



CELEBRATIONS

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Daily Dispatch

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706KG COCAINE SEIZED ON SHIP

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One of South Africa's biggest ever cocaine busts took place in the Eastern Cape this week.

Uncut South American cocaine valued at a gargantuan R720m, believed to be the work of an international drug cartel, was found on the vessel MSC Spain in Port Elizabeth's Port of Ngqura on Monday morning.

The Hawks, tipped off by Interpol, raided the vessel and discovered 706kg of cocaine, all vacuum-packed and plastic-wrapped in 1kg packets.

They were inside a container sent from Brazil en route to Singapore and India.

Cops dug out one container buried under 3,669 others near the bottom of the ship.

The bust took place when the vessel docked to offload other containers.

Ranked as the largest uncut cocaine bust in South African history over the last year, it was much-awaited by the Hawks, who said the tip-off from Interpol came in December.

This is the second raid of its kind in Ngqura port. In 2010 a container carrying cocaine valued at R400m was found sealed inside the frame of a shipping container. The bust also followed a tip-off from Interpol.

In that bust, former Cuban spy Nelson Yester-Garrido – who is believed to be linked to the network involving convicted drug dealer Glenn Agliotti – was arrested at his Hyde Park, Johannesburg, home. Charges against Yester-Garrido were later withdrawn following numerous delays in the case.

In this week's bust, the cocaine packages were found to have either the branding "Choele" stamped on them or a logo of a hand and the word "Fatima". The haul was taken in sealed evidence packets to the police's public order policing unit in Struandale for safekeeping.

Port captain Thulani Dubeko said police contacted the port asking them to keep track of the MSC Spain. "When it docked we alerted the police and they did their thing," he said.



HELL HAUL: A drug bust at the port of Ngqura on the outskirts of Port Elizabeth on Monday led to the seizure of cocaine with a street value of over R700m. The bust was carried out by a specialised police unit in the Hawks in conjunction with other police units. Members of the Hawks, both national and provincial, swooped on the port following a tip-off from Interpol in December. Once on board officers found the cocaine stashed well below the deck. In total, the cocaine is worth about R720m on the streets. Picture: EUGENE COETZEE



GODFREY LEBEYA

Dubeko said the vessel docked at about 2am on Monday and was set to leave by Tuesday afternoon. "The search and confiscation has not hampered the movement of the vessel in any way and it is keeping to its schedule."

During a briefing at the police office in Struandale, Hawks head Lieutenant-General Godfrey Lebeya said they were alerted to the drugs on board the vessel on December 27 and had been monitoring the vessel over the past 12 days.

"When it docked we began the search. Several roleplayers and various units were involved including customs and SA Revenue Service," he said. "The ship was scheduled to stop off here to do a drop-off of other containers and load others."

After several hours of searching on Monday, the container was found on the sixth floor below deck. "It was right at the bottom, below 3,669 other containers. The way it was hidden and right at the bottom of the vessel just shows how these cartels were so determined and organised," he said.

"The crooks were determined to ensure that no one would detect this [haul]. It was designed to evade detection. You can imagine that this detection requires intense labour and is very time-consuming."

Lebeya said that while no arrests had yet been made, they

Hawks, tipped off by Interpol, find drugs right at the bottom, below 3,669 other containers

would continue to work with Interpol as the probe unfolds.

"The cargo was going to Singapore and then its final destination, which is India."

"This cargo was clandestinely loaded into the ship in Brazil. When it landed in SA waters we came in. This type of crime is a transnational crime and is very organised."

Lebeya said that the MSC Spain would not be detained and detectives were liaising with police in the other countries involved.

"When dealing with cartels, it is important to note that money is the crucial commodity."

"Profit is what motivates them. In dismantling the business we do not only sever the demand and supply, but also prosecute the perpetrators and target their profits."

In June 2018, Namibian Grant Noble, 36, and South African Dinath Azhar, 62, were arrested in Namibia after a container with 412kg of cocaine was seized.

It is alleged the container was dispatched from Brazil via Cape Town and then to its end destination in Walvis Bay.

A month later, Hawks found a state-of-the-art underground Mandrax-manufacturing lab in Harding, KwaZulu-Natal.

Police Minister Bheki Cele said at the time that the mandrax making equipment and lab paraphernalia seized were valued at nearly R250m.

Woman, 21, in court for baby kidnapping

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ASIPHE CETYWAYO

Evidence was heard in court that Southernwood toddler Kamvalethu Newwadi was abducted for money – and child abduction accused Asiphe Cetywayo, 21, was in possession of a large amount of cash just moments before she abducted the two-year-old.

This evidence was led by forensic expert and private investigator Leon Nel during the bail application of Cetywayo at the East London magistrate's court on Tuesday.

Nel said his sources had

claimed Cetywayo had a large sum of money with her in a suitcase but this money was never recovered.

Nel told bail magistrate Joel Cesar that during the arrest on New Year's Day, Cetywayo confessed to the crime and said her love for children was the motive behind the kidnapping.

The expert told the court that evidence from confidential sources allegedly revealed that Cetywayo had attempted to take a young boy in Southernwood on the day of Kamvalethu's kidnapping on December 16.

Nel said he assembled a team

of sources to watch out and monitor Cetywayo's movements at taverns after he heard that she was a regular tavern hopper. He said on the day of Kamvalethu's kidnapping and 13 days later, a "jumpy" Cetywayo was spotted drinking alone in taverns in East London, Southernwood, Mdantsane and Nxarhuni.

Nel said what worried him was the reports that she was drinking alone with no sign of Kamvalethu.

Kamvalethu went missing from the verandah of her granny's Southernwood house on December 16 2018. Nel told the court that he had been

moved by the story of the missing child after spotting it on Facebook and had volunteered to help. Nel, who has 36 years' experience as a police detective, said: "I got involved two days later, on December 18, and I spoke to the family and the police and during that time I also interviewed community members."

Cesar postponed the bail application to Friday due to lack of time for cross-examination.

Nel claimed that during the arrest on New Year's Day, Cetywayo tried to seduce him on condition he let go of the case. He told the court that he received a call at 11:45pm on

New Year's Eve from a tavern informant in Kwerlerha, who reported that Cetywayo was in front of them at that moment drinking. He said he then rallied the police and Kamvalethu's father, Paul Mayekiso, to join him on a trip to the tavern.

Nel said Cetywayo took him and the police to an RDP house outside Gonubie, where Kamvalethu was kept.

Cetywayo's lawyer Noma-Afrika Wakashe tried to discredit Nel by asking if he was an expert in analysing behaviour. Nel responded by revealing he was a qualified forensic auditor, specialised in polygraphic testing and psycho-physiology.

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