

Hong Kong Customs detects three dangerous drugs cases at airport with seizure worth about \$58.4 million (with photos)

â€‹Hong Kong Customs yesterday (March 18) detected three drug trafficking cases, involving cargo channel and a passenger, at Hong Kong International Airport and seized a total of about 40 kilograms of suspected ketamine, about 152kg of suspected cannabis buds, and about 760 grams of suspected heroin, with a total estimated market value of about \$58.4 million.

In the first case, through risk assessment, Customs on March 17 inspected an air cargo consignment, declared as graphite furnace machine and arriving in Hong Kong from the Netherlands at the airport. Upon inspection, Customs officers found about 25kg of suspected ketamine, with an estimated market value of about \$11.8 million, concealed in the consignment.

After a follow-up investigation, Customs officers conducted a controlled delivery operation yesterday in Tsim Sha Tsui and arrested a male consignee, aged 20. Customs officers later escorted the arrested person to an industrial building unit in Kwai Chung for a search and further seized about 760g of suspected heroin and a batch of drug packaging paraphernalia.

An investigation is ongoing.

In the second case, through risk assessment, Customs yesterday inspected 48 cargoes arriving in Hong Kong from Thailand at the airport. About 152kg of suspected cannabis budswith an estimated market value of about \$39 million were found concealed inside.

After a follow-up investigation, Customs discovered that an overseas company had commissioned a local freight forwarding company to collect the batch of goods and arranged transshipment of the goods to the UK via air channel. Customs has contacted the overseas law enforcement agencies concerned to conduct follow-up investigations.

In the third case, a 33-year-old female passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Amsterdam, the Netherlands, via Istanbul, Türkiye, yesterday. During customs clearance, Customs officers found about 15kg of suspected ketamine with an estimated market value of about \$7.1 million inside her check-in suitcase. The woman was subsequently arrested. She has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. The case will be brought up at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (March 20).

Customs will continue to step up enforcement against drug trafficking

activities through intelligence analysis. The department also reminds members of the public to stay alert and not to participate in drug trafficking activities for monetary return. They must not accept hiring or delegation from another party to carry controlled items into and out of Hong Kong. They are also reminded not to carry unknown items for other people, nor to release their personal data or home address to others for receiving parcels or goods.

Customs will continue to apply a risk assessment approach and focus on selecting passengers from high-risk regions for clearance to combat transnational drug trafficking activities.

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.

Customs also reminds that cannabis and tetrahydro-cannabinol (THC) are classified as dangerous drugs under the Ordinance. Importation of products (including food or drinks) containing cannabis or THC into Hong Kong is prohibited unless the relevant provisions in the Ordinance are complied with. In order to avoid breaching the law inadvertently, special attention should be paid to the packaging labels of food and drinks.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).

