

Smuggled imported cigarettes worth Rs 1 crore on board train seized in Bengaluru

The RPF said that 7,180 boxes, each containing 50 cigarette packets, were seized from the Vehicle Parcel Unit of Karnataka Express when it reached Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station.

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The RPF team with the seized cigarette boxes at Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station | Express

By S Lalitha

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BENGALURU: Acting on a tip-off, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) seized imported cigarettes valued at around Rs 1 crore from the parcel van of Karnataka Express at Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station, on Tuesday evening. The consignment was booked on a train from New Delhi. This is the second major seizure of imported cigarettes smuggled into Bengaluru via trains.

Senior Divisional Security Commissioner of RPF, Bengaluru, Debashmita Chattopadhyay Banerjee told The New Indian Express that 7,180 boxes, each containing 50 cigarette packets, were seized from the Vehicle Parcel Unit of Karnataka Express when it reached the platform at 6.30 pm. "They appear to have been imported from the West Asia or Bangladesh. There was no one accompanying the parcel on the train. It has been booked from New Delhi railway station. We are investigating into it," she said.

The RPF immediately alerted both Customs as well as Sales Tax officials about the seizure. "This is the second such seizure of cigarettes inside trains in the last four months," Debashmita added. The cigarettes, packed in cartons and covered with white gunny bags, were concealed among other items to escape detection, said Assistant Security Commissioner, Yeshwantpur, Rajagopala Reddy, who was involved in the operations with a 10-member RPF team.

"The consignment contained the popular WIN brand of cigarettes. A 20-cigarette pack is priced at Rs 50, which makes it highly affordable. A similar quantity by an Indian brand is priced between Rs 200 and Rs 250 as they need to pay high taxes," he said.

He added that the warning on cigarette packets, made mandatory by the Health Ministry, are not displayed on them either. "Smuggling these, mainly from Bangladesh, is usually done via the Howrah Express, but of late it appears that they have begun using trains from Delhi to Bengaluru to escape detection," Reddy said.

Luggage vans in trains are given on annual lease to private firms, he added. In July, nearly 10 lakh cigarettes worth Rs 2 crore were smuggled in from Bangladesh and Myanmar to Bengaluru via a goods train which the RPF seized at Yeshwantpur.

Source: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bengaluru/2019/nov/14/smuggled-imported-cigarettes-worth-rs-1-crore-on-board-train-seized-in-bengaluru-2061525.html>