

4.5 lakh smuggled cigarette sticks recovered from Covid special train

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Customs preventive officials have seized 4.5 lakh cigarette sticks illegally brought in a Covid-19 special train at old Delhi Railway Station, officials said on Wednesday.

The cigarette sticks of Paris' brand, valued at ₹40 lakh, were packed in 15 cartons. It is suspected that they have been smuggled into the country from neighbouring

Bangladesh, they said.

These cartons were recovered from a goods compartment of a train — that runs from Howrah to Amritsar via Delhi to ferry passengers during coronavirus-induced national lockdown — from the Old Delhi Railway Station on Tuesday, the officials said.

The cigarettes of Bangladesh-origin are suspected to have been smuggled into the country through the porous India-Bangladesh border in

Howrah, they said.

The officials said that the parcels containing cigarettes were booked from Howrah to Varanasi and then from there to Delhi in a bid to dodge the customs authorities.

No arrests have been made so far. Further investigation in the case is continuing, an official said.

Foreign brand cigarettes are in demand in the country's grey markets as they are of good quality and nicely packed, he said.