



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS PRESS STATEMENT

OPERATION “RED LANTERN” FLUSHES OUT DEALINGS IN CONTRABAND CIGARETTES IN GEYLANG

Singapore Customs conducted a 3-day operation to flush out illegal cigarette peddling activities in the Geylang Road area. The operation, codenamed “Red Lantern” was targeted at the various back lanes and open fields in Geylang where some local and foreign nationals were seen setting up makeshift stalls selling duty-unpaid cigarettes to approaching passer-bys.

2 The operation from 10 to 12 Aug 2005 resulted in the arrest of 9 peddlers (4 Singaporeans, and 3 Chinese and 2 Bangladesh nationals, age from 37 to 58 years) and the seizure of 116 cartons and 157 loose packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes. The excise duty and GST payable on the contraband cigarettes totaled \$10,330.

3 Some of the arrested offenders have been charged while others are expected to be charged in court over the next few days. If found guilty, they can be fined up to a maximum of 20 times the amount of tax evaded and/or imprisonment.

4 Singapore Customs takes a serious view of the sale and distribution of smuggled cigarettes and will continue to monitor the situation closely. Storing, keeping or having in possession, conveying or dealing with any duty-unpaid cigarettes are offences under the Customs Act. Stiff penalties are imposed for such offences. Upon conviction by the Court, first time offenders can be fined up to a maximum of 20 times the amount of tax evaded. For second or subsequent convictions, offenders can be jailed for up to 2 years, as well as being fined. The offenders also face further fines based on the amount of GST evaded.

5 Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of customs duty or GST may contact the Singapore Customs Intelligence Hotline on 1800-2330000 or email to customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg

Singapore Customs
15 Aug 2005

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