



NORTHEAST NOW

Assam Rifles seizes foreign cigarettes in Mizoram

by **NE NOW NEWS** September 7, 2020

Assam Rifles seized 100 cartons of smuggled foreign cigarettes, valued at Rs 1.30 crore, in Mizoram's border Champhai district, officials said on Monday.

Acting on a tip-off, Assam Rifles personnel raided some houses and makeshift structures at Zokhawthar area in Champhai late on Sunday evening and recovered the cigarettes, smuggled from neighbouring Myanmar, an official said.

"A resident of Aizawl was detained in the operation and the contraband and the detainee were handed over to Custom Preventive Force for further investigations and prosecution, the official added.

However, no arrest has been made so far.

A total of 75 boxes of foreign cigarettes worth around Rs 1 crore were seized by Assam Rifles in the Champhai district bordering Myanmar on August 31.

"Ongoing illegal drug trades are a major cause of concern for the state of Mizoram," the release said.

it may be mentioned here that Mizoram's international border with Bangladesh (318 km) and Myanmar (404 km) and inter-state borders with Tripura, Assam and Manipur are sealed in view of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Even then the smuggling of various drugs, arms and ammunition and other contraband is still going on.

While the BSF guards the Bangladesh border, the border with Myanmar is looked after by the Assam Rifles and it has seized drugs and other contraband including heroin worth around Rs 29 crore since July 1 after these were smuggled from the neighbouring country.

Meanwhile, industry body Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) said that the Assam Rifles, during its recent successful interception, seized illicit cigarettes, smuggled from neighbouring Myanmar, worth Rs 14 crore.

It said that the recent rise in smuggling in the northeast can be attributed to economic distress insinuated by COVID-19 pandemic.

"Loss of jobs and lack of income due to recurrent lockdowns have left citizens without a means of livelihood. Reports suggest that smugglers and insurgents are using people from the local tribal areas to transport smuggled goods by taking advantage of their financial vulnerability caused due to COVID-19," a FICCI report said.

Source: <https://nenow.in/north-east-news/mizoram/assam-rifles-seizes-foreign-cigarettes-in-mizoram.html>