

Customs incinerates three tons of foreign cigarettes caught at Kochi airport

Sunday 05 May, 2024

KOCHI: Three tonnes of foreign cigarettes worth more than 4 crores, seized during smuggling attempts at Kochi International Airport in the last two years, were burnt by the Customs authorities last day. This includes a knock-off version of the Indian-made cigarette, Gold Flake. This alone is about two tons. It was burnt in the incinerator of Kerala Enviro Infrastructure Limited, a waste management company in Ambalamedu. It took a whole day to burn these cigarettes.



Only cigarettes with cancer pictures and warnings that cigarette smoke is harmful to health can be sold in India. Those seized were without it. It consisted of Gold Flake king size red and blue brands and foreign cigarettes including expensive Marlboro. The practice of manufacturing counterfeit of Indian brands was started recently in foreign nations.

Foreign knock-off for gold flake

Gold Flake is made by the Indian Tobacco Company (ITC) and has a century-old tradition. It is not exported. Knock-off versions of Gold Flake king size red and blue brands are smuggled here by some gangs. Cigarettes are taxed at 68 percent. A counterfeiter gives this at a lower price to the dealers, who sells it at the price of the original.

Malappuram gang

Malappuram gang is said to be behind the cigarette smuggling which is centred around Thiruvananthapuram, Nedumbassery and Karipur airports. Foreign and counterfeit cigarettes are mainly sold in Kasaragod, Mangalore, Goa and Mumbai.

Source: <https://keralakaumudi.com/en/news/news.php?id=1299505&u=>