



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

MEDIA RELEASE

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Three Chinese work permit holders jailed for involvement in contraband cigarette activities

Three male Chinese work permit holders were jailed between seven months and 17 months for their involvement in contraband cigarette activities.

A female Chinese national, Hong Shu Fang, 40, was also arrested in the Singapore Customs operation. She was fined \$67,000 or in default four months' jail for her involvement in the same racket. In addition, she was sentenced to 1½ months' jail and fined \$2,000 or in default a month's jail for overstaying in Singapore after her social visit pass had expired.

On 30 Jun 2012 afternoon, Singapore Customs enforcement officers keeping watch along Kranji Road spotted Yao Yuan Hua, 29, and Wang Yicheng, 43, carrying cardboard boxes from a bonded truck and loading them onto an open-top lorry.

The officers moved in to raid the vehicles. They counted 28 cardboard boxes containing water heaters. On opening the boxes and dismantling the water heaters, they found 340 packets of contraband cigarettes hidden in each of the 28 water heaters.

In total, 9,520 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were recovered. Another 140 packets were found in the bonded truck.

The total value of these duty-unpaid cigarettes meant for distribution to various parts of Singapore amounted to more than \$92,000. The duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) involved exceeded \$68,000 and \$6,400 respectively.

Investigations revealed that Yao, who was employed as an electrician, and Zhang Yong, 40, employed as a driver, were hired to deliver the contraband cigarettes concealed in the heaters to Wang, a mechanic, and Hong at Kranji Road.

Wang, Yao and Zhang were sentenced by the court on 2 Jul to seven, 15 and 17 months' jail respectively. Hong was sentenced on 9 Jul.

The two vehicles involved in this case were seized and will be forfeited.

Buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with duty-unpaid goods are serious offences under the Customs Act and the Goods and Service Tax Act. Offenders will be severely dealt with. They can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty evaded and/or jailed for up to six years.

With effect from 1 January this year, the minimum court fines for first-time and repeat offenders of tobacco-related offences have been raised to \$2,000 and \$4,000 respectively. Repeat offenders who are caught with more than two kilogrammes of tobacco products will also face mandatory imprisonment. Vehicles used in the commission of such offences may also be forfeited.

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ANNEX

Photos of Contraband Cigarettes in Water Heaters



Contraband cigarettes hidden in water heaters in the bonded truck.



9,520 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were found hidden in 28 water heaters.



A total of 9,660 packets of contraband cigarettes were seized by Singapore Customs in this operation at Kranji Road.