



PRESS RELEASE

SINGAPORE CUSTOMS ARRESTED SIX MEN AND SEIZED 48,000 PACKETS DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES FROM LORRY CARRYING VEGETABLES

On 3 June 2006, Singapore Customs officers raided a unit at Enterprise Centre, No. 20, Bukit Batok Crescent and arrested four male Singaporeans (aged between 37 and 52) and two male Malaysians (both aged 25). A total of 4,800 cartons (or 48,000 packets) of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized from the unit. A Malaysian registered lorry used for importing the cigarettes from Malaysia was also seized. The excise duty and GST on the seized cigarettes are \$359,520. The value of the contraband cigarettes is estimated at \$432,000.

2 Singapore Customs officers raided the warehouse after one week of investigation into leads provided by public tip-offs. When the officers moved in, they saw four men standing on a high scaffolding platform placed alongside the entire length of the lorry. At the end of the platform was a wooden slide. The men were in the midst of loading boxes of vegetables onto a Malaysian-registered lorry. The lorry was laden with boxes and baskets of vegetables.

3 On the warehouse floor against the wall, officers found stacks of brown paper boxes containing 48,000 packets of assorted brands of duty-unpaid cigarettes. Investigation revealed that the cigarettes were hidden amongst the boxes and baskets of vegetables which were to be delivered to the Pasir Panjang Wholesale Centre. To aid unloading, the boxes of cigarettes were slid down from the high platform onto the ground. Preliminary investigation revealed that the two Malaysians were the lorry driver and the attendant. All six men were arrested and charged in court on 5 June 2006 for customs offences.

4 Singapore Customs would like to take this opportunity to remind the public that storing, possession, conveying or dealing with any duty-unpaid 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. If convicted, they could be liable to a fine and/or imprisonment. Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of customs duty or GST may contact the Singapore Customs Intelligence Hotline at 1800-2330000 or email to customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg.