

Hong Kong Customs detects suspected frozen Wagyu beef smuggling case involving speedboat (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs early this morning (June 28) mounted an anti-smuggling operation in the western waters of Hong Kong and detected a suspected smuggling case involving a speedboat. A batch of suspected smuggled frozen Wagyu beef with an estimated market value of about \$1.4 million was seized.

Customs officers conducted an anti-smuggling operation in the waters near Tung Chung and spotted a suspicious speedboat heading towards the Tung Chung Public Pier with its navigation lights off in the early hours today. A light goods vehicle then arrived near the pier and the male driver, together with four men gathered at the pier, immediately moved the goods from the vehicle onto the speedboat. They were suspected of participating in smuggling activities. Customs officers swiftly took action and the five men jumped onto the speedboat and fled to Mainland waters immediately.

Customs officers then detained the light goods vehicle and seized 25 carton boxes of suspected smuggled frozen Wagyu beef therein.

An investigation is ongoing.

Customs stressed that it will keep up its enforcement action and will continue to vigorously combat sea smuggling activities through proactive risk management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies, along with mounting anti-smuggling operations at suitable times to land a solid blow against relevant activities.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

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



Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, June 28, 2023 is 104.7 (up 0.3 against yesterday's index).

Special traffic and transport arrangements for flag raising ceremony at Golden Bauhinia Square in Wan Chai

The Transport Department (TD) today (June 28) reminded the public that the following special traffic and transport arrangements will be implemented on June 30 and July 1 to facilitate the holding of the flag raising ceremony at Golden Bauhinia Square in Wan Chai on July 1 (Saturday) to celebrate the 26th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Traffic arrangements

The following sections of roads will be temporarily closed to vehicular traffic during the periods of time specified below:

(a) From 0.01am on June 30 to noon on July 1

- Expo Drive;
- Expo Drive Central;
- Expo Drive East;

- The slip road leading from the Central – Wan Chai Bypass (CWB) Tunnel to Expo Drive;
- The section of Lung Wo Road eastbound between the Wan Chai portal of the CWB Tunnel and Fleming Road.

(b) From 5.30am to noon on July 1

- The section of Lung Wo Road westbound between the Wan Chai portal of the CWB Tunnel and Fleming Road; and
- Lung Tat Path.

Public transport arrangements

The following bus route diversions and associated temporary relocation of bus stops will be implemented in connection with the road closures mentioned above:

- The terminal point for cross-harbour route No. 961 at Expo Drive East will be relocated to Harbour Road outside Wan Chai Training Pool;
- The bus stop for cross-harbour route No. 930 at Gloucester Road westbound near Paterson Street will be suspended and replacement bus stops will be temporarily provided at Hennessy Road near Tonnochy Road, Hennessy Road near Wan Chai Fire Station, Yee Wo Street outside Hong Kong Mansion, and Tung Lo Wan Road opposite St. Paul's Hospital after route diversion;
- The bus stop for New World First Bus route Nos. H1 and H1B at Expo Drive East outside Golden Bauhinia Square will be suspended;
- The cross-harbour route Nos. 104, 900, 914P and 914X will be temporarily diverted but existing bus stops will not be affected; and
- The taxi stand at Expo Drive will be suspended from 0.01am on June 30 to noon on July 1, and the cross-harbour taxi stand at Harbour Road westbound opposite Harbour Centre will be suspended from 5.30am to noon on July 1.

In anticipation of more traffic in the vicinity of Wan Chai North, motorists are advised to avoid driving to the affected areas. In case of traffic congestion, they should exercise tolerance and patience, follow the Police's instructions and be alert to the latest traffic news through the media.

Appropriate traffic signs will be erected to guide motorists. Public transport operators will display notices to inform passengers of the temporary arrangements. Public transport users are advised to pay attention to the arrangements of bus route diversions and relocation of bus stops. The TD and the Police will closely monitor the traffic situation and implement appropriate measures whenever necessary.

For details on the special traffic and transport arrangements, members of the public can browse the TD's website (www.td.gov.hk) or mobile application "HKeMobility".

