pertains to her and it was purchased by her and her sister. However, she does not possess any bill/invoice evidencing the purchase of said gold in her name. The gold was brought by her by way of concealment, so as to evade payment of Customs duty.
- (iv) She has indulged in smuggling of gold activity by way of concealing two capsules consisting mixture of gold and chemical covered with white plastic tape concealed in my rectum.
- (v) She had been present during the entire course of the Panchnama dated 29.04.2025 and she confirmed the events narrated in the said panchnama drawn on 29.04.2025 at Terminal-2, SVPI Airport, Ahmedabad;
- (vi) She is well aware of the gold concealed in 02 capsules containing gold and chemical mix in semi-solid form in her rectum but she did not make any declarations in this regard with an intention to smuggle the same without payment of Custom duty.

4. The above said gold bar weighing 374.900 grams recovered from Ms. Fatima, was allegedly attempted to be smuggled into India with an intent to evade payment of Customs duty by way of concealing the same in the form of semi solid substance comprising of gold and chemical mix, which is clear violation of the provisions of Customs Act, 1962. Thus, on a reasonable belief that the Gold bar weighing 374.900 grams is attempted to be smuggled by Ms. Fatima, liable for confiscation as per the provisions of Section 111 of the Customs Act, 1962. Hence, the above said gold bar weighing 374.900 grams derived from the above said semi solid gold paste with chemical mix along with

its packing material used to conceal the semi solid gold paste in 02 capsules, was placed under seizure under the provision of Section 110 of the Customs Act, 1962 vide Seizure Memo Order dated 29.04.2025.

SUMMATION:

5. The aforementioned proceedings indicated that Ms. Fatima attempted to smuggle the aforesaid gold into India and thereby rendered the aforesaid gold having Market value is Rs. 37,26,506/- (Rupees Thirty-Seven Lakh Twenty-Six Thousand Five Hundred Six Only) and tariff value is Rs. 35,82,484/- (Rupees Thirty-Five Lakh Eighty-Two Thousand Four Hundred Eighty-Four Only), liable for confiscation under the provisions of Section 111 of the Customs Act, 1962 and therefore the same was placed under seizure vide Order dated 29.04.2025 issued under the Provisions of Section 110(1) and (3) of the Customs Act, 1962.

6. LEGAL PROVISIONS RELEVANT TO THE CASE:

Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20 and Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992

- 6.1 In terms of Para 2.26 (a) of the Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20, only bona fide household goods and personal effects are allowed to be imported as part of passenger baggage as per limits, terms and conditions thereof in Baggage Rules notified by the Ministry of Finance. Gold can be imported by the banks (Authorized by the RBI) and agencies nominated for the said purpose under Para 4.41 of the Chapter 4 of the Foreign Trade Policy or any eligible passenger as per the provisions of Notification no. 50/2017-Customs dated 30.06.2017 (Sr. No. 356). As per the said notification "Eligible Passenger" means passenger of Indian Origin or a passenger holding valid passport issued under the Passport Act, 1967, who is coming to India after a period of not less than 6 months of stay abroad.
- 6.2 As per Section 3(2) of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992 the Central Government may by Order make provision for prohibiting, restricting or otherwise regulating, in all cases or in specified classes of cases and subject to such exceptions, if any, as may be made by or under the Order, the import or export of goods or services or technology.
- 6.3 As per Section 3(3) of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992 all goods to which any Order under sub-section (2) applies shall be deemed to be goods the import or export of which has been prohibited under section 11 of the Customs Act, 1962 (52 of 1962) and all the provisions of that Act shall have effect accordingly.
- 6.4 As per Section 11(1) of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992 no export or import shall be made by any person except in accordance with the provisions of this Act, the rules and orders made thereunder and the foreign trade policy for the time being in force.

The Customs Act, 1962:

- 6.5 As per Section 2(3) – "baggage includes unaccompanied baggage but does not include motor vehicles.

- 6.6 As per Section 2(22), of Customs Act, 1962 definition of 'goods' includes-
- (a) vessels, aircrafts and vehicles;
 - (b) stores;
 - (c) baggage;
 - (d) currency and negotiable instruments; and
 - (e) any other kind of movable property;
- 6.7 As per Section 2(33) of Customs Act 1962, prohibited goods means any goods the import or export of which is subject to any prohibition under this Act or any other law for the time being in force.
- 6.8 As per Section 2(39) of the Customs Act 1962 'smuggling' in relation to any goods, means any act or omission, which will render such goods liable to confiscation under Section 111 or Section 113 of the Customs Act 1962.
- 6.9 As per Section 11(3) of the Customs Act, 1962 any prohibition or restriction or obligation relating to import or export of any goods or class of goods or clearance thereof provided in any other law for the time being in force, or any rule or regulation made or any order or notification issued thereunder, shall be executed under the provisions of that Act only if such prohibition or restriction or obligation is notified under the provisions of this Act, subject to such exceptions, modifications or adaptations as the Central Government deems fit.
- 6.10 As per Section 77 of the Customs Act 1962 the owner of baggage shall, for the purpose of clearing it, make a declaration of its contents to the proper officer.
- 6.11 As per Section 110 of Customs Act, 1962 if the proper officer has reason to believe that any goods are liable to confiscation under this Act, he may seize such goods.
- 6.12 Section 111. Confiscation of improperly imported goods, etc.:
- The following goods brought from a place outside India shall be liable to confiscation:-*
- (a) any goods imported by sea or air which are unloaded or attempted to be unloaded at any place other than a customs port or customs airport appointed under clause (a) of section 7 for the unloading of such goods;*
 - (b) any goods imported by land or inland water through any route other than a route specified in a notification issued under clause (c) of section 7 for the import of such goods;*
 - (c) any dutiable or prohibited goods brought into any bay, gulf, creek or tidal river for the purpose of being landed at a place other than a customs port;*
 - (d) any goods which are imported or attempted to be imported or are brought within the Indian customs waters for the purpose of being imported, contrary to any prohibition imposed by or under this Act or any other law for the time being in force;*

