



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate

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### **THREE MEN ARRESTED FOR EVADING MORE THAN HALF A MILLION IN DUTIES AND TAXES**

*Three male Singaporeans, aged between 19 and 23, were caught with 5,044 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes on 5 July 2023.*

Singapore, 11 July 2023 – On 5 July 2023, Singapore Customs and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) conducted a joint operation as part of ongoing efforts to detect and prevent tax evasion. As part of the operation, Singapore Customs arrested three Singaporean men at Ubi Crescent and seized a total of 5,044 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes. The duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to about \$539,910.

2 In an industrial building in the vicinity of Ubi Crescent, Singapore Customs officers monitored a unit that was suspected to be used for storing duty-unpaid cigarettes. After a man was seen entering the unit, officers conducted a check and uncovered 2,040 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes packed in brown boxes, and another 3,004 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes concealed in sofa beds. The man, along with two other men in the unit were arrested. All the duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized. The total duty and GST evaded amounted to about \$495,321 and \$44,589 respectively. Court proceedings against the three men are ongoing.

3 Buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, possessing or dealing with duty-unpaid goods are serious offences under the Customs Act and the GST Act.

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

4 ICA will continue to conduct security checks at the checkpoints and work with relevant authorities to safeguard our land, air and sea borders against crime and security threats, including smuggling activities and non-compliance with our regulations. Members of public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of duty or GST can call the Singapore Customs hotline on 1800-2330000 or email [customs\\_intelligence@customs.gov.sg](mailto:customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg) to report these illegal activities.

Annex A: Photos of the operations

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#### **About Singapore Customs**

As the lead government agency under the Ministry of Finance, the core mission of Singapore Customs is to protect revenue and to facilitate easy, fair and secure trade. We are committed to ensuring compliance with customs regulations and collecting taxes and duties on imported and exported goods, while safeguarding Singapore's borders against potential risks and threats.

In addition to these core functions, Singapore Customs is also responsible for promoting trade competitiveness and ensuring the security of the supply chain. In order to fulfill our mission, we work closely with other government agencies, industry partners, and international organisations. We continuously strive to introduce digital initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of customs processes through the use of data analytics and various advanced technologies.

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**ANNEX A**



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the unit



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found concealed in the sofa beds



The three men arrested and duty-unpaid cigarettes seized