



**SINGAPORE CUSTOMS SMASHED AN ILLEGAL CIGARETTE
STORE AT WOODLANDS – ONE ARRESTED AND 12700 PACKETS
CIGARETTE SEIZED**

Singapore Customs officers smashed an illegal cigarette store and distribution point at Woodlands Street 13 after two weeks of surveillance and investigation. A male Singaporean, 46 years old, was arrested in a covert operation on 18 Apr 2006. Altogether, 12,700 packets (1270 cartons) duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized. The estimated market value of the contraband cigarettes is \$114,300 and the total duty and GST payable is \$95,130.

2 On 18 Apr 2006 at about 4.15 pm, Customs officers who were keeping watch at the car park of Marsiling Apartments at Woodlands St 13 saw the suspect arriving in his car. Officers moved in to question him. He later led them to a unit at the ground floor. The unit comprised 2 rooms. Officers found a total of 12,700 packets (1270 cartons) assorted brands of duty-unpaid cigarettes, stacks of empty cartons and new plastic bags. The man believed to be the Singapore contact point of a Malaysian cigarette smuggling syndicate, admitted that he had rented the unit since Mar 2006 to receive and store contraband cigarettes, and for repacking and distribution according to orders. Investigations into the illegal activities are ongoing.

3 Singapore Customs warns that storing, possession, conveying or dealing with any contraband cigarettes are serious offences under the Customs Act. First time offenders can be fined up to a maximum of 20 times the amount of duty evaded. For the second and subsequent convictions, offenders can be jailed for up to 2 years, as well as being fined. The offenders also face further fines based on the amount of GST evaded.

4 We would like to urge anyone with information on any illegal activities involving duty-unpaid cigarettes to contact the Singapore Customs Intelligence Hotline on 1800-2330000 or email to customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg. Also call us if you know of any person dealing in contraband cigarettes, either as distributors or sellers or if you have been approached by people who claim that they have cheaper cigarettes for sale. Members of the public are advised against buying contraband cigarettes. Those caught buying or having in their possession contraband cigarettes stand to face severe penalties.