

Mumbai: DRI seizes foreign cigarettes worth Rs 24 cr; 5 persons arrested



In an intelligence-based operation, the Department of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has seized foreign-origin cigarettes having an estimated market value of about Rs. 24 crore.

Five persons including the importer have been arrested to date - and investigations were in progress.

The DRI's Mumbai unit identified a container suspected of carrying contraband, at Nhava Sheva Port. The container was supposed to be trans-shipped to Arshiya Free Trade Warehousing Zone for further clearance. The discrete vigil was kept on the movement of the said container by the officers of DRI. It was found that, after the container left the port, instead of reaching its destination, the same was diverted to a private godown while it was en route to Arshiya FTWZ. Officers monitoring the movement of the said container immediately sensed the suspicious activities and intercepted the container at the godown. The entire 40 feet container was found to be stuffed with foreign-origin cigarettes which are banned for import into India due to their non-compliance with Indian standards. "The syndicate had planned to smuggle those cigarettes by way of removing them out from the container and replacing the same with goods declared in import documents in order to hoodwink Customs authorities," officials said on Sunday. A total of 1.07 crore sticks of foreign-origin cigarettes of Esse, Dunhill, Mond and Gudang Garam brands were recovered from the imported container. In a swift follow-up operation, another stash of 13 lakh cigarettes of foreign origin of various brands like Esse lights, and Mond which were smuggled earlier by the same syndicate was seized from another godown. A total of 1.2 crore sticks of foreign-origin cigarettes having an estimated market value of about Rs 24 crore have been seized by DRI, the officials said.

Source: <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/mumbai-dri-seizes-foreign-cigarettes-worth-rs-24-cr-5-persons-arrested-1218666.html>