- (e) any dutiable or prohibited goods found concealed in any manner in any conveyance;*
- (f) any dutiable or prohibited goods required to be mentioned under the regulations in an import manifest or import report which are not so mentioned;*
- (g) any dutiable or prohibited goods which are unloaded from a conveyance in contravention of the provisions of section 32, other than goods inadvertently unloaded but included in the record kept under sub-section (2) of section 45;*
- (h) any dutiable or prohibited goods unloaded or attempted to be unloaded in contravention of the provisions of section 33 or section 34;*
- (i) any dutiable or prohibited goods found concealed in any manner in any package either before or after the unloading thereof;*
- (j) any dutiable or prohibited goods removed or attempted to be removed from a customs area or a warehouse without the permission of the proper officer or contrary to the terms of such permission;*
- (k) any dutiable or prohibited goods imported by land in respect of which the order permitting clearance of the goods required to be produced under section 109 is not produced or which do not correspond in any material particular with the specification contained therein;*
- (l) any dutiable or prohibited goods which are not included or are in excess of those included in the entry made under this Act, or in the case of baggage in the declaration made under section 77;*
- (m) any goods which do not correspond in respect of value or in any other particular with the entry made under this Act or in the case of baggage with the declaration made under section 77 [in respect thereof, or in the case of goods under transshipment, with the declaration for transshipment referred to in the proviso to sub-section (1) of section 54];*
- (n) any dutiable or prohibited goods transitted with or without transshipment or attempted to be so transitted in contravention of the provisions of Chapter VIII;*
- (o) any goods exempted, subject to any condition, from duty or any prohibition in respect of the import thereof under this Act or any other law for the time being in force, in respect of which the condition is not observed unless the non-observance of the condition was sanctioned by the proper officer;*
- (p) any notified goods in relation to which any provisions of Chapter IV-A or of any rule made under this Act for carrying out the purposes of that Chapter have been contravened.*

6.13 Section 112. Penalty for improper importation of goods etc.:

any person,

(a) who, in relation to any goods, does or omits to do any act which act or omission would render such goods liable to confiscation under Section 111, or abets the doing or omission of such an act, or
(b) who acquires possession of or is in any way concerned in carrying, removing, depositing, harboring, keeping, concealing, selling or purchasing or in any manner dealing with any goods which he knows or has reason to believe are liable to confiscation under Section 111, shall be liable to penalty.

- 6.14 **Section 119.** *Confiscation of goods used for concealing smuggled goods: Any goods used for concealing smuggled goods shall also be liable to confiscation.*

Explanation: *In this section, "goods" do not include a conveyance used as a means of transport.*

- 6.15 As per Section 123 of Customs Act 1962,
(1) *where any goods to which this section applies are seized under this Act in the reasonable belief that they are smuggled goods, the burden of proving that they are not smuggled goods shall be-*
(a) *in a case where such seizure is made from the possession of any person -*
(i) *on the person from whose possession the goods were seized; and*
(ii) *if any person, other than the person from whose possession the goods were seized, claims to be the owner thereof, also on such other person;*
(b) *in any other case, on the person, if any, who claims to be the owner of the goods so seized.*
(2) *This section shall apply to gold, and manufactures thereof, watches, and any other class of goods which the Central Government may by notification in the Official Gazette specify.*

- 6.16 All dutiable goods imported into India by a passenger in his baggage are classified under CTH 9803.

Customs Baggage Rules and Regulations:

- 6.17 As per Customs Baggage Declaration (Amendment) Regulations, 2016 issued vide Notification no. 31/2016 (NT) dated 01.03.2016, all passengers who come to India and having anything to declare or are carrying dutiable or prohibited goods shall declare their accompanied baggage in the prescribed form under Section 77 of the Customs Act, 1962.

- 6.18 As per Rule 5 of the Baggage Rules, 2016, a passenger residing abroad for more than one year, on return to India, shall be allowed clearance free of duty in his bon-fide baggage of jewellery upto weight, of twenty grams with a value cap of Rs. 50,000/- if brought by a gentlemen passenger and forty grams with a value cap of one lakh rupees, if brought by a lady passenger.

Notifications under Foreign Trade Policy and the Customs Act, 1962:

6.19 As per Notification no. 49/2015-2020 dated 05.01.2022, gold in any form includes gold in any form above 22 carats under Chapter 71 of the ITC (HS), 2017, Schedule-1 (Import Policy) and import of the same is restricted.

6.20 Notification No. 50 /2017 –Customs New Delhi, the 30th June, 2017 G.S.R. (E).-

In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 25 of the Customs Act, 1962 (52 of 1962) and sub-section (12) of section 3, of Customs Tariff Act, 1975 (51 of 1975), and in supersession of the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue), No. 12/2012 - Customs, dated the 17th March, 2017 published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (i), vide number G.S.R. 185 (E) dated the 17th March, 2017, except as respects things done or omitted to be done before such supersession, the Central Government, on being satisfied that it is necessary in the public interest so to do, hereby exempts the goods of the description specified in column (3) of the Table below or column (3) of the said Table read with the relevant List appended hereto, as the case may be, and falling within the Chapter, heading, sub-heading or tariff item of the First Schedule to the said Customs Tariff Act, as are specified in the corresponding entry in column (2) of the said Table, when imported into India,- (a) from so much of the duty of customs leviable thereon under the said First Schedule as is in excess of the amount calculated at the standard rate specified in the corresponding entry in column (4) of the said Table; and (b) from so much of integrated tax leviable thereon under sub-section (7) of section 3 of said Customs Tariff Act, read with section 5 of the Integrated Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 (13 of 2017) as is in excess of the amount calculated at the rate specified in the corresponding entry in column (5) of the said Table, subject to any of the conditions, specified in the Annexure to this notification, the condition number of which is mentioned in the corresponding entry in column (6) of the said Table:

	Chapter or heading or sub-heading or tariff item	Description of goods	Standard rate	Condition No.
356.	71or 98	(i) Gold bars, other than tola bars, bearing manufacturer's or refiner's engraved serial number and weight expressed in metric units, and gold coins having gold content not below 99.5%, imported by the eligible passenger (ii) Gold in any form other than (i), including tola bars and ornaments, but excluding ornaments studded with stones or pearls	10%	41

Condition no. 41 of the Notification:

