

Hong Kong Customs steps up enforcement action at boundary control points during Christmas and New Year holidays (with photos)

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) mounted an operation during the Christmas and New Year holidays at the airport, seaport, land boundary and railway control points to combat smuggling and other illegal activities through passenger and cargo channels.

Starting on December 15, 2018, and concluding on January 2, 2019, the operation ended up with the detection of 232 cases, resulting in the arrest of 147 persons and the seizure of items with an estimated value of about \$65 million.

On the anti-narcotics front, 62 dangerous drug cases were detected, resulting in the seizure of about 62 kilograms of suspected dangerous drugs with an estimated market value of over \$34 million. Twenty-three persons suspected of trafficking in dangerous drugs were arrested. Most of the seizures were cocaine, cannabis and gamma-butyrolactone, seized mainly from inbound air parcels and air passengers.

Customs officers also detected 26 cases of suspected smuggling of endangered species items including agarwood, pangolin scales, controlled cactuses and controlled American ginseng. Fifteen persons were arrested and the estimated seizure value is about \$2.02 million.

Infringing products with an estimated value of about \$3.6 million were also seized, including counterfeit watches, electronic products, clothing, shoes and socks.

In the operation, Customs officers also seized more than 1.08 million suspected illicit cigarettes. The estimated market value of the seizures is about \$2.94 million and with duty potential of about \$2.07 million. Seven persons were arrested.

Meanwhile, 814 inbound passengers were found to have failed to make a declaration to Customs officers for carrying tobacco and liquor exceeding exempted quantities, breaching the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance. Thirty persons were prosecuted and 784 others were fined.

With the imminent arrival of the Lunar New Year, the C&ED will continue to step up enforcement action against smuggling activities.

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

"Smuggling is a serious offence and the maximum penalty upon conviction of trafficking in a dangerous drug is life imprisonment," a spokesman for the C&ED stressed.

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).



[Consent given to resume pile foundation works near Tai Wai Station](#)

A Government spokesman said today (January 4) that consent has been given to resume the pile foundation works of the topside development project of the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL)'s Tai Wai Station.

The spokesman said that since the readings recorded in the settlement monitoring checkpoints installed at the rear end of the southbound platform and an overhead line mast at the Tai Wai Station of the MTRCL's East Rail Line had exceeded the pre-set trigger level, the pile foundation works of the

Tai Wai Station topside development project were suspended on July 12, 2018. The Government announced the situation the next day, and the Buildings Department (BD) and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) have respectively confirmed the structural safety of the relevant railway facilities and safe operation of the railway.

The registered building professional appointed for the said building works subsequently submitted to the BD an incident report and a proposal of mitigation measures to alleviate the effects of the said building works on the structural safety of the nearby railway facilities. The registered building professional has also requested resumption of the suspended works.

The BD has ascertained the structural safety of the railway facilities concerned. The MTRCL has been consulted and confirmed that the resumption of works will not affect the structure of the railway facilities and railway operation. The EMSD has also confirmed that the MTRCL has put in place stringent monitoring measures to ensure the safety of railway operation.

Having considered the above advice, the request for resumption of works was accepted on January 2. The suspended pile foundation works will be resumed on January 5, and the proposed mitigation measures will be completed prior to the commencement of the remaining works. Having considered the engineering assessment and the revised building plans submitted by the registered building professionals responsible for the project, the BD accepted the revision of the pre-set trigger level for suspension of works to 40 millimetres.

The BD, the EMSD and the MTRCL will continue to closely monitor the situation to ensure structural safety of the railway facilities and the safety of railway operation, the spokesman said.

Rates and Government rent due January 31

Demand notes for rates and/or Government rent for the quarter from January to March 2019 have been issued, and payment should be made by January 31, 2019.

The demand notes have reflected the rates concession for this quarter, subject to a ceiling of \$2,500 for each rateable tenement. Any unused portion of the concession in this quarter will not be used to offset the outstanding rates in any other quarter. The concession does not apply to payment of Government rent.

Payment can be made:

- (1) by using autopay or electronic means (such as PPS, bank automated teller machine (ATM) or the Internet);
- (2) by uploading an e-Cheque/e-Cashier's Order via the Pay e-Cheque portal www.payechecque.gov.hk;
- (3) by sending a crossed cheque to the Treasury, PO Box 28000, Gloucester Road Post Office, Hong Kong (please note that mail with underpaid postage will be rejected); or
- (4) in person at any of the post offices or designated convenience stores. For the addresses and opening hours of post offices, please call Hongkong Post's hotline (2921 2222), or visit www.hongkongpost.hk.

If demand notes have not been received, members of the public may call 2152 0111, fax 2152 0113, or visit the Rating and Valuation Department, 15/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon.

