GST racket worth crores busted, 6 held

Jupinderjit Singh
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 21
The Punjab Vigilance Bureau today claimed to have unearthed a massive tax evasion and drug smuggling racket. A number of officers of the state Excise and Taxation Department were allegedly taking monthly cuts from businessmen and transporters to allow transport of goods in and out of Punjab without paying the goods and services tax (GST).

ADGP-cum-Chief Director of the Vigilance Bureau BK Uppal and Director LK Yadav said six persons, including four Excise and Taxation Officers (Varun Nagpal, Satpal Multani, Kalicharan and Japsimran Singh) and Excise Inspector Ram Kumar were arrested in this regard. The sixth person was identified as Shiv Kumar, an employee of a transport company.

Two FIRs have been lodged against the accused at the Vigilance Bureau police station, Mohali, under the Prevention of Corruption Act. The bureau conducted raids all over the state to nab accused.

“We suspect it to be a multi-crore scandal. The accused were causing a huge loss to the exchequer after pocketing a monthly bribe of Rs 2 lakh for ensuring safe passage of goods,” Uppal said.

As per the FIRs, the racketeers used a system of codes where the accused coded a truck of goods as “passer” and let it cross checkpoints without paying taxes. In some cases, tax of a lower slab of the GST was levied on goods.

The accused provided accurate information about “safe escape routes” to the transporters so that they didn’t have to pay tax at designated counters.

Uppal said the Excise and Taxation Department was fully cooperating with the investigation and had helped the Vigilance Bureau in tracing the scandal.