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SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE AND SINGAPORE CUSTOMS JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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More than S\$1.5 million confiscated from man who dealt with duty-unpaid cigarettes

The Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) of the Singapore Police Force and Singapore Customs conducted joint investigations against 68-year-old Tan Hock Chwee, who was arrested for storing duty-unpaid cigarettes. In the course of investigations, CAD seized cash and bank deposits as well as a luxury watch from Tan. He was subsequently sentenced to nine months' imprisonment on 3 July 2013 for storing more than 307 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes.

CAD further probed into Tan's financial affairs as there was evidence that he had significant wealth that could not be satisfactorily accounted for. It was believed that this unexplained wealth was Tan's benefits from criminal conduct. CAD investigated with a view to apply for a court order to confiscate his illicit monies so as to deny him his fruits of crime. CAD established that between 1 January 2009 and 25 July 2012, Tan had accumulated \$875,288.70 of unexplained wealth.

Tan had used part of his unexplained wealth to purchase a terraced house in 2010. This property has since appreciated in value, resulting in a capital gain of around \$700,000. This capital gain is also regarded as part of Tan's benefits from criminal conduct. The total benefits derived by Tan from criminal conduct is therefore \$1,575,288.70.

On 17 April 2018, the High Court issued a confiscation order of \$1,575,288.70 against Tan.

Customs offences such as buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with duty-unpaid goods are regarded as serious offences under the Second Schedule of the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act, Chapter 65A. Under section 5(1) of the same Act, any person who is convicted of a serious offence is subjected to have the benefits derived by him from criminal conduct confiscated.

The authorities take a serious view of such offences and will not hesitate to prosecute offenders to the fullest extent of the law, including financially crippling and denying them the ability to re-invest their ill-gotten gains to commit more crimes.

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