



SINGAPORE CUSTOMS 新加坡关税局 **KASTAM SINGAPURA** சிங்கப்பூர் கங்கத்துறை

MEDIA RELEASE

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Four men arrested for selling duty-unpaid cigarettes via WeChat

Four men, all Chinese nationals, were arrested in separate operations on 8 October 2018 for selling duty-unpaid cigarettes via the WeChat mobile app.

Singapore Customs officers arrested the first man in Bedok Reservoir Road. The man was carrying a paper bag containing 10 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes. Investigations revealed that he was delivering the duty-unpaid cigarettes to customers he had solicited via WeChat. The officers conducted a follow-up raid at the man's residential unit in Jalan Eunos, where they uncovered another 170 cartons and 77 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes.

Based on leads gathered from this arrest, Singapore Customs officers raided an HDB unit in Ubi Avenue 2, where they uncovered more than 206 cartons and 35 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes. Two men residing in the unit were arrested. Investigations revealed that both men had used the WeChat mobile app to buy and re-sell duty-unpaid cigarettes.

Court proceedings against the three men are ongoing.

In another operation on the same night, Singapore Customs officers arrested the fourth man, Zhu Yanqing, in Bedok Reservoir Road. Zhu was carrying a plastic bag and a haversack, which contained 12 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes. Investigations revealed that he was delivering the duty-unpaid cigarettes to customers he had solicited via WeChat. The officers conducted a follow-up raid at an HDB flat in Pasir Ris Street 21, where they uncovered another 294 cartons and 59 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes from Zhu's bedroom.

Zhu was sentenced by the State Courts on 10 October 2018 to 29 weeks' imprisonment for storing and dealing with duty-unpaid cigarettes.

A total of 692 cartons, 171 packets and 13 sticks of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized in these operations. The mobile phones used by the four men and more than \$1,400 suspected to be the sales proceeds of the duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized.

The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded in these cases amounted to about \$60,560 and \$4,440 respectively.

Buying, selling, conveying, delivering, storing, keeping, having in possession 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.

Members of public with information on smuggling activities or evasion of Customs duty or GST can call the Singapore Customs hotline on 1800-2330000, email customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg, or use the Customs@SG mobile app (which can be downloaded from the Apple Store or Google Play) to report these illegal activities.

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ANNEX



An advertisement put up by Zhu Yanqing on WeChat to source for potential buyers of duty-unpaid cigarettes.



A total of 692 cartons, 171 packets and 13 sticks of duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized from the operations conducted by Singapore Customs on 8 October 2018.

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