



# ASIA/PACIFIC <sup>VOLUME</sup> #74

## CUSTOMS NEWS

Navigating the  
E-commerce Landscape:  
Innovations and  
Collaborations



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Regional Customs



# Navigating the E-commerce Landscape: Innovations and Collaborations

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

A brief note from the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region P.1

A brief note from the Secretariat Office of the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region P.2

### Spotlight

- 1 | The Impact of E-commerce on Customs Operations: The Case of Bangladesh Customs **Bangladesh** P.4
- 2 | Leveraging Data Analytics and Disruptive Technologies to Mitigate E-commerce Risks **India** P.6
- 3 | Boosting India's E-commerce: CBIC's Strategic Initiatives and Future Prospects **India** P.8
- 4 | Bridging Borders the Modern Way - Enhancing Cross-Border E-commerce Customs Operations in Developing Asia-Pacific Nations **Sri Lanka** P.10

### Regional Updates

- 5 | Collaboration for a Successful Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting **New Zealand** P.14
- 6 | Major Drug Seizure by Papua New Guinea Customs Service **Papua New Guinea** P.16
- 7 | Participation of Thai Customs in Recent Activities : **Thailand** P.18
  - WTO Public Forum 2024 P.18
  - 33rd ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee (ASWSC) Meeting P.20
  - Pre-operational Meeting for the OPERATION LYNX – Phase 2 P.21

### Capacity Enhancement

- 8 | Canine, Enforcement and Detection Capacity Building Workshop **Hong Kong, China** P.23
- 9 | Capacity-building workshop / training **Thailand** P.25

### Customs Appreciation

- 10 | Hong Kong, China P.30
- 11 | India P.31
- 12 | Sri Lanka P.31

### WCO Events Calendar

- 13 | Recent and Upcoming WCO Events P.32

## A Brief Note

# from the **WCO Vice-Chairperson** for the Asia/Pacific Region

### **Tsz-tat CHAN**

WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region  
Commissioner of Hong Kong Customs



Dear Esteemed Members of the WCO Asia/Pacific Region,

It is my great honour to assume the role of WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific (A/P) Region, following the successful tenure of our ex-Commissioner Ms Louise HO. Under Ms HO's leadership, we witnessed remarkable advancements in regional cooperation and the implementation of innovative customs practices that have laid a strong foundation for future development. As we move forward, I am committed to building on this legacy and fostering closer collaboration among A/P Members to address the dynamic challenges of the customs landscape.

The Customs community is facing unique challenges and opportunities in this era of digital economy. The theme of this A/P Customs News, "Navigating the E-commerce Landscape: Innovations and Collaborations", has highlighted our adaptation to the evolving e-commerce environment, featuring insightful contributions of various Customs administrations to showcase our innovative strategies and collaborative efforts.

In this issue, you will find articles discussing the impact of e-commerce on customs operations in Bangladesh, how data analytics

and disruptive technologies are being leveraged to mitigate risks in India, and how Sri Lanka bridges borders and enhances cross-border e-commerce operations in developing nations. These contents illustrate the importance of regional cooperation in navigating through challenges.

As we delve into research, it is essential for all Members to reflect on how we can further strengthen our partnerships and share best practices. The ongoing collaboration within the A/P region is vital to ensure the integrity and efficiency of our customs processes.

I am also glad to have your support to the "Customs Appreciation" corner, where we recognise the outstanding contributions of customs officers who have performed above and beyond their duties. Their dedication is a testament to our shared mission of facilitating trade while ensuring security.

Together, let us embrace innovations and collaborations that will shape the future of customs in the A/P region. The commitment and support of all Members are crucial as we navigate this dynamic landscape.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to our collective goals.

## A Brief Note

# from the Secretariat Office of the WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region

**Kin-kei LI**

Head of Secretariat Office  
WCO Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific Region  
Assistant Commissioner (World Customs Organization) of Hong Kong Customs



Dear WCO Asia/Pacific Colleagues,

In this edition of the Asia/Pacific (A/P) Customs News, we are going to explore the theme of “Navigating the E-commerce Landscape: Innovations and Collaborations”. This is a significant topic worth more in-depth discussions as the growth of e-commerce in recent years has brought substantial changes to the global logistics landscape. While these changes are posing great challenges to Customs operation, they bring vast opportunities to economic growth in particular within the SME sector. To truly achieve a good balance, we shall thoroughly evaluate the dynamics and find out the future way of collaborations among Customs administrations, the logistics industry and e-commerce platforms.

