

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected ketamine (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs seized about 24 kilograms of suspected ketamine with an estimated market value of about \$16 million at Hong Kong International Airport on November 26.

Customs officers inspected a consignment arriving in Hong Kong from Europe declared as cosmetics on that day at the Asia Airfreight Terminal. The batch of suspected ketamine was found concealed in milk powder packages inside three carton boxes. A 41-year-old man was arrested.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers further arrested two 21-year-old men suspected to be in connection with the case in Kwun Tong yesterday (November 27).

One of the 21-year-old arrested men has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug and will appear at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (November 29). The remaining two have been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs will maintain close contact with Hongkong Post and logistics industries to step up action against drug trafficking through postal and express courier channels.

Customs reminds members of the public that trafficking in a dangerous drug through any channel, including postal and express courier services, is a serious offence. Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, the maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



[HK SAR Government responds to article in The Lancet](#)

In response to an article that appeared in The Lancet on November 21, a Government spokesman said the following today (November 28):

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government rejects claims by Dr Darren Mann in his online article (The Lancet, November 21) entitled "International humanitarian norms are violated in Hong Kong".

By the time Dr Mann arrived at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University on November 17, violent protests and riots had been taking place, and escalating, for five days at the campus, in surrounding areas and elsewhere in Hong Kong. The Government's approach, including that of the Police and other emergency services, was to resolve the standoff at the university peacefully and flexibly.

Context is needed in this case. Rioters and radical protesters had seized control of the campus and areas near it, including a major footbridge above the busiest arterial road tunnel in Hong Kong. They set fire to the footbridge and the toll booths. They bombarded police officers with petrol bombs, rocks and metal objects fired from high-tension catapults capable of killing. They fired arrows, one of which pierced a police officer's calf. Extensive damage was done to the campus and dangerous chemicals were stolen from laboratories. Hundreds, if not thousands, of petrol bombs were being stored and manufactured on campus. In addition, the threat posed to the general public by the smuggling out of petrol bombs and dangerous chemicals capable of making bombs needed to be contained. The situation was extremely dangerous and volatile and a serious threat to public safety and human life.

Throughout the incident, rioters and others inside – including members of the media and first-aid providers – were repeatedly asked and given opportunities to leave the campus peacefully. Many took up this offer, but many did not. Those under the age of 18 were allowed to leave without being arrested at the scene after providing personal details. The Police reserve the right to take follow-up legal action if necessary. A mass exodus occurred on the evening of November 17, during which all those leaving were detained. It has been a common tactic of rioters to disguise themselves as first-aid workers or media representatives to escape detection and arrest. Owing to the large numbers leaving the campus and the ongoing chaotic situation, the Police did detain people claiming to be first-aid workers and media representatives to confirm their identities and credentials. Those who could prove their bona fides were released. Those who could not were arrested. Those arrested included 12 people self-claimed to be first-aid workers who did not have first-aid qualifications and did not work for any medical institution, and seven who claimed to be media workers but could not produce

any solid proof.

Dr Mann's own account acknowledges that the Police did suggest that ambulance crews could attend the scene, but this offer was rejected by protesters for fear of being arrested. On the morning of November 18, the Police started to make arrangements for Hong Kong Red Cross (HKRC) volunteers to enter the campus. The HKRC volunteers arrived at 2pm to provide first aid to the injured. Contrary to Dr Mann's claim, they were not delayed in their work, nor given a time limit. This was confirmed by the HKRC on November 22 through its official statement, which reads as follows: "Hong Kong Red Cross would like to clarify that, through the co-ordination and communications with different parties, including Hong Kong Police Force, our first aid team provided first aid service to anyone in need in the campus, without any delay, obstruction or impolite treatment. The arrangement and duration of the HKRC's services are decided after due consideration on service needs, capability of the HKRC and safety factors" (www.redcross.org.hk/en/press_room/press_release_2019/20191122.html).

The Police arranged for other groups including the Fire Services Department (ambulances) and Médecins Sans Frontières volunteers to provide medical or first aid services at or in the vicinity of the campus.