If, - 1. (a) the duty is paid in convertible foreign currency; (b) the quantity of import does not exceed ten kilograms of gold and one hundred kilograms of silver per eligible passenger; and 2. the gold or silver is,- (a)carried by the eligible passenger at the time of his arrival in India, or (b) the total quantity of gold under items (i) and (ii) of Sr. No. 356 does not exceed one kilogram and the quantity of silver under Sr. No. 357 does not exceed ten kilograms per eligible passenger; and (c) is taken delivery of from a customs bonded warehouse of the State Bank of India or the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation Ltd., subject to the conditions 1 ; Provided that such eligible passenger files a declaration in the prescribed form before the proper officer of customs at the time of his arrival in India declaring his intention to take delivery of the gold or silver from such a customs bonded warehouse and pays the duty leviable thereon before his clearance from customs. Explanation.- For the purposes of this notification, "eligible passenger" means a passenger of Indian origin or a passenger holding a valid passport, issued under the Passports Act, 1967 (15 of 1967), who is coming to India after a period of not less than six months of stay abroad; and short visits, if any, made by the eligible passenger during the aforesaid period of six months shall be ignored if the total duration of stay on such visits does not exceed thirty days and such passenger has not availed of the exemption under this notification or under the notification being superseded at any time of such short visits.

- 7** From the above paras, it appears that during the period relevant to this case, import of gold in any form (gold having purity above 22 kt.) was restricted as per DGFT notification and import was permitted only by nominated agencies. Further, it appears that import of goods whereas it is allowed subject to certain conditions are to be treated as prohibited goods under section 2(33) of the Customs Act, 1962 in case such conditions are not fulfilled. As such import of gold is not permitted under Baggage and therefore the same is liable to be held as prohibited goods.

CONTRAVENTION AND VIOLATION OF LAW:

- 8.** It therefore appears that:
- (a) The passenger **Ms. Fatima Suaad Shabandri** had dealt with and knowingly indulged herself in the instant case of smuggling of gold into India. The passenger had improperly imported gold weighing 374.90 grams having purity 999.0/24kt, tariff value is Rs. 35,82,484/- and Market value of Rs. 37,26,506/-. The said semi solid gold paste was concealed in 02 capsules covered with white plastic tape containing gold and chemical mix in semi-solid paste form and not declared to the Customs. The passenger opted green channel to exit the Airport with deliberate intention to evade the payment of Customs Duty and fraudulently circumventing the restrictions and prohibitions imposed under the Customs Act 1962 and other allied Acts, Rules and Regulations. Thus, the element of mensrea appears to have been established beyond doubt. Therefore, the improperly imported gold bar weighing 374.90 grams of purity 999.0/24 Kt. by Ms. Fatima by way of concealment and without declaring it to the

Customs on arrival in India cannot be treated as bonafide household goods or personal effects. The passenger has thus contravened the Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20 and Section 11(1) of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992 read with Section 3(2) and 3(3) of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.

- (b) **Ms. Fatima Suaad Shabandri** by not declaring the value, quantity and description of the goods imported by him, the said passenger violated the provision of Baggage Rules, 2016, read with the Section 77 of the Customs Act, 1962 read with Regulation 3 of Customs Baggage Declaration Regulations, 2013.
- (c) The improperly imported gold by the passenger **Ms. Fatima Suaad Shabandri**, found concealed in 02 capsules containing gold and chemical mix in semi-solid paste form without declaring it to the Customs is thus liable for confiscation under Section 111(d), 111(f), 111(i), 111(j), 111(l) and 111(m) read with Section 2 (22), (33), (39) of the Customs Act, 1962 and further read in conjunction with Section 11(3) of Customs Act, 1962.
- (d) **Ms. Fatima Suaad Shabandri** by his above-described acts of omission and commission on his part has rendered himself liable to penalty under Section 112 of the Customs Act, 1962.
- (e) As per Section 123 of Customs Act 1962, the burden of proving that the gold bar weighing 374.90 grams having purity 999.0/24kt, Market value is Rs. 37,26,506/- and tariff value is Rs. 35,82,484/- derived from semi solid gold paste concealed in 02 capsules containing gold and chemical mix in semi-solid paste form in rectum of the passenger **Ms. Fatima Suaad Shabandri**, without declaring it to the Customs, is not smuggled goods, is upon the passenger Ms. Fatima who is Noticee in this case.

9. Accordingly, a Show Cause Notice was issued to **Ms. Fatima Suaad Shabandri**, residing at Miya House, Sultan Street, PO Bhatkal, Karwar, Karnataka-581320, as to why:

- (i) One Gold Bar weighing **374.90 grams** having purity 999.0/24kt, Market value is **Rs. 37,26,506/-** (Rupees Thirty-Seven Lakh Twenty-Six Thousand Five Hundred Six Only) and tariff value is **Rs. 35,82,484/-** (Rupees Thirty-Five Lakh Eighty-Two Thousand Four Hundred Eighty-Four Only) derived from semi solid gold paste concealed in 02 capsules containing gold and chemical mix in semi-solid paste form in rectum by the passenger and placed under seizure under panchnama proceedings dated 29.04.2025 and Seizure Memo Order dated 29.04.2025, should not be confiscated under the provision of Section 111(d), 111(f), 111(i), 111(j), 111(l) and 111(m) of the Customs Act, 1962;
- (ii) Penalty should not be imposed upon the passenger, under Section 112 of the Customs Act, 1962, for the omissions and commissions mentioned hereinabove.

DEFENSE REPLY AND RECORD OF PERSONAL HEARING:

10. The noticee has not submitted any written submission to the Show Cause Notice issued to her.

11. The noticee was given opportunity for personal hearing on 25.11.2025, 03.12.2025 & 18.12.2025 but she failed to appear and represent her case. In the instant case, the noticee has been granted sufficient opportunity of being heard in person for three times but she failed to appear. In view of above, it is obvious that the Noticee is not bothered about the ongoing adjudication proceedings and she do not have anything to say in her defense. I am of the opinion that sufficient opportunities have been offered to the noticee in keeping with the principle of natural justice and there is no prudence in keeping the matter in abeyance indefinitely.

