

Illegal imported cigarette racket busted in Delhi, contraband worth Rs 15 lakh seized

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The Delhi Police Crime Branch has arrested two persons and seized a huge quantity of prohibited imported cigarettes worth around Rs 15 lakh from the Chawri Bazar area of the national capital, officials said on Sunday.

The seized consignment included premium international cigarette brands such as Esse Light White, Esse Light Gold and Mond, among others. Officials said the recovered cigarette packets did not carry the mandatory statutory health warnings required under Indian law, making them illegal for sale and distribution in the country.

According to the Delhi Police, specific and credible information was received on May 6 by the ISC unit of the Crime Branch regarding the illegal storage and wholesale trade of prohibited imported cigarettes in the Naya Bans Road area of Chawri Bazar in Delhi.

Acting on the information, a special raiding team was constituted under the leadership of Inspector Kamal Kumar Yadav and under the close supervision of ACP Ramesh Lamba of the ISC unit, Crime Branch.

The raiding team included Sub-Inspectors Ashish Sharma and Gulab Singh, Assistant Sub-Inspectors Shailendra Singh and Jafruddin, along with Head Constables Surendra, Mahendra, Karmbir, Varun and Shakti, besides Constable Naveen Yadav.

During the course of the investigation, police developed inputs indicating that one Mohd Tausif had allegedly stocked a large quantity of prohibited imported cigarettes at a shop located on Naya Bans Road in Delhi-6, as well as in a godown situated in the adjoining lane near Masjid Tabar Khan Wali in Fatehpuri.

Police said the accused was allegedly involved in the wholesale trading of such imported cigarette products. Based on the information gathered during surveillance, simultaneous raids were conducted at both locations.

During the raid at the godown, police found the accused, Junaid Ahmed, aged around 35 years and a resident of Darbhanga district in Bihar, present at the premises. A total of 73,840 prohibited imported cigarettes of different international brands were recovered from the godown.

At the same time, another team raided the shop on Naya Bans Road, where the accused, Mohd Tausif, aged around 44 years and a resident of Gagan Vihar in Shahdara, was apprehended. Police recovered an additional 80,000 prohibited imported cigarettes from the shop premises.

Officials said none of the recovered cigarette packets carried the mandatory health warnings prescribed under the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), thereby rendering the products illegal under Indian regulations.



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