

## SINGAPORE CUSTOMS PRESS STATEMENT

### **SINGAPORE CUSTOMS ARRESTED 2 MEN WITH 509 CARTONS OF CONTRABAND CIGARETTES**

On 22 Sep 2003, acting on intelligence gathered, Customs Special Investigation Branch officers arrested 2 Chinese male Singaporeans (aged 59 and 40, unemployed) and seized 509 cartons of assorted brands of duty-unpaid. The customs duty and GST of the cigarettes are \$25,959.00 and \$1,437.42 respectively.

Acting on information gathered, an operation was mounted on 22 Sep 2003 to keep watch for the suspect vehicle at Woodlands St 13. 10 officers participated in the operation. At about 2.05 pm, officers saw the suspect van driving into the car park of Block 173, Woodlands St 13. At this juncture, officers intercepted the van for a check. A total of 509 cartons of cigarettes were found in the van. The cigarettes were of the brands Marlboro, Dunhill and Salem. When questioned, the 59 year old driver admitted that the cigarettes were duty-unpaid. He was arrested, and the van together with the cigarettes were seized. During the course of the check, officers noticed a man behaving suspiciously. The man was stopped for questioning. He admitted to that he was there to collect his cigarettes. He was placed under arrest.

Preliminary investigations showed that the driver was working for a local cigarette smuggling syndicate. The role of the driver was to deliver the cigarettes to local buyers. The driver claimed that he was paid \$50.00 for every trip he made. The 40-year-old man had earlier placed an order of 50 cartons of cigarettes at \$35.00 per carton and was told to wait at the said car park to collect the goods.

The 2 men will be charged in court on 23 Sep 2003. If found guilty, the offenders could be fined up to 20 times the amount of custom duties and GST involved.

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22 Sep 03