11.1 Before, proceeding further, I would like to mention that Hon'ble Supreme Court, High Courts and Tribunals have held, in several judgments/decision, that ex-parte decision will not amount to violation of principles of Natural Justice. In support of the same, I rely upon some the relevant judgments/orders which are as under-

a). The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of Jethmal Versus Union of India reported in 1999 (110) E.L.T. 379 (S.C.), the Hon'ble Court has observed as under;

"7. Our attention was also drawn to a recent decision of this Court in A.K. Kripak v. Union of India - 1969 (2) SCC 340, where some of the rules of natural justice were formulated in Paragraph 20 of the judgment. One of these is the well-known principle of audi alteram partem and it was argued that an ex parte hearing without notice violated this rule. In our opinion this rule can have no application to the facts of this case where the appellant was asked not only to send a written reply but to inform the Collector whether he wished to be heard in person or through a representative. If no reply was given or no intimation was sent to the Collector that a personal hearing was desired, the Collector would be justified in thinking that the persons notified did not desire to appear before him when the case was to be considered and could not be blamed if he were to proceed on the material before him on the basis of the allegations in the show cause notice. Clearly, he could not compel appearance before him and giving a further notice in a case like this that the matter would be dealt with on a certain day would be an ideal formality."

b). Hon'ble High Court of Kerala in the case of United Oil Mills Vs. Collector of Customs & C. Ex., Cochin reported in 2000 (124) E.L.T. 53 (Ker.), the Hon'ble Court has observed that;

"Natural justice - Petitioner given full opportunity before Collector to produce all evidence on which he intends to rely but petitioner not prayed for any opportunity to adduce further evidence - Principles of natural justice not violated."

c). Hon'ble High Court of Calcutta in the case of Kumar Jagdish Ch. Sinha Vs. Collector of Central Excise, Calcutta reported in 2000 (124) E.L.T. 118 (Cal.) in Civil Rule No. 128 (W) of 1961, decided on 13-9-1963, the Hon'ble court has observed that;

"Natural justice - Show cause notice - Hearing - Demand - Principles of natural justice not violated when, before making the levy under Rule 9 of Central Excise Rules, 1944, the Noticee was issued a show cause notice, his reply considered, and he was also given a personal hearing in support of his reply - Section 33 of Central Excises & Salt Act, 1944. - It has been established both in England and in India [vide N.P.T. Co. v. N.S.T. Co.

(1957) S.C.R. 98 (106)], that there is no universal code of natural justice and that the nature of hearing required would depend, inter alia, upon the provisions of the statute and the rules made there under which govern the constitution of a particular body. It has also been established that where the relevant statute is silent, what is required is a minimal level of hearing, namely, that the statutory authority must 'act in good faith and fairly listen to both sides' [Board of Education v. Rice, (1911) A.C. 179] and, "deal with the question referred to them without bias, and give to each of the parties the opportunity of adequately presenting the case" [Local Govt. Board v. Arlidge, (1915) A.C. 120 (132)]. [para 16]

d). Hon'ble High Court of Delhi in the case of Saketh India Limited Vs. Union of India reported in 2002 (143) E.L.T. 274 (Del.). The Hon'ble Court has observed that:

Natural justice - Ex parte order by DGFT - EXIM Policy - Proper opportunity given to appellant to reply to show cause notice issued by Addl. DGFT and to make oral submissions, if any, but opportunity not availed by appellant - Principles of natural justice not violated by Additional DGFT in passing ex parte order - Para 2.8(c) of Export-Import Policy 1992-97 - Section 5 of Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.

e). The Hon'ble CESTAT, Mumbai in the case of Gopinath Chem Tech. Ltd Vs. Commissioner of Central Excise, Ahmedabad-II reported in 2004 (171) E.L.T. 412 (Tri. - Mumbai), the Hon'ble CESTAT has observed that;

Natural justice - Personal hearing fixed by lower authorities but not attended by appellant and reasons for not attending also not explained - Appellant cannot now demand another hearing - Principles of natural justice not violated. [para 5]

f). The Hon'ble High Court of Jharkhand in W.P.(T) No. 1617 of 2023 in case of Rajeev Kumar Vs. The Principal Commissioner of Central Goods and Service Tax & The Additional Commissioner of Central GST & CX, 5A Central Revenue Building, Main Road, Ranchi pronounced on 12.09.2023 wherein Hon'ble Court has held that-

"Accordingly, we are of the considered opinion that no error has been committed by the adjudicating authority in passing the impugned Order-in-Original, inasmuch as, enough opportunities were provided to the petitioner by issuing SCN and also fixing date of personal hearing for four times; but the petitioner did not respond to either of them.

8. Having regard to the aforesaid discussions and admitted position with regard to non-submission of reply to the SCN, we failed to appreciate the contention of the petitioner that principle of natural justice has not been complied in the instant case. Since there is efficacious alternative remedy provided in the Act itself, we hold that the instant writ application is not maintainable.

9. As a result, the instant application stands dismissed. Pending I.A., if any, is also closed."

DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS:

12. I have carefully gone through the facts of the case. Though sufficient opportunity for filing reply and personal hearing had been given, the Noticee has not come forward to file her reply/ submissions or to appear for the personal hearing opportunities offered to her. The adjudication proceedings cannot wait until the Noticee makes it convenient to file her submissions and

appear for the personal hearing. I, therefore, take up the case for adjudication ex-parte, on the basis of evidences available on record.

13. In the instant case, I find that the main issue to be decided is whether the One Gold Bar weighing **374.900 Grams** (Net Weight) and purity of 24Kt/999.0, which was derived from the 02 capsules containing gold paste and chemical mix, having the having total **Market Value of Rs.37,26,506/-** (Rupees Thirty-Seven Lakh Twenty-Six Thousand Five Hundred Six Only) and **Tariff Value of Rs.35,82,484/-** (Rupees Thirty-Five Lakh Eighty-Two Thousand Four Hundred Eighty-Four Only), seized vide Seizure Memo/ Order under Panchnama proceedings both dated 29.04.2025 on a reasonable belief that the same is liable for confiscation under Section 111 of the Customs Act, 1962 (hereinafter referred to as 'the Act') or not; and whether the passenger is liable for penal action under the provisions of Section 112 of the Act.

