



Singapore Customs Media Release

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS BUST CONTRABAND CIGARETTE SYNDICATE OPERATING IN THE EAST

Singapore Customs has crippled a contraband cigarette syndicate operating in the eastern part of Singapore. A key player in the syndicate, Ali Bin Asjadi, 55, was sentenced today to 30 months' imprisonment and fined a total of S\$8200. Three other men were sentenced last month (September 2011) for their involvement in the illegal cigarette activities of this syndicate, while another man has been charged in court.

2. Singapore Customs officers mounted a 10-hour operation against the syndicate on the night of 9 September 2011. After seven hours of keeping vigil for the suspected contraband activities of the syndicate in the vicinity of 218 Changi Road, the officers observed a van coming to a halt next to a stationary bonded truck in the backlane of 218 Changi Road at about 3.15am on 10 September. The van driver Muhammad Azmi Bin Tahir, 28, and passenger Muhammad Sharmizan Bin Mazlan, 19, alighted and proceeded to move boxes from the truck to their van. Suspecting these boxes to contain duty-unpaid cigarettes, the officers swung into action and interdicted the transfer of boxes.

3. Ali Bin Asjadi and Atlis Suryanto, 40, who were in the rear compartment of the truck, were caught by surprise by the Singapore Customs officers. The four men tried to flee but they were stopped and swiftly arrested by the Singapore Customs officers. A total of 10,052 packets of contraband cigarettes found in the two vehicles were seized.

4. In the subsequent search within the building, Singapore Customs officers uncovered more than 14,300 packets of contraband cigarettes hidden in various locations such as the staircase landing on the ground floor, two rooms, and the office used by Ali. Another 57 packets of contraband cigarettes were found in Ali's car.

5. Investigations revealed that Ali was in cahoots with an unknown Indonesian who supplied the contraband cigarettes.

6. In the course of its investigations, Singapore Customs uncovered that a fifth man involved in handling the illegal cigarettes, Rahmad Bin Kamar, 56, was subsequently arrested in Bedok on 19 September 2011.

7. In this Singapore Customs operation, a total of 24,460 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes worth more than S\$255,000 were seized. The total excise duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded exceeded S\$221,000. The bonded truck and van used in the illegal cigarette activities were seized.

8. For their involvement in contraband cigarette activities, Atlis, Sharmizan, and Rahmad were sentenced by the court to imprisonment terms of 15 months, six months, and 10 months respectively, while Azmi has claimed trial after being charged.

9. 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. Those found guilty of these offences will be severely dealt with. Repeat offenders can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded and/or jailed up to six years. Vehicles used in the commission of such offences may be forfeited. For possessing a packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, buyers may face a composition sum of \$500 or prosecution in court.

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

ISSUED BY: SINGAPORE CUSTOMS 新加坡关税局

KASTAM SINGAPURA சிங்கப்பூர் சுங்கத்துறை

DATE: 7 October 2011

APPENDIX



Singapore-registered van (left) and truck (right) used to transfer contraband cigarettes.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the van.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the truck.



Boxes of duty-unpaid cigarettes wrapped in black trash bags on the staircase landing in the building.



(Close-up) Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in a storeroom in the building.



(Close-up) Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in Ali's car.