

# Hong Kong Customs detects two cases of illegally importing animals in fourth phase of “Pet Guardian” operation (with photos)

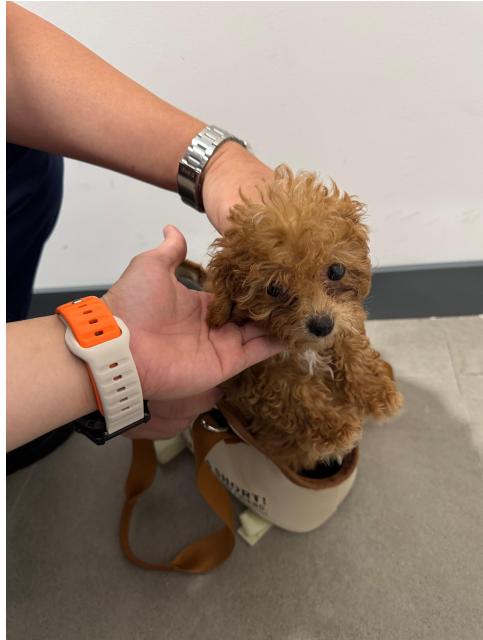
Hong Kong Customs has mounted an operation against the smuggling of animals, codenamed "Pet Guardian", with the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of Shenzhen Customs since November 2023. In late May this year, Hong Kong Customs launched the fourth phase of the operation, and detected two suspected cases of illegally importing animals yesterday (June 4). Three suspected illegally imported animals with an estimated market value of about \$20,000 were seized.

Yesterday, Hong Kong Customs at Sha Tau Kok spotted two separate situations of women who were seen pushing bikes and entering Hong Kong through the Chung Ying Street Checkpoint from the Mainland side of Chung Ying Street. Suspecting that there were animals inside the handbags on the bikes, in each case Customs officers immediately conducted a search on the women. A total of three suspected illegally imported animals, namely one kitten and two puppies, were uncovered inside the handbags. The two women, aged 55 and 32, were subsequently arrested.

The two cases have been handed over to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for a follow-up investigation.

Being a government department specifically responsible for tackling smuggling, Customs will continue to enhance co-operation and intelligence exchanges with other law enforcement agencies, and carry out targeted anti-smuggling operations at suitable times to disrupt relevant crimes.

Under the Rabies Regulation, any person found guilty of illegally importing animals, carcasses or animal products is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for one year upon conviction.



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## **Red flag lowered at Silverstrand Beach**

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department said today (June 5) that the red flag at Silverstrand Beach in Sai Kung District has been lowered and the beach has been reopened.

The beach was closed earlier on after an oil spill.

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## **CHP investigates suspected case of mad honey poisoning**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (June 5) investigating a suspected case of mad honey poisoning, and reminded the public to buy honey from a reliable source or apiary.

A 51-year-old female developed dizziness around 30 minutes after consuming honey earlier today. She attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Pok Oi Hospital and was hospitalised for observation due to hypotension and bradycardia. The patient is now in stable condition. Her clinical diagnosis was suspected mad honey poisoning.

A preliminary investigation revealed that the patient had consumed honey brought by her relative from Nepal. The poisoning might have been caused by grayanotoxin. The CHP's investigation is ongoing.

Mad honey poisoning is caused by ingestion of honey containing grayanotoxins derived from plants belonging to the Ericaceae family, including rhododendrons. Grayanotoxins are neurotoxins which can affect nerves and muscles. Symptoms of poisoning include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, dizziness, weakness, excessive perspiration, hypersalivation and paraesthesia shortly after ingestion. In severe cases, hypotension, bradycardia or shock may occur.

Members of the public are reminded to take heed of the following preventive advice:

- Buy honey from a reliable source or apiary;
- Discard honey with a bitter or astringent taste – grayanotoxin-containing honey may cause a burning sensation in the throat; and
- Pay special attention to honey from India, Nepal and the Black Sea region of Türkiye as there have been grayanotoxin poisoning cases connected with honey from these areas.

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## **Hong Kong Customs conducts**

# interdepartmental anti-illicit cigarette publicity activities in Wong Tai Sin District (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs conducted a joint anti-illicit cigarette publicity campaign with members of the Wong Tai Sin District Council, the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office (TACO) of the Department of Health (DH), the Police and the Housing Department (HD) at Lok Fu Estate in Wong Tai Sin today (June 5).

Customs officers conducted inspections and carried out publicity at the estate to promote anti-illicit cigarette messages and introduce the Government's proposal to amend the existing legislation to increase penalties for illicit cigarette-related offences to security personnel, residents and traders, as well as to encourage them to report suspected illicit cigarette trading activities to Customs.

If public rental housing units are found to be involved in illicit cigarette crimes, Customs will notify the HD for follow-up action after the conclusion of court proceedings. Customs reminds members of the public, especially young people, not to buy or sell illicit cigarettes or distribute illicit cigarette leaflets to avoid creating a criminal record that could affect their future.

Customs will continue to closely monitor the situation of illicit cigarette activities at control points and in the city, and flexibly deploy its resources to clamp down on the crime. Also, Customs will strengthen publicity and education to remind the public not to take part in unlawful acts related to illicit cigarettes.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes 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 cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002)).

In accordance with the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance (Cap. 371), no person shall distribute any smoking product advertisement (including any promotional leaflets). Any person who contravenes the regulation is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000. Members of the public may report any suspected activities of illicit cigarette leaflet distribution to TACO of the DH's hotline 2961 8823.



## Scam alert related to banks

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to the press releases issued by the banks listed below relating to fraudulent websites, internet banking login screens, phishing emails or other scams, which have been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlinks to the press releases are available on [the HKMA website](#).

Bank	Type of Scam
Chong Hing Bank Limited	Fraudulent website and internet banking login screen
Dah Sing Bank, Limited	Fraudulent websites and internet banking login screens

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the scams concerned, should contact the relevant bank with the information provided in the corresponding press release, and report the matter to the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.