

# Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illegally imported COVID-19 oral drugs and other suspected controlled medicines (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs seized a total of about 117 000 tablets and 900 vials of suspected controlled medicines with an estimated market value of about \$3 million at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and in Sheung Shui from March 21 to April 1. A 55-year-old man suspected to be in connection with the case was arrested. The seized medicines are in three major categories, namely COVID-19 oral drugs, drugs for curing cardiovascular diseases and drugs for curing cancer.

Through risk assessment, Customs officers on March 21 selected and inspected two air parcels at HKIA that arrived in Hong Kong from India and were declared as containing gifts. Upon examination, Customs officers seized about 12 000 tablets of suspected illegally imported COVID-19 oral drugs inside the parcels.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers on March 23 raided a commercial premises in Sheung Shui and further seized about 35 000 tablets of suspected illegally imported COVID-19 oral drugs and about 70 000 tablets of other suspected controlled medicines.

Customs officers later intercepted on April 1 at HKIA a further two air parcels, which were declared as containing health supplements. About 900 vials of suspected illegally imported controlled medicines were seized inside the parcels.

Investigation is ongoing. The arrested man has been released on bail pending further investigation and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person who imports pharmaceutical products and medicines without a valid import licence commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years.

Under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, any person who possesses any poison included in Part 1 of the Poisons List other than in accordance with provisions commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for two 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](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).

