

Fake currency note busted in Assam, four arrested

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GUWAHATI: Busting a fake Indian currency note (FICN) racket, the Assam Police, in two separate operations on Wednesday, arrested four persons and seized illegal firearms from them. While two along with arms and ammunition were held from Priloo Ronghang village of Karbi Anglong district, the other two were arrested from Hojai.

In the first operation, police sleuths carried out a search operation in Priloo Ronghang village from where two of the gang members were held. "They were identified as Gyan Bahadur Lama and Nikhil Terang. At least 100 FICNs having a face value of Rs 2,000, along with a 7.65 pistol and three rounds of live ammunitions, were seized from their possession," police sources said.

Based on the revelations made by the duo, police launched a separate manhunt in Doboka area of Hojai district. "In the second operation, police arrested two other gang members - Faijul Islam and Jayanta Singh. Police have also recovered 26 fake notes having a face value of Rs 500 and five counterfeit notes of Rs 2,000 denomination," police sources added. Police informed that FICNs having a total of worth Rs 2.23 lakh were seized in the entire operation.

The arrest of the gang members comes a day after the National Investigation Agency (NIA) took custody of three persons, Motaleb Ali, Dilbar Hussain and Amir Hamza, who were arrested from Islampur area of Paltan Bazar here in April with FICNs of having a face value of Rs 1.84 lakh. The premier investigation agency had taken over the case following an order issued from the counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation division of the Union home ministry.

The NIA in its investigation has been trying to trace links to an international racket based in Pakistan and Bangladesh which is allegedly involved in cross-border operations, with its fake notes believed to be used for terror funding.

On the other hand, the state police have been also conducting operations against similar rackets. "From 2017 to April this year, state police have registered more than 206 cases in connection with counterfeit notes. What is more worrying that the numbers of FICN cases have doubled from 2016, when only 63 such cases were recorded," said police sources.

An ongoing investigation, following the arrests of over 50 operatives of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in the state, has exposed a clear link between the nexus of FICN racketeers and the Islamic fundamentalist outfits. Assam's South Salmara-Mankachar, Dhubri, Hailakandi, Darrang, Cachar and Karbi Anglong districts were found to be vulnerable to FICN rackets due to their close proximity to Bangladesh.