



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE BY SINGAPORE CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY

SMUGGLERS BEWARE! - FIRST CASE OF SNIFF DOG THAT FOILED CIGARETTE SMUGGLING ATTEMPT

Smugglers beware, as the risk of getting caught (yes, by the dogs) is now much higher. In yet another triumph against smugglers of illegal cigarettes, smugglers have to guard not only against vigilant officers and cutting-edge detection technology, but also sharp-nosed and alert sniff dogs which are specially trained to detect tobacco and related products such as cigarettes. In the first case detected on 4 August 2009, a police dog by the name of “Car” successfully sniffed out 1,305 packets of illegal cigarettes worth more than \$13,000 and involving \$10,010 in duty and GST. A 34-year-old Singaporean man linked to the case has been convicted and jailed six months for attempting to smuggle duty-unpaid cigarettes.

2 On 4 August, a joint operation was conducted by the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and the Police K-9 Unit at the Woodlands Checkpoint. At 4.50 pm, a Singapore-registered vehicle was stopped for checks. Noticing that the driver appeared nervous, the officer proceeded to conduct a dog search on the vehicle. During the search, police dog “Car” showed positive indication on a few areas of the vehicle such as the car door panels, back seat and the spare tyre compartment. Hence, a manual search was subsequently conducted by officers. True enough, a total of 1,305 packets of illegal cigarettes were found in the areas which the police dog had shown positive indication during sniffing. This is the first case that a sniff dog had detected illegal cigarettes at the checkpoints.

3 Singapore Customs took over the case for further investigations. The Singaporean driver was arrested. The vehicle and contraband cigarettes were also seized. Investigations revealed that the man had been hired by syndicates to smuggle duty-unpaid cigarettes using vehicles. The man would be paid \$500 if the cigarettes were successfully smuggled. For his involvement with dealing

and conveying duty-unpaid goods, which were offences under the Customs and GST Acts, the Singaporean man was sentenced by the court on 5 August to six months' jail.

4 Singapore Customs warns that buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with contraband cigarettes are serious offences under the Customs and GST Acts. Stiff penalties are imposed for such offences. On conviction, offenders can be jailed as well as fined. The vehicles used in the commission of such offences are also liable to be forfeited. The public are strongly advised not to buy duty-unpaid cigarettes. For possessing a packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, an offender may face a minimum fine of \$500 or prosecution in court.

5 As Singapore's first line of defence against terrorist threats, ICA has a duty to ensure the security and safety of Singapore. ICA has tightened security checks on passengers and vehicles at the checkpoints to prevent attempts to smuggle in undesirable persons, drugs, weapons, explosives and other contraband. The same methods of concealment used by contraband smugglers may be used by terrorists to smuggle arms and explosives to carry out attacks in Singapore. ICA would like to advise the public against smuggling unlawful goods into Singapore.

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

**ISSUED BY: SINGAPORE CUSTOMS (新加坡关税局) (KASTAM SINGAPURA)
IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY (移民与关卡局)**

DATE: 12 AUGUST 2009



Police dog "Car" in action sniffing at the car door panel



Officer mounted a thorough search of the vehicle when police dog "Car" showed positive indication on a few areas of the vehicle after sniffing.



The illegal cigarettes were hidden inside door panels, rear passenger seat (above) and spare tyre compartment, exactly locations where police dog “Car” showed positive indication.



A total of 1,305 packets of illegal cigarettes evading more than \$10,000 in duty and GST were seized.