

## **Amid COVID-19, customs seize goods worth over Rs 100 cr in northeast**

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In 710 operations since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the northeast, various goods worth Rs 110 crore have been seized in the region. The seizures have been done by the customs in association with other central paramilitary forces and agencies.



Image for representational purpose only. Courtesy: SeaNew Turkey

This was informed by Commissioner of Customs (North-East Region) GM Kamei on Wednesday. He was addressing a discussion on a virtual

platform called Combating counterfeiting and smuggling during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

The discussion was organised by the industry body Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI). He further added that the customs officials have been conducting raids in coordination with other agencies and paramilitary forces.

Kamei said that the customs officers are working in close coordination with Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Assam Rifles, Border Security Force and various state police forces to curb the illegal trade in the northeast.

“During the COVID-induced situation, we have effectively conducted 710 operations across the region and seized various goods worth Rs 110 crore,” said the Customs’ northeast chief.

“Contraband over Rs 110 crore has been seized in the northeast from April to August,” Kamei said.

The northeast shares its international borders with China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. Smuggling of drugs, arms and other goods have been taking place infrequently across the borders especially from Myanmar, Kamei further informed.

It may be mentioned here that the Assam Rifles recently intercepted, seized illicit cigarettes, smuggled from Myanmar.

**The seized item is worth Rs 14 crore.**

Experts speaking at the discussion said that the recent rise in smuggling in the northeast can be attributed to COVID-19 induced economic distress.

Several reports suggest that smugglers and insurgents are using local people to transport smuggled goods by taking advantage of their financial vulnerability.

A lot of people have been left jobless due to COVID-19 and they take up such peddling and transportation works.

**Source:** <https://nenow.in/north-east-news/amid-covid-19-customs-seized-goods-worth-over-rs-100-cr-in-northeast.html>