LCQ22: Making good use of reservoirs for leisure purpose

Following is a question by the Hon Tony Tse and a written reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (June 28):

Question:

There are views that Hong Kong has many man-made reservoirs that are as picturesque as natural lakes. However, owing to the need to safeguard fresh water supply and safety, there are restrictions on the leisure activities among the public and visitors in reservoirs and the associated catchments. In addition, some reservoirs, due to their smaller storage capacities, in fact have limited contributions to the supply of fresh water, the Government should consider discontinuing the use of such reservoirs for water supply purpose and making good use of them for other purposes, so as to achieve cost savings in repairs and maintenance of the relevant water supply systems. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the water supply quantities of Dongjiang water and reservoirs, and their proportion in the overall fresh water consumption in Hong Kong in each of the past five years; whether the authorities have made projections on the future water supply proportion of Dongjiang water and various reservoirs and developed a water supply strategy;

(2) of the reservoirs currently still in use for water supply, their storage capacities and surface areas, as well as the average actual water supply quantities, and repair and maintenance expenses involved in each of the past five years (set out in a table);

(3) of the number of cases (including those in which warnings were issued, arrests were made, prosecutions were instituted and convictions were handed down) involving the violation of the Waterworks Ordinance (Cap. 102) and the Waterworks Regulations (Cap. 102A) in reservoirs or the catchment areas in the past five years, and the major offences involved; whether it has studied if there is room to suitably relax some of the restrictions specified in Cap. 102 and Cap. 102A (e.g. the requirement for a fishing licence when fishing in reservoirs, and restrictions on swimming and rowing in reservoirs);

(4) whether it will review the use of certain reservoirs with smaller storage capacities to enhance the promotion of a water-friendly culture, and meet the leisure needs of the public and visitors;

(5) as it has been reported that the pleasure boat operations in Wong Nai Chung Reservoir Park have resumed since 2021, of the utilisation of such facility since its resumption of operation; whether the authorities will

consider introducing additional leisure facilities to the Park to provide convenience for and attract visitors; and

(6) as it is learnt that the originally abandoned Jordan Valley Reservoir and Ma Yau Tong Reservoir have been converted for other uses, whether there are other existing abandoned reservoirs in Hong Kong; if so, of the authorities' plans to optimise their uses?

Reply:

President,

There are no natural lakes, large rivers or abundant underground water source in Hong Kong. To meet Hong Kong's fresh water demand, we need sufficient water storage facilities (i.e. impounding reservoirs) to collect and store rainwater, and temporarily store part of the water imported from Dongjiang in Guangdong Province. Currently, there are 17 reservoirs of this kind in Hong Kong. With the peaceful and scenic environment, these reservoirs are very popular outing and fishing spots for citizens. Therefore, we are pleased to allow citizens to fish and engage in outing activities around the reservoirs on the condition that fresh water sources stay free from pollution.

The replies to various parts of Hon Tse's question are as follows:

(1) Currently, Hong Kong's fresh water supply mainly comes from rainwater collected from local catchment areas and Dongjiang water imported from the Guangdong Province. The total supply quantities and the proportions of these two water sources over the past five years are as follows:

Year	Local Yield (million cubic metres)	Dongjiang Water (million cubic metres)	Total supply quantity (million cubic metres)
2018	277 (27%)	736 (73%)	1 013
2019	278 (28%)	718 (72%)	996
2020	225 (22%)	802 (78%)	1 027
2021	244 (23%)	811 (77%)	1 055
2022	256 (24%)	810 (76%)	1 066

Note: The numbers in parentheses indicate the percentages of the total fresh water supply of that year.

To ensure the stability of Hong Kong's water supply and support its sustainable development, the Water Supplies Department (WSD) has formulated the Total Water Management Strategy and adopted a two-pronged approach by controlling the increase in water demand on one hand and enhancing supply stability through diversified water sources on the other hand, including the utilisation of seawater desalination to supplement fresh water supply so as to combat the impact of climate change. In the foreseeable future, local

yield and Dongjiang water will still be Hong Kong's main sources of fresh water, accounting for about 90 per cent of the total fresh water consumption. The rest will be supplemented by seawater desalination.