The cross-border e-commerce environment is getting even more complex. The transformation has been driven by advancements in technology, high penetration of smart phones, changing consumer behaviours (in particular amid the pandemic), increasing integration of digital platforms, more efficient transportation networks and more choices of fast international payment. All these have accelerated the development of e-commerce and given rise to the huge volume of online shopping that has broken down traditional goods consignments

into “tsunami of small parcels” going across international borders every day. As a result, it is imperative for Customs administrations to adjust their strategies and adopt new ways of thinking in order to effectively address these complex issues.

It is undeniable that e-commerce has become a vital component of the global economy, facilitating access to markets and enabling businesses to reach consumers worldwide. Our costs arising from the growth of e-commerce include the needs to enhance compliance measures and security protocols, and to foster more efficient risk management and trade facilitation. In this issue of the A/P Customs News, there are articles featuring the dynamic nature of the e-commerce landscape and focusing on how various Customs administrations remain agile and responsive to the rapid changes, and how they foster collaborations to leverage shared knowledge and resources.

Together, we shall remain open to innovative ideas and strive to collaborate more closely to cope with challenges and create a brighter future. We thank you for your continued dedication and support as we work towards a secure and efficient Customs community in the A/P region.



# SPOTLIGHT

A large studio spotlight is the central focus, glowing with a warm yellow light. It is mounted on a black stand with various cables and connectors. The background is dark and out of focus, showing other studio lights and equipment, creating a professional and artistic atmosphere.

Asia/Pacific Customs News #74

## Bangladesh



Goods stored in the bonded warehouse at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC), Dhaka.

## The Impact of E-commerce on Customs Operations: The Case of Bangladesh Customs

By Rizvi Mohammad Salahuddin,  
Joint Commissioner,  
Bangladesh Customs

E-commerce has revolutionized global trade, transforming traditional business models and reshaping supply chain dynamics. In Bangladesh, the rapid growth of e-commerce has introduced both opportunities and challenges for customs operations. As cross-border transactions increase, Bangladesh Customs must adapt to evolving trade patterns while ensuring compliance, security, and efficiency in the supply chain.

### E-commerce Growth in Bangladesh

The e-commerce sector in Bangladesh has experienced exponential growth, driven by increasing internet penetration, smartphone adoption, and digital payment solutions. Platforms of online retailers have expanded market access,

leading to a surge in imports of small parcels and individual shipments. This trend poses new challenges for customs authorities, particularly regarding revenue collection, risk management, and regulatory compliance.

### Challenges for Bangladesh Customs

#### 1. Increased Volume of Low-Value Shipments:

The rise in low-value and small parcel shipments significantly burdens customs clearance processes, requiring efficient screening and risk assessment mechanisms.

#### 2. Revenue Collection and Duty Evasion:

Declaring lower values and misclassifying goods pose challenges in revenue collection, necessitating robust valuation methods and stricter enforcement.

#### 3. Risk Management and Security Concerns:

The anonymity and speed of e-commerce transactions create vulnerabilities, making it challenging to detect illicit trade, counterfeit goods, and security threats.

#### 4. Digitalization and Infrastructure Gaps:

While efforts have been made to modernize customs operations, Bangladesh Customs faces challenges in fully implementing advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain for trade facilitation.



## Bangladesh



### Adapting Customs Operations to E-commerce

To address these challenges, Bangladesh Customs has implemented several measures:

- **Automation and Digital Platforms:** Adopting the ASYCUDA World system and electronic customs declarations has streamlined processes and improved transparency.
- **Launch of Bangladesh Single Window:** The Single Window system known as Bangladesh Single Window (BSW) was launched partially in January 2025. The BSW system will streamline and expedite customs and trade operations, providing traders and government agencies with the benefits of automation and improved efficiency in Bangladesh.
- **Collaboration with E-commerce Platforms:** Strengthening partnerships with online marketplaces and logistics providers to improve compliance and trade monitoring.
- **Capacity Building and Policy Adjustments:** Enhancing customs personnel training and revising regulations to align with global best practices in e-commerce trade.

### Conclusion

E-commerce is reshaping the landscape of trade and customs operations in Bangladesh. While challenges remain, Bangladesh Customs is taking proactive measures to modernize its operations and facilitate seamless trade. Continued investments in digital infrastructure, risk management, and regulatory frameworks will be essential to harness the full potential of e-commerce while safeguarding national interests. By embracing technological advancements

and fostering collaboration, Bangladesh can strengthen its position in the global digital economy.



The Express Courier Zone within the bonded warehouse at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC), Dhaka.



