



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS 新加坡关税局 KASTAM SINGAPURA சிங்கப்பூர் கங்கத்துறை

MEDIA RELEASE

21 September 2016

Duo arrested for dealing with duty-unpaid cigarettes

A male Singaporean taxi driver, 44, and a female Chinese national, 46, were arrested in a condominium car park on 16 September 2016 for dealing with duty-unpaid cigarettes.

That morning, Singapore Customs officers mounted an operation in Still Road South. About six hours later, the officers kept a close watch as a taxi was driven into the car park of a condominium. They then saw a woman loading two big blue plastic bags into the car boot of the taxi.

The officers moved in to check and they found 70 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes in the plastic bags. The woman and the taxi driver were then arrested.

In a follow-up search of a unit in the condominium, the officers uncovered a total of 612 cartons and 156 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes inside several brown boxes, canvas bags, plastic bags and trash bags in the condominium unit.

The officers also searched the taxi driver's HDB flat in Kallang Bahru, where they found five cartons and five packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes. The duty-unpaid cigarettes and the taxi were seized.

The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) involved in this case exceeded \$58,840 and \$5,750 respectively.

Investigations revealed that the woman had paid the taxi driver a one-time payment of \$1,000 to rent the condominium unit in his name. She also hired him to assist in the delivery of the duty-unpaid cigarettes.

The woman was previously charged in the State Courts in April 2015 for offences also involving duty-unpaid cigarettes, but she absconded while on bail. Following her re-arrest, court proceedings for the woman and the taxi driver are now ongoing.

“Singapore Customs is keeping a close watch on such illegal activities happening in residential areas,” said Mr Yeo Sew Meng, Assistant Director-General (Intelligence and Investigation), Singapore Customs [新加坡关税局助理局长(情报与调查)杨秀明].

“We also urge members of the public, in particular landlords and security personnel, to report to Singapore Customs any suspected duty-unpaid cigarette activities which they observed, and help us stop such criminal activities from taking place in their neighbourhood,” said Mr Yeo.

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 is \$2,000 and \$4,000 respectively. Repeat offenders who are caught with more than two kilogrammes of tobacco products will also face mandatory jail sentences. Vehicles used in the commission of such offences are also liable to be forfeited.

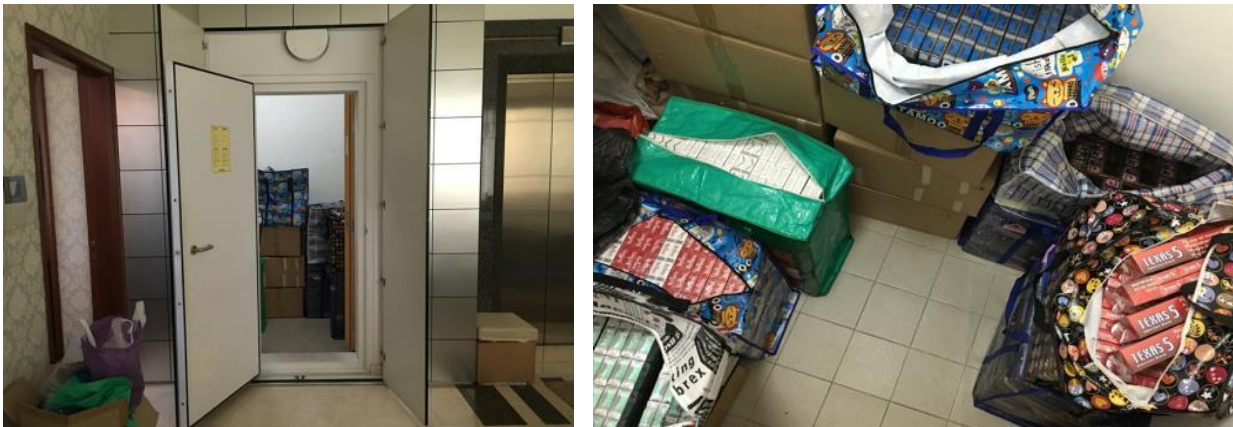
Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of Customs duty or GST can call the Singapore Customs hotline on 1800-2330000, email customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg or use Customs@SG mobile app (which can be downloaded from the Apple Store or Google Play) to report these illegal activities.

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ANNEX



70 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were uncovered from two big blue plastic bags in the car boot of the taxi.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes in brown boxes and canvas bags were uncovered in the store room of the condominium unit.

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