

New tactic by LPG smugglers

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Nazari showing the 'hotspot' smuggling areas in Tawau.

TAWAU: Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) smugglers, in their latest modus operandi, are transporting two or three gas cylinders to Pulau Sebatik to avoid being detected by enforcement officers.

Tawau Marine Police Commanding Officer (PPM), DSP Mohd Nazari Ismail, said the skippers were going back and forth up to 10 times a day with only two or three cylinders at a time from Tawau mainland to Pulau Sebatik via the old CIQ jetty.

"If the smugglers went back and forth at least 10 trips, they could have brought out at least 20 gas cylinders to the neighbouring country.

"The smugglers are now getting smarter by planting a spy to make sure they get a chance to smuggle the said items.

"However, I don't think this has got to do with any large-scale syndicate. It's merely for instant profit, knowing it (gas) is sold in a high price in the neighbouring country," he told a press conference after an integrated operation with the district Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) Ministry branch, here, Saturday.

The four-day integrated operation, which ended on Aug 10, saw two PPM boats deployed with nine officers and personnel, and seven KPDNHEP enforcement officers.

He said the operation focused on "hotspots" that had been identified. Among them were the waters off CIQ, seaport, Tg Batu and Log Pond.

"During the operation, a Filipino woman was arrested following the seizure of a gas cylinder and sugar. There was also a case involving the Dangerous Drugs Act and three cases involving the Control of

Supplies Act 1961," he said.

Meanwhile, Mohd Nazari said from January to August, their team has recorded a total of 190 cases involving various violations across the border worth RM2,301,904.

He said violations under the Sabah Ports and Harbours Department (JPDS) Enactment were the highest at 73, followed by 29 under the Immigration Act, 26 under the Fisheries Act and 11 under the Customs Act.

Among others were six cases under the Merchant Shipping Ordinance 1952, four under the Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrant Activity Act (Atipsom), four under the Pharmacy Act, three under the Forest Enactment, two under the Dangerous Drugs Act, two under the National Registration Act and one under the Animal Enactment.

Meanwhile, Tawau KPDNHEP Deputy Chief, Yapp Kon Fatt, said LPG gas cylinder is one of the highest subsidised items that are smuggled over to the neighboring country via Pulau Sebatik, especially during the festive season.

He said among other items are sugar, cooking oil and flour which is not a subsidised item.

