



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY AND SINGAPORE CUSTOMS

CALCIUM-ENRICHED TOBACCO

We are well aware that smoking is among the leading causes of health hazards such as lung cancer and heart attacks. But how about enriching the tobacco with calcium? The smugglers must have smugly thought that by concealing their contrabands within healthy products, they can hoodwink the checkpoint officers. Unfortunately for them, their attempt was busted by a joint operation conducted by officers from the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and Singapore Customs (SC).

2 On 9 June 2008 at about 0715 hours, ICA officers conducted checks on a refrigerated truck at the Arrival Cargo Complex of Tuas Checkpoint. During the course of checks, the sharp-eyed officers detected cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden amongst declared boxes of milk. The Malaysian driver and his attendant were placed under arrest immediately.

3 A total of 4,000 cartons x 200 sticks of cigarettes were found concealed within the boxes of milk and they were handed over to SC for their follow-up actions. The total duty and GST on the seized cigarettes amounted to \$307,600.

4 The 32 year-old Malaysian Indian driver admitted knowledge of the exhibits found. He revealed that he was enticed with an offer of RM5,000 upon successful delivery to a male Chinese.

Related penalties

5 Upon conviction by the court, first time offenders of cigarette smuggling can be fined up to a maximum of 20 times the amount of duty evaded. For second or subsequent convictions, offenders can be jailed for up to two years, as well as being fined. The offenders also face further fines based on the amount of GST evaded.

6 Singapore Customs warns that buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with contraband cigarettes are serious offences under the Customs and GST Acts. Stiff penalties are imposed for such offences. On conviction by the Court, offenders can be jailed as well as fined. The conveyances used in the commission of the offence are also liable to forfeiture. The public are also advised against buying duty-unpaid cigarettes. For a packet of cigarettes, buyers stand to face a minimum fine of \$500 or prosecution in Court.

7 Our borders are our first line of defence in safeguarding Singapore's security. The enhanced security checks are critical to our nation's security. We have tightened our security checks on passengers and vehicles at the checkpoints to prevent attempts to smuggle in undesirable persons, drugs, weapons, explosives and other contrabands. The same methods of concealment used by smugglers may be used by terrorists to smuggle arms and explosives to carry out attacks in Singapore. We seek your continued understanding and cooperation, and would like to advise against smuggling unlawful goods into Singapore.

Issued by: Immigration & Checkpoints Authority and Singapore Customs

Date: 9 June 2008

CASE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1: Refrigerated truck



Photo 2: Total exhibits seized