



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS MEDIA RELEASE

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS RAID UNCOVERS CONTRABAND CIGARETTES HAUL OF OVER 82,000 PACKETS

Singapore Customs officers intercepted three large deliveries of contraband cigarettes in an all night operation on 5 November 2007. The raids at three different locations ending in the wee hours of the morning on 6 November 2007 resulted in a significant seizure of 82,480 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes and the arrest of six men.

2 On 5 November 2007, at about 9 pm, a team of Customs officers kept surveillance at Block 11 Teban Garden for a suspected delivery of contraband cigarettes. At about 10.30 pm, the suspect van arrived, followed shortly by a taxi. A male passenger alighted from the taxi. Together with the van driver, the two men started transferring boxes from the van into the taxi. In the midst of the transfer, Singapore Customs officers moved in. A total of 18,500 packets contraband cigarettes worth about \$166,500 were seized from the vehicles. The duty and GST on the seized cigarettes totalled \$142,450. The two men (both Chinese nationals, aged 30 and 22) were arrested.

3 On the same day, at about 10.30 pm, another surveillance operation was mounted at a container yard at Penjuru Road. Soon, a Malaysian-registered trailer arrived at the yard and parked next to two vans. Immediately, two men jumped into action carrying boxes from the trailer into the vans. Customs officers moved in and found 14,000 packets of contraband cigarettes worth about \$126,000 on the vehicles. The duty and GST on the seized cigarettes totalled \$107,800. The two Singaporean men aged 49 and 21, including a guard at the yard (a Chinese national aged 34) were arrested.

4 Follow-up investigations into the Penjuru Road arrests led a third team of Singapore Customs officers to keep watch at a yard at Jalan Lam Huat for yet another illegal transaction. At about 1.30 am, the suspect Malaysian registered truck arrived. The truck was fully loaded with limestone. Under the pile of limestone, officers found a total of 49,980 packets of contraband cigarettes worth over \$449,000. The duty and GST on the seized cigarettes totalled \$384,846. A Malaysian man aged 40 was arrested.

5 All in all, six men were arrested and 82,480 packets of contraband cigarettes as well as three vans, a trailer and a truck were seized in the overnight enforcement operation.

6 Singapore Customs warns that buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with contraband cigarettes are serious offences under the Customs and GST Acts. On conviction by the Court, offenders can be jailed as well as fined. The vehicles used in the commission of the offence are also liable to forfeiture.

7 Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of Customs duty or GST should contact the Singapore Customs Hotline at 1800-2330000 or email to customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg.

-- End of Media Release --

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