



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS 新加坡关税局 **KASTAM SINGAPURA** சிங்கப்பூர் சுங்கத்துறை

MEDIA RELEASE

18 December 2015

Key syndicate man sentenced to five years' jail for role in smuggling contraband cigarettes

A key member of a contraband cigarette smuggling syndicate, Ibrahim Bin Saleh, was sentenced by the State Courts on 15 December 2015 to a total of five years' imprisonment for his involvement in contraband cigarette activities.

Ibrahim, a 45-year-old Singaporean, pleaded guilty to two charges. Another two charges were taken into consideration in the sentencing.

On 20 May 2013, Singapore Customs officers arrested Ibrahim and his four accomplices in a warehouse at Kallang Avenue for their role in a case involving 14,400 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes. The duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded in this case amounted to over \$1.3 million. One of his accomplices was sentenced by the State Courts on 13 August 2013 to 32 months' imprisonment, and another was sentenced to a fine of \$1,000 on 16 December 2013. Ibrahim, however, absconded while he was on court bail. A warrant of arrest was issued by the State Courts against him.

On 9 June 2015, Ibrahim was arrested by the Royal Malaysia Police in Johor Baru, Malaysia. Singapore Customs took over the custody of Ibrahim and escorted him back to Singapore on the same day.

The following day, 10 June 2015, Singapore Customs officers raided a warehouse at Loyang Crescent and seized more than 2,999 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes, which were hidden in modified bed headboards imported into Singapore from Batam. The duty and GST involved amounted to more than \$309,000. Five Singaporean men and one

Indonesian man were sentenced by the State Courts to imprisonment terms ranging from 26 months to 33 months for their involvement in this syndicated smuggling, which was coordinated by Ibrahim in Batam.

For his involvement in these two contraband cigarette cases in 2013 and 2015, Ibrahim was sentenced to imprisonment terms of 26 months and 34 months respectively. The State Courts ruled that the two imprisonment terms be served consecutively.

“Such smuggling activities undermine the integrity of Singapore’s trading system,” said Mr Yeo Sew Meng, Assistant Director-General (Intelligence & Investigation), Singapore Customs [新加坡关税局助理局长(情报与调查)杨秀明]. “We will spare no effort in hunting down criminals on the run and going after syndicates which attempt to smuggle cigarettes into Singapore.”

Under the Customs Act and the GST Act, offenders caught buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, possessing or dealing with duty-unpaid goods are liable to a fine of up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded, or imprisonment for up to six years, or both.

The minimum court fines for first-time and repeat offenders of tobacco-related offences are \$2,000 and \$4,000 respectively. Repeat offenders who are caught with more than two kilogrammes of tobacco products will also face mandatory imprisonment.

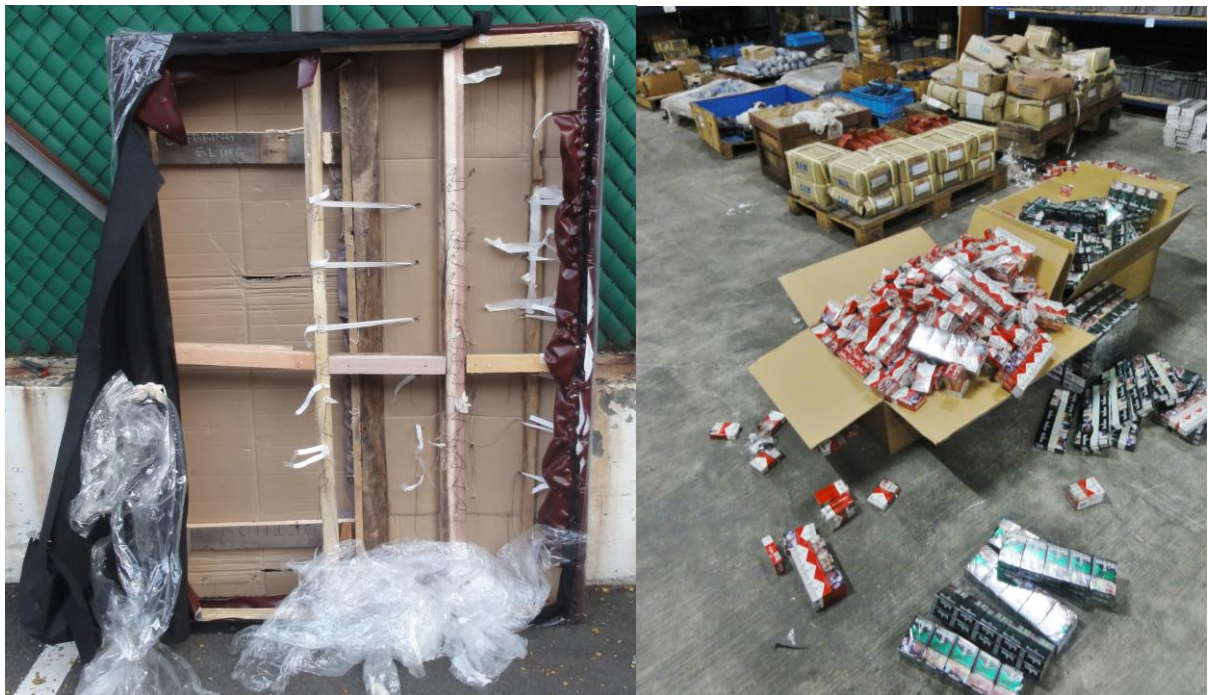
Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of customs duty or GST can contact the Singapore Customs hotline on 1800-2330000 or email customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg

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ANNEX



Singapore Customs seized 14,400 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes in a warehouse at Kallang Avenue on 20 May 2013.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes were hidden in the hollow spaces within the modified bed headboards shipped from Batam. The cigarettes were then retrieved by the syndicate members in a warehouse at Loyang Crescent and packed into boxes.