



MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate

28 May 2024

THREE MEN ARRESTED FOR EVADING OVER HALF A MILLION IN DUTIES AND TAXES

Singapore, 28 May 2024 – Singapore Customs conducted an operation on 23 May 2024 at Woodlands Link as part of its ongoing efforts to detect and deter tax evasion.

2 During the operation, officers conducted checks on three men and a van suspected of involvement in duty-unpaid cigarette activities. Officers subsequently found 1,250 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes packed in boxes in the van's rear compartment. \$26,404 in cash, suspected to be proceeds from the sales of duty-unpaid cigarettes, was also found in a backpack belonging to one of the men. The three Indian nationals - aged 20, 38 and 39 - were arrested.

3 Arising from interviews with the three men and using a key found in the possession of one of them, officers conducted a follow-up check on a lorry parked at an industrial building in Woodlands Industrial Park E9. Another 4,200 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes were then discovered in two wooden crates in the cargo compartment.

4 Altogether 5,450 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes and cash amounting to \$26,404 were seized. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to about \$590,626. Investigations are ongoing.

5 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.

6 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 operation

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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 in the van at Woodlands Link.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the lorry at Woodlands Industrial Park E9.