Physical examination area for goods in the Express Zone at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC), Dhaka.



## Leveraging Data Analytics and Disruptive Technologies to Mitigate E-commerce risks

*Customs administrations need to harness the potential of disruptive technologies and data analytics to facilitate legitimate trade and address the risks associated with cross-border e-commerce.*

**By Shivam Dhamanikar, Deputy Director, National Customs Targeting Centre and Sruti Vijayakumar, Deputy Commissioner of Customs, Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs, India**

E-commerce, defined by the WCO as “*all transactions which are effected digitally through a computer network and result in physical goods flows subject to Customs formalities*”, is transforming global trade. The global e-commerce market is projected to reach \$7.9 trillion in 2027. The rise of e-commerce and ‘parcelization’ of trade has led to an increase in the volume of individual traders, participation of unknown players, and time-sensitive flow of goods. In this evolving landscape, Customs administrations must be agile and adaptable, balancing facilitation with enforcement. The WCO Framework of Standards on Cross-Border E-Commerce outlines principles to support cross-border e-commerce growth, while ensuring national safety, security and facilitating legitimate trade.

WCO’s Revised Kyoto Convention, Immediate Release Guidelines and Baku declaration on E-commerce prescribe norms for standardization of Advance Electronic Data. Indian Customs’ Express Cargo Clearance System, US Customs ACE program and Japan Customs’ Memorandum of Cooperation on border enforcement prescribe data policies and provide for data collection and transmission between customs administrations,

e-platforms and logistic partners.

The diversity of goods traded in e-commerce presents both revenue and non-revenue risks. Revenue risks include misuse of ‘*de minimus*’ by disaggregation into low-value consignments to avoid duties, undervaluation, misclassification, and misuse of duty exemption for personal-use items. Non-revenue risks encompass smuggling of prohibited and restricted goods. The WCO Illicit Trade Report 2023 highlights an increase in the seizures of smuggled goods transported via express mail, accounting for 20% of wildlife-related, 77.6% of counterfeit goods, 35.5% of medical products, and about 12,000 drug concealment cases. Alongside these trade risks, e-commerce faces significant challenges including lack of advance electronic data, global procedural standards, poor data quality, and limited electronic information exchange between stakeholders.

Development of technology-driven solutions along with data-driven risk management is quintessential for Customs to facilitate e-commerce and ensure safety, security, and fair revenue collection.



## India



Advanced data analysis techniques and disruptive technologies include-

#### 1. Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning (AI/ML)

- Cross-referencing of multiple databases; real-time risk assessment; customized risk insights; and adaptability to evolving risk environment.
- Trained models identify risks specific to e-commerce landscape.
- Semantic clustering of entities in the supply chain for risky network analysis.
- Geo-spatial analysis and geocoding for supply chain analysis and identifying risky hotspots.
- Network analysis to tackle misuse of '*de-minimus*' threshold.

#### 2. Block-chain, Distributed Ledger Technology, Digital Twin (DT)

- Enhance secure, seamless data transmission and generation.
- By including Partner Government Agencies, e-commerce operators and logistic partners as part of blockchain, end to end tracking of consignments and secure data sharing across borders are achieved.
- DT creates a virtual replica of a physical system and helps in improving efficiency and identifying supply chain risks.

#### 3. Non-Intrusive Imaging (NII)

- Combining features of NII and AI/ML, algorithms are trained to identify risky commodities and provide real-time risk-insights.

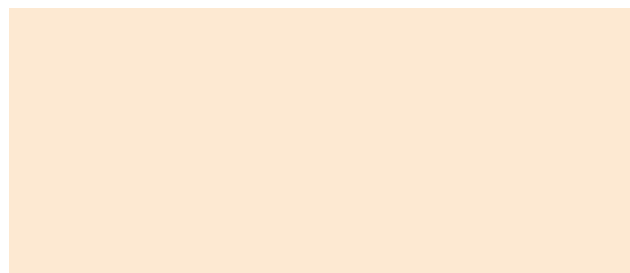
#### 4. Internet of Things (IoT)

- IoT devices enable tracking of high-risk e-commerce shipments.
- Helps in identifying tampering of seals.

#### 5. Dark web monitoring, OSINT

- Dark web crawling and scraping tools can identify suspicious transactions and gather actionable intelligence.
- OSINT enriches the customs risk analysis by cross-referencing the e-commerce declarations with multiple open-source databases.

