

Imphal Free Press

1,500 packets of Win cigarettes from Myanmar seized, burned in Imphal

Members of Joint local bodies of Andro along with Coalition Against Drugs and Alcohol (CADA) seized 1,500 packets of Win cigarettes from two cars on Saturday.

By Thomas Ngangom | Updated on: Aug. 8, 2020



WIN cigarettes seized from two vehicles on August 8, 2020 at Andro, Imphal, being destroyed by local bodies

As many as 30 carton boxes of 1,500 packets of Myanmar's WIN cigarettes worth around Rs 5.4 lakh at market value were seized and burned at Meehatpung in Andro area of Manipur on Saturday by members of joint local bodies of Andro and the Coalition Against Drugs and Alcohol (CADA).

The cigarettes smuggled in from Myanmar were seized from two Maruti Alto bearing registration number MN01AG-5320 and MN06LA-8512 at Andro in Imphal East. The drivers of the cars have been identified as one Md Atiqur, 21, son of Md Rahaman of Kyamgei Awang Leikai and Buyamayum Aboy, 24, son of Buyamayum Jiyauddin of Hiyangthang Palak.

Speaking to the Imphal Free Press over the phone, CADA Thoubal district secretary Shintha Laishram said the tobacco items were seized in connection with the ban imposed on such items in the area and as per the Tobacco Act.

Following an alert by some local volunteers, members of the All Andro Youths Clubs Association, the All Andro Government Employee Association, The Eastern Scheduled Caste Students Union Andro, the Andro Pana Loishang and the All Andro Meira Paibi Association intercepted the two alto cars on Saturday at about 1.50 am. The tobacco items were reportedly being transported from Kasom Khullen, Kamjong district.

Further speaking to the Imphal Free Press, Shintha alleged, "Some police personnel, paramilitary forces and politicians are involved in smuggling of intoxicants. Some of them

are even trying to deceive the public by seizing small amounts of narcotics in order to continue their illicit activities on a large scale”.

Shintha said they have been continuing the drive against other tobacco items, drugs and others. Such drives will be continue in the future as well, he added.

Meanwhile, huge quantities of various tobacco items, drugs and other illegal items, which are being smuggled through the India-Myanmar highway. They are being seized ever since the international border trade was banned. Local bodies have also started seizing such items. However, there has been not a single incident of seizing Indian-made cigarettes reported till date.

Indian-made cigarettes are being openly sold in shops and they can be purchased at higher price though the government has banned tobacco items since the lockdown. During an interaction with the IFP, a local shop owner who chose not to be named said, tobacco business has become highly profitable during the lockdown.

“We can get all kinds of tobacco items, including WIN cigarettes, chewing tobacco, Khaini etc. at the black markets. Since the government has put a ban on selling of tobacco items, the shopkeepers can sell them at any price they want to the public by taking advantage of the ban. But there is no stop in the demand for these items from the public and we are making more profits by selling tobacco items other than selling essentials,” the shopkeeper said.

“If the government continues its ban on tobacco items, I will be able to buy a car in the next two-three months easily,” he added.

The shopkeeper further said that sometimes tobacco items, including betel leaves, are purchased from the people who are working under the category of ‘essential services’. “As essential services are exempted during lockdown, it is easy to get from them,” he added.

Source: <https://ifp.co.in/1500-packets-of-win-cigarettes-from-myanmar-seized-burned-in-imphal>