

Hyderabad: Rajasthan native held for selling illegal cigarettes

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📷 The accused Akash Mali along with his stash of illegal cigarettes after his arrest. (Photo: Siasat)

Hyderabad: A 22-year-old native of Rajasthan was arrested by the city police on Tuesday for selling foreign cigarettes illegally. The cops raided and busted his godown, after they received information about his operations at Aghapura. Another his accused, his partner in crime, is still absconding.

According to the police, the accused, Akash Kumar Mali, was illegally procuring the foreign cigarettes from New Delhi, and selling it to local merchants, pan shop vendors, kirana shops and petty vendors here. The other accused, Vikas Mali (25), is absconding. After Akash's arrest, illegal imported cigarettes worth Rs. 20 lakh have been seized from the accused, which include 32000 packs of Paris cigarettes, 6000 packs of Esse cigarettes, 2,500 packs of black cigarettes, 1000 packs of Mond cigarettes and 480 packs of H-10 cigarettes.

Both the accused are natives of Rajasthan and had come to Hyderabad four years ago to do business. They took to the illegal business of selling cigarettes to earn money quickly, and through the illegal route. As they were acquainted with wholesale marketing agents at Delhi, they purchased cigarettes from them without any tax invoice on the lowest prices

and transported the cigarettes to Hyderabad through either Railway Cargo or road transport.

The foreign cigarettes are reportedly being imported from China, Malaysia, Switzerland and South Korea and then sold in Delhi, Hyderabad and other states at cheaper rates with heavy margins to the sellers, said the police in a press release on Tuesday. The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) has made it mandatory to have a graphic health warning on the 85% space of the cigarette packet and the union government levies heavy taxes on the tobacco products to discourage sales of the same.

The foreign cigarettes seized by the police have no health warning on the boxes. The police said that the accused imported huge quantities of foreign cigarettes from Delhi on Monday and kept them at the Godown in New Aghapura in order to deliver them to local merchants.

The accused along with seized material were handed over to SHO, Mangalhat PS for further investigation. The arrest was made under the supervision of P.Radhakishan Rao, Dy.Commissioner of Police (OSD), Commissioner's Task Force, Hyderabad by K.Nageswar Rao, Inspector of Police, Commissioner's Task Force, North Zone, and K.Srikanth, B.Parameshwar and North Zone Task Force Team, Hyderabad.

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