

Pune Crime: Customs seize illegal foreign cigarettes worth Rs 14.40 lakh

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The Commissioner of Customs Pune division has recovered five cardboard boxes containing 300 cartons packed with 72000 sticks of contraband foreign-made cigarettes



Representational Pic

The Pune Customs Department has broken a new modus operandi of illegal smuggling foreign branded cigarettes from Ahmedabad to Pune worth of Rs 14.40 lakh. These products such are traded for a higher price to retailers for them to gain enormously by pushing sales of such substances.

The Commissioner of Customs Pune division has recovered five cardboard boxes containing 300 cartons packed with 72000 sticks of contraband foreign-made cigarettes. This contraband was of Gudang Garam brand and was worth Rs 14.40 lakh. It seized from the Travel company based near Golibar Maidan in Camp, Pune.

Superintendent Narcotics Alexandar Lee, speaking to Mid-Day, said, "The mandate of the customs preventives is to nab economic offenders involved in the evasion of customs duty and criminals engaging in activities of trafficking of Narcotics Drugs &

Psychotropic Substances. This consignment was sent from Ahmedabad to a customer in Pune through a travel bus."

Inspector Amjad Shaikh who is probing the case said, "This is an Indonesian brand of cigarettes and it is illegally procured. During an investigation, we found out that the availability of international cigarettes has increased all over the country. Retailers benefit enormously by pushing sales of such foreign branded cigarettes due to higher trade margins. these foreign branded cigarettes are offered to retailers at extremely low prices compared to Indian manufacturers. Further, illegal cigarettes are sold cheap due to tax evasion affording a huge arbitrage opportunity."

Vaishali Patange Joint Commissioner Customs, Pune has appealed to citizens that those who are interested in providing genuine information on evasion of customs duty/ trafficking of drugs may contact them at 020-26051804/ 020-26051848. Any such genuine information shared will be rewarded as per government norms and conditions.

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