



## Singapore Customs Media Release

### **ONE NIGHT, TWO OPS, THREE RAIDS, RESULT IN HAUL OF 81,504 PACKETS OF ILLEGAL SMOKES**

Singapore Customs hit paydirt when it mounted two operations in one night last week.

2 The operations saw its officers carrying out raids at three different locations, which resulted in its largest haul of illegal cigarettes inland in the past one year.

3 The 81,504 packets (8,150 cartons and four packets) of duty-unpaid cigarettes seized had a street value of over \$800,000, with the total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) involved exceeding \$710,000.

4 After nine hours of surveillance at Jalan Kemajuan on the night of 12 March 2012, a team of Singapore Customs officers saw a man transferring boxes into a house. On searching the house, the officers found 17,066 packets (1,706 cartons and six packets) of duty-unpaid cigarettes, which were subsequently seized.

5 Upon interrogation, the man led the officers to a storage facility nearby at Kallang Way, where another 5,000 packets (500 cartons) of contraband cigarettes were found and duly seized.

6 The total duty and GST involved in this case exceeded \$195,400 and \$17,400 respectively.

7 Earlier that night, another team of Singapore Customs officers was also keeping watch on another man at Kaki Bukit Road 2. Suspecting that a warehouse unit was used to store illegal cigarettes, the officers moved in for a search. They found 59,438 packets (5,943 cartons and eight packets) of duty-unpaid cigarettes in the unit.

8 The total duty and GST involved in this case exceeded \$458,500 and \$42,300 respectively.

9 The two men were arrested. Investigations into these two cases are currently ongoing.

10 Buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with duty-unpaid goods are serious offences under the Customs Act and the GST Act. Offenders will be severely dealt with. They can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty evaded, and/or jailed for up to six years.

11 With effect from 1 January this year, the minimum court fine for first-time and repeat offenders of tobacco-related offences has been raised to \$2,000 and \$4,000 respectively. Repeat offenders who are caught with more than two kilogrammes of tobacco products will also face mandatory imprisonment. Vehicles used in the commission of such offences are also liable to be forfeited.

12 The public is strongly advised not to get involved with illegal cigarettes. For possessing a packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, buyers may face a minimum fine of \$500 or prosecution in court.

**ISSUED BY: SINGAPORE CUSTOMS**      新加坡关税局

**KASTAM SINGAPURA**      சிங்கப்பூர் கங்கத்துறை

**DATE: 19 March 2012**

Appendix



A total of 81,504 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized from the two operations on the night of 12 March 2012.