



Singapore Customs Media Release

CUSTOMS' OPERATION LED TO SEIZURE OF 42,570 PACKETS OF ILLEGAL CIGARETTES AMOUNTING TO OVER \$300,000 IN DUTY & GST

A total of 42,570 packets of illegal cigarettes of assorted brands such as *Navy*, *Modeng* and *Marlboro*, with total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) exceeding \$300,000 were seized by Singapore Customs during an operation conducted on 5 May 2011. Two local registered vehicles were also seized and one 55 year-old Singaporean Chinese man was arrested at a condominium.

2 On 5 May 2011, Singapore Customs officers kept watch on a blue van parked inside the compound of a condominium. On the same day at about 6.15pm, the accused was seen driving the blue van to another part of the private estate. The blue van was parked next to a white bonded truck. Just when he was attempting to open the side panel of the van, officers moved in and arrested him. They found brown packages inside the van, and upon closer inspection, it was found to contain illegal cigarettes.



Brown packages containing illegal cigarettes found in a blue van parked at a condominium

3 Sensing something fishy with the white bonded truck, the officers further questioned the accused. The white bonded truck had its doors locked by a padlock. From the combination code provided by the accused, the officers managed to unlock the padlock. Similar brown packages were found inside the truck and upon opening, more illegal cigarettes were found.



Illegal cigarettes hidden in similar brown packages in the white bonded truck

4 Investigations revealed that the accused had been engaged by an unknown Malaysian supplier known to him as “Boss” to load cigarettes onto both vehicles and to deliver them to various locations. The accused was promised a sum of money upon completion of the task. However, the law caught up with the accused and he was charged on 6 May 2011. The case against the accused is still on-going.

5 SC warns that the buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with duty-unpaid goods are serious offences under the Customs Act and the GST Act and will be severely dealt with. Repeat offenders can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded and/or jailed for up to six years. The vehicles used in the commission of such offence are also liable to be forfeited. For every packet of illegal cigarettes, buyers will be compounded for at least \$500.

6 Despite the restricted access of condominiums, smugglers are still able find their way in to conduct illegal cigarettes activities within such compounds. As such, members of the public should not let their guard down even in enclosed compounds. Should there be information on smuggling activities or evasion of customs duty or GST, the public should contact the Singapore Customs Hotline at 1800-2330000 or email to customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg.



Illegal cigarettes sneakily being hidden in brown packages



Over 42,500 packets of illegal cigarettes Navy, Modeng and Marlboro were seized in Singapore Customs' recent operation

End of Release

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