

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS PRESS STATEMENT

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS SEIZED 45,000 PIECES OF UNCENSORED VCDs, CD-ROMs and DVDs

On 14 Oct 2003, acting on intelligence gathered, Customs Special Investigation Branch officers arrested one male Indian Malaysian (aged 33, lorry driver), one male Indian Malaysian (aged 22, lorry attendant) and 1 male Chinese Singaporean (aged 29, unemployed) and seized around 45,000 pieces of assorted VCDs, CD-ROMs, DVDs and music CDs. The GST on the goods valued at \$165,875 amounted to \$6,635.

An operation was mounted on 13 Oct 2003 to keep watch for a lorry suspected to be conveying contraband. At about 7.45 am, Customs officers saw the suspect lorry traveling along Woodlands Road. They then trailed the lorry to a warehouse at Tanjung Penjuru. After discharging the cargo, the lorry left the premises and stopped along the main road. Minutes later, a light brown van approached and parked next to the lorry. Subsequently, the drivers of both vehicles and the attendant were seen unloading boxes from the lorry onto the van. At this juncture, officers moved in for a check. Officers found cartons of containing about 45,000 pieces of uncensored VCDs, CD-ROMs, DVDs and music CDs in the van and the lorry. Of these, about 2,500 were obscene. When questioned, the 3 men admitted that the goods were smuggled into Singapore. All 3 were placed under arrest and the exhibits together with both vehicles were seized.

Preliminary investigations showed that the driver and attendant of the lorry were working for a Malaysian VCDs smuggling syndicate. Their role was to deliver the goods to the local buyer. They claimed they were paid S\$300 for every trip made. The Singaporean driver admitted that he was working for a local smuggling syndicate and was paid S\$2,000 per month.

The men will be charged in court on 15 Oct 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. 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 importing obscene films are liable to a fine not less than \$1,000 for each film imported (but not exceeding aggregate of \$40,000), and/or to a jail term up to 12 months. Repeat offenders are liable to a fine not less than \$2,000 for each film imported (but not exceeding aggregate of \$100,000), and/or to a jail term up to 2 years.

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SINGAPORE CUSTOMS

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