

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected duty-not-paid cigars (with photo)

With the Christmas holiday approaching, Hong Kong Customs has further stepped up enforcement to combat cross-boundary smuggling of illicit cigarette activities before the holiday. A total of about 10 400 suspected duty-not-paid cigars with an estimated market value of about \$900,000 and a duty potential of about \$160,000 were seized at Lok Ma Chau Control Point between December 12 and 14.

Customs officers intercepted three incoming cross-boundary lorries at Lok Ma Chau Control Point between December 12 and 14. About 10 400 suspected duty-not-paid cigars were found inside 11 cartons of express postal parcels on board the vehicles.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers today (December 16) arrested a 32-year-old man suspected to be in connection with the case in Fanling and further seized about 30 suspected duty-not-paid cigars in his residence in the district.

Investigation is ongoing.

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.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying duty-not-paid tobacco commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

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

