

JOINT NEWS RELEASE

ICA AND SINGAPORE CUSTOMS SMOKE OUT CONTRABAND CIGARETTE SELLERS

On 8 April 2005, acting on information received, ICA and Singapore Customs officers conducted a joint operation to catch foreigners involved in the distribution of duty-unpaid cigarettes in the vicinity of Kaki Bukit Road. At about 2110 hours, the officers intercepted a taxi with two PRC nationals in it. The two men, aged 35 and 39 were found with a box in the rear passenger seats. Inside the box, the officers found many cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes.

2 A thorough check of the taxi revealed that many more cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were found in the boot of the vehicle. In total, the ICA and Custom officers recovered 200 cartons of contraband cigarettes in the taxi. The two PRC nationals were arrested and the duty-unpaid cigarettes seized.

3 The next day, a party of Customs officers conducted a follow-up raid at a flat in Bedok North Street 3 and seized another 531 cartons of assorted brands of duty unpaid cigarettes.

4 The customs duty and GST on the cigarettes were \$65,542 and \$4,198 respectively. The market value amounted to \$83,790. The two offenders were charged in Court on 11 April 2005. If found guilty, the offenders could be fined up to a maximum of 20 times the amount of tax evaded and/or imprisonment.

5 Storing, possession, conveying or dealing with any duty-unpaid cigarettes are offences under the Customs Act. Singapore Customs takes a serious view of any attempt to evade duty and tax and will not hesitate to prosecute offenders in court. If convicted, they could be liable to a fine and/or imprisonment. Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of customs duty or GST may contact the Singapore Customs Intelligence Hotline at 1800-2330000 or email to customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg

END OF NEWS RELEASE