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Securing Our Borders,
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**SINGAPORE
CUSTOMS**

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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Four men arrested in single largest haul of duty-unpaid cigarettes seized in 2020

Singapore Customs arrested four men and seized more than 17,000 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes in an operation conducted at an industrial building in Yishun Street 23, making this the largest haul of duty-unpaid cigarettes seized in a single operation in 2020.

On 27 May 2020, at about 12 pm, Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) officers directed a prime mover with an attached container for further checks at the Pasir Panjang Scanning Station. The officers' suspicions were aroused when they noticed anomalies in the scanned images of the consignment. During the course of checks, ICA officers uncovered duty-unpaid cigarettes concealed inside metal cabinets. The case was handed over to Singapore Customs for further investigation.

Singapore Customs subsequently conducted an operation at an industrial building in Yishun Street 23. During the operation, officers observed a man using a forklift to remove metal cabinets from the container, while another two men were removing carton boxes containing duty-unpaid cigarettes from 16 metal cabinets and loading the carton boxes back into the container. Singapore Customs officers moved in to arrest the three men.

The operation led to a seizure of 17,250 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) amounted to about \$1,473,150 and \$119,270 respectively. Another 35-year-old man was subsequently arrested on the same day for his involvement in the case. All four men were charged in court on 29 May 2020 and court proceedings are ongoing.

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

Members of public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of Customs duty or GST can call the Singapore Customs hotline on 1800-2330000, email customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg or use Customs@SG mobile app (which can be downloaded from the Apple Store or Google Play) to report these illegal activities.

Safeguarding Singapore's borders remains ICA's top priority. 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 will continue to conduct security checks on passengers, cargos and vehicles at the checkpoints to prevent attempts to

smuggle undesirable persons, drugs, weapons, explosives and other contrabands across our borders.

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Duty-unpaid cigarettes packed in carton boxes were retrieved from the metal cabinets and loaded back into the container [Photos: Singapore Customs].



Four men were arrested and 17,250 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes seized. [Photo: Singapore Customs]