



MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate

28 March 2024

TWO ARRESTED FOR EVADING MORE THAN \$400,000 IN TAXES AND ABOUT 3,000 CARTONS AND 6,900 PACKETS OF DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES SEIZED

Singapore, 28 March 2024 – An operation was conducted on 25 March 2024 at an industrial building in Chai Chee Lane as part of Singapore Customs' ongoing efforts to detect and deter tax evasion.

2 During the operation, two men were seen pushing a trolley with boxes towards a lorry parked at a loading and unloading bay. Officers conducted checks and found a total of 860 cartons and 1,380 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes on the trolley and in the lorry. The two men, who are Malaysians aged 28 and 44, were arrested.

3 Officers conducted follow-up inspections at a storage unit in the same building which led to the discovery of another 2,168 cartons and 5,533 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes concealed within boxes labelled as biscuits.

4 Investigations revealed that both men were allegedly engaged to retrieve the duty-unpaid cigarettes from the boxes labelled as biscuits in the storage unit for repacking before loading them onto the lorry for delivery.

5 All the duty-unpaid cigarettes found and the lorry were seized. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to about \$403,067. Both men were charged in Court on 27 March 2024.

6 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.

7 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.

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ANNEX A



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found at the loading and unloading bay and in the lorry.





Boxes containing biscuits allegedly used to conceal the duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the industrial unit.



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