



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS MEDIA RELEASE

DIRTY BUSINESS LANDS CLEANER IN JAIL *Cleaner arrested for illegal cigarettes at rubbish collection centre*

In its latest operation to clamp down illegal peddling activities at Yishun, Singapore Customs arrested Syed Abdullah Bin Syed Ali (46-year-old Singaporean man) who had 581 packets of contraband cigarettes worth \$6,400 on 23 January 2009. The cigarettes were hidden in his rubbish cart and in the store room of a rubbish collection centre at Block 257 Yishun Ring Road. The man was charged in court and sentenced to eight months' jail. The duty and GST involved for the seized cigarettes amounted to \$5,650.

2 On 23 January 2009, Singapore Customs officers conducted a surveillance operation in the vicinity of Block 257 at Yishun Ring Road to flush out illegal cigarette peddling activities in the area. At about 2.10 pm, a rubbish collection cart drove by. Soon, people started approaching the "cleaner" operating the cart. He was seen retrieving items from a bag and handing them over to the people who approached him. The officers trailed the man as he drove his cart to a rubbish collection centre beside Block 257. When he alighted and entered a store room, the officers moved in and identified themselves to conduct a check. A total of 581 packets of assorted brands of duty-unpaid cigarettes were found in the battery-operated cart and in a cabinet in the store room. The officers also found \$697.40 cash in a small bag kept in his pouch. Investigations revealed that the money came from selling duty-unpaid cigarettes for the past week. The man was arrested and charged in court. He was sentenced to eight months' jail on 29 January 2009. The cigarettes as well as the \$697.40 cash were forfeited by the Court.

3 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, offenders can be jailed as well as fined. The public are strongly advised not to smoke or buy duty-unpaid cigarettes. For possessing a packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, an offender may face a minimum fine of \$500 or prosecution in court.

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

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Please credit SINGAPORE CUSTOMS for below case photographs. Thank you.



Photo credit: Singapore Customs

Cleaner parked his rubbish collection cart at the rubbish collection centre beside Block 257 at Yishun Ring Road



Photo credit: Singapore Customs

Singapore Customs Officers approached the cart to take a closer look



Photo credit: Singapore Customs

Officers found a green recycling bag containing suspicious items



Photo credit: Singapore Customs

Some cartons of illegal cigarettes were found hidden in the green bag and more in another white plastic bag



Photo credit: Singapore Customs

Officers uncovered more cartons of illegal cigarettes in the cabinet of the store room in the rubbish collection centre