



**SINGAPORE CUSTOMS** 新加坡关税局 **KASTAM SINGAPURA** சிங்கப்பூர் சுங்கத்துறை

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

30 January 2013

### **Singapore Customs seizes 21,227 cartons of contraband cigarettes in three days**

A series of island-wide operations mounted by Singapore Customs between 23 and 25 January 2013 resulted in the seizure of 21,227 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes.

The total value of the cigarettes and the total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded exceeded S\$2 million and S\$1.8 million respectively.

Three distribution networks were disrupted, and five men and one woman were arrested in these operations.

Based on information received by Singapore Customs, officers from the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority conducted a check on a prime-mover that was suspected to be transporting duty-unpaid cigarettes out of Jurong Port on 23 January 2013. The consignment had been declared as pottery. However, the officers uncovered 18,000 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes from the wooden crates in the trailer.

This was Singapore Customs' largest haul of contraband cigarettes since 2009. Three men were arrested and investigations are ongoing.

On 24 and 25 January 2013, three more operations were mounted in Bukit Panjang and Woodlands.

A Malaysian man, Gwee Beng Teck, was arrested at a multi-storey car park in Bukit Panjang on 24 January 2013. Singapore Customs officers inspected the car he was driving and found 3,127 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden in the modified seats and floorboard of the vehicle.

Investigations revealed that Gwee was recruited by a Malaysian man to retrieve the hidden cigarettes from the car. Gwee was sentenced to 12 months' jail on 25 January 2013.

Meanwhile on 24 and 25 January 2013, other teams of Singapore Customs officers also raided two Housing & Development Board (HDB) flats in Bukit Panjang and Woodlands. A total of 29,143 packets of contraband cigarettes were found hidden in these two flats. A Singaporean man and a Chinese national were arrested and charged for their roles in contraband cigarette activities. Court proceedings are ongoing.

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

The minimum court fines for first-time and repeat offenders of tobacco-related offences are \$2,000 and \$4,000 respectively. Repeat offenders who are caught with more than two kilogrammes of tobacco products will also face mandatory imprisonment.

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

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## ANNEX – PHOTOS



18,000 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were uncovered from wooden crates in the trailer.



The 18,000 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden in the modified seats of the car.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden in the modified seats of the car.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden in the modified floorboard of the car.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the HDB flat in Bukit Panjang.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the HDB flat in Woodlands.



A total of 28,332 packets (2,833 cartons and two packets) of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized from the HDB flat in Woodlands.

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