



Singapore Customs Media Release

Four men arrested in Singapore Customs's three-day operation for dealing with 1.2m sticks of duty-unpaid cigarettes

In a three-day blitz, Singapore Customs (SC) has successfully crippled a distribution network dealing with contraband cigarettes in the heartlands of Bedok, Hougang and Yishun. Four men were arrested between 5 and 7 July 2011. A total of 60,013 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes or 1.2 million sticks were seized. The duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) involved exceeded \$450,000. Three vehicles (two bonded trucks and a saloon) used by the syndicate members to convey the illegal cigarettes were also seized.

2 On 5 July 2011 at around 2am, SC officers interdicted a bonded truck in Bedok and seized a total of 36,240 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes. A Singaporean man, Ang Wee Koon, aged 37, was sentenced to 21 months' imprisonment for his role in the case.

3 To further disrupt the distribution network of duty-unpaid cigarettes, SC mounted another operation on 6 July 2011 at about 6pm targeting a distributor residing in an HDB flat in Yishun. After several hours of surveillance, SC officers spotted a Chinese national, Chen Zushun, aged 38, leaving the unit with an empty trolley and heading towards a nearby carpark. Just then, two Singaporean men, Mohamed Shah bin Jantan, aged 50, and Tan Boon Kiat, aged 55, drove into the carpark in a bonded truck and a car respectively. Shah and Tan started unloading 10 brown boxes onto Chen's trolley. Thereafter, Chen returned to his flat with the loaded trolley, while Shah and Tan left the carpark in their respective vehicles.

4 Sensing that the men were involved in contraband cigarettes, a group of SC officers kept watch on Chen while another group of SC officers followed the truck and car. The two vehicles arrived at a carpark in Hougang, where Shah was seen handing a brown box from the truck to Tan. At this juncture, SC officers arrested both Shah and Tan. Chen was later also arrested in Yishun. A total of 23,773 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes found in Chen's flat as well as the two vehicles used by Shah and Tan were seized. Proceeds from the sale of illegal cigarettes amounting to \$15,300 were also seized. Shah was sentenced to 20 months' imprisonment while court proceedings are still ongoing for Tan and Chen.

5 SC takes a serious view on contraband cigarette activities and is monitoring the situation closely. Buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with duty-unpaid goods are serious offences under the Customs Act and the GST Act. Offenders will be severely dealt with. Repeat offenders can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded and/or jailed for up to six years. For every packet of illegal cigarettes, buyers may face a composition sum of at least \$500.

6 Members of the public are encouraged to stay vigilant and to report any information on evasion of duty or GST to the Singapore Customs Hotline at 1800-2330000 or email to customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg.

ISSUED BY: SINGAPORE CUSTOMS

新加坡关税局

KASTAM SINGAPURA

சிங்கப்பூர் சுங்கத்துறை

DATE: 21 JULY 2011

Appendix



(5 July 2011) Bonded truck contained brown boxes which revealed duty-unpaid cigarettes in Bedok.



(Close-up) Boxes contained duty-unpaid cigarettes in the bonded truck.



(7 July 2011) Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the car in Hougang.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the bonded truck in Hougang.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in Chen's flat in Yishun.