Members of the public can also visit the department's website at www.rvd.gov.hk to obtain replacement demand notes or enquire about the amount payable. For instant payment, payers may obtain a payment QR code from the Account Enquiries service at the website by using a mobile device and present it at any post office, 7-Eleven, Circle K or VanGO in Hong Kong. Members of the public may also take a demand note for any previous quarter to any of the following post offices, where replacement demand notes can be obtained and payment can be made:

- (1) General Post Office, 2 Connaught Place, Central, Hong Kong;
- (2) Gloucester Road Post Office, 1/F, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong;
- (3) Kowloon Central Post Office, G/F, Kowloon Government Offices, 405 Nathan Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon; and
- (4) Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office, G/F and 1/F, Hermes House, 10 Middle Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon.

A surcharge of 5 per cent will be imposed for late payment and a further surcharge of 10 per cent will be levied on the amount (including the 5 per cent surcharge) that remains unpaid six months after the payment deadline.

To support environmental protection, payers are advised to utilise the free eRVD Bill service to receive e-bills and make payments. They are also encouraged to settle bills by autopay or other means of e-payment (e.g. PPS, ATM, the Internet or e-Cheque/e-Cashier Order) in order to save queuing time. Application forms for autopay are obtainable from the Rating and Valuation Department, District Offices and major banks in Hong Kong or by telephoning 2152 0111. Payers may also download the form from the department's website.

Construction of seawater outfalls for additional District Cooling System at southern part of former Kai Tak Airport runway proposed

The Government proposes to construct seawater outfalls for an additional District Cooling System (DCS) at the southern part of the former Kai Tak Airport runway for heat rejection by the centralised chiller plant of the DCS. The extent of the area of foreshore and seabed affected is described in a notice published in the [Government Gazette](#) today (January 4).

To support the additional DCS at the Kai Tak Development, the Government intends to construct permanent seawater outfalls along a section of an existing seawall, and reconstruct the above section of the existing seawall (about 80 metres long) within an area of approximately 3 200 square metres of foreshore and seabed at the southern part of the former Kai Tak Airport runway.

The proposed works are tentatively scheduled for commencement in late 2019 and completion in 2022.

The notice and its related plan are posted near the site. The plan is also available for inspection at:

- * Survey and Mapping Office of the Lands Department (23/F, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong) (where copies can be purchased on order);
- * Kowloon City Home Affairs Enquiry Centre of the Kowloon City District Office (LG/F, Kowloon City Government Offices, 42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom, Kowloon);
- * Kwun Tong Home Affairs Enquiry Centre of the Kwun Tong District Office (G/F, The Grande Building, 398 Kwun Tong Road, Kwun Tong, Kowloon);
- * Wong Tai Sin Home Affairs Enquiry Centre of the Wong Tai Sin District Office (Unit 201, 2/F, Lung Cheung Office Block, 138 Lung Cheung Road, Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon); and
- * Lands Department's website (www.landso.gov.hk) under Government Notices.

Any person who considers that he or she has an interest, right or easement in or over the foreshore and seabed involved may submit a written objection to the Director of Lands, 20/F, North Point Government Offices, 333

Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong, within two months from the above-mentioned date, i.e. on or before March 4. The notice of such objection shall describe the interest, right or easement of the objector and the manner in which he or she will be allegedly affected.

Acclaimed Cantonese opera stars to share experience

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department will present a series of talks entitled "Cantonese Opera Libretti and Scripts – From Texts to Performance" from January to March. The six talks will be hosted by Sun Kim-long.

Acclaimed Cantonese opera stars have been invited to share their experience of performing and interpreting the libretti of various well known repertoires including "The Reincarnation of The Red Plum", "The Legend of the Purple Hairpin", "Princess Changping", "Snow in June", "The Nymph of Luo River", "The Reunion by a White Hare" and "The Peony Pavilion" by Tong Tik-sang , as well as works by other playwrights. Details are as follows:

January 19 (Saturday)
Speaker: Yuen Siu-fai

January 26 (Saturday)
Speaker: Law Ka-ying

February 2 (Saturday)
Speaker: Loong Koon-tin

February 9 (Saturday)
Speaker: Nam Fung

March 2 (Saturday)
Speaker: Wan Fai-yin

March 16 (Saturday)
Speaker: Tang Mi-ling

All lectures (to be conducted in Cantonese) will be held at 3pm at the Function Room, 4/F, Ko Shan Theatre New Wing. Admission is free with limited seats available on a first-come, first-served basis. For programme enquiries, please call 2268 7325 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/chinese_opera/programs_705.html.

Members of the audience are welcome to stay behind to tour the Cantonese Opera Education and Information Centre, where they will be guided by docents and be able to see digitised versions of the libretti in its collection. The free guided tour lasts approximately one hour.