



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

MEDIA RELEASE

7 August 2013

Singapore Customs, Police break up six-man contraband cigarette distribution ring

Two joint operations conducted last week by Singapore Customs and the Singapore Police Force (SPF) have disrupted a contraband cigarette distribution ring.

Six men were arrested and two vans used to transport boxes of contraband cigarettes were seized in the operations on 28 July and 4 August 2013.

A total of 2,399 cartons and eight packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes worth more than S\$269,000 were seized. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to almost S\$230,000.

On 28 July 2013, Singapore Customs and SPF officers mounted an operation at Jalan Raja Udang. The officers interdicted a van used to convey contraband cigarettes and raided a unit in a condominium, where a Singaporean man was arrested. A total of 1,200 cartons and eight packets of contraband cigarettes were recovered from the van and the unit.

Following further investigations, Singapore Customs and the SPF mounted a second joint operation in the early hours of 4 August 2013 at Pandan Road to nab the other members of the distribution ring. The officers kept a close watch as they saw a van being driven into a shipyard.

Five minutes later, they saw the van being driven out of the shipyard. The officers moved in to interdict the van and arrest the driver. They searched the shipyard and arrested two other men on the premises. Another two men suspected to be members of the syndicate were subsequently arrested. A total of 1,199 cartons of contraband cigarettes were recovered from the van.

Investigations revealed that one of the syndicate members had sought the assistance of the shipyard's night watchman Sumon Chandra Das Gonesh Chandra Das, a Bangladeshi national, to use the premises as the syndicate's collection point for contraband cigarettes.

For dealing with contraband cigarettes, Sumon was sentenced by the court on 5 August 2013 to 15 months' jail.

Investigations are ongoing for the other five men, all Singaporeans, arrested.

Singapore Customs advisory

“We would like to advise business owners to be alert and to prevent their premises from being used for illegal contraband activities,” said Mr David Foo, Head of Special Investigation Branch, Singapore Customs (新加坡关税局缉私处处长符庆元).

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 will be severely dealt with. They can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded and/or jailed for up to six years.

The minimum court fine for first-time and repeat offenders of tobacco-related offences are \$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 are also liable to be forfeited.

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

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ANNEX



Boxes containing contraband cigarettes were found in the van interdicted at Jalan Raja Udang on 28 Jul 2013.



Boxes containing contraband cigarettes were found in the van which was interdicted as it was leaving the shipyard at Pandan Road on 4 August 2013.



1,200 cartons and eight packets of contraband cigarettes were seized from the operation at Jalan Raja Udang on 28 July 2013.



1,199 cartons of contraband cigarettes were seized from the operation at Pandan Road on 4 August 2013.

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