In parallel, the Hospital Authority (HA) closely monitored the situation to ensure that Accident and Emergency Departments (AEDs) in public hospitals were ready to promptly provide medical services if and when needed. Around 80 injured persons from the campus were received by various AEDs on the morning of November 19.

At around noon that day, around 100 injured persons were still at the scene. The HA sent an Emergency Medical Team to the site to assess the situation and eventually arranged for the transfer of about 200 injured persons to 12 public hospitals for treatment. Most were in a stable condition.

Throughout the entire incident, the Government leadership and emergency services departments, in co-operation with a wide range of others including university staff, secondary school principals, community and religious leaders as well as social workers, have appealed to the protesters and the injured to leave the campus peacefully and to seek medical care as necessary.

The well-being and safety of the injured, who include police officers, has been a top priority of the Government from the time the standoff started.

[Structured Dialogue meeting between](#)

HKSARG and European Union explores way to deepen relations

The 13th annual Structured Dialogue meeting between the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSARG) and the European Union (EU) was convened today (November 28) in Hong Kong. The Structured Dialogue is a high-level event in which the HKSARG and the EU meet to exchange views on a wide spectrum of subjects and foster closer co-operation between the two sides in different fields.

The meeting was co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Commerce and Industry) of the HKSARG, Ms Vivian Sum, and the Managing Director for Asia and the Pacific of the European External Action Service, Mr Gunnar Wiegand.

The close trade and investment partnership between Hong Kong and the EU is evident in the high value of trade in goods and services as well as the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) between the two sides. The EU remains Hong Kong's second largest trading partner after Mainland China, while Hong Kong is one of the EU's largest trading partners. Hong Kong is also one of the EU's major direct investment destinations. In turn, Hong Kong remains amongst the largest sources of FDI into the EU.

Ms Sum said, "Despite recent social incidents, Hong Kong's institutional strengths and core competencies remain strong and are well recognised by many international institutions. With our unique advantages under 'one country, two systems', we have unparalleled strengths on various fronts, including the rule of law and our independent judiciary; a low and simple tax regime; the free flow of capital and world class financial markets; excellent professional services and robust intellectual property rights protection, etc. It is with such distinct and diverse advantages that Hong Kong remains the ideal gateway for international businesses to tap the vast opportunities in Mainland China and other parts of Asia. We particularly treasure our strong and longstanding connections with the EU. We look forward to working even more closely with the EU in further strengthening our ties on all spectrum of our bilateral relationship."

Mr Wiegand said, "The European Union is strongly committed to Hong Kong, with 2 200 companies headquartered in Hong Kong and an estimated 350 000 EU citizens residing there. True friends stand by each other at difficult times, and Hong Kong can count on the EU in this regard. Today's discussion have helped review our extensive co-operation in many fields. Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy, its rule of law and fundamental rights and freedoms as enshrined in the 'one country, two systems' principle are fundamental for our close economies and people-to-people ties."

At the meeting, the HKSARG and the EU provided updates and exchanged views on various matters of mutual interest, including latest developments.

The two sides also provided updates on their respective initiatives on free trade agreements and investment agreements, and exchanged views on potential negotiations on a bilateral investment agreement. Both sides pledged to work together to support ongoing efforts to reform the World Trade Organization as a key pillar of rules-based, multilateral, open, free and non-discriminatory trade. The HKSARG briefed the EU on its latest work in taking forward the Belt and Road Initiative and the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, as well as Hong Kong's role in the two initiatives. The EU provided updates on its work on the "Strategy on Connecting Europe and Asia".

Both sides recognised the importance of close co-operation and mutual understanding for the benefit of the economies of Hong Kong and the EU. Both sides discussed Hong Kong's government procurement system and agreed to maintain dialogue on international obligations and best practices. The two sides also exchanged views on technical issues, including current standards and requirements for light buses operating in Hong Kong.

On EU-Hong Kong co-operation, the two sides acknowledged the collaboration on tackling human trafficking crimes over the past year and welcomed further co-operation in this area. The two sides also reviewed the on-going progress achieved under the EU-Hong Kong Action Plan against counterfeiting and looked forward to further collaboration under the initiative. Moreover, the HKSARG and the EU reaffirmed their joint commitment to pursuing the development of a mutual recognition arrangement for Authorised Economic Operators as early as possible, with a view to allowing accredited traders to enjoy customs facilitation on both sides.

