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POLICE FORCE**  
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## **SINGAPORE CUSTOMS AND SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE**

### **JOINT NEWS RELEASE**

12 October 2022

### **Singaporean man jailed more than 26 months for offences under the Customs Act and the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act**

A 24-year-old Singaporean man, Muhammad Rifa'ie Bin Mazlan ("Rifa'ie"), was sentenced by the State Courts on 11 October 2022 to 26 months' imprisonment for engaging in a conspiracy to deal in duty-unpaid cigarettes. In addition, he was sentenced to one month and 18 days imprisonment for possessing and using property reasonably suspected to be the benefits of criminal conduct.

Rifa'ie pleaded guilty to one charge under the Customs Act and two counts of offences under Section 47AA of the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act (CDSA). Another similar charge of engaging in a conspiracy to deal in duty-unpaid cigarettes was taken into consideration during sentencing.

#### Facts of the Case

On 22 April 2021, Singapore Customs officers mounted an operation in a multi-storey carpark in the vicinity of Kim Keat Court, where they observed a 31-year-old Singaporean man, Lau Gim Guan, Andy ("Andy"), approaching a lorry loaded with carton boxes and styrofoam boxes. Officers moved in to conduct a check and uncovered 1,420 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes in the boxes. Andy was placed

under arrest and all the duty-unpaid cigarettes and the lorry were seized. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to about \$194,020 and \$14,570 respectively.

Investigations revealed that Rifa'ie had engaged and paid Andy and two other men - a Singaporean, Abdul Rahim Bin Ali ("Abdul"), 60, and an Indonesian, Jasni Bin Kasim ("Jasni"), 43 - to smuggle, collect and deliver duty-unpaid cigarettes.

Rifa'ie would place orders for duty-unpaid cigarettes from an unknown Indonesian man. He would then ask Jasni, the captain of an Indonesia fishing vessel, to smuggle the cigarettes from Indonesia to Singapore via Jurong Fishery Port by packing them inside styrofoam boxes and fibre containers which were concealed with legitimate container of fishes to avoid detection.

After Jasni unloaded the containers with the duty-unpaid cigarettes from the vessel onto the wharf at Jurong Fishery Port, Rifa'ie engaged Abdul to collect them from the wharf and to load them onto the lorry driven by Andy. Andy would then drive out from Jurong Fishery Port and deliver the duty-unpaid cigarettes to Rifa'ie's customers.

Singapore Customs subsequently referred the case against Rifa'ie to the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) in the Singapore Police Force for investigation.

Investigations by the CAD showed that Rifa'ie received transfers totalling \$8,200 in his bank account between 30 April and 1 May 2021 from another individual. During the same period, Rifa'ie also made transfers amounting to \$4,000 to the same individual's bank account. Rifa'ie was unable to provide a satisfactory account of the possession and use of these funds.

The cases against Andy, Jasni and Abdul have been dealt with separately. Their sentences were as follows:

- a. Andy was sentenced to 24 months' imprisonment for dealing in duty-unpaid cigarettes, a fine of \$1,000 for storing duty-unpaid cigarettes, and a fine of \$1,500 for driving without a licence;

- b. Jasni was sentenced to 24 months' imprisonment for importation of duty-unpaid cigarettes; and
- c. Abdul was sentenced to 26 months' and three weeks' imprisonment for possession, storing and loading of duty-unpaid cigarettes and a fine of \$1,000 for driving without a licence.

### Offenders Face Stiff Penalties

Buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, possessing or dealing in duty-unpaid goods are serious offences under the Customs Act and the GST Act. Offenders can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded and/or jailed for up to six years. Vehicles used in the commission of such offences are also liable to be forfeited.

Members of public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of duty or GST can call the Singapore Customs hotline at 1800-2330000 or email [customs\\_intelligence@customs.gov.sg](mailto:customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg) to report these illegal activities.

Under the CDSA, the offence of possessing or using any property that may be reasonably suspected of being benefits of criminal conduct and failing to account satisfactorily how one comes by the property, carries a punishment of up to three years' imprisonment, a fine of up to \$150,000, or both. The Police would like to remind members of the public not to use their bank accounts to receive or transfer money from or to any unknown party.

**Singapore Customs**

**Singapore Police Force**

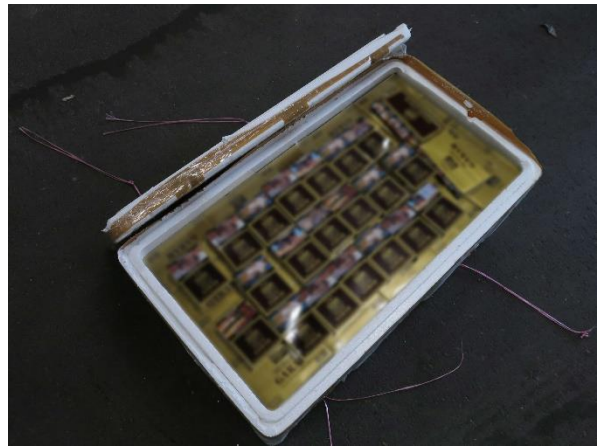
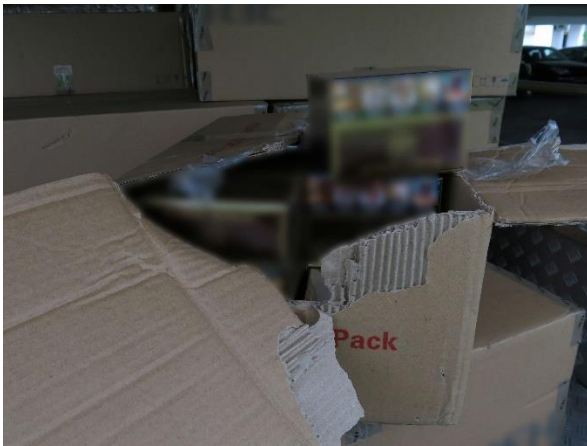
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**ANNEX**



Lorry found to contain duty-unpaid cigarettes



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the lorry