

## PRESS RELEASE

### **“YOU JUMP, I JUMP ... .. TO NAB YOU!” - SINGAPORE CUSTOMS GAVE CHASE AT SEA, FOUR ARRESTED AND OVER 36,000 PACKETS DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES SEIZED**

It was drama at “high sea”. On 30 Jan 2007, officers of Singapore Customs gave chase, even jumping into the sea to foil a smuggling attempt. Four Singaporean men, aged between 38 and 51 were arrested and 36,710 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes seized. The duty-unpaid cigarettes are worth about \$370,000. The customs duty and GST evaded totaled \$278,200.

2 On 30 Jan 2007 at about 10.30 am, Singapore Customs officers kept watch at a warehouse along Admiralty Road West and sighted a Malaysian-registered prime-mover with its trailer reverse-parked in the said warehouse. Two men were seen prying open what appeared to be a special compartment under the platform of the trailer, and starting to remove cartons suspected to be contraband cigarettes and repacking them into carton boxes. The officers continued to stay undercover and kept a close watch. Once the packing was completed, the officers pounced onto the men. The two men started to flee towards the rear of the warehouse. Singapore Custom officers immediately gave chase. One of the men was caught while the other managed to run out of the warehouse towards the sea. In a desperate attempt to escape, the man jumped into the sea and started swimming towards the nearby jetty. A Singapore Customs officer followed and jumped into sea as well. Realising that he was surrounded by Customs officers who were waiting to nab him at the jetty, the man surrendered himself and was arrested.

3 Another team of Singapore Customs officers searching the warehouse arrested two other men in a room within the warehouse. Altogether, 31,940 packets of contraband cigarettes were seized from the warehouse. Upon questioning by the officers, one of the men revealed that more cigarettes were hidden in another location. He led the officers to a store at Woodlands industrial area where another 4,770 packets were seized. Preliminary investigations revealed that the men were part of a cigarette smuggling syndicate to deliver contraband cigarettes for re-distribution. All four will be charged in Court on 31 Jan 2007.

4 Singapore Customs warns that buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with contraband cigarettes are serious offences under the Customs. Stiff penalties are imposed for such offences. On conviction by the court, offenders can be jailed as well as fined. The vehicles used in the commission of the offence are also liable to forfeiture. The public are also advised against buying duty-unpaid cigarettes. For a packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, buyers stand to face a minimum fine of \$200 or prosecution in court.

5 Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of customs duty or GST can contact the Singapore Customs Intelligence Hotline on 1800-2330000 or email to [customs\\_intelligence@customs.gov.sg](mailto:customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg).

**Issued by Singapore Customs      30 Jan 2007**