



## PRESS RELEASE

### **SINGAPORE CUSTOMS SEIZED 237,000 PACKETS DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES – THE LARGEST INLAND HAUL**

On 3 August 2006 at about 2.40 pm, Singapore Customs officers seized 23,700 cartons (237,000 packets) of duty-unpaid cigarettes. The estimated market value of the cigarettes is over \$2.1 million. The total duty and GST payable is about \$1,859,000.

2 Singapore Customs officers, acting on a tip-off received from a member of the public, mounted an operation at Kranji Way which resulted in the seizure of 23,700 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes, the largest inland haul so far since 2004. The cigarettes of assorted brands were hidden in three large cylindrical tanks. Investigation into the case is underway.

3 Singapore Customs warns that the storing, possession, conveying or dealing with any contraband cigarettes are serious 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. Upon conviction by the court, first time offenders can be fined up to a maximum of 20 times the amount duty evaded. For the second or 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. The public are advised against buying duty-unpaid cigarettes. Those caught buying or having in their possession duty-unpaid cigarettes stand to face severe penalties.

4 To enhance effectiveness, we seek the co-operation of the public to be our eyes and ears. Much of the success of the Customs anti-cigarette smuggling efforts resulted from tip-offs from the public. Members of the public with information on any illegal activities involving duty-unpaid cigarettes are encouraged to contact the Customs toll-free hotline on 1800-2330000.

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