



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Immediate**

23 October 2024

### **SEVEN ARRESTED FOR EVADING OVER \$800,000 IN DUTIES AND TAXES**

Singapore, 23 October 2024 – On 16 October 2024, Singapore Customs (Customs) arrested seven individuals and seized 7,550 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes, along with four vehicles, in two separate operations.

2 In the first operation, Customs officers conducted checks on a bus and a car at Marsiling Crescent Heavy Vehicle Park. They uncovered 1,400 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes in the bus and another 150 cartons in the car. Four Malaysian men, aged 33 to 57, were arrested.

3 Investigations revealed that the 57-year-old man was allegedly the driver of the Malaysian bus, which had a hidden compartment used to smuggle duty-unpaid cigarettes into Singapore. The two 33-year-old men were allegedly tasked with retrieving these cigarettes and repacking them into canvas bags. The 55-year-old man was allegedly responsible for loading the canvas bags into the car for local delivery. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to about \$167,976.

4 In the second operation, Customs officers conducted checks on a lorry and a car at Tampines Road Heavy Vehicle Park. They discovered 5,400 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes in the lorry and another 600 cartons in the car. Two Malaysian men, aged 24 and 37, and a Malaysian woman, aged 36, were arrested.

5 Investigations revealed that the woman was allegedly the driver of the lorry. The two men were allegedly responsible for retrieving the duty-unpaid cigarettes from the lorry and loading into the car for local delivery. The total duty and GST evaded amounted to about \$650,231.

6 Court proceedings against the seven individuals are ongoing.

7 Under the Customs Act and the GST Act, buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, possessing or dealing with duty-unpaid goods are serious offences. 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 subject to forfeiture.

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

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 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](http://www.customs.gov.sg)

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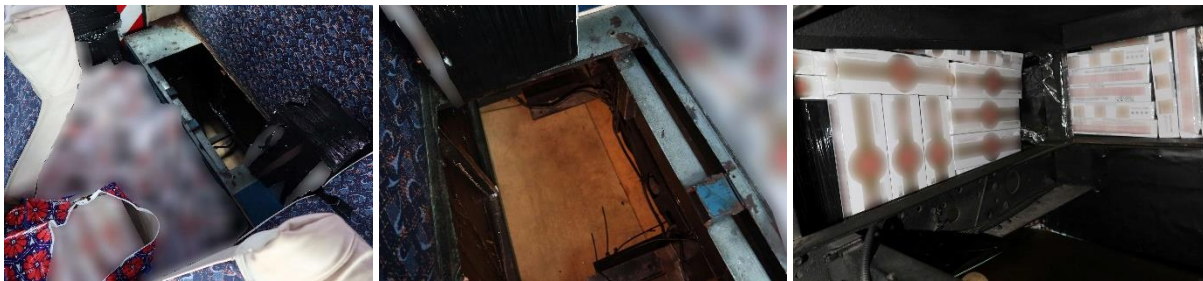
**Annex A**



The bus and car parked side-by-side at Marsiling Crescent Heavy Vehicle Park.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the bus at Marsiling Crescent Heavy Vehicle Park.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes recovered from the hidden compartment within the bus.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the car at Marsiling Crescent Heavy Vehicle Park.



Three of the four men arrested and the duty-unpaid cigarettes seized.



The lorry and car parked side-by-side at Tampines Road Heavy Vehicle Park.





Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the lorry at Tampines Road Heavy Vehicle Park.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the car at Tampines Road Heavy Vehicle Park.



The two men and one woman arrested and the duty-unpaid cigarettes seized.