



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY AND SINGAPORE CUSTOMS

SOYA BEAN PUFFS

Riddle: What do you get when you cross soya bean milk with cigarettes?

Answer: That's right, it's soya bean puffs!

Officers from the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and Singapore Customs (SC) came across these new “products” when they conducted a joint operation and busted a smuggling attempt of another big haul of cigarettes this year.

2 On 15 July 2008, ICA and SC officers conducted a joint operation at Pasir Panjang Scanning Station (PPSS). At about 1451hrs, a 20-footer container arrived at the checkpoint and was directed for radiographic scanning. The officers found the scanned image to be inconsistent with the declared consignment of canned drinks.



Photo 1: The 20-footer container

3 Sensing something amiss, officers directed the container to the cargo inspection platform of PPSS for physical examination. ICA & SC officers opened the container and found cartons of canned soya bean milk neatly stacked in the container. However, upon removing a few layers of the cartons of canned drinks, the eagle-eyed officers found some boxes containing contraband cigarettes hidden amidst the cargo.



Photo 2: Unknown cartons within declared consignment



Photo 3: Contrabands uncovered!

4 A total of 6,320 cartons x 200 sticks of cigarettes were found concealed amongst 1,699 cartons of canned drinks. The contraband cigarettes and container were seized by SC for follow-up investigations. The total duty and GST on the seized cigarettes amounted to about \$485,200.



Photo 4: Total contrabands seized

5 Upon conviction by the court, first time offenders of cigarette smuggling can be fined up to a maximum of 20 times the amount of duty evaded. For second or subsequent convictions, offenders can be jailed for up to two years, as well as being fined. The offenders also face further fines based on the amount of GST evaded.

6 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 by the Court, offenders can be jailed as well as fined. The conveyances used in the commission of the offence are also liable to forfeiture. The public are also advised against buying duty-unpaid cigarettes. For a packet of cigarettes, buyers stand to face a minimum fine of \$500 or prosecution in Court.

7 Our borders are our first line of defence in safeguarding Singapore's security. The enhanced security checks are critical to our nation's security. We have tightened our security checks on passengers and vehicles at the checkpoints to prevent attempts to smuggle in undesirable persons, drugs, weapons, explosives and other contrabands. The same methods of concealment used by smugglers may be used by terrorists to smuggle arms and explosives to carry out attacks in Singapore. We seek your continued understanding and cooperation, and would like to advise against smuggling unlawful goods into Singapore.

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