

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

OVER 26,000 PACKETS CONTRABAND CIGARETTES SEIZED IN OFFSHORE JOINT OPERATION, 3 INDONESIANS ARRESTED

Singapore Customs (SC), together with the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and Police Coast Guard (PCG), in a joint operation on 7 February 2007 arrested three Indonesian men aged 24 to 28, and seized a total of 26,360 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes on board a tug boat at Western Anchorage, Singapore. The contraband cigarettes are worth about \$270,000, while duties and GST evaded amount to \$244,320.

2. From 11 am on 7 February 2007, officers from SC, ICA and PCG began to keep close watch over tug boat “Scandidewa”, which was suspected to be used for cigarette smuggling into Singapore. At 11.15 am, PCG intercepted the tug boat at the Western Anchorage. Officers from the three enforcement agencies boarded the vessel and searched the boat. 26,360 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes stashed in cartons and black plastic bags were found hidden in an empty oil tank located in the engine room. The vessel was escorted to ICA Coastal Command HQ for further search.

3. Upon questioning by the officers, the three Indonesian men, one second engineer and two crew members, admitted ownership of all the duty unpaid cigarettes. The men were arrested and will be charged in Court for customs offences.

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. As Singapore’s first line of defence against terrorist threats, ICA has a duty to ensure the security and safety of Singapore. ICA has tightened security checks on

passengers and vehicles at the checkpoints to prevent attempts to smuggle in undesirable persons, drugs, weapons, explosives and other contraband. ICA would like to advise the public against smuggling unlawful goods into Singapore.

End of Release

**ISSUED BY: IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY
POLICE COAST GUARD
SINGAPORE CUSTOMS**

DATE: 8 FEBRUARY 2007