



**SINGAPORE CUSTOMS
AND
IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY**

JOINT NEWS RELEASE

27 August 2014

Malaysian trio jailed for attempting to smuggle contraband cigarettes into Singapore

A Malaysian man who attempted to drive into Singapore with contraband cigarettes hidden in his car was sentenced by the court on 19 August 2014 to seven months' jail. Both his female passengers, who were also involved in the smuggling attempt, were each sentenced to six months' jail.

The trio was arrested on 15 August 2014 by Singapore Customs officers. A total of 298 cartons and 210 packets of contraband cigarettes worth more than \$34,000 were seized. The duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded exceeded \$27,100. A Malaysian-registered car was also seized.

Ching Siong Huat, 47, along with passengers Joo Mei Suan, 43, and her daughter Ler Kia Ling, 18, were driving through the Woodlands Checkpoint to enter Singapore on 15 August 2014 when they were stopped for checks by Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) officers. After a search, the ICA officers found 298 cartons and 210 packets of contraband cigarettes hidden in various modified compartments of the car. The trio was immediately detained and subsequently arrested by Singapore Customs officers.

Investigations revealed that Ching was engaged to drive the car loaded with contraband cigarettes into Singapore. He recruited Joo and Ler to act as "passengers" as he assumed this would minimise suspicion and avoid detection by ICA officers.

In the first seven months of this year, Singapore Customs seized 134 vehicles that were used to smuggle contraband cigarettes into Singapore. In comparison, last year 146 vehicles were seized.

Said Mr David Foo, Head of Special Investigation Branch (新加坡关税局缉私处处长符庆元): "Singapore Customs takes a serious view of cross-border smuggling of contraband cigarettes. We will continue to clamp down on such illegal activities and bring the offenders to justice. Those who are caught smuggling contraband cigarettes will be arrested and their vehicles will be seized."

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. Offenders will be severely dealt with. They can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded and/or jailed for up to six years.

The minimum court fine for first-time and repeat offenders of tobacco-related offences are \$2,000 and \$4,000 respectively. Repeat offenders who are caught with more than two kilogrammes of tobacco products will also face mandatory imprisonment. Vehicles used in the commission of such offences are also liable to be forfeited.

Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of customs duty or GST can contact the Singapore Customs hotline on 1800-2330000 or email customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg.

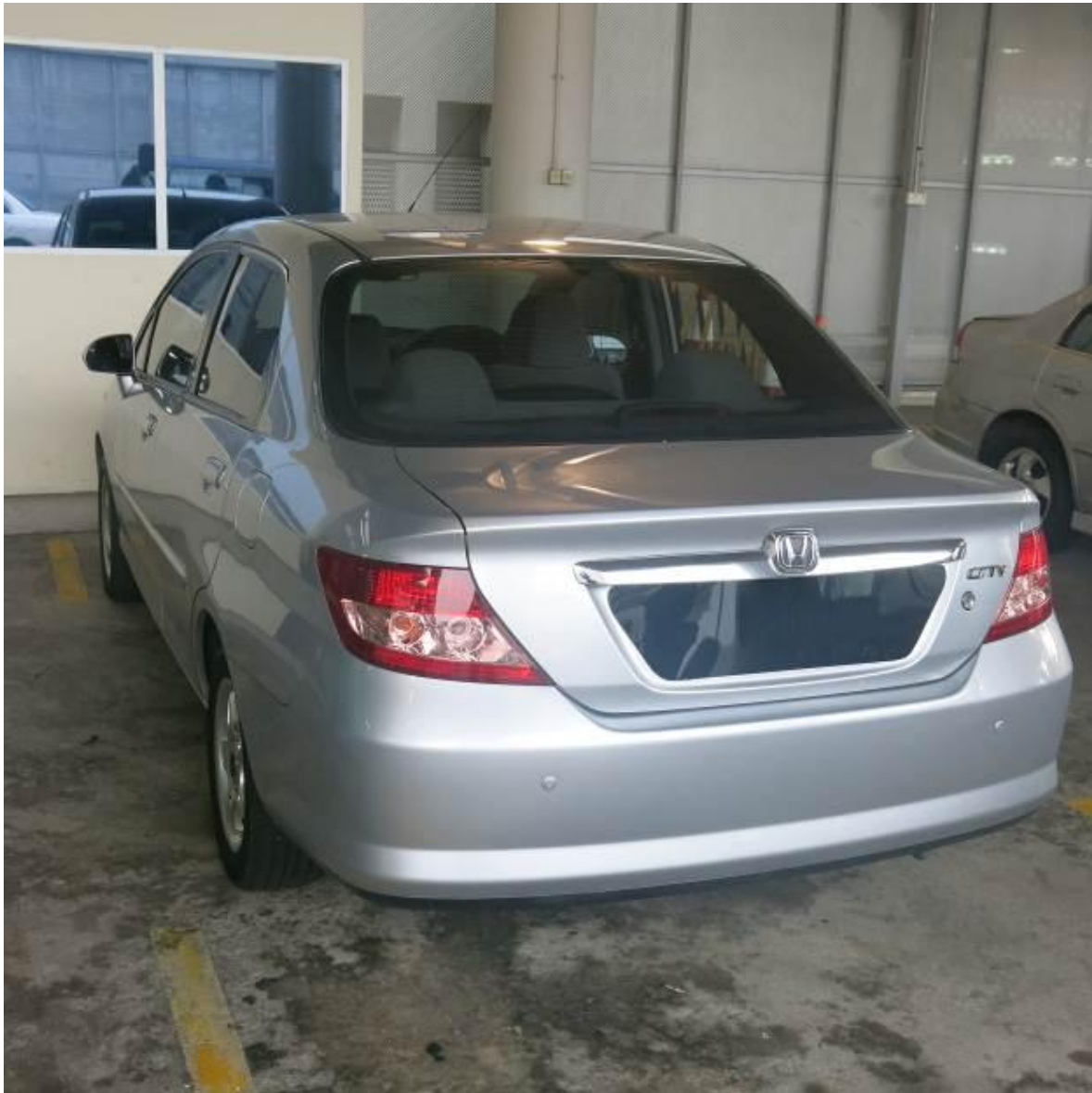
Our borders are our first line of defence in safeguarding Singapore's security. The security checks are critical to our nation's security. ICA will continue to conduct security checks on passengers and vehicles at the checkpoints to prevent attempts to smuggle in undesirable persons, drugs, weapons,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

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ANNEX



Duty-unpaid cigarettes were found hidden in various modified compartments of the Malaysian-registered car on 15 August 2014. (Photo: Singapore Customs)



Singapore Customs officers seized the Malaysian-registered car (above) that was used to smuggle duty-unpaid cigarettes into Singapore at Woodlands Checkpoint. (Photo: Singapore Customs)



A total of 298 cartons and 210 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were recovered from the car. (Photo: Singapore Customs)

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