14. I find that the Panchnama has clearly drawn out the fact, that, **Ms. Fatima Suaad Shabandri** was arrived from Jeddah to Ahmedabad at the arrival Hall of the SVPIA, on dated 29.04.2025 and she was attempting to exit through green channel without making any declaration to the Customs. Therefore, the AIU officers questioned the said passenger that as to whether she was carrying any dutiable/contraband goods in person or in her baggage, to which she denied. Then, the officers informed her that a personal search to be carried out as well as her baggage. Accordingly, the AIU officers asked her to pass through the Door Frame Metal Detector (DFMD) installed at the arrival hall after removing all the metallic substances. The passenger passed through the DFMD machine, but no beep sound was heard in the DFMD machine and it was indicating that there was nothing objectionable/dutiable on her body/clothes. Her baggage was scanned through the X-Ray machine at SVPI Ahmedabad Terminal 2, revealing no suspicious images.

14.1 I further find that the officers, in the presence of panchas, questioned the passenger about concealing any substance in her body, which she initially denied. After further interrogation, Ms. Fatima admitted to hiding two capsules wrapped in white plastic tape inside her rectum, containing gold paste and semi-solid chemicals. She was then escorted to the washroom near belt No. 2 in the arrival hall of Terminal 2 at SVPI Airport, Ahmedabad, where she retrieved and handed over the two capsules. The AIU officers informed the panchas that the capsules recovered from Ms. Fatima contained a semi-solid mixture of gold and chemicals, requiring confirmation of their contents, purity, and weight. To carry out this process, they contacted Shri Kartikey Vasantrai Soni, a Government Approved Valuer, who stated that the necessary facility was available only at his shop. Consequently, the officers, panchas, and the passenger traveled in a government vehicle to his premises at Golden Signature, C.G. Road, Ahmedabad. There, the valuer weighed the two capsules on his scale and reported a total weight of 416.10 grams, inclusive of the white plastic tape wrapping.

15. It is on record that the Government Approved Valuer, Shri Kartikey Vasantrai Soni, processed the semi-solid substances recovered from the capsules and converted them into a solid gold bar. Upon completion, he confirmed that the bar weighed 374.900 grams with a purity of 999.0/24 Kt. He issued certificate no. 128/2025-26 dated 29.04.2025, certifying the gold bar's purity and valuing it at a Market Value of **Rs.37,26,506/-** (Rupees Thirty-Seven Lakh Twenty-Six Thousand Five Hundred Six Only) and Tariff Value of **Rs.35,82,484/-** (Rupees Thirty-Five Lakh Eighty-Two Thousand Four Hundred Eighty-Four Only), calculated in accordance with Customs

Notification No. 28/2025 and Exchange Rate Notification No. 25/2024. The purification, testing, and valuation were conducted in the presence of the independent panchas, the passenger, and the officers, all of whom agreed with the findings and signed the valuation certificate as confirmation. The details of the Valuation of the said gold bar is as under:

Sr. No.	Details of Items	Pcs	Net Weight in Gram	Purity	Market Value (Rs.)	Tariff Value (Rs.)
1.	Gold Bar	01	374.900	999/24Kt	37,26,506/-	35,82,484/-

16. Accordingly, the said Gold Bar having purity 999.0/24Kt. weighing **374.900 Grams**, recovered from noticee was seized vide Panchnama dated 29.04.2025, under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962, on the reasonable belief that the said gold bar was smuggled into India by the said noticee with an intention to evade payment of Customs duty and accordingly the same was liable for confiscation under the Customs Act, 1962 read with Rules and Regulation made thereunder.

I also find that the said One Gold Bar weighing **374.900 Grams** (Net Weight), having Market Value of **Rs.37,26,506/-** and Tariff Value of **Rs.35,82,484/-** was carried by the passenger appeared to be "smuggled goods" as defined under Section 2(39) of the Customs Act, 1962. The offence committed is admitted by the passenger in her statement recorded on 29.04.2025 under Section 108 of the Customs Act, 1962.

17. I also find that the noticee had neither questioned the manner of the Panchnama proceedings at the material time nor controverted the facts detailed in the Panchnama during the course of recording her statement. Every procedure conducted during the Panchnama by the Officers was well documented and made in the presence of the Panchas as well as the noticee. In fact, in her statement, she stated that she is a housewife, traveled from CSMI Airport to Jeddah on 13.02.2025 and returned to India on 29.04.2025 via Indigo Flight No. 6E76, arriving at SVPI International Airport, Ahmedabad. She confessed to concealing two semi-solid gold paste capsules wrapped in white plastic tape inside her rectum, which she had purchased jointly with her sister but without any supporting bill or invoice. The concealment was done with the intent to evade payment of Customs duty. She admitted to indulging in smuggling activity and was present throughout the Panchnama proceedings dated 29.04.2025 at Terminal-2, SVPI Airport, where she confirmed the recorded events. Despite being fully aware of the concealed gold capsules, she made no declaration to Customs, thereby attempting to smuggle the gold into India without duty payment. She had opted for green channel so that she can attempt to smuggle the gold without paying customs duty. I find from the content of the statement, that said smuggled gold was clearly meant for commercial purpose and hence do not constitute bonafide baggage within the meaning of Section 79 of the Customs Act, 1962. I find from the statement that the said goods were also not declared before Customs and she had to clear the gold without payment of Customs duty, she did not make any declarations in this regard. She admitted that she had opted for green channel so that she could attempt to smuggle the Gold without paying customs duty and thereby violated provisions of the Customs Act, the Baggage Rules, the Foreign Trade (Development & Regulations) Act, 1992 as amended, the Foreign Trade (Development & Regulations) Rules, 1993 as amended and the Foreign Trade Policy 2015-2020.

18. Further, the noticee has accepted that she had not declared the said gold concealed by her, on her arrival to the Customs authorities. It is clear case of non-declaration with an intent to smuggle the gold. Accordingly, there is sufficient evidence to say that the noticee had kept the said Gold Bar, having net weight **374.900 Grams**, having purity of 24Kt/999.0 derived from the above mentioned 02 capsules containing gold paste and chemical mix, which were concealed in her rectum and failed to declare the same before the Customs Authorities on her arrival at SVPIA, Ahmedabad. The case of smuggling of gold recovered from her possession and which was kept undeclared with an intent of smuggling the same and in order to evade payment of Customs duty is conclusively proved. Thus, it is proved that the passenger violated Section 77 and Section 79 of the Customs Act for import/smuggling of gold which was not for bonafide use and thereby violated Rule 11 of the Foreign Trade Regulation Rules 1993 as amended, and para 2.26 of the Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20 as amended. Further as per Section 123 of the Customs Act, 1962, gold is a notified item and when goods notified thereunder are seized under the Customs Act, 1962, on the reasonable belief that they are smuggled goods, the burden to prove that they are not smuggled, shall be on the person from whose possession the goods have been seized.

