



IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY AND SINGAPORE CUSTOMS

JOINT NEWS RELEASE

5 April 2017

2,185 cartons and 2,250 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes seized

On 28 March 2017 at about 4.35pm, an Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) officer at the Pasir Panjang Scanning Station directed a 20-footer container for inspection. The officer had noticed anomalies in the scanned images of the container that was declared to contain 34 “wooden bases”.

During the course of checks, ICA officers detected duty-unpaid cigarettes that were concealed within the hollow base of one of the wooden altars. Singapore Customs was alerted and its officers conducted a follow-up operation in Senoko Road, which resulted in the seizure of 2,148 cartons and 2,250 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes. Two male Chinese nationals were arrested and two vehicles used to convey the duty-unpaid cigarettes were also seized.

Singapore Customs officers subsequently raided a HDB flat in Sembawang Drive which was rented by one of the Chinese nationals, and seized 37 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes from the flat.

A total of 2,185 cartons and 2,250 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized by Singapore Customs. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax evaded amounted to about \$187,010 and \$13,860 respectively. Investigations are ongoing.

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 can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded and/or jailed for up to six years. Vehicles used in the commission of such offences are also liable to be forfeited.

Our borders are our first line of defence in safeguarding Singapore's safety and security. The security checks are critical to our nation's security. We will continue to conduct 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 contraband smugglers may be used by terrorists to smuggle arms and explosives to carry out attacks in Singapore.

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ANNEX



Duty-unpaid cigarettes concealed within the hollow base of one of the wooden altars. (Photos: ICA)



A total of 2,185 cartons and 2,250 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized by Singapore Customs. (Photo: Singapore Customs)



Two vehicles that were used to convey the duty-unpaid cigarettes were also seized. (Photo: Singapore Customs)

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