



## PRESS RELEASE

### **SINGAPORE CUSTOMS SEIZED 197,300 PACKETS CONTRABAND CIGARETTES – LARGEST INLAND HAUL**

On 7 Oct 2005, Singapore Customs officers arrested two male Chinese Singaporeans, (aged 42 & 47) for being concerned in dealing with 5,607 cartons (or 56,070 packets) of contraband cigarettes. The goods were seized from a Singapore registered bonded (covered) truck. The estimated market value of the contraband cigarettes is \$504,630, and the total duty and GST payable is \$419,964. The two men were charged in court on 8 Oct 2005. The case has been fixed for Pre-Trial Conference on 21 Oct 2005.

2 On the same day, Customs officers also seized another 14,123 cartons (141,230 packets) of duty-unpaid cigarettes from two other Singapore registered bonded (covered) trucks. The estimated market value of the contraband cigarettes is \$1.25 million, and the total duty and GST payable amounted to \$1,042,833. The three bonded trucks were parked next to each other at the industrial building of 1, 3, 5 Kallang Sector car park. Investigations revealed that the cigarettes were meant for the Singapore market. The bonded trucks were rented vehicles and were used for storage and for delivering the contraband cigarettes to night spots, construction sites and dormitories housing foreign workers. Further investigations into the parties involved in the other two bonded trucks are ongoing.

3 The above seizure of 19,730 cartons of contraband cigarettes (or 197,300 packets) is the largest inland haul since the formation of Singapore Customs in April 2003. This case demonstrates our resolve to stamp out organised cigarette smuggling. We will continue to target our investigative efforts and mount inland operations to curb internal distribution and retail of smuggled cigarettes.

4 Singapore Customs reminds the public that storage, possession, conveying or dealing with any duty-unpaid cigarettes are offences under the Customs Act. Singapore Customs takes a serious view of any attempt to evade duty and tax and will not hesitate to prosecute offenders in court. Upon conviction by the court, first time offenders can be fined up to 20 times the amount of tax evaded. If the tobacco products involved exceed 2 kg, the offender can be jailed up to 3 years as well as being fined. Offenders with previous convictions involving more than 2 kg of tobacco products may be liable to a fine of up to 40 times the amount of tax or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 years or to both.

5 Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of customs duty or GST may contact the Singapore Customs Intelligence Hotline on 1800-2330000 or email to [customs\\_intelligence@customs.gov.sg](mailto:customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg)