

# Foreign cigarettes worth ₹17 cr seized

Ahmed.Ali@timesgroup.com

**Mumbai:** A cigarette smuggling racket has been busted with the seizure of 93.6 lakh Indonesia-made Gudang Garam cigarettes worth Rs 17 crore from a godown near Nava Sheva in Navi Mumbai early on Tuesday morning.

Officials from the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) said that the smugglers used to break open the seal of the container before customs officials did a physical check and would replace the cartons of cigarettes with wash basins. Two persons—Rajan Kumar, a Indian based out of Cyprus, and Rajeev Kumar, have been arrested while two others involved in the racket are wanted.

In all, 650 master cartons

containing foreign-origin cigarettes were recovered from the container.

Officials said this shows the quantum of cigarettes being brought illegally into the country. "Tobacco products are a favourite of smugglers

due to high rate of duty on these products," said an official.

Officials had intercepted a 40-foot container that had come

in from Dubai and was being sent to the Inland Container Depot in Aurangabad for a check. "A different unit of Customs was to physically check the container. In such a case, in Mumbai, no one checks the containers. The gang would take the container to a warehouse, break open the bottle seal, replace cigarettes with wash basins and seal it," said an official.

