

## PRESS RELEASE

### **SINGAPORE CUSTOMS ARRESTED FIVE MEN AND SEIZED 36,500 PACKETS DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES**

On 29 Jan 2007, Customs officers arrested five men - three Singaporeans (aged 35 to 52) and two Malaysians (aged 29 and 31) and seized a total of 36,500 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes in an operation at a warehouse at Sungei Kadut Street 4. The customs duty and GST on the seized cigarettes totaled \$275,210. The value of the contraband cigarettes is estimated at \$365,000.

2 On 29 Jan 2007 at about 11.00 am, Singapore Customs officers keeping watch along Sungei Kadut Street 4 intercepted a suspect Singapore registered covered truck as it was about to leave the warehouse vicinity. Upon checking, officers found 112 boxes containing 36,500 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes in the truck. The driver was detained and questioned. Investigations led to the warehouse where a trailer was parked and the detention of another four men. The officers inspected the trailer and found a specially-constructed compartment under the platform of the vehicle. The two Malaysian men (the driver of the prime mover and his assistant) admitted that they were employed by a Malaysian-based syndicate to deliver the cigarettes which were hidden in the special compartment of the trailer to the said warehouse at Sungei Kadut. The warehouse was rented by one of the Singaporean men. The smuggled cigarettes were unloaded from the trailer, packed into boxes in the warehouse and were subsequently transferred onto the covered truck for delivery to local buyers in the Geylang area and construction sites. The contraband cigarettes and the vehicles were seized. All five men were arrested. They will be charged in Court on 30 Jan 2007 for customs offences.

3 Singapore Customs warns that buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession or dealing with contraband cigarettes are serious offences under the Customs. Stiff penalties are imposed for such offences. On conviction by the court, offenders can be jailed as well as fined. The vehicles used in the commission of the offence are also liable to forfeiture. The public are also advised against buying duty-unpaid cigarettes. For a packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, buyers stand to face a minimum fine of \$200 or prosecution in court.

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

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