Effective risk management in cross-border e-commerce hinges on the timely and accurate exchange of information between stakeholders and Customs administrations aiding robust data analytics, thereby improving the efficiency of the supply chain while ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. Customs administrations should integrate disruptive technologies into their risk management strategies to facilitate seamless e-commerce flows while strengthening control measures. In an e-commerce landscape marked by rapid trade growth and complex supply chain risks, the adoption of such technologies and data analytics is essential for transforming cross-border regulatory agencies into more data-driven, resilient organizations.





## Boosting India's E-commerce: CBIC's Strategic Initiatives and Future Prospects



International Courier Terminal at Bengaluru International Airport

*This article outlines CBIC's initiatives to boost India's e-commerce sector, including regulatory reforms, technological advancements, and infrastructure development, aiming to enhance e-commerce competitiveness and streamline cross-border trade.*

**By: Aditya Bajpai, I.R.S, Deputy Director, DRI**

India's internet connections are poised to reach 1.1 billion by 2025. This growth has significantly fueled the e-commerce sector, which is expected to reach US\$ 400 billion by 2030. Major segments such as Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) and Business-to-Business (B2B) have experienced substantial growth, with the D2C market projected to reach US\$ 60 billion by FY27.

To support the expanding e-commerce trade and mitigate smuggling activities, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has designated 14 International Courier Terminals (ICTs). The Courier Imports and Exports (Electronic Declaration and Processing) Regulations, 2010,

to facilitate electronic processing of import and export declarations for goods transported via courier. The process is conducted through CBIC's dedicated e-commerce portal, the Indian Customs EDI System (ICES).

The Express Cargo Clearance System (ECCS), operational at nine key ICTs, streamlines customs clearance for courier consignments. In 2023, enhancements such as the Auto Let Export Order (LEO) facility for exports via courier mode and the option for advance assessment of Courier Shipping Bills were introduced, further optimizing the ECCS framework.



## India



The volume of cross-border e-commerce shipments processed by courier companies is burgeoning. Post COVID-19, more than 4 million Courier Bills of Entry (CBEs) and 13 million Courier Shipping Bills (CSBs) are filed annually in India.

The surge in e-commerce shipments has, however, heightened the risk of smuggling. Criminal networks exploit courier and postal services to transport contraband, leveraging the high volume of small parcels to evade detection. In response, Indian Customs and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) have intensified counter-smuggling measures. These include advanced screening technologies such as X-ray scanners and AI-based tools, proactive intelligence sharing with domestic and international agencies, targeted operations focusing on high-risk consignments, and specialized training for officials to detect concealment methods.

In December 2022, CBIC, in collaboration with the Department of Posts, launched an innovative 'Hub and Spoke' model to promote e-commerce exports. This model leverages the extensive network of post offices across the country to

export processes, particularly benefiting MSMEs and small exporters in remote areas. Under this model, 1,015 Dak Niryat Kendras have been designated for facilitating the booking and collection of export parcels.

CBIC has also undertaken measures to reduce logistics costs and dwell time for EXIM clearances. A flagship initiative in this regard is the Direct Port Delivery (DPD) scheme, introduced in 2019 and implemented across ports in India. This scheme streamlines EXIM clearances by enabling direct cargo release from terminals, bypassing Container Freight Stations (CFSs). Expanded in 2021 to include facilitated advance Bills of Entry, DPD reduces logistics costs and dwell times, significantly benefiting India's rapidly growing e-commerce sector.

These initiatives by the CBIC aim to provide a level playing field and a conducive environment for the inclusive and harmonious growth of exports through courier mode, enhancing the competitiveness of MSME exporters and strengthening India's position in the global e-commerce sector.





## Bridging Borders the Modern Way - Enhancing Cross-Border E-commerce Customs Operations in Developing Asia-Pacific Nations

By W A Thivanka Perera, Assistant Superintendent of Customs, Sri Lanka Customs



The Asia-Pacific region has emerged as a global hub for cross-border e-commerce, driven by rapid digital adoption, expanding internet penetration, and an increasingly tech-savvy consumer base. As of recent estimates, the region contributes approximately 60-65% of global cross-border e-commerce trade. Countries like China, Australia, South Korea, and Thailand are leading the charge, but developing nations in the region still struggle with regulatory frameworks, logistics, and revenue collection.

The exponential growth in e-commerce transactions necessitates modernized customs operations to enhance efficiency and security while fostering economic growth. Despite the potential benefits, customs authorities in developing Asia-Pacific nations face significant hurdles in handling B2C and C2C cross-border

e-commerce packages.

