



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS MEDIA RELEASE

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS STING OPERATION NABBED 68 BUYERS AND 8 SELLERS, OVER 2,000 PACKETS OF DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES SEIZED

Singapore Customs' enforcement efforts against sellers and buyers of duty unpaid cigarettes continued on high gear with a series of sting operations on 18 to 19 February 2008 at the Central, Western and Eastern parts of Singapore. A total of 68 buyers and 8 sellers were caught in the 2-day raids, with a total of 2,001 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes seized. The total duty and GST involved amounted to \$17,722. These are part of Singapore Customs' tough measures against cigarette smuggling.

2 Enforcement teams sprung into action in areas such as Tampines, Bedok, Geylang, Changi, Jurong, Boon Lay, and Ang Mo Kio etc. Out of the 8 sellers caught, 7 were Singaporeans. They were caught at various locations, such as interchanges, void decks and coffee shops. They have been charged in Court. Furthermore, 68 buyers of these cigarettes were fined on the spot of up to \$500 per packet.

3 Commenting on the results of the 2-day operation, Assistant Director-General of Customs (Investigations & Intelligence), Mr Lee Boon Chong said, "We will continue to mount such island-wide operations as part of our enforcement effort against cigarette smuggling. Our enforcement efforts will be more effective if buyers say no to duty-unpaid cigarettes".

4 Singapore Customs will continue to conduct such island-wide operations to flush out duty unpaid cigarette sellers and those who buy them. In addition, Singapore Customs also works closely with other enforcement agencies such as the Singapore Police Force and Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) to conduct regular sweeps and operations at hotspot areas.

5 Singapore Customs warns that buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with duty unpaid 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 or fined or both. The vehicles used in the commission of the offence are also liable to forfeiture. The public are also urged not to buy duty-unpaid cigarettes. Buyers stand to face a minimum composition fine of up to \$500 for each packet of cigarettes or prosecution in Court.

6 Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of Customs duty or GST should contact the Singapore Customs Intelligence Hotline at 1800-2330000 or email to customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg.

End of Release

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