

Hong Kong Customs detects smuggling case of collectibles with high speculative price (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs seized a batch of suspected smuggled goods with an estimated market value of about \$1.2 million at Man Kam To Control Point on July 18. Most of the seizures were collectibles with a speculative price, including seven types of old banknotes, commemorative coins, archaic bronze art pieces as well as stamps and commemorative envelopes. In addition, it also included duty-not-paid liquor, suspected controlled pharmaceutical products and suspected counterfeit goods.

Customs officers on that day intercepted an incoming goods vehicle at Man Kam To Control Point. After inspection, the batch of suspected unmanifested goods was found inside two carton boxes among 580 boxes of declared goods on board the vehicle.

After investigation, Customs officers estimated that the speculative price of the collectibles is very high. The total face value of the old banknotes seized was about \$150,000, while its estimated speculative price could reach \$1 million. The stamps and commemorative envelopes seized were all special editions. Some of them were issued a long time ago, making the items exceptional collectibles.

An investigation is ongoing. The 41-year-old male goods vehicle driver is assisting the investigation.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Moreover, smuggling of cash or counterfeit goods is also an offence. Under the Cross-boundary Movement of Physical Currency and Bearer Negotiable Instruments Ordinance, a person commits an offence if he or she imports or exports in one batch a large quantity of currency and bearer negotiable instruments (i.e. the total value of which is more than HK\$120,000) for which no declaration has been made. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who imports or exports any goods to which a forged trademark is applied commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

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

