

Hong Kong Customs "Operation Summer" hits cross-boundary smuggling activities during summer holidays (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs mounted a special operation codenamed "Summer" during the summer holidays at the airport, land boundary, railway and ferry control points in a bid to combat smuggling and other illegal activities through passenger channels.

Starting on June 1 and concluding yesterday (August 30), a total of 2 791 cases were detected in the three-month operation, resulting in the seizure of items with an estimated value of \$17.5 million and the arrest of 2 786 persons.

On the anti-narcotics front, 53 dangerous drug cases were detected with the arrest of 53 persons, including five young people aged under 21. About 24 kilograms of suspected dangerous drugs with an estimated market value of \$9.6 million were seized. Most of the intercepted items were methamphetamine (commonly known as "ice"), cannabis resin and cocaine found mainly from inbound air passengers.

During the operation, Customs officers also seized about 910 000 suspected illicit cigarettes and 126 litres of dutiable liquor with an estimated duty potential of \$1.93 million in the passenger channels at various control points. Of the 2 482 persons arrested, 179 were prosecuted and 2 303 others were fined.

Customs officers also detected 117 smuggling cases involving items of suspected endangered species, including American ginseng, dried seahorse, rhino horn, agarwood and controlled frog species with an estimated value of \$3.5 million. Five hundred and sixty kilograms of meat and poultry without a health certificate were also seized. The cases were handed over to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department respectively for follow-up.

Reiterating that Customs has always adopted a zero tolerance approach towards cross-boundary smuggling activities, a department spokesman said that the operation was successful in hitting smuggling and other illegal activities through passenger channels.

The spokesman reminds members of the public, particularly young people, not to engage in drug trafficking and smuggling activities. "It is anticipated that criminals may make use of cross-boundary students for smuggling of various prohibited and controlled items when the school year starts. Hong Kong Customs pledges to step up enforcement action against smuggling activities through risk assessment and intelligence analysis."

Smuggling is a serious offence. The spokesman urges parents and guardians not to make use of children as smuggling tools.

