

THIS STORY IS FROM AUGUST 25, 2019

Maharashtra excise team seizes Rs 35 lakh fake duty-free Scotch bottles in Dahisar

Chittaranjan Tembhekar | TNN | Aug 25, 2019, 08:45 IST



Excise commissioner Prajakta Lavangare Verma got a tip-off that 500 bottles were stored in room 11 in Dawood S... Read More

MUMBAI: The state excise on Thursday busted a major racket of bootleggers, who bottled local whisky and vodka in duplicate duty-free 1 litre Scotch bottles and sold them at half the price, to make a Rs1,500 profit on each.

Excise commissioner Prajakta Lavangare Verma, after receiving a tip-off that 500 bottles were stored in room 11 in Dawood Sheikh Chawl on C

S Road, Dahisar (E), got a team to raid the premises. Besides the liquor stock worth Rs 35 lakh, the team seized bottles of inferior quality liquor, forged labels, printers, duplicate monograms and sealing material. They arrested Pandit Shankarappa Kalshetti (56) under Bombay Liquor Prohibition Act and investigations are on to trace those involved in the chain. In a similar case in Mogarapada, Andheri, in 2018, they had confiscated illicit Scotch worth around Rs 1.75 crore.

Lavangare said the inferior Scotch was being sold through home deliveries, after taking orders over the phone, through calls or WhatsApp messages. Senior excise officials Ravindra Patne and Shankar Amberkar were part of the team.

The excise department has decided to meet event management firms, duty-free shop-owners and customers to make them aware of the fake duty-free liquor being sold in the city by people posing as agents. "We will share the plan to avoid such incidents ahead of festivities, and thus their ill-effects on health. The department wants Mumbaikars to buy from licensed shops only," said Verma.

"Bottles were either made with the help of a glassmaker or bought from scrap dealers, and the labels were forged and reprinted. People involved appear to be in the business of collecting empty bottles and selling them," said Patne. A duty-free Scotch bottle normally costs around Rs7,500 a bottle, while the 750ml Indian bottles cost about Rs5,000 each.

He said they were being sold for Rs3,500. "Even if we consider the cost of inferior liquor, empty bottles, printing of labels and labour, they earned a profit of Rs1,500 on each bottle," he said.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/maharashtra-excise-team-seizes-rs-35-lakh-fake-duty-free-scotch-bottles-in-dahisar/articleshow/70824652.cms>