



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
PRESS RELEASE
20 JULY 2017

FIRST PERSON CONVICTED AND JAILED FOR IMPORTING CHEWING TOBACCO PRODUCTS

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) has prosecuted Kavinthiran, a 32-year-old male Singaporean, for importing close to 5,000 sachets of “Hans Chhap Tobacco” with an estimated street value of about \$9,200. The sachets contained 55 kg of *khaini* tobacco, which is a type of chewing tobacco prohibited in Singapore. It is an offence under the Tobacco (Control of Advertisements and Sale) Act to import, distribute, sell or offer for sale *khaini* tobacco. The accused was convicted in Court on 20 July and sentenced to an imprisonment term of four weeks.

2 This was the first time a person was prosecuted in Court under the amended TCASA, which came into force on 1 August 2016 and put into effect the ban on emerging tobacco products, which include chewing tobacco products.

3 On 3 January 2017, Kavinthiran drove a Singapore-registered vehicle from Johor Bahru to Woodlands Checkpoint and was stopped by the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority officers for further checks. 4,585 sachets labelled as “Hans Chhap Tobacco” were found hidden in various parts of the vehicle such as the rear side panel of the car boot, and the side door panels. Kavinthiran had rented the vehicle specifically for the purpose of importing the prohibited products into Singapore.

4 Investigations revealed that Kavinthiran had entered into an agreement with an acquaintance in Malaysia to bring the banned chewing tobacco into Singapore. He would receive payment if the delivery into Singapore was successful.

Chewing tobacco such as Khaini is strictly prohibited in Singapore

5 HSA would like to remind the public that section 15(1)(b) of the TCASA (Prohibited Tobacco Products) Regulations prohibits the import, distribution, sale or offer for sale of all chewing tobacco products (refer to Annex B for types of chewing tobacco). The enhanced tobacco control measures are intended to discourage tobacco consumption and better protect Singaporeans from the adverse health effects of tobacco.

6 Any person who is convicted of the above offence is liable to a fine of up to \$10,000, or imprisonment of up to 6 months or both for the first offence, and to a fine of up to \$20,000, or imprisonment of up to 12 months or to both for the second or subsequent offence. Any chewing tobacco imported will be seized and confiscated. Information pertaining to the prohibition of harmful tobacco products in Singapore is available on HSA's [website](#).

7 The public is strongly advised not to purchase or bring prohibited tobacco products into Singapore.

8 HSA encourages members of the public who have information on the illegal import, distribution, sale or offer for sale of prohibited tobacco products to call its Tobacco Regulation Branch at Tel: 6684-2036 or 6684-2037 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.

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Vehicle used to smuggle the chewing tobacco (photo credit: Immigration & Checkpoints Authority)





Chewing tobacco that was concealed in the left and right door side panels and the rear boot compartment (photo credit: Immigration & Checkpoints Authority)



Chewing tobacco that was seized tobacco (photo credit: Immigration & Checkpoints Authority)

Examples of Chewing Tobacco Products

Nasal snuff



Khaini



Oral snuff



Zarda



Gutkha

