



MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate

2 July 2024

7,500 CARTONS OF DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES SEIZED THAT AMOUNTED TO OVER \$800,000 IN TAX EVASION

Singapore, 2 July 2024 – Singapore Customs conducted two operations on 25 and 27 June 2024 as part of its ongoing efforts to detect and deter tax evasion.

2 During the operation at an industrial unit in Depot Lane on 25 June 2024, our officers checked two suspicious men in the vicinity. Using a key found on one of them, officers opened the back door of the unit and discovered a third man with 3,750 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes inside, along with a consignment of stretch film. The three Singaporeans, aged 26, 27 and 43, were arrested.

3 Investigations revealed that one of the men was allegedly engaged to collect and deliver duty-unpaid cigarettes to the industrial unit and keep a lookout for authorities. The other two were allegedly engaged to repack the cigarettes in the unit.

4 Following leads, officers conducted a follow-up operation on 27 June 2024 at a warehouse in Pandan Avenue, discovering another 3,750 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden in five pallets among stretch film.

5 In total, 7,500 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to about \$812,788. Court proceedings are ongoing against two of the men while investigations are ongoing for the remaining man.

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

7 Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of duty or GST can provide information to Customs at <https://go.gov.sg/reportcustomsoffence>.

Annex A: Photos of the operations

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About Singapore Customs

Singapore Customs, a lead agency under the Ministry of Finance, protects revenue and facilitates trade. We make trade easy, fair and secure. We ensure compliance with customs regulations and collect taxes and duties on dutiable and taxable goods. We regulate the export of strategic goods and implement Singapore's commitments to some international trade regulations such as the United Nations Security Council Sanctions.

We work closely with other government agencies, industry partners, and international organisations in our mission and operations. With the use of data analytics, digitalisation of processes and various technologies, we continuously improve the efficiency and effectiveness of customs processes.

By proactively balancing the intricate requirements of trade facilitation, security and regulatory compliance, Singapore Customs strengthens Singapore's position as a global trade hub trusted by businesses operating in Singapore and foreign trading partners.

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Annex A



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found alongside a consignment of stretch film in the industrial unit at Depot Lane.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden among stretch film found in the warehouse at Pandan Avenue.