19. From the facts discussed above, it is evident that noticee had carried the said gold weighing **374.900 Grams**, while arriving from Jeddah to Ahmedabad (AMD), with an intention to smuggle and remove the same without payment of Customs duty, thereby rendering the said Gold Bar of 24Kt/999.00 purity totally weighing 374.900 Grams, liable for confiscation, under the provisions of Sections 111(d), 111(f), 111(i), 111(j), 111(l) and 111(m) of the Customs Act, 1962. By concealing the said one Gold Bar in form of 02 capsules containing gold paste and chemical mix, not declaring the same before the Customs, it is established that the noticee had a clear intention to smuggle the gold clandestinely with the deliberate intention to evade payment of Customs duty. The commission of above act made the impugned goods fall within the ambit of 'smuggling' as defined under Section 2(22), 2(33) and 2(39) of the Customs Act, 1962.

20. It is seen that for the purpose of customs clearance of arriving passengers, a two-channel system is prescribed/adopted i.e. Green Channel for passengers not having dutiable goods and Red Channel for passengers having dutiable goods and all passengers have to ensure to file correct declaration of their baggage. I find that the Noticee had not filed the baggage declaration form and had not declared the said gold which was in her possession, as envisaged under Section 77 of the Act read with the Baggage Rules and Regulation 3 of Customs Baggage Declaration Regulations, 2013 and she was tried to exit through Green Channel which shows that the noticee was trying to evade the payment of eligible customs duty. I also find that the definition of "eligible passenger" is provided under Notification No. 50/2017- Customs New Delhi, the 30th June, 2017 wherein it is mentioned as - "eligible passenger" means a passenger of Indian origin or a passenger holding a valid passport, issued under the Passports Act, 1967 (15 of 1967), who is coming to India after a period of not less than six months of stay abroad; and short visits, if any, made by the eligible passenger during the aforesaid period of six months shall be ignored if the total duration of stay on such visits does not exceed thirty days. I find that the noticee has not declared the gold before customs authority. It is also observed that the imports were also for non-bonafide purposes. Therefore, the said improperly imported gold weighing 374.900 Grams concealed by her in form of 02 capsules containing gold paste

and chemical mix, without declaring to the Customs on arrival in India cannot be treated as bonafide household goods or personal effects. The noticee has thus contravened the Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20 as amended and Section 11(1) of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992 read with Section 3(2) and 3(3) of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992.

It, is therefore, proved that by the above acts of contravention, the noticee has rendered the said gold weighing **374.900 Grams**, having Market Value of **Rs.37,26,506/-**(Rupees Thirty-Seven Lakh Twenty-Six Thousand Five Hundred Six Only) and Tariff Value of **Rs.35,82,484/-**(Rupees Thirty-Five Lakh Eighty-Two Thousand Four Hundred Eighty-Four Only) recovered and seized from the noticee vide Seizure Order under Panchnama proceedings both dated 29.04.2025 liable to confiscation under the provisions of Sections 111(d), 111(f), 111(i), 111(j), 111(l) and 111(m) of the Customs Act, 1962. By using the modus of concealing the one Gold Bar concealed in her rectum in form of 02 capsules containing gold paste and chemical mix, it is observed that the noticee was fully aware that the import of said goods is offending in nature. It is, therefore, very clear that she has knowingly carried the gold and failed to declare the same on her arrival at the Customs Airport. It is seen that she has involved herself in carrying, keeping, concealing, and dealing with the impugned goods in a manner which she knew or had reasons to believe that the same is liable to confiscation under the Act. It is, therefore, proved beyond doubt that the Noticee has committed an offence of the nature described in Section 112 of the Customs Act, 1962 making her liable for penalty under Section 112 of the Customs Act, 1962.

21. I find that the Noticee confessed of carrying the said one Gold Bar of 374.900 grams derived from the 02 capsules containing gold paste and chemical mix concealed by her in her rectum and attempted to remove the said gold from the Airport without declaring it to the Customs Authorities violating the Para 2.26 of the Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20 and Section 11(1) of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992 read with Section 3(2) and 3(3) of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992 further read in conjunction with Section 11(3) of the Customs Act, 1962 and the relevant provisions of Baggage Rules, 2016 and Customs Baggage Declaration Regulations, 2013 as amended. As per Section 2(33) "prohibited goods" means any goods the import or export of which is subject to any prohibition under this Act or any other law for the time being in force but does not include any such goods in respect of which the conditions subject to which the goods are permitted to be imported or exported have been complied with. The improperly imported gold by the noticee without following the due process of law and without adhering to the conditions and procedures of import have thus acquired the nature of being prohibited goods in view of Section 2(33) of the Act.

22. It is quite clear from the above discussions that the one Gold Bar was concealed and not declared to the Customs with the sole intention to smuggle the same clandestinely and to evade payment of Customs duty. The record before me shows that the noticee did not choose to declare the prohibited/dutiable goods with the wilful intention to smuggle the impugned goods. The said one Gold Bar weighing **374.900 Grams**, having Market Value of **Rs.37,26,506/-** and Tariff Value of **Rs.35,82,484/-** recovered and seized from the noticee vide Seizure Order under Panchnama proceedings both dated 29.04.2025. Despite having knowledge that the goods had to be declared and such import without declaration and by not discharging eligible customs duty,

is an offence under the Act and Rules and Regulations made under it, the noticee had attempted to remove the said one Gold Bar weighing 374.900 Grams, by deliberately not declaring the same by her on arrival at airport with the wilful intention to smuggle the impugned gold into India. I, therefore, find that the passenger has committed an offence of the nature described in Section 112(a) & 112(b) of the Customs Act, 1962 making her liable for penalty under the provisions of Section 112 of the Customs Act, 1962.

