



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
PRESS RELEASE
27 AUGUST 2019**

17 CAUGHT IN A TWO-DAY JOINT OPERATION FOR CHEWING TOBACCO OFFENCES

17 persons were caught for peddling and possession of chewing tobacco products, during a joint operation in Little India, and a raid at a storage facility in the Jurong area on 25 and 26 August 2019 by the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) and the Singapore Police Force (SPF). Two of the peddlers caught were Social Visit Pass holders and they have been repatriated.

2 The two-day joint operation was the largest scale operation to curb the peddling of Khaini tobacco (a type of chewing tobacco) to-date, with the most number of peddlers caught.

3 During the operation, officers uncovered chewing tobacco hidden under a metal plate along the pavement and in a haversack placed on a shoe rack in a nearby temple. The total seized items from the operation amounted to over 21,036 sachets, with a street value of approximately S\$42,000. Those caught are currently assisting in investigations. Please refer to **Annex A** for photographs of the seized products.

Chewing tobacco is strictly prohibited in Singapore

4 Khaini tobacco has a distinctive smell and consists of moist, dark brown tobacco leaf, mixed with slaked lime or spices. Chewing tobacco like Khaini, Gutkha and Zarda has been found to cause oral cancer and are prohibited under the Tobacco (Control of Advertisements and Sale) Act.

5 Information pertaining to prohibited tobacco products in Singapore is available on HSA's website.

Penalties

6 HSA takes a serious view of such offences and would not hesitate to take stern action on such offenders. HSA will continue to collaborate with partner enforcement agencies to curb the peddling of such products.

7 Any person convicted of an import, distribution, sale or offer for sale offence is liable to a fine not exceeding \$10,000, or to imprisonment for up to six months or to both, for the first offence and a fine not exceeding \$20,000, or to imprisonment for up to 12 months or to both, for subsequent offences.

8 The possession, purchase and use of such tobacco products is also prohibited in Singapore. Any person convicted is liable to a fine not exceeding \$2,000. The public is reminded not to purchase or bring chewing tobacco products into Singapore.

9 HSA encourages members of the public who have information on the prohibited sale of chewing tobacco products to call its Tobacco Regulation Branch at Tel: 66842036 or 66842037 during office hours (9:00am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday).

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About the Health Sciences Authority (HSA)

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) applies medical, pharmaceutical and scientific expertise through its three professional groups, Health Products Regulation, Blood Services and Applied Sciences, to protect and advance national health and safety. HSA is a multidisciplinary authority. It serves as the national regulator for health products, ensuring they are wisely regulated to meet standards of safety, quality and efficacy. As the national blood service, it is responsible for providing a safe and adequate blood supply. It also applies specialised scientific, forensic, investigative and analytical capabilities in serving the administration of justice. For more details, visit <http://www.hsa.gov.sg/>.

For more updates on public health and safety matters, follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/HSAsg.

About HSA's Health Products Regulation Group

The Health Products Regulation Group (HPRG) of HSA ensures that drugs, innovative therapeutics, medical devices and health-related products are wisely regulated and meet appropriate safety, quality and efficacy standards. It contributes to the development of biomedical sciences in Singapore by administering a robust, scientific and responsive regulatory framework.

Photographs of the Seized Products



Image 1: Total exhibits seized at Little India



Image 2: Total exhibits seized at the storage facility.



Image 3: Chewing tobacco hidden under a metal plate along the pavement.



Image 4: Chewing tobacco hidden in a haversack placed on a shoe rack at a temple.