

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS PRESS STATEMENT

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS SEIZED 400 CARTONS OF CONTRABAND CIGARETTES AND 14,000 PIECES OF UNCENSORED VCDs, CD-ROMs and DVDs

On 29 Sep 2003, acting on intelligence gathered, Customs Special Investigation Branch officers arrested 1 male Chinese Malaysian (aged 33, lorry driver), one male Indian Malaysian (aged 18, lorry attendant) and 1 male Chinese Singaporean (aged 41, unemployed) and seized 400 cartons of assorted brands of duty-unpaid cigarettes and about 14,000 pieces of uncensored VCDs, CD-ROMs and DVDs. The customs duty and GST of the cigarettes (valued at \$28,240.00) are \$20,400.00 and \$1,128.00 respectively. The GST on the VCDs, CD-ROMs and DVDs (valued at \$29,500.00) is \$1,180.00.

Information was received that one Malaysia lorry was used in the conveyance of contraband cigarettes at Jalan Tukang area. An operation was mounted on 29 Sep 2003 to keep watch for the suspect lorry at Jalan Tukang.

At about 10.55 am, Customs officers saw the suspect lorry driving into Jalan Jentera (next to Jalan Tukang) and met up with a Singapore registered van. The drivers and the passenger were seen to be unloading boxes from the lorry into the van. At this juncture, officers moved in to check the 2 vehicles. Upon a search of the 2 vehicles, officers found a total of 400 cartons of cigarettes in the lorry and around 14,000 pieces of assorted VCDs, CD-ROMs and DVDs in the van. The cigarettes were Marlboro, Dunhill and Salem. When questioned, the driver and attendant of the Malaysia lorry admitted that the cigarettes and VCDs were smuggled into Singapore. The Singaporean driver of the van also admitted ownership to the VCDs, CD-ROMs and DVDs found inside his van. All the 3 accused were placed under arrest and the exhibits together with both vehicles were seized.

Preliminary investigations showed that the driver and attendant of the Malaysia lorry were working for a Malaysian cigarette and VCDs smuggling syndicate. Their role was to deliver the cigarettes and VCDs to local buyers. They claimed that they together were paid RM\$1100 for every trip they made. The Singaporean driver admitted that he was working for a local smuggling syndicate and was paid S\$160 per trip.

The driver and attendant of the Malaysian lorry as well as the driver of the Singapore van will be charged in court on 30 Sep 2003. Upon conviction by the court, they may be fined up to 20 times the tax evaded or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years or to both.

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29 Sep 03