23. I further find that the gold is not on the list of prohibited items but import of the same is controlled. The view taken by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of Om Prakash Bhatia however in very clear terms lay down the principle that if importation and exportation of goods are subject to certain prescribed conditions, which are to be fulfilled before or after clearance of the goods, non-fulfilment of such conditions would make the goods fall within the ambit of 'prohibited goods' This makes the gold seized in the present case "prohibited goods" as the noticee, trying to smuggle it and was not eligible passenger to bring it in India or import gold into India in baggage as per the prescribed conditions. The said one Gold Bar weighing 374.900 Grams, was recovered from her possession, and was kept undeclared with an intention to smuggle the same and evade payment of Customs duty. Further, the noticee one Gold Bar derived from the above mentioned 02 capsules containing gold paste and chemical mix concealed in her rectum. By using this modus, it is proved that the goods are offending in nature and therefore prohibited on its importation. Here, conditions are not fulfilled by the passenger.

24. In view of the above discussions, I find that the manner of concealment, in this case clearly shows that the noticee had attempted to smuggle the seized gold to avoid detection by the Customs Authorities. **Further, no evidence has been produced/ submitted to prove licit import of the seized gold bar, which shows that the noticee has nothing to submit in her defense and sole purpose of the noticee to smuggle the same into India and to avoid the payment of duty without declaring the same before customs authority at airport. Thus, the noticee has failed to discharge the burden placed on him in terms of Section 123.** Further, from the SCN, Panchnama and Statement, I find that the manner of concealment of the gold is ingenious in nature, as the noticee concealed the one Gold Bar which was derived from the above mentioned 02 capsules containing gold paste and chemical mix, in her rectum with intention to smuggle the same into India and evade payment of customs duty. Therefore, I hold that the said one Gold Bar weighing 374.900 Grams, carried and undeclared by the Noticee with an intention to clear the same illicitly from Airport and evade payment of Customs duty is liable for absolute confiscation. Further, the Noticee in her statement dated 29.04.2025 stated that she had carried the said gold by concealment to evade payment of Customs duty. In the instant case, I find that the gold was carried by the Noticee for getting monetary benefit/ personal benefit and that too by concealment of the said one Gold Bar. **I am therefore, not inclined to use my discretion to give an option to redeem the gold on payment of redemption fine, as envisaged under Section 125 of the Act.**

25. Further, before the Kerala High Court in the case of Abdul Razak [2012(275) ELT 300 (Ker)], the petitioner had contended that under the Foreign Trade (Exemption from application of rules in certain cases) Order, 1993, gold was not a prohibited item and can be released on payment of redemption fine. The Hon'ble High Court held as under:

“Further, as per the statement given by the appellant under Section 108 of the Act, he is only a carrier i.e. professional smuggler smuggling goods on behalf of others for consideration. We, therefore, do not find any merit in the appellant's case that he has the right to get the confiscated gold released on payment of redemption fine and duty under Section 125 of the Act.”

The case has been maintained by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Abdul Razak Vs. Union of India 2017 (350) E.L.T. A173 (S.C.) [04-05-2012]

26. In the case of Samynathan Murugesan [2009 (247) ELT 21 (Mad)], the High Court upheld the absolute confiscation, ordered by the adjudicating authority, in similar facts and circumstances. Further, in the said case of smuggling of gold, the High Court of Madras in the case of Samynathan Murugesan reported at 2009 (247) ELT 21(Mad) has ruled that as the goods were prohibited and there was concealment, the Commissioner's order for absolute confiscation was upheld.

27. Further I find that in a recent case decided by the Hon'ble High Court of Madras reported at 2016-TIOL-1664-HC-MAD-CUS in respect of Malabar Diamond Gallery Pvt. Ltd, the Court while holding gold jewellery as prohibited goods under Section 2(33) of the Customs Act, 1962 had recorded that “restriction” also means prohibition. In Para 89 of the order, it was recorded as under;

89. While considering a prayer for provisional release, pending adjudication, whether all the above can wholly be ignored by the authorities, enjoined with a duty, to enforce the statutory provisions, rules and notifications, in letter and spirit, in consonance with the objects and intention of the Legislature, imposing prohibitions/restrictions under the Customs Act, 1962 or under any other law, for the time being in force, we are of the view that all the authorities are bound to follow the same, wherever, prohibition or restriction is imposed, and when the word, “restriction”, also means prohibition, as held by the Hon'ble Apex Court in Om Prakash Bhatia's case (cited supra).

28. The Hon'ble High Court of Madras in the matter of Commissioner of Customs (AIR), Chennai-I Versus P. Sinnasamy 2016 (344) E.L.T. 1154 (Mad.) held-

Tribunal had arrogated powers of adjudicating authority by directing authority to release gold by exercising option in favour of respondent - Tribunal had overlooked categorical finding of adjudicating authority that respondent had deliberately attempted to smuggle 2548.3 grams of gold, by concealing and without declaration of Customs for monetary consideration - Adjudicating authority had given reasons for confiscation of gold while allowing redemption of other goods on payment of fine - Discretion exercised by authority to deny release, is in accordance with law - Interference by Tribunal is against law and unjustified -

Redemption fine - Option - Confiscation of smuggled gold - Redemption cannot be allowed, as a matter of right - Discretion conferred on adjudicating authority to decide - Not open to Tribunal to issue any positive directions to adjudicating authority to exercise option in favour of redemption.

29. In 2019 (370) E.L.T. 1743 (G.O.I.), before the Government of India, Ministry of Finance, [Department of Revenue - Revisionary Authority]; Ms. Mallika Arya, Additional Secretary in Abdul Kalam Ammangod Kunhamu vide

Order No. 17/2019-Cus., dated 07.10.2019 in F. No. 375/06/B/2017-RA stated that it is observed that C.B.I. & C. had issued instruction vide Letter F. No. 495/5/92-Cus. VI, dated 10.05.1993 wherein it has been instructed that “in respect of gold seized for non-declaration, no option to redeem the same on redemption fine under Section 125 of the Customs Act, 1962 should be given except in very trivial cases where the adjudicating authority is satisfied that there was no concealment of the gold in question”.

