



MEDIA RELEASE

Immediate

26 April 2024

FOUR ARRESTED AND OVER 2,900 CARTONS OF DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES SEIZED

Singapore, 26 April 2024 – In our ongoing efforts to detect and deter tax evasion, Singapore Customs conducted an operation on 23 April 2024.

2 During the operation, our Customs officers conducted observation on an industrial unit at Sungei Kadut Street 1. A prime mover towing a fuel bowser was seen entering an industrial unit and the driver left the unit subsequently. Suspecting that illegal duty-unpaid cigarette activities could be involved, the officers moved in. They saw two men transferring black trash bags from the fuel bowser to a parked van behind it. The officers uncovered a total of 2,952 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes wrapped within the trash bags and arrested the two Singaporeans, aged 23 and 29.

3 Singapore Customs also arrested the prime mover driver, a 39-year-old male Malaysian, and another man, a 23-year-old Singaporean, who was later sighted within the vicinity.

4 Investigations revealed that the driver allegedly drove the prime mover with the bowser from Malaysia to the industrial unit. The two men transferring duty-unpaid cigarettes to the van were allegedly engaged by another unknown person via a social messaging platform to retrieve the cigarettes from the bowser. For the remaining man, he was allegedly engaged to act as a lookout.

5 Singapore Customs seized all the duty-unpaid cigarettes as well as the van, prime mover and bowser. The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to about \$319,914. Court proceedings are ongoing.

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. Vehicles used in committing such offences are liable to be forfeited.

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 operation

-END-

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.

To find out more, visit our website at www.customs.gov.sg
Follow us at www.facebook.com/SingaporeCustoms

ANNEX A



The prime mover and the van in the industrial unit.



The modified compartment at the base of the fuel bowser used to conceal the duty-unpaid cigarettes.



The duty-unpaid cigarettes found in the van and in front of it.