

Benson & Hedges

Ceylon Tobacco Co., (CTC), introduced its premium cigarette Benson and Hedges to the local market on September 16.



This “All Gold ‘Special Filter’ pack” is priced at Rs 100 and bears the government health warning ‘Smoking Reduces Physical Fitness’ in all three languages, English, Sinhala and Tamil, thus distinguishing it from the smuggled product.

It will be distributed initially in the country’s four main urban areas, Colombo, Kandy, Galle and Ratnapura.

“The objective is to enable us to have effective control of this product”, said CTC Chairman Michael Fenn.

According to him, this launch aims at addressing two of his company’s major concerns - firstly to provide customers with a product that is fresh and of an international quality and secondly to assist in curbing the smuggling trade by legally introducing and supporting this brand through a unique “Turn to Gold’ advertising concept. And more importantly by lobbying government to take legal action against smugglers.

The punitive measures imposed at present are not stringent enough, says CTC’s Corporate & Legal Affairs Director, Vijaya Malalasekera.

Eight percent of cigarettes sold are smuggled. Of this 50 percent were Benson & Hedges-sold at Rs 70 per pack.

Smuggling robs the government of the much needed revenue through tax and excise evasion and that loss is something in the region of Rs 1.3 billion a year, he said.