

Hong Kong Customs detects mixed mode criminal case of dangerous drugs and illicit cigarettes (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (February 1) detected a mixed mode criminal case involving dangerous drugs and illicit cigarettes in Pat Heung. About 13 kilograms of suspected cannabis buds, about 170 grams of solutions containing suspected tetrahydro-cannabinol (THC) and about 660 000 suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$4.7 million and a duty potential of about \$1.3 million were seized. This is a less common case in recent years in light of the large seizure amounts of suspected dangerous drugs and illicit cigarettes seized at the same time during the operation.

Customs officers yesterday seized the batch of suspected dangerous drugs, illicit cigarettes and a batch of drug packaging paraphernalia inside two containers and a light goods vehicle (LGV) at a scrapyards in Pat Heung. A 56-year-old man suspected to be in connection with the case was arrested and the LGV has also been detained.

Customs believes that a suspected dangerous drugs and illicit cigarettes storehouse was raided during the operation. Investigation is ongoing.

Cannabis and THC (a major cannabinoid present in cannabis plants) are dangerous drugs controlled under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap. 134). All products that contain cannabis or THC are also controlled under Cap. 134.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in dangerous drugs, or illicitly importing to and exporting from Hong Kong, procuring, supplying, manufacturing or dealing in or with dangerous drugs, constitutes a criminal offence. The maximum penalty is life imprisonment and a fine of \$5 million. Illicitly possessing or smoking, inhaling, ingesting or injecting dangerous drugs is subject to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for seven years and a fine of \$1 million.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Customs will continue to enhance enforcement against drug trafficking and illicit cigarette activities through intelligence analysis.

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

