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SINGAPORE CUSTOMS AND SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE JOINT NEWS RELEASE

Immediate

23 June 2023

Singaporean man sentenced to 24 months' imprisonment for offences under the Customs Act and the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act

Singapore, 23 June 2023 – On 22 June 2023, a Singaporean man, Lo Kwang Meng (“Lo”), 45, was sentenced to 24 months' imprisonment – comprising 17 months' imprisonment for delivery of duty-unpaid cigarettes; and an additional seven months for assisting another person to retain benefits from criminal conduct.

Facts of the Case

2 On 28 April 2022, Singapore Customs officers mounted an operation at Changi Road where they observed Lo seated in a van. The officers moved in to conduct a check and uncovered 1,329 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes within boxes in the van's cargo compartment. Cash amounting to \$42,660, suspected to be criminal proceeds from the sales of duty-unpaid cigarettes, was also uncovered. Lo was arrested and the duty-unpaid cigarettes, cash, as well as the van were seized. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to about \$116,050 and \$9,200 respectively.

3 Investigations revealed that Lo was engaged by an unknown person via a social messaging platform to deliver duty-unpaid cigarettes and collect cash payments from the recipients. At the end of the delivery, he was supposed to pass the criminal

proceeds to other unknown individuals or deposit the proceeds into bank accounts provided to him.

4 Singapore Customs subsequently referred Lo's involvement in the criminal proceeds to the Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) in the Singapore Police Force for further investigation.

5 Investigations by the CAD showed that Lo performed multiple cash deposits, which amounted to a total sum of \$77,000, into six individual bank accounts between 4 April 2022 and 19 April 2022. Lo was aware that these funds, which he had assisted to deposit into the six bank accounts, were criminal proceeds derived from the sale of duty-unpaid cigarettes.

Offenders Face Stiff Penalties

6 Buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, possessing or dealing in duty-unpaid goods are serious offences under the Customs Act 1960 and the GST Act 1993. Offenders can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded and/or jailed for up to six years. Vehicles used in the commission of such offences and proceeds of sales of duty-unpaid cigarettes are also liable to be forfeited.

7 Members of public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of duty or GST can call the Singapore Customs hotline at 1800-2330000 or email customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg to report these illegal activities.

8 Under the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act 1992, those found guilty of the offence of assisting others to retain benefits from criminal conduct face an imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years, a fine up to S\$500,000, or both. The Police would like to remind members of the public not to partake in any form of arrangement with others to facilitate the retention of criminal benefits by the other party under knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the other party has engaged in criminal conduct.

Annex A: Photos of the operation

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About Singapore Customs

Singapore Customs, a lead agency under the Ministry of Finance, protects revenue and facilitates trade. We make trade easy, fair and secure. We ensure compliance with customs regulations and collect taxes and duties on dutiable and taxable goods. We promote trade competitiveness and ensure the security of the supply chain.

We work closely with other government agencies, industry partners, and international organisations as we safeguard Singapore's borders against potential risks and threats. With the use of data analytics and various advanced technologies, we continuously leverage digital initiatives to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of customs processes.

By proactively balancing these intricate requirements of trade facilitation, security and regulatory compliance, Singapore Customs strengthens Singapore's position as a global trade hub trusted by businesses operating in Singapore and foreign trading partners.

To find out more, visit our website at www.customs.gov.sg

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ANNEX A



The duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the van.



\$42,660 in cash, suspected to be criminal proceeds from the sales of duty-unpaid cigarettes, was found in the van.



The 1,329 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes seized.