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Smuggled, fake cigarette traders to face action

Our correspondent

Islamabad

The people involved in the business of smuggled and fake cigarettes have been warned, as the growing illegal business inflicted around Rs8 billion losses to the national kitty last year.

'The News' has learnt on good authority that nationwide teams have been formed by the Federal Board of Revenue to crack down on retail outlets of smuggled cigarettes, which totalled Rs14 billion out of last year's local cigarette market of Rs85 billion.

Raids on illegal cigarette dumping sites have also been planned. According to a careful estimate, the smuggled and fake cigarette trade caused around

Rs8 billion losses to the national exchequer in 2009. Under Section 24-A of Federal Excise Act, every cigarette packet sold in the country must carry the government's approved health warning, retail price and manufacturer's name, but the packets of smuggled cigarettes don't display such information.

Officials said that most of the cigarettes smuggled in the country from Afghanistan were manufactured in Korea and China, adding smugglers normally use Chapman, Quetta and Kabul-Peshawar transit routes. According to them, smuggled cigarettes are moved to other parts of the country from Quetta and Peshawar. They said around 40 illegal cigarette brands were sold in the market.