

Imported cigarettes worth Rs 25L seized from flyer at city airport

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Bhubaneswar: Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officers on Tuesday seized 2,000 packets of imported cigarettes worth Rs 25 lakh from a passenger arriving from Dubai at the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA here. The flyer was detained for questioning.

This was the third instance of imported cigarettes being seized at the airport in the past two years. The operation was carried out based on technical and human intelligence.

The imported cigarettes, which attract substantial customs duties, were packed in a suitcase. DRI sleuths did not divulge the name of the carrier as the consignment was worth less than Rs 50 lakh.

"The packets did not contain the statutory and pictorial warning printed on them. Further investigation is on to ascertain whether he was just the carrier or he deals in imported cigarettes," a DRI source said.

The seized cigarettes, although not laced with marijuana, represented a significant violation of commercial regulations. Each cigarette, valued at around Rs 15-20 without taxes, could cost up to Rs 50 when all duties were applied. The substantial profit margin from evading duties was a primary motivator for smuggling activities, officials said.

"This is purely a commercial violation and does not fall under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act," a DRI officer clarified.

DRI, in collaboration with local law enforcement, is intensifying efforts to curb the supply and distribution of contraband, particularly near educational institutes. The seizure came on the heels of a recent operation where Rs 4 crore worth of marijuana was confiscated, marking the 10th interception of Thailand-made hydroponic ganja since Jan 2024.