



Singapore Customs Media Release

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS FOILED ANOTHER SYNDICATED CIGARETTE SMUGGLING CASE

Two men arrested, 74,000 packets seized, \$567,300 duty & GST evaded

On 26 October 2009, Singapore Customs (SC) successfully foiled a syndicated cigarette smuggling ruse in Changi. The operation took three days and resulted in two Singaporean Chinese men arrested. About 74,000 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes and over 100 sets of surround speakers were seized. The total duty and GST involved amounted to \$567,300.

Illegal Loot Uncovered In Surround Speakers

2 Over the weekend, SC's officers kept watch outside a rented warehouse unit located along Changi South Street 1. Two men were seen carrying large cardboard boxes into the store and closing the roller shutter. Knocking noises were heard from the store and after a few hours, both men left the warehouse empty-handed.

3 Two days later, officers saw the same men returning to the warehouse unit. Behind the closed roller shutter, there were sounds of heavy items being moved around and dragged across the floor. Once again, loud knocking noises were heard coming from the store. After some time, the men remained inside the unit and the noises went on. Officers then decided to move in and raid the store.

4 Inside the store, the two men were busy retrieving duty-unpaid cigarettes from the hollows of some surround speakers. Both were stunned when they saw the Customs officers forcing through the closed roller shutter to enter the store. Customs officers found seven pallets of boxes containing more than 100 sets of surround speakers lying around in the 200 square feet store. About 7,400 cartons filled with packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were stacked neatly at the sides of the store. Each speaker was stuffed with 70 cartons of cigarettes. The cigarettes worth \$671,100 and the speakers used as cover-loads were seized. The two men, aged 49 and 39 respectively, were arrested.

Illegal Ciggies Arrested

5 Further investigations revealed that the older man had engaged the assistance of the other to carry out the illegal act. The helper was a repeat offender who had been convicted and sentenced to 30 months in jail in April 2007. Both men were charged on 28 October 2009 and the 49-year-old man had pleaded guilty and was sentenced by the Court to 33 months in jail for committing offences under the Customs and GST Acts. For the other man, the court trial is still ongoing and the pre-trial conference will be held in mid-November 2009.

Advisory from Singapore Customs

6 This is the second time that such method of concealment using speakers was uncovered by SC. In October 2008, a similar ruse was employed where a total of 89,980 packets of contraband cigarettes were hidden inside 60 sets of subwoofer speakers which had been hallowed out to conceal the loot.

7 Singapore Customs warns that errant traders who evade duty and tax will be taken to task. Buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with duty-unpaid goods are serious offences under the Customs and GST Acts. Offenders can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty evaded and/or jailed for up to six years. The vehicles used in the commission of such offence are also liable to be forfeited. The public are strongly advised not to buy duty-unpaid products. For possessing a packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, buyers may face a minimum fine of \$500 or prosecution in court.

ISSUED BY: SINGAPORE CUSTOMS
KASTAM SINGAPURA

新加坡关税局
சிங்கப்பூர் காங்கத்துறை

DATE: 29 OCTOBER 2009



Customs officers kept watch outside the warehouse unit



Cardboard boxes were found lying around in the 200 square feet warehouse unit



Customs officers opened the suspicious-looking surround speakers



**Contraband
cigarettes uncovered
in the surround
speakers**



**Each speaker
contained 70 cartons
of contraband
cigarettes**



**Customs officers
seized 74,000 packets
of contraband
cigarettes**