

Rs 2 crore cigarettes seized in Calcutta

The cigarettes were smuggled into the country from Myanmar and the loaded on the truck in Assam a few days ago

By [Snehal Sengupta](#) in Calcutta | Published September 13, 2019



(Representational image) The team seized 26,99,900 cigarettes of foreign brands, including Chinese brand Win, Esse from South Korea and Ruili River from Myanmar among others, in the truck
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Close to 2.7 million foreign cigarettes, valued at Rs 2.69 crore, have been seized from a truck that had “On Army Duty” written on its windscreen near the Dankuni toll plaza this week.

An officer of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, which made the seizure, said the consignment was headed to Calcutta from Assam’s Nagaon. The cigarettes were smuggled into the country from Myanmar and loaded on the truck in Assam a few days ago, the officer said.

The agency had received information about the consignment and a team kept watch on the highway. The truck was stopped while it was headed towards the Dankuni toll plaza.

The truck’s windscreen had a sticker with “On Army Duty” written on it. The driver tried to speed past the team but the truck was stopped, the officer said. The team seized

26,99,900 cigarettes of foreign brands, including Chinese brand Win, Esse from South Korea and Ruili River from Myanmar, among others.

Lakshmi Narayan, the driver, was arrested when he failed to produce purchase receipts and customs duty clearance slips to prove the cigarettes had been imported legally, the officer said.

The officer said the cigarettes had been smuggled into the country from Myanmar and hidden in a warehouse in Assam.

A cigarette shop owner in Chandni Chowk said a packet of Gudang Garam sold for around Rs 180, while a packet of Esse Gold cost Rs 150 and a packet of Esse Lights Rs 150.

Narayan apparently told DRI officers that the cigarettes had been loaded at a warehouse in Nagaon a few days ago. The consignment was meant to be transferred to smaller trucks that would carry the cartons to various parts of the city, the officer said.

“Smuggling foreign cigarettes is lucrative because one can make huge profits by avoiding customs duty,” the officer said. “Smuggled cigarettes generally don’t have pictorial warnings on them as is mandatory under the cigarette and other tobacco products act. At times, profit margins can cross 100 per cent.”

An international gang is involved in smuggling foreign cigarettes in bulk into the country, according to the officer. “They have been using the India-Myanmar border to smuggle cigarettes into the country. Consignments are being sent to Delhi and Mumbai as well. We are trying to track down the main players.”

In July, the DRI had seized cigarettes valued at nearly Rs 1.62 crore. Myanmar was the origin of the consignment then, too. A part of the consignment had been seized from a warehouse in Burrabazar.

A city court on Thursday sent Narayan, the truck driver, to judicial custody

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