



JOINT NEWS RELEASE BY
IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY
AND SINGAPORE CUSTOMS

INCHING TOWARDS THE MILLION DOLLAR MARK

Smugglers must be nursing their wounds for losing hundreds of thousands dollars as officers from the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and the Singapore Customs (SC) successfully foiled two recent cigarettes smuggling attempts, one day after the next. What tricks did they use this time? Smugglers thought they could get away by making false declarations on the trade permits, the two phoney consignments were found to be carrying contraband cigarettes which had a street value of close to a million dollars! Ouch! It must be painful for the smugglers as the contraband cigarettes were confiscated.

Case 1: Kranji Loop, 4,850 cartons of contraband cigarettes detected

2 The date was 10 March 2010 at around 5pm. Workers from the Kranji Loop industrial park were streaming out from their work places, oblivious to the many huge trailers that were parked alongside the road. Unknown to the workers and motorists passing by the area, one Malaysian-registered trailer, which was left unattended along the road for the past few days, had the full attention from a group of ICA and SC officers who were lying patiently in wait. When the long wait became seemingly futile, the officers decided to check out the 'abandoned' consignment.



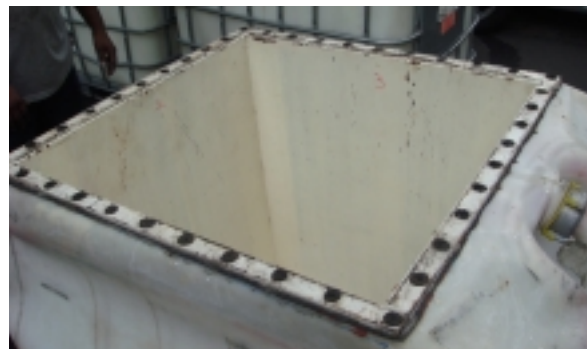
Trailer declared to be containing 'rubber latex'

3 According to the trade permit, the consignment declared to be 38 drums of rubber latex, were marked as corrosive and flammable. For safety reasons, officers had to exercise caution during the preliminary inspection. They used a wooden pole as a dip stick and found that the drums were only one-third full. As the content of the drums were thought to be toxic, officers arranged for the mixture to be tested and had the trailer towed to the Singapore Customs Operation Command, pending results of the laboratory tests.

4 The tests revealed that the drums contained only contaminated water with no trace of toxic or corrosive chemicals in it. They immediately sprang into action, eager to uncover what lay in the drums. Before they could proceed, they had another challenge ahead. Each drum weighed a hefty one tonne! A forklift had to be used to unload the drums carefully one by one. Once the container was inverted with the help of the mechanical arm and the metal casing securing the drums removed, contraband cigarettes were sighted. A total of 4,850 cartons of contraband cigarettes were uncovered. The potential duty and GST involved amounted to \$341,440 and \$30,850 respectively.



Contraband cigarettes uncovered



Specially constructed compartment

Case 2: Keppel Distripark, 5996 cartons of contraband cigarettes detected

5 Immediately following closure of the first case, on 12 March 2010, another consignment was found with contraband cigarettes attempting to pass through the Keppel Distripark. The permit had declared the consignment to be carrying ventilators. In the course of a routine check on the Singapore-registered lorry, contraband cigarettes were sighted when the driver was asked to open one of the boxes for inspection. The smugglers were either trying their luck, hoping that officers would not check the consignment or they were blatantly challenging the authorities.

6 A total of 5,996 cartons of contraband cigarettes were uncovered. The potential duty and GST involved amounted to \$422,120 and \$38,200 respectively. The driver, as well as the contraband cigarettes and the vehicle were handed over to SC for investigation



Contraband cigarettes uncovered in boxes of “ventilators”

7 Upon conviction by the court, first time offenders can be fined up to 20 times the amount of duty evaded and liable to a jail term not exceeding three years. For second or subsequent convictions, offenders can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty evaded and jailed for up to six years. The offenders also face further fines based on the amount of GST evaded. The vehicles used in conveying this contraband will also be liable for forfeiture.

8 SC 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. Vehicles used in the commission of

such offences are also liable to be forfeited. The public is strongly advised not to buy duty-unpaid cigarettes. For possessing a packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, buyers may face a minimum fine of \$500 or prosecution in court.

9. Our borders are our first line of defence in safeguarding Singapore's security. The enhanced security checks are critical to our nation's security. We have tightened our security checks on passengers and vehicles at the checkpoints to prevent attempts to smuggle in undesirable persons, drugs, weapons, explosives and other contrabands.

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

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

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