

Hong Kong Customs steps up enforcement action during Singles' Day sales period (with photos)

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) mounted a two-week operation codenamed "Trans Mountain II" during the Singles' Day sales period in mid-November to step up enforcement action against the smuggling of prohibited and controlled items through postal and cargo channels.

In the 14-day operation that started on November 12 and concluded yesterday (November 25), the C&ED detected a total of 82 cases with the arrest of three persons, resulting in a total seizure with an estimated value of about \$9 million.

On the anti-narcotics front, 16 dangerous drug cases were detected, resulting in the seizure of about 24 kilograms of suspected dangerous drugs with an estimated market value of about \$5.7 million. In particular, about 10.2kg of methamphetamine (commonly known as "ice") and about 8.5kg of gamma-butyrolactone were seized at various control points.

With regard to intellectual property protection, the C&ED detected 12 cases that led to the seizure of infringing products of various kinds with an estimated value of about \$700,000.

In the protection of revenue on dutiable goods, Customs officers seized about 570 000 suspected illicit cigarettes and about 30 litres of dutiable liquor with an estimated market value of about \$2.2 million and duty potential of about \$1.2 million.

Customs officers also detected a suspected smuggling case of American ginseng, with an estimated seizure value of about \$200,000. In the case, more than 97 kilograms of suspected American ginseng were seized from an inbound truck. A 47-year-old male driver was arrested for suspected importation of endangered species without an import licence.

The C&ED will continue to step up enforcement actions at all control points during the Christmas and New Year holiday periods to combat cross-boundary smuggling and drug trafficking activities.

"Hong Kong Customs adopts a zero-tolerance approach against cross-boundary smuggling activities. Apart from strengthening deployment and carrying out stringent enforcement actions during the festive holidays, Customs officers will be equally vigilant in combating smuggling activities through risk assessment and intelligence analysis in their routine operation," a spokesman for the C&ED reiterated.

Online customers are reminded not to make purchases of prohibited or controlled items. Any import or export of the controlled items must be

accompanied by a valid licence or permit issued by the relevant authorities. For details on import and export controls, they can visit the C&ED's website at www.customs.gov.hk.

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

