



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Immediate**

10 May 2024

### **THREE MEN ARRESTED FOR EVADING OVER \$700,000 IN TAXES, WITH SEIZURE OF 1 LORRY, 1 CAR AND MORE THAN 6,400 CARTONS OF DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES**

Singapore, 10 May 2024 – On 6 May 2024, Singapore Customs conducted operations at Serangoon North Avenue 4 and Gul Circle as part of its ongoing efforts to detect and deter tax and duty evasion.

2 During the operation at a unit in an industrial building in Serangoon North Avenue 4, officers observed two men loading brown boxes into a car that had reversed into the unit. Suspecting the presence of duty-unpaid cigarettes, officers moved in to conduct checks. Subsequently, they found 2,997 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes within the industrial unit and 240 cartons in the rear compartment of the car. Both men, a 24-year-old Singaporean and a 37-year-old Malaysian, were arrested. Another man, a 42-year-old Malaysian, who was seen loitering near the loading and unloading bay, was also apprehended.

3 Investigations revealed that the 24-year-old man and 37-year-old man were allegedly tasked with collecting a consignment described as floor tiles but containing duty-unpaid cigarettes, using a lorry from an industrial building in Gul Circle. They were then to repack the cigarettes into cartons at the Serangoon North Avenue 4 industrial unit. The 42-year-old man was allegedly responsible for delivering the duty-unpaid cigarettes using the car.

4 A subsequent follow-up operation at the industrial building in Gul Circle led to the discovery of an additional 3,233 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes.

5 In total, 6,470 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes, along with the car and lorry used for transportation were seized. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to about \$701,166. Investigations are ongoing.

6 The act of buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, possessing or dealing with duty-unpaid goods constitutes serious offences under the Customs Act and the GST Act. Offenders may face fines of 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 subject to forfeiture.

7 Members of the public with information regarding smuggling activities or evasion of duty or GST can report 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.

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## ANNEX A



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the industrial unit and the car at Serangoon North Avenue 4.



Consignment of tiles allegedly used to conceal the duty-unpaid cigarettes.



The lorry allegedly used to collect the consignment described as floor tiles but containing duty-unpaid cigarettes.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found at Gul Circle.