

Smuggled Nepalese cigarette brand dominates border areas of Uttarakhand

'Khukuri' a brand of Nepalese cigarette has captured the market in the border areas of US Nagar, Champawat and Pithoragarh. Over 90% of smokers prefer to purchase and smoke this not due to taste but its cheap prices, said an official.

HT Correspondent | January 16, 2021

A little-known Nepalese cigarette brand called 'Khukuri' has been dominating the markets in border areas of Uttarakhand due to its cheap price despite several Indian brands being available. Though its export is banned, smugglers make it available easily to shopkeepers through the porous Indo-Nepal border.

The police have seized two big consignments of Nepalese cigarettes in less than a month in Champawat.

Jasveer Singh Chauhan, station house officer, Tanakpur police station in Champawat said, "We have seized two smuggled consignments of Nepalese cigarette 'Khukuri' worth ₹7 lakh in less than a month and handed it over to the Custom department. Smugglers make available these cigarettes after crossing the Sharda river which flows along the border."

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Vinod Kala, a social activist of Banbasa Champawat said, "One can find 'Khukuri' cigarettes easily in every grocery or Paan shop in border areas. People who smoke prefer to purchase it compared to Indian cigarette brands."

A shopkeeper of Tanakpur, who did not wish to be named, revealed that a packet of 'Khukuri' cigarettes costs ₹60 to 62 and contains 20 cigarettes while Indian cigarette packets are rather costly and contain only 10 cigarettes. He said, "We know selling smuggled cigarettes is a crime but smokers demand this particular brand. In such a condition, we have to keep these Nepalese brand cigarettes in the shop."

Nepalese cigarettes dominate Khatima, Banbasa, Tanakpur, Jhulaghat, Jauljibi and Dharchula like the border areas markets and are freely available in every shop. A smoker said, "One 'Khukuri' cigarette costs us merely ₹3 while an Indian cigarette costs ₹7 to 10 with the same taste. Therefore, we prefer to smoke this cheaper brand."

Chauhan said, "We are trying to identify those elements who make available Nepalese cigarettes in our area. Action will be taken thereafter to check the smuggling of this particular brand of cigarettes."

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/smuggled-nepalese-cigarette-brand-dominates-border-areas-of-uttarakhand-101610735143799.html>