

## Foreign cigarettes worth Rs 1.3 crore seized, five in the dock

Hyderabad Task Force sleuths on Friday arrested five persons for importing foreign cigarettes illegally and selling them at higher prices.

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**By Express News Service**

**HYDERABAD:** Hyderabad Task Force sleuths on Friday arrested five persons for importing foreign cigarettes illegally and selling them at higher prices. Police seized cigarettes worth Rs 1.3 crore from the accused. The arrested persons are Vipul Ranka, Jagadish Kumar, Doongarchand Shrishrimal, Pavan Kumar Perthani and M A Haneef.

Another accused, Ravinder Singh Sarna, is absconding. Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar said the main accused, Vipul Ranka, was running a business called D Rajesh Kumar and Co, situated at Begum Bazar, and would sell tailoring material and incense sticks. Due to insufficient income, he entered into the business of selling foreign cigarettes. Ranka became acquainted with the owner of Sarna Transports. He would purchase huge quantities of foreign cigarettes from him and sell them at D Rajesh Kumar & Co to known customers for high prices.

Ranka had hired the other accused for running the business. The cigarettes were being illegally smuggled from foreign countries such as China, Malaysia, Switzerland and South Korea, among others, to evade taxes and were being sold in New Delhi, Hyderabad and other States at cheaper rates than the MRP, but with heavy profit margins to the sellers, the police said. As compared to Indian brands, many customers would prefer to buy these imported cigarettes.

**Source:** <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/hyderabad/2020/jul/04/foreign-cigarettes-worth-rs-13-crore-seized-five-in-the-dock-2165098.html>