

Two incoming passengers convicted and jailed for possessing and dealing with duty-not-paid cigarettes and importing alternative smoking products (with photo)

Two incoming male passengers were sentenced to four and six months' imprisonment respectively, with a fine of \$1,000, at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts today (June 18) for possessing and dealing with duty-not-paid cigarettes and failing to declare them to Customs officers, as well as for importing alternative smoking products, in contravention of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO) and the Import and Export Ordinance (IEO).

Customs officers intercepted two incoming male passengers, both aged 44, at Hong Kong International Airport on March 11. A total of about 57 000 duty-not-paid cigarettes and about 68 200 alternative smoking products, with an estimated market value of about \$440,000 and a duty potential of about \$190,000 in total, were seized from their personal baggage. They were subsequently arrested.

Customs welcomes the sentence. The custodial sentence has imposed a considerable deterrent effect and reflects the seriousness of the offences.

Under the DCO, tobacco products are dutiable goods to which the DCO applies. Any person who imports, deals with, possesses, sells or buys illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Under the IEO, any person who imports an alternative smoking product into Hong Kong commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven 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) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).

