



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

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

21 October 2016

### **Two men sentenced for their involvement in duty-unpaid cigarettes transacted via WeChat**

Two Chinese nationals were sentenced by the State Courts on 20 October 2016 for their involvement in duty-unpaid cigarettes transacted via the WeChat platform.

Bao Jiancao, 29, and Zhu Xingbing, 45, were arrested in two separate operations conducted by Singapore Customs in Geylang and Woodlands respectively on 18 October 2016. Bao was sentenced by the State Courts to an imprisonment term of three months and one week, while Zhu was sentenced to an imprisonment term of two months and a fine of \$2,000.

On the night of 18 October 2016, Singapore Customs officers were keeping a close watch on Bao as he was leaving a condominium in Lorong 39 Geylang. Suspecting that the backpack Bao was carrying contained duty-unpaid cigarettes, the officers moved in to check, and they found 12 cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes in his backpack. In a follow-up search of Bao's rented room in a unit of the condominium, they found 52 cartons and four opened packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes. The duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized.

Earlier the same day, Singapore Customs officers conducted another operation in Woodlands Industrial Park. On the premises of a company, the officers found 22 cartons and 17 packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes in Zhu's sling bag and metal chest. In a follow-up search of Zhu's rented room in an HDB flat in Woodlands Avenue 6, the

officers found another five packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes, including an opened packet. The duty-unpaid cigarettes were seized.

Investigations revealed that Bao had been buying and selling duty-unpaid cigarettes via the WeChat platform. Zhu, who sold duty-unpaid cigarettes to his colleagues and friends, had also bought his stock of duty-unpaid cigarettes via the WeChat platform.

In both operations, duty-unpaid cigarettes of the Golden Deer brand, which are not available for sale publicly in Singapore, were seized.

The total duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) involved in the two cases amounted to more than \$5,480 and \$2,050 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 will be severely dealt with. They can be fined up to 40 times the amount of duty and GST evaded, and/or jailed for up to six years.

The minimum court fine for first-time and repeat offenders of tobacco-related offences is \$2,000 and \$4,000 respectively. Repeat offenders who are caught with more than two kilogrammes of tobacco products will also face mandatory jail sentences.

Members of the 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](mailto:customs_intelligence@customs.gov.sg) or use 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



The cartons of duty-unpaid cigarettes found in Bao's backpack.



A follow-up search of Bao's rented room in a unit of the condominium resulted in the seizure of 52 cartons and four opened packets of duty-unpaid cigarettes.



Zhu, who sold duty-unpaid cigarettes to his colleagues and friends, had also bought his stock of duty-unpaid cigarettes via the WeChat platform.



A total of 22 cartons and 22 packets, including an opened packet of duty-unpaid cigarettes, were found in Zhu's possession.

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