

Uttarakhand: Illicit liquor trade flourishing in the hills during lockdown

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Prashant Jha | TNN | Updated: Apr 10, 2020, 15:26 IST



NAINITAL: With the focus of police and district administration across the state mainly on enforcing the Covid-19 lockdown and social distancing, the liquor mafia has been sensing an opportunity and getting increasingly active in the hills.

Police officials in Kumaon said that since the 21-day lockdown came into force, illicit liquor

seizures in hills have gone up. Over the past week, administration and police teams have seized and destroyed illicit liquor units in places such as Amthal village in Pithoragarh, Almora and Bageshwar. "The lockdown has been strictly enforced in cities and towns of the plains. However, due to this, the liquor mafia is seeing it as an opportunity to get more active in hills. Recent patterns of seizure justifies that," said a police official. The official said that revenue police had recently found over 700 litres of illicit liquor in Amthal village of Pithoragarh district. "The revenue police were informed by locals and as they reached the spot, they found over 700 litres of liquor in a field," the official added.

The police officials in Almora further said that since the lockdown, they have seized around 650 liquor bottles and picked up 12 people. The liquor's market value is estimated to be over 3.5 lakh.

"Two individuals were arrested and booked under the Excise Act on Thursday. We are trying to find out how they managed to smuggle these goods into the town during a lockdown," Navin Joshi, SHO of Almora, said.

In Bageshwar, police have registered three cases since the lockdown. Kumaon Range DIG, Jagatram Joshi, said that due to police's strict measures, the liquor trade has been affected in the plains. But, since the villages in the hills are more scattered with low police presence, there is a possibility that the liquor mafia is becoming more active there."

(With inputs from Rohit Joshi)

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