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SINGAPORE CUSTOMS AND SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE JOINT NEWS RELEASE

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Five arrested by Singapore Customs and Police Coast Guard for dealing with duty-unpaid cigarettes

Four men and a woman were arrested in a two-day joint operation by Singapore Customs and the Police Coast Guard (PCG) for dealing with duty-unpaid cigarettes.

On 13 July 2016 afternoon, Singapore Customs officers intercepted a lorry in Bukit Batok Street 21. They found 15,960 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes stored in styrofoam boxes in the lorry. The 56-year-old male lorry driver was arrested and the lorry was seized.

Investigations by Singapore Customs revealed that the boxes of duty-unpaid cigarettes had been loaded onto the lorry at Changi Creek from a boat registered to a coastal fish farm in the waters off Pulau Ubin. Upon receiving this information, PCG's intelligence and Loyang region officers immediately worked together to identify the fish farm believed to be involved in this illegal transaction. In the early hours of the morning on 14 July 2016, PCG and Singapore Customs mounted a joint raid at the identified fish farm. Two other fish farms were also raided after further investigations by PCG investigators. This follow-up and subsequent interviews by PCG and Singapore Customs officers led to the recovery of 2,088 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes packed in styrofoam boxes and the seizure of a boat. One man aged 51, two men aged 32, and one woman aged 50, were arrested at the fish farms.

A total of 18,048 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized in the two-day joint operation mounted by the two agencies. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) involved exceeded S\$140,000 and S\$14,000 respectively. Investigations are ongoing.

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 and GST evaded, and/or jailed for up to six years.

The minimum court fine for first-time and repeat offenders of tobacco-related offences is \$2,000 and \$4,000 respectively. Repeat offenders who are caught with more than two kilogrammes of tobacco products will also face mandatory jail sentences.

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ANNEX



The lorry used in the transportation of duty-unpaid cigarettes was seized.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes stored in styrofoam boxes were found in the lorry.



Singapore Customs and Police Coast Guard seized the 15,960 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes from the lorry.



More duty-unpaid cigarettes were found in a coastal fish farm in the waters off Pulau Ubin.



A boat (foreground) was also seized by Singapore Customs and Police Coast Guard.

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