

₹1.5-cr tobacco goods seized in tax evasion crackdown: Cheema

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Finance and taxation minister Harpal Singh Cheema on Friday announced that the taxation department has launched a large-scale, coordinated enforcement drive across Punjab to curb tobacco tax evasion, leading to the detection of unaccounted goods estimated at ₹1.5 crore.

Cheema said that following the recent increase in tax rates on tobacco products such as cigarettes, bidis, and allied items, the department received specific inputs regarding a surge in tax evasion activities within this sector. He added that acting swiftly on this intelligence, teams from four state investigation and preventive units (SIPUs) based in Amritsar, Ludhiana, Patiala, and Jalandhar carried out simultaneous inspections at eight different locations, comprising five registered business premises and three operating entirely without registration.



He said that major detections were made in Ludhiana and Amritsar, where enforcement teams put in significant efforts to identify concealed storage locations and unaccounted stock. **“During the thorough inspections of both main shops and associated godowns, substantial quantities of goods were found being stored and traded without valid invoices,”** he said in a statement. The seized stock included approximately 1.32 lakh packs of Indian cigarettes, 18,472 packs of Indian bidis, 302 packs of zarda, 13 packets and 95 boxes of imported cigarettes, 148 pieces of foreign-made hookah material, and 13,000 lighters.

The minister stated that a tax liability exceeding ₹50 lakh, along with applicable penalties, would be firmly recovered on the detected goods as per the provisions of the law. An amount of ₹12 lakh has already been recovered so far, and further recovery proceedings are actively underway.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/15cr-tobacco-goods-seized-in-tax-evasion-crackdown-cheema-101774638515534.html>