

Customs Dept seizes RM12m illegal cigarettes

KUCHING: The Sarawak Customs Department has foiled a smuggling attempt involving various brands of cigarettes worth over RM12.6 million at an unnamed premises along Jalan Semaba.

Its director, Norizan Yahya, said authorities arrested a 44-year-old local man during the raid at 9.30am on Feb 12.

"An inspection of the premises uncovered 16,656,000 kretek cigarettes. The estimated value of the seized cigarettes is RM1,499,040 while the total duty and tax involved is about RM11,142,864. A lorry with an estimated value of RM80,000, believed to have been used for transporting the contraband, was also seized."

He added that the premises, located in a remote area, is believed to have been used as a storage facility for smuggled goods before distribution to the local market.

He said the case is being investigated under Section 135(1)(d) of the Customs Act 1967, which carries a fine of between RM100,000 and RM500,000, six months to five years' jail, or both upon conviction.

"The public is urged to assist the department in addressing smuggling activities, particularly involving cigarettes, liquor, firecrackers, drugs and vehicles. They are also cautioned against participating in such illegal activities."

"Smuggling not only results in revenue losses for the country but also poses a threat to national security and public well-being."

The public can report smuggling activities by contacting the Customs toll-free line at 1-800-88-8855 or any Customs office. The department emphasised that informant identities will be kept strictly confidential. — Bernama