Circular economy was identified as an important area for future co-operation at the last Structured Dialogue held in December 2018. A technical meeting on the matter was held yesterday (November 27). The HKSARG and the EU updated each other on initiatives and best practices to promote circular economy. They agreed to strengthen co-operation to accelerate the transition towards a more circular economy and improve resource recovery.

There was also a technical meeting on financial services held yesterday. Both sides updated each other on the stability and integrity of their financial systems, and exchanged information on several strands of work, such as green finance, fintech and virtual assets, asset management, derivatives market and regulatory work in the audit and banking sectors.

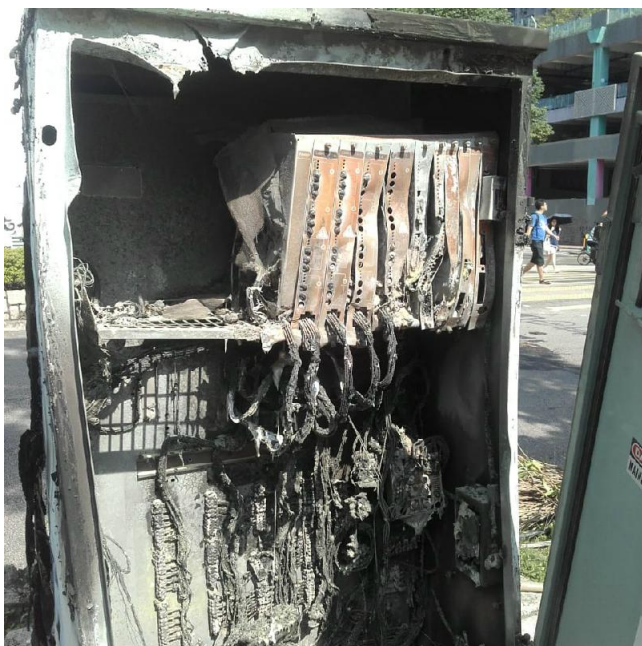
[Latest situation on damaged traffic lights \(with photos\)](#)

The Transport Department (TD) today (November 28) said that about 730 sets of traffic lights in various districts have been damaged to varying

degrees since June. After months of continual repair works, about 650 sets have resumed normal operation.

The damage to the traffic lights in October and November, however, has been more serious than that in the past. A number of controllers and components were damaged or even burnt. The repair progress has been affected as cables have to be replaced. As at 4pm today, about 80 sets of traffic lights were still under urgent repair. Relevant departments are working more closely and, where circumstances permit, will strive to complete the repair of about 40 per cent of the traffic lights currently out of order within the next week, including those at major road junctions in Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long Districts. Relevant departments will continue their efforts to repair the remaining damaged traffic lights. In addition, the TD will implement temporary traffic arrangements on the affected road sections depending on the situation and actual traffic conditions.

The TD urges motorists and pedestrians to be patient and pay attention to road safety when passing through the affected junctions. For the safety of road users, the TD again appeals to members of the public to stop damaging traffic lights and other road facilities.





[Grants approved for flood victims in Bihar, India](#)

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has accepted the advice of the Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee and approved from the Disaster Relief Fund two grants totalling \$9.607 million to two agencies for providing relief to flood victims in Bihar, India.

Announcing the grants today (November 28), a spokesman for the Government said that the flood had affected more than 2 million people in Bihar, India. The two grants – one of \$5.108 million to Habitat for Humanity Hong Kong and one of \$4.499 to Plan International Hong Kong – will be used to provide shelter kits, water kits and kitchen kits as well as household and hygiene items to benefit around 58 560 flood victims. As the targeted localities of the two relief agencies are different, there will be no overlapping of resources. The Committee hoped the grants would facilitate the provision of timely relief to the victims and help them restore their normal living. The grants, together with the one approved earlier for this flood in Bihar, India, will take the accumulative value of grants and number of beneficiaries to \$14.888 million and 123 560 respectively.

"To ensure that the money is used for the designated purposes, the relief agencies will be asked to submit evaluation reports and audited accounts on the use of the grants after the relief projects have been completed," the spokesman said.