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***News Release***

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Brazen fraudsters who cooked up a £600k tax scam sentenced

Five men, including two already in prison for a previous VAT fraud conviction, have been sentenced after an investigation by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) into a £600,000 tax fraud.

Mridul Kanti Das, 48, and Mohammed Rabiul Hoque, 44, are currently serving seven year prison sentences for a £1.2 million VAT fraud they carried out between 2003 and 2011. However, their arrests in February 2012 did not deter these fraudsters. While awaiting their trial and subsequent imprisonment, the men continued their fraud – masquerading behind frontmen who claimed to be responsible for their restaurants, Moza Indian in Basildon and Memsaheb on Thames in the Docklands area of London.

Abu Sohal Kadir, 52, Sheikh Hussain, 52, and Ashraful Haque, 32, carried on Das and Hoque’s scam of the tax system. The five men pocketed the VAT they charged their customers, liquidated companies with debts to HMRC and then created ‘new’ companies to come in and take over where the previous one left off. In total, they stole £600,000 between November 2011 and March 2015.

David Margree, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“These men stole money from honest taxpayers in an incredibly brazen way. In spite of HMRC’s first investigation in February 2012, they felt that they were above the law and could not be caught.

“The vast majority of people in the UK pay the taxes that are due when they’re due. But, it is our job to find and bring to justice those who break the law at the expense of everyone else and our public services. If you choose to be in the minority, we will find you and you will pay the price.” If you have information about tax fraud, you can help us by calling the HMRC 24-hour hotline on 0800 59 5000.”

Their accountant, Anil Shah, was fined £25,000 on 5 October 2016 for obstructing HMRC’s investigation by failing to comply with a Disclosure Notice.

Confiscation proceedings to recover the proceeds of their crimes will now follow.

**Notes for editors**

1. Mridul Kanti Das (DOB 19/12/1967) currently HMP, formerly of Stanley Road North, RM13, pleaded guilty to two counts of cheating the Public Revenue, on 8 August 2016. He was sentenced to a consecutive jail sentence of two and a half years at Southwark Crown Court on 25 October 2016. He will now serve a total sentence of nine and a half years. He was disqualified from acting as a director for ten years.
2. Mohammed Rabiul Hoque (DOB 27/10/1971) currently HMP, formerly of Charlemont Road, E6, pleaded guilty to two counts of cheating the Public Revenue, on 9 August 2016. He was sentenced to a consecutive jail sentence of two and a half years at Southwark Crown Court on 25 October 2016. He will now serve a total sentence of nine and a half years. He was disqualified from acting as a director for ten years.
3. Abu Sohal Kadir (DOB 02/05/1964) of Swanstead, SS16, was found guilty of one count of cheating the Public Revenue, on 31 August 2016. He was jailed for ten months, suspended for two years and ordered to carry out 250 hours of unpaid work at Southwark Crown Court on 25 October 2016.
4. Sheikh Hussain (DOB 10/04/1964) of Irenton Street, E6, pleaded guilty to cheating the Public Revenue, on 10 August 2016. He was jailed for ten months, suspended for two years and ordered to carry out 100 hours of unpaid work at Southwark Crown Court on 25 October 2016.
5. Ashraful Haque (DOB 13/06/1984) from Norfolk, was found guilty of cheating the Public Revenue, on 31 August 2016. He was sentenced to ten months in prison at Southwark court on 25 October 2016. Haque’s current whereabouts are unknown.
6. Suspected tax crime can be reported to the Customs Hotline on 0800 59 5000.
7. Images are available on HMRC’s Flickr site [www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk](http://www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk)
8. Follow HMRC’s press office on Twitter @HMRCpressoffice

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