



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS SEIZED 2200 CARTONS OF DUTY UNPAID CIGARETTES AND 138,000 PIECES OF UNCENSORED OPTICAL DISCS

On 9 October 2004 at about 0615 hrs, Customs Special Investigations Branch officers arrested one male Chinese Malaysian (aged 33, lorry driver) and seized a total of 2,200 cartons of assorted brands of duty-unpaid cigarettes and 138,000 pieces uncensored optical discs from a Malaysian registered lorry. The customs duty and GST on the cigarettes are \$128,920 and \$8,602 respectively. The market value of the cigarettes is \$209,000. The GST on the assorted optical discs valued at \$118,000 is \$5,900.

On 7 October 2004, a party of Customs officers kept round-the-clock watch at the vicinity of Woodlands Avenue 1 for a certain Malaysian registered lorry. Intelligence gathered indicated that the suspect lorry was conveying contraband cigarettes.

On 9 October at about 0545 hrs, the officers trailed the suspect lorry from Woodlands Avenue 1 to Yishun Avenue 6. Officers intercepted when the lorry slowed down to turn into a side track off Yishun Avenue 6. The driver put up a struggle and tried to escape, but he was subdued in no time. The lorry was piled full of pineapples. On removing some pineapples, the officers found cartons below. Upon questioning, the driver admitted that the cartons contained smuggled cigarettes and optical discs. He was immediately arrested and the exhibits together with the lorry seized.

There were about 1,000 pieces of pineapples. Below the layer of pineapples were 44 boxes containing 2,200 cartons of cigarettes and 26 boxes containing 138,000 pieces of uncensored optical discs (DVDs, PC Games and VCDs). Of these, about 72,000 were obscene. Preliminary investigations revealed that the driver was working for a Malaysian smuggling syndicate. His role was to deliver the cigarettes and the optical discs to local buyers. He claimed that he was paid RM\$1,000 for every trip he made.

The offender will be charged in Court on 11 October 2004. Upon conviction, he may be fined up to 20 times the tax evaded or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years or to both for the Customs offence. Under Copyright Act (Cap 63), persons found guilty of selling or distributing articles of any work in which copyright or trademark subsists are liable to a fine of up to \$10,000 per article (or up to a maximum fine of \$100,000), and/or to a jail term up to 5 years. Under Films Act (Cap 107), persons found guilty of distributing uncensored films are liable to a fine not less than \$500 for each film (or up to a maximum fine of \$40,000), and/or to a jail term up to 6 months.

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

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