(2) In addition to storing local yield, some impounding reservoirs are also used for storing Dongjiang water temporarily. Furthermore, many reservoirs are interconnected through transfer networks to allow water sources to be transferred as needed to increase supply flexibility. Therefore, we are unable to provide the quantity of water supply of each reservoir. Maintenance of a reservoir mainly includes the upkeep of relevant facilities such as drainage systems, road signs, landscaping and safety facilities. As improvement works, such as installation of additional piezometers, improvement of existing pipeworks and addition of greening facilities, may also be involved during the maintenance works, we do not have a separate breakdown solely for the maintenance expenditure for reservoirs.

The areas and storage capacities of all the impounding reservoirs are tabulated below:

Reservoir	Approximate surface area (square metres)	Approximate capacity (million cubic metres)
High Island Reservoir	6 950 000	281
Plover Cove Reservoir	12 122 000	230
Shek Pik Reservoir	1 040 000	24
Tai Lam Chung Reservoir	1 659 000	20
Shing Mun Reservoir	615 000	13
Lower Shing Mun Reservoir	245 000	4.3
Kowloon Reservoir	164 000	1.6
Kowloon Byewash Reservoir	57 000	0.8
Shek Lei Pui Reservoir	61 000	0.4
Kowloon Reception Reservoir	39 000	0.1
Tai Tam Tuk Reservoir	389 000	6
Tai Tam Upper Reservoir	123 000	1.5
Tai Tam Intermediate Reservoir	88 000	0.7
Tai Tam Byewash Reservoir	24 000	0.1
Aberdeen Upper Reservoir	77 000	0.8
Aberdeen Lower Reservoir	57 000	0.5
Pok Fu Lam Reservoir	39 000	0.2

(3) Pursuant to the Waterworks Ordinance (Cap. 102) and the Waterworks Regulations (Cap. 102A), any person who pollutes water of the waterworks or fishes in the water of the waterworks without complying with the conditions of the fishing licence, shall be guilty of an offence. Once a violation is

discovered, the WSD will arrest and prosecute the person concerned direct without a warning. The numbers of the relevant prosecutions and convictions over the past five years are as follows:

	Contravention	Year					Total
		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
Prosecution	Pollution	5	8	20	32	14	79
	Illegal fishing	19	39	19	27	12	116
Conviction of the prosecution in the year	Pollution	5	8	19	31	14	77
	Illegal fishing	18	39	17	25	12	111

The WSD has been issuing fishing licences to allow the public to enjoy fishing in reservoirs in compliance with the licence conditions, and at the same time, ensure that such fishing activities do not affect the ecology and environment of the reservoirs. To accord with public expectation, the WSD has relaxed the fishing period since April last year to allow anglers holding valid fishing licences to fish in all reservoirs in Hong Kong throughout the year, in contrast to the previous arrangement which only allowed fishing from September of each year to March of the following year. As regards swimming and rowing in reservoirs, the WSD has no plan at this moment to relax the restriction of such activities having considered that such activities will highly increase the risk of the water in reservoirs being polluted.

(4) Since local yield is still one of Hong Kong's major sources of fresh water, we have to retain all existing impounding reservoirs (including those with smaller capacities) for catchment and temporary storage of Dongjiang water to safeguard the sustainability of water supply.

(5) The Wong Nai Chung Reservoir has not been a waterworks for storage of water for potable purpose since the 1980s, after its conversion to the existing Wong Nai Chung Reservoir Park by the former Urban Council for opening to the public. The Wong Nai Chung Reservoir Park is now under the management of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). According to the LCSD, the light refreshment and boat hiring business at Wong Nai Chung Reservoir Park began to operate on May 1, 2021 with the contract expiry on April 30, 2024. The operator has equipped with two rowing boats and 15 pedal wheel boats for hire during the business hours on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. Currently, the daily patronage of Wong Nai Chung Reservoir Park during Sundays or public holidays is about 2 000. The LCSD has also arranged renovation of the facilities of the venue and works for beautification and improving the landscape with a view to attracting the public.

(6) The "Jordan Valley Reservoir" and the "Ma Yau Tong Reservoir" mentioned in the question are in fact the Jordan Valley Salt Water Service Reservoir and the Ma Yau Tong Salt Water Service Reservoir, which are different from the aforementioned impounding reservoirs used for collecting and storing

rainwater, and temporarily storing Dongjiang water. They were originally used for storing salt water for supplying flushing water to their supply areas and were subsequently reconstructed for other purposes to meet other projects' needs at that time. According to records of the WSD, there are currently no abandoned reservoirs in Hong Kong.

LCQ19: Illegal parking in public housing estates

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Ngan Man-yu and a written reply by the Secretary for Housing, Ms Winnie Ho, in the Legislative Council today (June 28):

Question:

It has been reported that the problem of illegal parking in public housing estates has become increasingly serious in recent years. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of parking spaces in public housing estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority and the Hong Kong Housing Society (including those sold to enterprises such as Gaw Capital Partners and Link Real Estate Investment Trust), with a tabulated breakdown by District Council district;

(2) of the number of vehicles illegally parked in the public housing estates mentioned in (1) above that were subject to enforcement actions in each of the past three years, with a tabulated breakdown by type of enforcement action (including towing, impounding, issuing fixed penalty notices in accordance with the Housing (Traffic Contraventions) (Fixed Penalty) Bylaw (Cap. 283 sub. leg. C) by authorised staff of the Housing Department, etc) and District Council district;

(3) whether cases of evading law enforcement by parking the vehicles on the footpaths of public housing estates were found in the past three years; if so, of the number of vehicles involved and the follow-up actions taken by the authorities; and

(4) of the measures put in place by the authorities in the past three years to improve the problem of illegal parking in public housing estates, and whether they have assessed the effectiveness of such measures?

Reply:

President,

Regarding Dr the Hon Ngan Man-yu's questions, our reply is as follows:

(1) As at March 31, 2023, the number of carpark spaces in public rental housing (PRH) estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) by respective District Council district is listed at Annex 1.

As at March 31, 2023, the number of carpark spaces under the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) by District Council district is listed at Annex 2.

(2) In the past three years (i.e 2020/21 to 2022/23), the numbers of vehicles being towed away, impounded and the number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued by Housing Department staff due to illegal parking in HA's PRH estates by respective District Council district are listed at Annex 3.

The number of vehicles towed away or impounded by the HKHS due to illegal parking in the past three years (i.e 2020/21 to 2022/23) by District Council district is listed at Annex 4.

During the same period, there was no case involving vehicles being issued FPN by HKHS staff for illegal parking.

(3) When the Estate Office (EO) has found someone putting sundry articles (including motorcycles parked or abandoned in pedestrian passage) in the public areas of the PRH estates under the HA and the articles are causing obstruction, the HD will take follow up action according to established procedures. Under normal circumstances, the EO will issue a written warning to the owner to remove the relevant object within specified timeframe; if in vain, the relevant object will be removed and seized in accordance with the power conferred by the Housing Ordinance (Cap. 283). If the owner fails to claim the object and pay the fee within specified date and timeframe, the Housing Department will dispose of the seized property according to established procedures, including selling or disposing of it in other appropriate ways. The EO will also conduct joint operations with other departments to remove illegally parked or abandoned vehicles in the area having regard to the actual circumstances as necessary.

(4) Tackling illegal parking is part of the regular work of estate management staff, including combating illegal parking through patrolling and law enforcement actions, and publicising the message to the drivers not to park illegally and cause traffic obstruction through publicity and education. In order to manage the estate roads and passages effectively, apart from stepping up patrols at illegal parking blackspots within the estate, the EO will also take surprise enforcement actions during non-office hours, including impounding the illegal parked vehicles, issuing FPN, etc. The Housing Department will continue to review the situation of illegal parking in PRH estates and effectiveness of our work, and will deploy manpower having regard to the actual circumstances to step up enforcement.