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Gold smuggling: principal secy to Pinarayi removed

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
DHNS 8/7/20

Tharoor denies
links

Kerala government has removed senior IAS officer M Sivasankar as the principal secretary of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan for his alleged nexus with former staff of the UAE consulate in Thiruvananthapuram involved in smuggling of gold through diplomatic baggage.



Swapna.

The development comes a day after the chief minister termed baseless the alleged nexus of his office with the smuggling racket.

A CMO statement said that Sivasankar was removed from the CM's secretary post and Mir Mohammed would hold the additional charge of the post.

The IAS officer is also alleged to have nexus with UAE consulate former staff Swapna Suresh and Sarith, who are facing Customs' probe in connection with smuggling of 30-kilogram gold

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor has denied allegations that those facing probe in connection with gold smuggling now got job at the UAE consulate in Thiruvananthapuram earlier on his recommendation. He also said he would cooperate with any probe in this regard.

through diplomatic baggage. Meanwhile, customs officials suspect that the racket had smuggled gold eight times since March, 2019.

While Sarith was arrested on Monday, Swapna is still absconding. Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala said that Sivasankar was being made a scapegoat.

Pinarayi has reiterated that the government had no links with any gold smuggling racket. He said that the Opposition was trying to tarnish his government's image as the elections were approaching.