



## SINGAPORE CUSTOMS SEIZED 12,200 PACKETS CONTRABAND CIGARETTES

Singapore Customs officers arrested a 47 year old male Singaporean and seized a total of 12,200 cartons (122,000 packets) of duty-unpaid cigarettes in a stakeout on 24 Jan 2006. The estimated market value of the contraband cigarettes is \$1.10 million and the total duty and GST payable is \$913,780.

2 On 24 Jan 2006, Customs officers kept surveillance at the vicinity of a warehouse located at the Airport Logistics Park (ALPS) on a consignment of goods suspected to be contraband cigarettes. On the same day at about 10.30 am, the officers saw a covered lorry arriving at the location. Four pallets of the said goods were seen loaded onto the lorry. Customs officers in two cars trailed the lorry. When it slowed down towards a traffic junction, the Customs cars tried to intercept the lorry. Instead of stopping, the lorry driver made a quick reverse and sped off along Changi Coastal Road, towards Changi Village. The Customs cars pursued the lorry all the way until the Tampines Community Centre. The lorry dashed through the cash-card barrier of the carpark, but was forced to a halt when it hit the height limit signboard. The driver alighted from the lorry and Customs officers chased after him on foot. During the chase, the driver tripped over a parking lot divider and was immediately arrested. Officers later checked the lorry and found 3600 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes. Preliminary investigation revealed that the man was a member of a cigarette smuggling syndicate. The goods were imported by air from Malaysia and were declared as air-conditioner parts.

3 Meanwhile at about 2.40 pm on the same day, in a follow-up raid of the warehouse, another 8600 cartons (86,000 packets) of duty-unpaid cigarettes were found. The cigarettes seized were meant for distribution to factories, construction sites and dormitories of foreign workers. The man will be charged in court on 25 Jan 2006 for offences under the Customs Act.

4 Singapore Customs warns that the storing, possession, conveying or dealing with any contraband cigarettes are serious offences under the Customs Act. Singapore Customs takes a serious view of any attempt to evade duty and tax and will not hesitate to prosecute offenders in court. Upon conviction by the court, first time offenders can be fined up to a maximum of 20 times the amount duty evaded. For the second or subsequent convictions, offenders can be jailed for up to 2 years, as well as being fined. The offenders also face further fines based on the amount of GST evaded.

5 Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of customs duty and GST can contact Singapore Customs Intelligence Hotline on 1800-2330000 or email to [customs\\_intelligence@customs.gov.sg](mailto:customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg).