

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected mitragynine worth about \$138 million (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs on March 8 and yesterday (March 14) seized a total of about 52 tonnes of suspected mitragynine with an estimated market value of about \$138 million at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound.

Through risk assessment, Customs officers on the above-mentioned two days selected for inspection two 40-foot seaborne containers, declared as carrying *Mitragyna speciosa*, arriving from Indonesia en route to America via Hong Kong. Upon examination, Customs officers found a total of 2 339 carton boxes, each containing a large bag of green powder which was suspected to be mitragynine, inside the two containers.

An investigation is ongoing.

Mitragynine is the major compound available in a plant known as *Mitragyna speciosa* (also known as kratom). If mitragynine is abused, it may cause health effects including nausea, constipation, increased urination, loss of appetite, seizures, hallucinations and withdrawal symptoms.

Customs reminds importers, exporters and the logistics industry that importation of dangerous drugs requires an import licence and import certificate issued by the Department of Health. A valid export authorisation or diversion certificate from the exporting country will also be required. Transshipment of dangerous drugs also requires a removal licence issued by the Department of Health.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

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

