MEDIA RELEASE

31 October 2018

Four men arrested in two weeks for buying and selling duty-unpaid liquor via WeChat

Four men were arrested in a series of operations conducted in the last two weeks of October 2018 for their involvement in duty-unpaid liquor activities.

The four Chinese nationals were arrested between 16 and 23 October 2018 in various parts of Singapore for possessing, storing and dealing with duty-unpaid liquor. Investigations revealed that they were selling duty-unpaid liquor to buyers they solicited via the WeChat mobile app.

In the first operation on 16 October 2018, Singapore Customs officers arrested Guo Xu (郭旭), 39, in Woodlands Avenue 4. The officers found seven bottles of duty-unpaid liquor on the passenger seat of the cement truck he was driving. Guo was on his way to deliver the duty-unpaid liquor to a customer. The duty and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evaded amounted to about $695 and $68. Guo was sentenced by the State Courts on 18 October 2018 to a fine of $7,500.

The second man was arrested on 19 October 2018 at the void deck of an HDB block in Woodlands Avenue 6. Singapore Customs officers found six bottles of duty-unpaid liquor in his haversack and plastic bag. A follow-up search of a hair salon in Geylang Road uncovered another 45 bottles of duty-unpaid liquor stored in a cupboard. Investigations revealed that the man had arranged to meet with a buyer when he was arrested. Court proceedings are ongoing for the man.

On 23 October 2018 morning, Singapore Customs officers arrested Zhu Fuzeng

(朱福增), 28, in an HDB flat in St. George's Road after they uncovered 30 bottles of duty-unpaid liquor in his room. Zhu had intended to sell the duty-unpaid liquor to buyers via WeChat. The duty and GST evaded amounted to about $3,744 and $350. Zhu was sentenced by the State Courts on 24 October 2018 to a fine of $40,000, or in default 100 days' imprisonment.
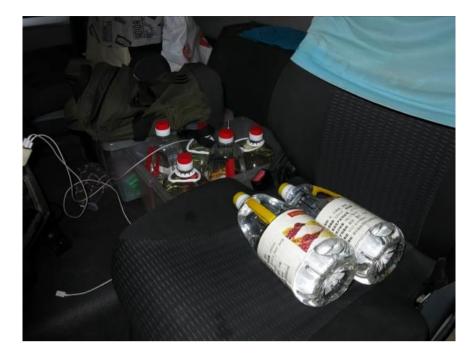
On 23 October 2018 night, Singapore Customs conducted a check on a man at the void deck of a HDB block in Hougang Avenue 3. They found 12 bottles of duty-unpaid liquor in a box the man was carrying. In a follow-up search of an HDB rental flat nearby, the officers uncovered another 54 bottles of duty-unpaid liquor. Another bottle of duty-unpaid liquor was found in the man's dormitory in Hougang Avenue 7. Court proceedings are ongoing for the man.

"Singapore Customs is keeping a close watch on such cases of buying and selling of duty-unpaid liquor via social media platforms," said Mr Teh Thiam Siong, Head of Intelligence, Singapore Customs（新加坡关税局情报处处长郑添祥）. "Those who are thinking of engaging in such illegal activities should think twice as they will be severely punished when caught."

Under the Customs Act, any person who is guilty of storing, keeping, in possession and dealing with dutiable goods with the intention to defraud the Government of any duty and GST will be liable on conviction to a fine of up to 20 times the amount of duty and GST evaded.

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 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

Seven bottles of duty-unpaid liquor were found on the passenger seat
of the cement truck that Guo was driving.

Singapore Customs officers found six bottles of duty-unpaid liquor in the haversack and plastic bag of a man during an operation on 19 October 2018. A follow-up search of a hair salon in Geylang Road uncovered another 45 bottles of duty-unpaid liquor stored in a cupboard.

A WeChat conversation between Zhu and a buyer.

A total of 67 bottles of duty-unpaid liquor were seized in the operation in Hougang Avenue 3 on 23 October 2018 night.

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