



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS 新加坡关税局 **KASTAM SINGAPURA** சிங்கப்பூர் சுங்கத்துறை

MEDIA RELEASE

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Singapore Customs seizes more than 1,300 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes and arrests five men in two operations

Singapore Customs seized more than 1,300 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes from operations conducted in Woodlands and Tampines on 26 June 2018.

Five men – two Bangladeshi nationals, two Chinese nationals, and a Singaporean – aged between 26 and 43, were arrested for their suspected involvement in duty-unpaid cigarette activities.

In the evening of 26 June 2018, Singapore Customs officers kept watch on a storeroom, suspected to be used to store duty-unpaid cigarettes, at the void deck of a HDB block in Woodlands Circle. The officers saw a Bangladeshi man, who had earlier arrived in a taxi, coming out from the storeroom. The officers moved in to conduct a check and they seized a total of 386 cartons and 740 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes from the storeroom and the taxi. The Bangladeshi man and another Bangladeshi man who was inside the taxi were arrested.

That same evening, another team of Singapore Customs officers conducted another operation at a HDB block in Tampines Street 34. The officers stopped two Chinese nationals who were pushing a trolley laden with brown boxes and a canvas bag, suspected to contain duty-unpaid cigarettes, at the void deck of the HDB block. The two men were heading towards a Singapore-registered car parked behind the block.

The officers uncovered 265 cartons and 170 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes in the brown boxes and canvas bag, and another 738 cartons and 506 packets of duty-unpaid

cigarettes in a follow-up search of a flat in the same HDB block. The two Chinese nationals and the Singaporean driver of the car were arrested for their suspected involvement in duty-unpaid cigarette activities.

A total of 1,389 cartons and 1,416 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized from the two operations. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to about \$130,700 and \$9,580 respectively.

Court proceedings are ongoing for one of the Chinese nationals, while investigations are ongoing for the other men.

Buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession 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. Repeat offenders who are caught with more than two kilogrammes of tobacco products will also face mandatory imprisonment.

Members of public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of Customs duty or GST can call the Singapore Customs hotline on 1800-2330000, email customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg or use Customs@SG mobile app (which can be downloaded from the Apple Store or Google Play) to report these illegal activities.

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ANNEX



Brown boxes containing duty-unpaid cigarettes were found in the storeroom at the void deck of a HDB block in Woodlands Circle.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes were also found in the taxi that the Bangladeshi men took to the HDB block in Woodlands Circle.



Singapore Customs officers stopped two Chinese nationals who were pushing a trolley of brown boxes and a canvas bag, suspected to contain duty-unpaid cigarettes, at the void deck of the HDB block in Tampines Street 34.



More duty-unpaid cigarettes were uncovered in the follow-up search of a flat in the same HDB block in Tampines Street 34.



A total of 1,389 cartons and 1,416 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized from the two operations.

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