

DRI seizes foreign brand cigarettes worth Rs 2.4 crore at Mumbai airport

Agency suspects the parcel was smuggled from China to India via Dubai

Vijay Kumar Yadav | January 1, 2024



The team found 15,86,960 cigarettes of a foreign brand estimated at Rs 2.40 crore in the parcel, DRI source said. (File Photo)

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) Mumbai has foiled an attempt to smuggle in foreign cigarettes through air cargo by misdeclaring them as bedsheets and ladies dress material. Around 16 lakh cigarettes of a foreign brand worth Rs 2.40 crore have been confiscated in this operation. A customs clearing agent—Kaluram Kokane, a resident of Asalfa village area in Mumbai) was arrested in the case on Saturday.

As per DRI sources, on Thursday an air cargo parcel from Dubai arrived at the air cargo complex in Mumbai, wherein the document said the parcel contained bed-sheets and ladies dress material. DRI had received specific inputs regarding this cargo, hence the agency carried out an inspection of the parcel on Friday.

The team found 15,86,960 cigarettes of a foreign brand estimated at Rs 2.40 crore in the parcel, DRI source said.

Since all documentation for this cargo parcel was done via customs broker Kaluram Konkane, he was summoned by DRI. During interrogation he admitted his knowledge and involvement in smuggling of the cigarettes, DRI said, and the cigarettes were smuggled from the import-export number of a company.

“Kokane knew that cigarettes were being smuggled in the name of bed-sheets, so he charged Rs 100 per kg as commission. Investigation revealed he had received Rs 70,000 in advance from the main accused,” agency sources said.

The agency suspects that these cigarettes were first transported from China to Dubai and then to Mumbai. The central agency has received information about the main accused is investigating the matter.

Earlier this month, DRI had seized cigarettes worth around Rs 6 crore from a container at Nhava Sheva port in Navi Mumbai on Thursday.

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