

SMUGGLING ACROSS INDO-MYANMAR BORDER

Five held with foreign cigarettes, spices worth ₹6cr

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MUMBAI: The Mumbai wing of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) on Wednesday arrested five people for allegedly smuggling Gudang Garam cigarettes and black pepper across the Indo-Myanmar border. Officials seized 32.04 lakh cigarettes and 6,000kg of black pepper, collectively worth ₹6.09 crore, after intercepting two trucks in Guwahati. The consignment came to Guwahati via Imphal and was going to be transported to various places in India, said officials.

“The cigarettes originate in Indonesia and reach Myanmar through the sea route. It is

brought to India via the Indo-Myanmar border and then taken to New Delhi via Guwahati by road,” said an officer.

According to investigations, owing to the porous border with Myanmar at Moreh in Manipur, the state has become a hub for smuggling, with large quantities of gold, spices, cashew nuts, betel leaves and cigarettes being exchanged. “In the past one year, smuggled goods worth more than ₹100 crore have been seized,” said a source.

According to sources, smuggling cigarettes has become a lucrative option as imports are highly taxed, increasing the pack price by 200%. “Owing to the high margins, smugglers are opting



■ Smuggling Gudang Garam, an Indonesian brand of cigarettes, has increased owing to rise in import taxes.

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for sneaking in cigarettes,” said the officer. “If the value of the seized good is ₹6 crore, the actual value will be ₹2 crore while the

rest are taxes. So even if a consignment is caught, smugglers continue to trade.”

“We have a bilateral trade

DRI PROBES GOA CASE LINK

The DRI is probing whether the recent seizure of smuggled goods is connected to seizures worth more than ₹6 crore made in Goa last month. “In the Guwahati case, probe pointed to an Indian-origin person in Dubai as the kingpin. The goods at Goa were also brought in from Dubai,” said an officer.

agreement with Sri Lanka so smugglers often show that the goods originate in Sri Lanka,” the officer said.