30. The Hon’ble High Court of Delhi in the matter of Rameshwar Tiwari Vs. Union of India (2024) 17 Cen-Tax 261 (Del.) has held-

“23. There is no merit in the contention of learned counsel for the Petitioner that he was not aware of the gold. Petitioner was carrying the packet containing gold. The gold items were concealed inside two pieces of Medicine Sachets which were kept inside a Multi coloured zipper jute bag further kept in the White coloured zipper hand bag that was carried by the Petitioner. The manner of concealing the gold clearly establishes knowledge of the Petitioner that the goods were liable to be confiscated under section 111 of the Act. The Adjudicating Authority has rightly held that the manner of concealment revealed his knowledge about the prohibited nature of the goods and proved his guilt knowledge/mens-rea.”

*“26. The Supreme Court of India in State of Maharashtra v. Natwarlal Damodardas Soni [1980] 4 SCC 669/1983 (13) E.L.T. 1620 (SC)/1979 taxmann.com 58 (SC) **has held that smuggling particularly of gold, into India affects the public economy and financial stability of the country.**”*

31. Given the facts of the present case before me and the judgments and rulings cited above, the said Gold Bar weighing 374.900 Grams, carried by the noticee is therefore liable to be confiscated absolutely. **I therefore hold in unequivocal terms that the said Gold Bar weighing 374.900 Grams, placed under seizure would be liable to absolute confiscation under Section 111(d), 111(f), 111(i), 111(j), 111(l) and 111(m) of the Customs Act, 1962.**

32. As regard to imposition of penalty under Section 112 of Customs Act, 1962 in respect of Noticee **Ms. Fatima Suaad Shabandri**, I find that in the instant case, the principle of mens-rea on behalf of noticee is established as the noticee has failed to follow the procedure and intentionally involved in smuggling of the gold and deliberately concealed the gold in form of 02 capsules containing gold paste and chemical mix, thus, established that the concealment of said gold is ingenious in nature. On deciding the penalty in the instant case, I also take into consideration the observations of Hon’ble Apex Court laid down in the judgment of M/s. Hindustan Steel Ltd Vs. State of Orissa; wherein the Hon’ble Apex Court observed that “The discretion to impose a penalty must be exercised judicially. A penalty will ordinarily be imposed in case where the party acts deliberately in defiance of law, or is guilty of contumacious or dishonest conduct or act in conscious disregard of its obligation; but not in cases where there is technical or venial breach of the provisions of Act or where the breach flows from a bona fide belief that the offender is not liable to act in the manner prescribed by the Statute.” In the instant case, the noticee was attempting to smuggled the one Gold Bar weighing 374.900 Grams having purity of 999.0/24Kt, which was derived from the 02 capsules containing gold paste and chemical mix and attempting to evade the Customs Duty. Hence, the

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OIO No.203/ADC/SRV/O&A/HQ/2025-26

identity of the goods is not established and non-declaration at the time of import is considered as an act of omission on her part. I further find that the noticee had involved herself and abetted the act of smuggling of the said one Gold Bar weighing 374.900 Grams, carried by her by concealment. She has agreed and admitted in her statement that she travelled from Jeddah to Ahmedabad with the said gold in form 02 capsules containing gold paste and chemical mix, which were concealed in her rectum. Despite her knowledge and belief that the gold carried by her is an offence under the provisions of the Customs Act, 1962 and the Regulations made under it, the noticee attempted to smuggle the said gold of 374.900 Grams, having purity 999.0/24kt by concealment. Thus, it is clear that the noticee has concerned herself with carrying, removing, keeping, concealing and dealing with the smuggled gold which she knows very well and has reason to believe that the same are liable for confiscation under Section 111 of the Customs Act, 1962. Accordingly, I find that the noticee is liable for the penalty under Section 112(a) and Section 112(b) of the Customs Act, 1962 and I hold accordingly.

33. Accordingly, I pass the following Order:

ORDER

- i) I order absolute confiscation of the one Gold Bar**, having purity 999.0/24Kt., weighing **374.900 Grams** (Net Weight) and having the Market Value of **Rs.37,26,506/-** (Rupees Thirty-Seven Lakhs Twenty-Six Thousand Five Hundred Six only) and Tariff Value **Rs.35,82,484/-** (Rupees Thirty-Five Lakh Eighty-Two Thousand Four Hundred Eighty-Four Only), derived from the 02 capsules containing gold paste and chemical mix, which were concealed and carried by the passenger, **Ms. Fatima Suaad Shabandri**, who arrived from Jeddah to Ahmedabad on 29.04.2025 by Indigo Flight No. 6E-76, at Terminal-2 of SVPIA Ahmedabad, placed under seizure under Panchnama Proceedings dated 29.04.2025 and Seizure Memo Order dated 29.04.2025, under the provisions of Section 111(d), 111(f), 111(i), 111(j), 111(l) and 111(m) of the Customs Act, 1962;
- ii) I impose a Penalty of Rs.9,00,000/-** (Rupees Nine Lakh Only) on **Ms. Fatima Suaad Shabandri** under the provisions of Section 112(a)(i) and 112(b)(i) of the Customs Act, 1962.

34. Accordingly, the Show Cause Notice No. VIII/10-46/SVPIA-C/O&A/HQ/2025-26 dated 13.10.2025 stands disposed of.

(Shree Ram Vishnoi)
Additional Commissioner
Customs Ahmedabad

DIN: 20260171MN000000BF8B

F. No. VIII/10-46/SVPIA-C/O&A/HQ/2025-26

Date: 30.01.2026

By Rpad/E-Mail/ Notice Board/Other Legally Permissible Mode

**To,
Ms. Fatima Suaad Shabandri
Miya House, Sultan Street,
PO Bhatkal, Karwar,
Karnataka-581320.**

Copy to:

1. The Principal Commissioner of Customs, Ahmedabad. (Kind Attn: RRA Section)
2. The Deputy Commissioner of Customs (AIU), SVPIA, Ahmedabad.
3. The Deputy Commissioner of Customs, SVPIA, Ahmedabad.
4. The Deputy Commissioner of Customs (Task Force), Ahmedabad.
5. The System In-Charge, Customs, HQ., Ahmedabad for uploading on the official web-site i.e. <http://www.ahmedabadcustoms.gov.in>
6. Guard File.