

# Hooch haul in Lucknow: Rs 50 lakh consignment seized, racket busted

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TNN | Jun 3, 2019, 07:06 IST



*Consignment of 1,150 cartons was seized from a truck*

LUCKNOW: After four days and 20 hooch deaths in neighbouring districts Barabanki and Sitapur, a massive consignment of 13,800 litre of spurious liquor was seized in the heart of the city on Sunday. Police pegged the hooch seizure from a truck near Indira Nagar to over Rs 50 lakh.

“The team rushed and

intercepted the truck on Picnic Spot road in Indira Nagar. The driver Anand Kumar Singh, a native of Haryana, was nabbed while the tuck owner Vikas Kumar and his aide Dharmendra managed to flee.

A huge consignment of 1,150 cartons, each having 55, 200-pint size liquor bottles (13,800 litre) was seized from the truck.

The liquor was coming from Sonapat district in Haryana,” said Ghazipur circle officer Deepak Singh. “The ‘Crazy Romeo’ whiskey sticker was pasted on the bottles had but they contained adulterated liquor. The liquor was being smuggled to Bihar which is a dry state as the government there has imposed a blanket ban on sale and consumption of liquor,” he said.

## ‘Gang used to guide the drivers’

The officer told TOI that the gang seems to be involved in large-scale liquor smuggling as it paid drivers Rs 15,000 per trip.

Explaining the modus operandi of the gang, Lucknow SSP, Kalanidhi Naithani, said the gang changed the drivers of the truck after a specific distance.

They were given a phone in which four to five numbers were saved. The gang members running the racket used to guide the drivers by giving them instructions over phone. The drivers were given fake permission letters to duck excise and police checking,” he said.

“A car moved ahead of the truck as a strategy. The gang members in the car used to move ahead to keep an eye and alerted the driver in case checking was going on. The truck was diverted if possible or else it was parked somewhere till the way was clear,” the SSP added.

“The gang was ferrying the liquor to Bihar via Barabanki. We have some clues about the persons to whom the consignment was to be delivered,” he said.

Sources privy to the probe said that the same liquor brand ‘Crazy Romeo’ had been smuggled into Kushinagar from Bihar and claimed eight lives in February. Police are yet to trace manufacturers of the spurious liquor in such large quantities.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/hooch-haul-in-lucknow-rs-50-lakh-consignment-seized-racket-busted/articleshow/69626223.cms>