

DRI seizes smuggled Korean-made cigarettes worth ₹10 crore

By Abhishek Sharan | Jan 15, 2024

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) in Mumbai seized smuggled Korean cigarettes worth ₹10.08 crore, hidden in a shipping container mis-declared as Chinese carpets. The container, intercepted at Nhava Sheva Port, contained 67.20 lakh cigarettes. Investigations are ongoing.

Mumbai: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)'s Mumbai Zonal Unit recently seized smuggled Korean-made cigarettes worth ₹10.08 crore, which were allegedly imported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, in a shipping container mis-declared as Chinese viscose-woven carpets.

The seized container, consisting of 67.20 lakh sticks, was intercepted at the Nhava Sheva Port, Navi Mumbai, on arriving from Dubai's Port of Jebel Ali recently, DRI sources said.

Based on specific intelligence, the DRI team had intercepted two imported cargo containers in consignment that were declared as Chinese viscose-woven carpets, and one of them yielded the smuggled foreign cigarettes on closer inspection, the sources said.

"Detailed examination of the first container revealed that it was fully stuffed with foreign-brand cigarettes, namely Esse Change, made in Korea," a DRI source said. "The second container had 325 rolls of old used carpets, which were used as cover cargo by the smugglers to hoodwink the customs authorities," the source said.

Further investigation is under progress to act against those involved in the smuggling bid, the sources said. "The seizure shows DRI's resolve towards its anti-smuggling mandate and taking exemplary actions against the syndicates involved in such nefarious activities," a DRI source said.

The DRI concealed both consignments under the Customs Act, 1962.

Last December, the DRI's Mumbai unit had also seized smuggled imported cigarettes worth ₹14.67 crore at the Nhava Sheva Port. The seized cigarettes, 86.30 lakh in all, were found allegedly concealed inside a 40-foot container that had arrived at one of the Container Freight Stations (CFS) of the Nhava Sheva port on December 4.

The smuggling bids were allegedly meant to avoid paying the higher rate of duty imposed by the government on the import of tobacco-based products and comply with associated regulations, the sources said. "Since smoking cigarettes has a deleterious effect on the health of the citizens and burdens the health infrastructure of the country, the government imposes a higher rate of duty on such goods," said a DRI source. "To evade the duty and the compliance with regulations related to the import of tobacco-related products, the corrupt often indulge in smuggling of such items," the source said.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/dri-seizes-smuggled-korean-made-cigarettes-worth-10-crore-101705258362191.html>