

**SINGAPORE CUSTOMS, IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY AND  
SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE**

**JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

**JOINT OPERATION LED TO ARREST OF 10 SYNDICATE  
MEMBERS AND SEIZURE OF 26,749 PACKETS OF  
CONTRABAND CIGARETTES WORTH OVER \$243,400**

A cigarettes smuggling syndicate succumbed to the joint forces of three enforcement agencies - Singapore Customs (SC), the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and Singapore Police Force (SPF) on 25 June 2008. The enforcement agencies smashed the syndicate's ploy to smuggle 26,749 packets of duty-unpaid cigarette worth over \$243,415. The duty and GST involved amounted to over \$205,350. Altogether 10 men (four Singaporeans, three Malaysians and three Bangladesh nationals) were arrested. Three vehicles were also seized.

2. Acting on intelligence gathered by SC on illicit cigarette activities around Marsiling area, officers from the three enforcement agencies (SC, ICA and SPF) mounted a surveillance operation on 25 June 2008 at a rubbish dump at Marsiling Drive. At 8.45 pm, a Malaysian-registered lorry was sighted entering the rubbish dump, to be followed immediately by several men. The roller shutter of the rubbish dump was pulled down immediately. Subsequently, loud drilling and knocking noises could be heard coming from the rubbish dump.

3. At 11.00 pm, when the roller shutter was being pulled up, the officers moved in and detained the 10 men inside. They found several canvas bags packed with cigarettes. A total of 25,440 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized. Dismantled metal cabinets were strewn all over inside the dump. Investigations revealed that the metal cabinets were unloaded from the lorry. These cabinets were fitted with special compartments to hide the duty-unpaid cigarettes. The men had to cut open the metal parts

to retrieve the hidden cigarettes, which explained the loud drilling and banging noises heard earlier.

4 A follow-up raid was conducted at one of the suspect's residence at Jalan Limbok. Another 1,309 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were uncovered from the storeroom. All 10 men will be charged in Court for Customs offences.

5 Singapore Customs warns that buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with contraband cigarettes are serious offences under the Customs and GST Acts. Stiff penalties are imposed for such offences. On conviction, offenders can be jailed as well as fined. The vehicles used in the commission of such offence are also liable to be forfeited. The public are strongly advised not to buy duty-unpaid cigarettes. For possessing a packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, an offender may face a minimum fine of \$500 or prosecution in court.

6 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 undesirable persons, drugs, weapons, explosives and other contraband into Singapore. The same methods of concealment used by contraband smugglers may be used by terrorists to smuggle arms and explosives to carry out attacks in Singapore. ICA would like to advise the public against smuggling unlawful goods into Singapore.

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

END OF RELEASE

**JOINTLY ISSUED BY:**

**SINGAPORE CUSTOMS (新加坡关税局)**

**IMMIGRATION & CHECKPOINTS AUTHORITY (移民与关卡局)**

**SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE**

**DATE: 27 JUNE 2008**