



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

MEDIA RELEASE

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Singapore Customs seizes 1.9 million packets of contraband cigarettes in first nine months this year

About 1.9 million packets of contraband cigarettes were seized in the first nine months of this year. This is an 84 per cent increase compared to the 1.03 million packets seized in the same period last year.

The larger quantity of illegal cigarettes seized is due to stepped up enforcement by Singapore Customs and its collaboration with other law enforcement agencies against contraband cigarette smugglers, peddlers and buyers.

Duty collected from legal cigarettes in the first nine months of this year also shows a spike, of 4.1 per cent – \$721 million compared to \$692 million collected in the same period last year – suggesting that smokers are increasingly ditching contraband for duty-paid cigarettes.

“We will continue with our strong enforcement efforts to keep the smuggling, peddling and buying of contraband cigarettes in check,” said Mr Lee Boon Chong, Senior Assistant Director-General (Intelligence and Investigation), Singapore Customs [新加坡关税局高级助理局长（情报与调查）李文聪].

“In particular, we will spare no effort in going after syndicates involved in the smuggling and distribution of contraband cigarettes,” said Mr Lee.

In two recent operations, Singapore Customs hauled 13,300 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes.

On 25 September 2013, Singapore Customs officers conducted an operation at Ang Mo Kio Avenue 10 and intercepted a van that was conveying 2,500 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes. The driver, a 57-year-old Singaporean man, was arrested.

The enforcement officers were aware that the man had rented a bonded truck, which they suspected was also used to convey duty-unpaid cigarettes. The officers fanned out island-wide to search for the truck. Their determination and persistence paid off nine days later when they finally located the truck in a car park at Bangkit Road on 4 October 2013. The officers recovered another 10,800 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes from the truck.

The 13,300 cartons of contraband cigarettes seized from these two operations have a total street value of more than \$1.2 million. This is Singapore Customs’ fourth largest

haul of contraband cigarettes this year. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded exceeded \$1.02 million.

Both vehicles were seized and investigations into this case are ongoing.

Advisory from Singapore Customs

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. Repeat offenders can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty evaded and/or jailed for up to 6 years.

The minimum court fines 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.

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



Singapore Customs officers intercepted the van at Ang Mo Kio Avenue 10 on 25 September 2013 and found 2,500 cartons of contraband cigarettes in it. The driver, a 57-year-old Singaporean man, was arrested.



The 2,500 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the van were seized.



Singapore Customs enforcement officers worked round the clock to search for the bonded truck rented by the 57-year-old Singaporean man. Their efforts paid off nine days later when they managed to locate the truck in a car park at Bangkit Road. Another 10,800 cartons of contraband cigarettes were found in the truck.



The 10,800 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes recovered from the bonded truck.

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