



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS PRESS RELEASE

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS STING OPERATION - ONE MAN ARRESTED AND 1.75 MILLION STICKS OF DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES SEIZED

In a sting operation by Singapore Customs, one male Singaporean was arrested at a heavy vehicle parking centre at Eunos. A total of 1,749,340 sticks of duty-unpaid cigarettes worth about \$800,000 were seized from a container. The excise duty and GST on the seized cigarettes is \$668,430.

2 On 23 December 2006, at about 2.45 pm, officers from the Singapore Customs Special Investigations Branch, kept surveillance at the vicinity of the heavy vehicle parking centre at Eunos Industrial Estate. At about 3.00 pm, the officers saw a man carrying two brown boxes from a container. Suspecting the boxes to contain duty- unpaid cigarettes, the officers stopped him for a check. Duty-unpaid cigarettes were found in the boxes. The man was immediately detained. The officers moved in to check the suspect container. A total of 87,921 packets (1,749,340 sticks) of assorted brands of duty-unpaid cigarettes were found. The man was arrested and was charged in court for customs offences. If found guilty, he can be jailed and/or fined 20 times the amount of tax evaded.

3 Singapore Customs warns that the storing, possession, conveying, or dealing with any contraband cigarettes are serious offences under the Customs Act. Stiff penalties are imposed for such offences. Upon conviction by the Court, offenders can be fined 20 times the amount of tax evaded and jailed. Members of the public are also reminded that selling and buying of contraband cigarettes are serious offences under the Customs Act. Singapore Customs will not hesitate to charge offenders in court. For a packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, buyers stand to face a minimum fine of \$200 or prosecution in court.

4 Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of Customs duty or GST should contact the Singapore Customs Intelligence Hotline at 1800-2330000 or email to customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg