

Hong Kong Customs teams up with Mainland Customs to detect largest speedboat smuggling case on record (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs and the Mainland Customs mounted a joint anti-smuggling operation codenamed "Xun Lei" since March this year. Hong Kong Customs has conducted enforcement operations from June 2 to 7 and detected a suspected speedboat smuggling case. A batch of suspected smuggled goods with an estimated market value of about \$120 million was seized, including about 66 000 pieces of high-value goods, about 2.3 tonnes of expensive food ingredients and about 186 kilograms of scheduled endangered species. This is the largest speedboat smuggling case detected by Hong Kong Customs on record in terms of the seizure value.

In view of the recent upward trend of sea smuggling activities, Hong Kong Customs has particularly stepped up intelligence exchanges with the anti-smuggling departments of the Mainland Customs, and targeted a cross-boundary smuggling syndicate for an in-depth investigation. The "Xun Lei" operation was jointly conducted by Hong Kong Customs, the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC), the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of the Guangdong Sub-Administration of the GACC, and the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of Shenzhen Customs. From March to April, authorities of the Mainland Customs first took action and raided three storehouses suspected to be used for storing smuggled goods in places including Guangdong, Guangxi and Anhui. A total of 11 people were arrested and about 2.42 tonnes of suspected smuggled pangolin scales with an estimated market value of about RMB50 million were seized.

Hong Kong Customs then conducted operations from June 2 to 7. Customs officers on June 2 spotted several suspicious men moving cartons of goods from a lorry to a speedboat using a ladder with metal rollers at a seashore in Lau Fau Shan. The officers then took action and those men immediately jumped onto the speedboat and fled. A lorry suspected to be connected with the case was intercepted at the scene. A large batch of suspected smuggled goods, including luxury handbags, valuable watches, expensive food ingredients and highly endangered species, was seized on board the lorry. After a follow-up investigation, Customs officers raided three storehouses and a residential unit in the New Territories. A large batch of suspected smuggled goods was further seized in the storehouses.

During the whole operation, the total value of the suspected smuggled goods seized by Hong Kong Customs is about \$120 million. Together with the smuggled goods seized by the Mainland Customs, the total value of the seizures has amounted to over \$180 million.

Four men suspected to be in connection with the case, aged between 35

and 62, were arrested by Hong Kong Customs during the operation.

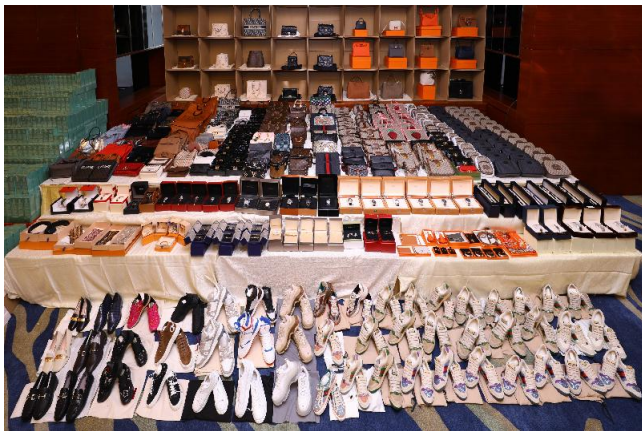
An investigation is ongoing. All arrested men have been released on bail pending further investigation, and further arrests are not ruled out.

The Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Chan Tsz-tat, stressed at a press conference today (June 10) that the department has always been fiercely combating cross-boundary smuggling activities and would continue working closely with the law enforcement agencies in the Mainland through intelligence exchanges and joint enforcement actions, with a view to further increasing the enforcement effectiveness in the anti-smuggling realm by the Mainland and Hong Kong enforcement agencies.

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.

Under the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting an endangered species without a licence is liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 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).



Phishing email related to DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited

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 a press release issued by DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited relating to a phishing email, which has been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the email concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

Persons aged 12 to 15 can make reservations to receive BioNTech vaccine from tomorrow

The Government announced today (June 10) the expansion of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme by lowering the minimum age for receiving the BioNTech vaccine from 16 to 12.

Starting from 9am tomorrow (June 11), persons aged 12 to 15 can make reservations through the online booking system on the designated website of the Vaccination Programme (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk) for receiving BioNTech vaccination at 24 Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) across the territory commencing next Monday (June 14).

The Government reminded youths and their parents that, like persons aged 16 and 17, those aged 12 to 15 are required to bring along a consent form signed by their parents for getting their vaccinations. The consent form can be downloaded from the designated website.

The Government attaches great importance to the vaccination of teenagers and students. In addition to their making own appointments for vaccination, the Government will provide them with special channels to get vaccinated, including providing special appointments at CVCs and transport from and to schools, as well as outreach vaccination at schools. The Education Bureau will write to schools to inform them of the details and arrangements.

"These measures will greatly assist schools, teachers and parents. We hope they will make arrangements for their students or children to get vaccinated as soon as possible," a Government spokesman said.

The minimum age for receiving the Sinovac vaccine remains at 18. Persons aged 18 or above can make reservations through the online booking system for receiving the vaccine at the five relevant CVCs or 21 general out-patient clinics of the Hospital Authority. They can also make appointments for vaccination with private doctors or clinics participating in the programme.

"We have to put in place an immune barrier in Hong Kong as soon as possible and the next three months will be critical. We must act fast to receive the first vaccine dose by the end of August to protect ourselves, our families and friends. Let's pitch in for the 'Early Vaccination for All' campaign together," the spokesman added.

Members of the public can search for information about all vaccination venues through the GeoInfo Map (www.map.gov.hk/gm/map/s/m/communityvaccinationservicesofcovid) and the Interactive Map Dashboard of COVID-19 (chp-dashboard.geodata.gov.hk/covid-19/en.html) on the designated website.

LegCo Finance Committee meeting

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Finance Committee originally scheduled for 3pm tomorrow (June 11) in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex will be held at 3.15 pm (or an earlier time between 3pm and 3.15 pm).

Quarterly business receipts indices for service industries for first quarter of 2021

Business receipts in value terms of most of the major service industries showed increases of different magnitudes in the first quarter of 2021 when compared with the first quarter of 2020, according to the provisional figures

of business receipts indices released today (June 10) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD).

Comparing the first quarter of 2021 with the first quarter of 2020, double-digit increases were recorded in business receipts of the courier (+47.3%), warehousing and storage (+39.1%), financing (except banking) (+28.1%), import/export trade (+27.8%), transportation (+19.1%), accommodation services (+16.5%), wholesale (+12.1%) and real estate (+10.6%) industries.

On the other hand, the administrative and support services industry recorded a decrease of 10.9% in business receipts during the same period.

Analysed by service domain, business receipts of the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain decreased by 72.5% year-on-year during the same period, whereas those of the computer and information technology services domain increased by 23.7% year-on-year.

On a seasonally adjusted quarter-to-quarter comparison, business receipts in value terms of most of the major service industries recorded increases of different magnitudes in the first quarter of 2021 when compared with the fourth quarter of 2020. In particular, double-digit increases were recorded in business receipts of the banking (+16.7%), import/export trade (+15.5%), transportation (+14.5%), courier (+13.0%), financing (except banking) (+12.0%) and warehousing and storage (+11.9%) industries. On the other hand, business receipts of the accommodation services and real estate industries decreased by 13.3% and 13.2% respectively during the same period.

Comparing the first quarter of 2021 with the fourth quarter of 2020 and on a seasonally adjusted basis, business receipts of the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain decreased by 18.0%, whereas those of the computer and information technology services domain increased by 14.7%.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that most of the major service industries registered year-on-year growth in business receipts in the first quarter of 2021, yet the pace of recovery was uneven across industries. Specifically, business receipts of import/export trade, warehousing and storage, courier, and financing (except banking) continued to increase visibly. Business receipts in some other industries, such as wholesale, retail, transportation, accommodation services, information and communications, and real estate, also increased, but it was mainly due to low bases of comparison and the business receipts of some of these sectors were still well below their levels before the recession. Meanwhile, business receipts of some industries such as food services and banking declined in the first quarter.

The spokesman further pointed out that the economic recovery, coupled with the Government's relief measures, should render support to the services industries in the near term. Yet, the evolving global pandemic is still a key source of uncertainty, and the business environment for some industries, including those consumption- and tourism-related industries, will remain

challenging. It is essential for the community as a whole to keep the epidemic under control and actively participate in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme so as to create favourable conditions for a full-fledged economic recovery. The Government will continue to monitor the developments closely.

Further information

Table 1 presents the business receipts indices and their corresponding year-on-year rates of change in respect of selected service industries and service domains for the recent five quarters, while Table 2 shows the corresponding quarter-to-quarter rates of change in the business receipts indices for the recent five quarters based on the seasonally adjusted series.

The revised figures of business receipts indices for the first quarter of 2021 will be released at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/web_table.html?id=93) and relevant publications of the C&SD starting from July 20, 2021.

Data for compiling the business receipts indices are mainly based on the Quarterly Survey of Service Industries conducted by the C&SD, supplemented by relevant data provided by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

A service domain differs from a service industry in that it comprises those economic activities which straddle different industries but are somehow related to a common theme. It may include all activities carried out by all establishments in a service industry that is closely related to the domain. For a service industry that is less closely related, however, only a portion of the establishments in the industry or even only part of the economic activities of the establishments is related to the domain. Taking the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain as an example, it includes all services of hotels and travel agents, and some (those involving visitors as customers) but not all of the services of restaurants, retailers and transport operators.

The classification of service industries follows the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification Version 2.0, which is used in various economic surveys for classifying economic units into different industry classes.

More detailed statistics are given in the report "Quarterly Business Receipts Indices for Service Industries, First Quarter 2021". Users can download this publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080006&scode=520).

Members of the public who have enquiries about the business receipts indices may contact the Business Services Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7267 or email: business-receipts@censtatd.gov.hk).