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## Health hazard sounded over smuggled cigarettes

*DRI sources said that many smokers prefer certain brands of smuggled foreign cigarettes because these are around 50 per cent cheaper than Indian brands.*



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**GUWAHATI:** The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has cautioned cigarette addicts against smoking cheap cigarettes smuggled from certain foreign countries.

DRI sources said that many smokers prefer certain brands of smuggled foreign cigarettes because these are around 50 per cent cheaper than Indian brands. During 2021-22, a total of 11 crore cigarette sticks valued at Rs 93 crore were seized by the DRI across the country, including the North-East, the sources said. They said that 47 per cent of these cigarettes originated from Myanmar, 22 per cent from the UAE and the remaining 31 per cent from a couple of other countries.

The sources said that none of the seized foreign-origin cigarette packages bore the pictorial and textual health warning covering at least 85 per cent of the packaging space as mandated by COTPA (Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act), 2003.

The sources said that smuggling of cigarettes is not only resulting into loss of revenue to the exchequer, but is also harming the health of citizens because many of the smuggled cigarettes are counterfeits with inferior quality of tobacco and other ingredients. The sources added that cigarette smugglers have utilized all possible modes of shipment like courier consignments and land borders, besides sea and air cargo.

The sources said that apart from Myanmar and the UAE, most of the seized cigarettes were shipped from countries such as Indonesia and China. Most of the seizures were made on the basis of specific information, requiring the agency to keep constant vigil.

The sources further said that although the quantity of e-cigarettes seized during 2021-22 was negligible at 11,000 pieces in comparison to the overall cigarettes seizures, this could be one of the segments to watch out for, given the growing market demand.

Source: <https://www.sentinelassam.com/topheadlines/health-hazard-sounded-over-smuggled-cigarettes-630950>