



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Immediate**

12 August 2024

### **OVER \$800,000 IN DUTIES AND TAXES EVADED AS 4,480 CARTONS AND 35,838 PACKETS OF DUTY-UNPAID CIGARETTES SEIZED**

Singapore, 12 August 2024 – Singapore Customs conducted two operations on 31 July and 5 August 2024 and uncovered 4,480 cartons and 35,838 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes which amounted to about \$873,889 in duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion.

2 In the first operation on 31 July at an industrial building in Woodlands Avenue 12, officers arrested four men outside a unit and found duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden among a consignment of glass blocks in the unit. The individuals included a 38-year-old Singaporean and three Indian nationals aged 26, 29, and 39. A 49-year-old Singaporean, suspected to be the coordinator, was later arrested near his residence. Officers seized 2,240 cartons and 17,918 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes, along with a truck allegedly used for transportation.

3 Investigations revealed that the 49-year-old man had allegedly engaged the 38-year-old man to transport the glass blocks containing duty-unpaid cigarettes to the industrial unit. He had also allegedly engaged the 39-year-old man to enlist the help of the 26 and 29-year-old men to repack the duty-unpaid cigarettes into carton boxes.

4 A follow-up operation on 5 August at a warehouse in Jurong Port Road led to the discovery of another 2,240 cartons and 17,920 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden among glass blocks.

5 Court proceedings are ongoing against four of the men, while investigations continue for the 29-year-old 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. Vehicles used in committing such offences are also subject to forfeiture.

7 Members of the public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of duty or GST can report it 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.

To find out more, visit our website at [www.customs.gov.sg](http://www.customs.gov.sg)

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Annex A



Duty-unpaid cigarettes among glass blocks in brown boxes found in the industrial unit at Woodlands Avenue 12.



Four of the five men arrested at Woodlands Avenue 12 and the duty-unpaid cigarettes seized.



Duty-unpaid cigarettes hidden among glass blocks found in the warehouse at Jurong Port Road.