

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS PRESS STATEMENT

2 MEN ARRESTED AND 1000 CARTONS OF CONTRABAND CIGARETTES SEIZED

On 17 Oct 2003, Singapore Customs Special Investigations Branch officers arrested 2 male Indian Malaysians aged 30 and 26 years and seized 1,000 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes from a Malaysian-registered truck along Ubi Avenue 1. Customs duty and GST on the cigarettes were \$51,000 and \$2,820 respectively. The market value amounted to \$83,000.

Acting on information received, officers mounted an operation along Ubi Avenue 1 on 17 October 2003 to keep watch for a Malaysian-registered truck suspected to be conveying contraband cigarettes. At about 1.35 pm, officers spotted the truck driving up to Ubi Avenue 1 and intercepted it.

A check was conducted and a total of 25 boxes containing 1000 cartons of duty-unpaid Marlboro and Salem cigarettes were found on the truck. When questioned, the men (the driver aged 30 years and the attendant aged 26 years) admitted that they were aware that the boxes contained cigarettes and that duty and GST on the goods were not paid. Both men were arrested and the contraband cigarettes and the truck seized.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the 2 men were working for a syndicate to smuggle duty-unpaid cigarettes into Singapore and were paid about RM\$400.00 for every trip.

The two men will be charged in court on 18 Oct 2003. Upon conviction by the Court, the offenders may be fined up to 20 times the tax evaded.

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17 Oct 2003