



MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate

7 February 2024

TWO ARRESTED FOR EVADING OVER HALF A MILLION IN DUTIES AND TAXES

Singapore, 7 February 2024 – In its ongoing efforts to detect and deter tax evasion, Singapore Customs conducted operations on 31 January 2024 at Jurong West Street 74 and Bukit Batok Street 31. Two male Singaporeans, aged 21 and 24, were arrested, with 4,420 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes and two vans seized. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded from both operations amounted to about \$542,959.

2 In the operation conducted at a multi-storey carpark in Jurong West Street 74, officers sighted a man walking towards a van suspected to contain duty-unpaid cigarettes and uncovered 2,680 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes in the rear compartment of the van. The 21-year-old man was arrested, and the duty-unpaid cigarettes and the van were seized.

3 Following up from the first operation, officers conducted another operation at an open carpark in Bukit Batok Street 31 where a man was seen standing suspiciously beside a van. Officers found 1,740 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes in the rear compartment of the van. Officers arrested the 24-year-old man and seized the duty-unpaid cigarettes and the van.

4 Investigations revealed that the 24-year-old man received instructions on the collection and delivery locations for the duty-unpaid cigarettes via a social messaging platform. He would then relay the information to the younger man, who was allegedly

engaged by him to assist in the collection and delivery of the duty-unpaid cigarettes. Court proceedings are ongoing for both men.

5 Buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, possessing 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. Vehicles used in committing such offences are also liable to be forfeited.

6 Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of duty or GST can provide information to Customs at <https://go.gov.sg/reportcustomsoffence>.

Annex A: Photos of the operations

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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 regulate the export of strategic goods and implement Singapore's commitments to some international trade regulations such as the United Nations Security Council Sanctions.

We work closely with other government agencies, industry partners, and international organisations in our mission and operations. With the use of data analytics, digitalisation of processes and various technologies, we continuously improve the efficiency and effectiveness of customs processes.

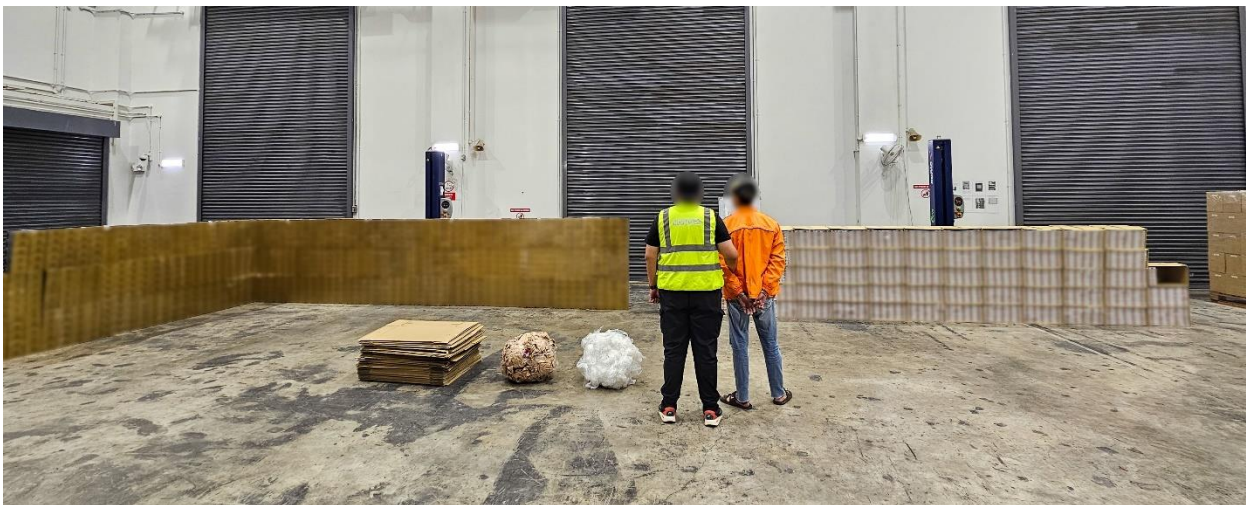
By proactively balancing the intricate requirements of trade facilitation, security and regulatory compliance, Singapore Customs strengthens Singapore's position as a global trade hub trusted by businesses operating in Singapore and foreign trading partners.

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



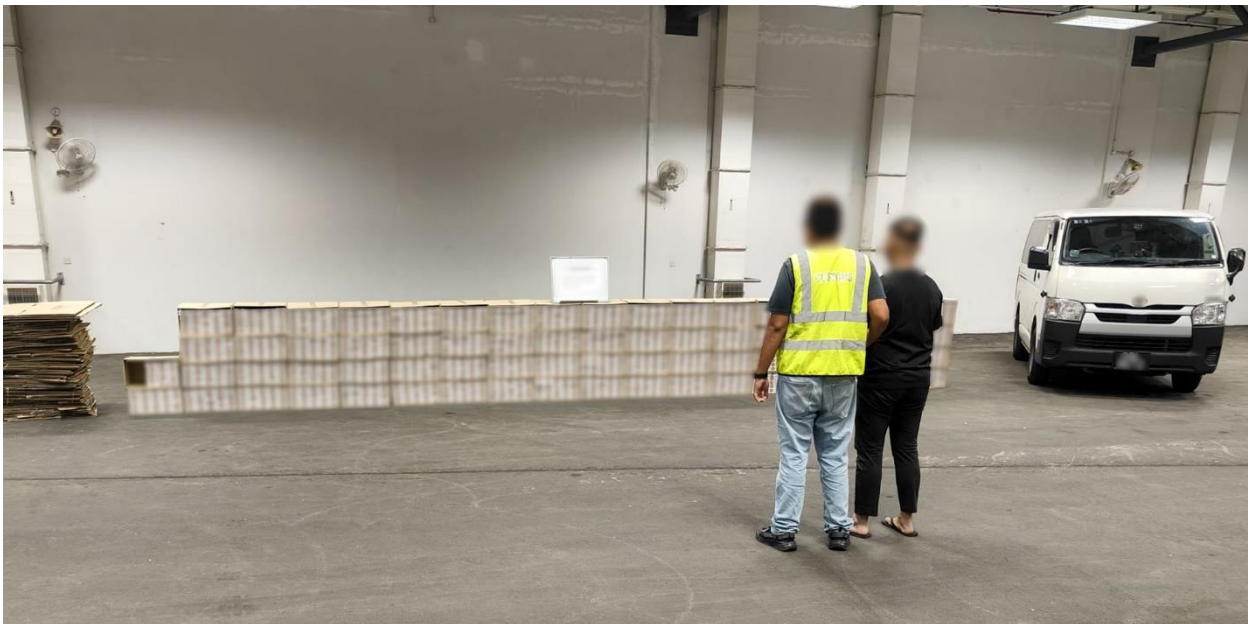
Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the van at Jurong West Street 74



The man arrested at Jurong West Street 74 and the duty-unpaid cigarettes seized



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the van at Bukit Batok Street 31



The man arrested at Bukit Batok Street 31 and the duty-unpaid cigarettes seized