These challenges include regulatory complexity, as diverse customs regulations across jurisdictions such as complex tariffs and licensing requirements which creates compliance difficulties for businesses and customs authorities. The high volume of low-value shipments further strains traditional customs clearance procedures, leading to backlogs and delays, particularly for time-sensitive business models. Additionally, the lack of reliable data for analysis and risk assessment raises concerns about its quality and accuracy. Revenue collection gaps also pose a significant issue, as many developing nations struggle to impose duties and taxes effectively, resulting in lost government revenue. Moreover, social protection, security,



## Sri Lanka



and fraud risks increase due to the anonymity of online transactions, making undervaluation, fraud, intellectual property rights (IPR) violations, and illicit trade more prevalent. Further, inadequate infrastructure and outdated technology hinder customs administrations from implementing advanced automated risk management and efficient data processing systems.

Developing Asia-Pacific nations can learn from the customs best practices of more advanced regional economies. Australia has implemented the “vendor tax collection model,” requiring overseas sellers to collect and remit Goods and Services Tax (GST) at the point of sale, improving tax compliance. South Korea uses advanced data analytics and AI-driven risk assessment tools to enhance customs efficiency and detect fraudulent shipments. China has established bonded warehouses and cross-border e-commerce pilot zones that streamline customs clearance and facilitate trade. Thailand has introduced single-window customs processing, reducing paperwork and speeding up clearance times for e-commerce shipments.

### **The Case for a Flat Tax Rate and Vendor Tax Collection Model:**

Based on the successful results seen in these countries and the guidelines outlined in the “WCO Cross-Border E-Commerce Framework of Standards,” a country can significantly improve its e-commerce clearance process by implementing two key measures: adopting a “Flat Tax Rate” (such as VAT or GST rate) on all cross-border e-commerce goods and establishing a “Vendor Tax Collection Model”.

A combined approach of a” Vendor Tax Collection

solution to these challenges. Together, these mechanisms enhance revenue collection, expedite clearance processes, improve risk management, minimize social protection threats, and facilitate trade, creating a more efficient and secure e-commerce ecosystem.

The vendor tax collection model, where e-commerce platforms or vendors collect duties and taxes at the point of sale, ensures that governments capture revenue on all transactions. This eliminates the concept of *de-minimis* from cross border e-commerce transactions. Many developing countries has raised concerns over the revenue loss they gained from allowing the *de-minimis* benefit on cross-border e-commerce packages. When paired with a flat tax rate, a fixed percentage applied to the value of all e-commerce shipments, this model simplifies tax calculation and eliminates complexities associated with varying duty rates. This approach reduces revenue leakage, ensures fairness, and creates a level playing field for domestic businesses that are already subject to taxes. By making tax collection more predictable and transparent, customs authorities can significantly boost revenue without increasing administrative burdens.

This combination streamlines the customs clearance process. With taxes collected upfront by vendors, customs authorities can focus on higher-risk shipments rather than processing low-value parcels. The flat tax rate further simplifies the process by eliminating the need for complex duty calculations based on product categories or trade agreements. This reduces congestion at ports and airports, accelerates clearance times,

## Sri Lanka



and enhances the overall efficiency of the supply chain. For consumers, this means faster delivery times and a seamless shopping experience.

The vendor tax collection model provides customs authorities with access to accurate and timely Advanced Electronic Data(AED) on e-commerce transactions, as vendors are required to share detailed shipment information. This simplifies risk assessment and targeting. Customs can leverage advanced analytics and artificial intelligence to identify high-risk shipments, combat illicit activities such as smuggling and counterfeiting, and ensure compliance with trade regulations. This proactive approach enhances risk management while facilitating the smooth flow of legitimate trade.

Cross-border e-commerce can pose significant social protection threats, including the influx of counterfeit goods, unsafe products, and unfair competition for local businesses. The vendor tax collection model strengthens customs' ability to monitor and regulate e-commerce trade. By holding vendors accountable for social protection measures, this model creates a more transparent and secure trading environment. It also ensures compliance with safety standards, intellectual property rights, and consumer protection laws, safeguarding both consumers and domestic industries.

The vendor tax collection model and flat tax rate simplify the customs process for all stakeholders, including e-commerce platforms, logistics providers, and consumers. It helps minimize double taxation and simplify the process of return shipments. By standardizing tax collection and reducing administrative burdens, this approach fosters a more predictable and efficient trade environment. It also encourages compliance

markets. For customs authorities, this model aligns with the WCO standards and supports the growth of legitimate cross-border e-commerce.

For the successful implementation of the flat tax rate and vendor collection model, authorities must conduct market research to determine an optimal tax rate, conduct a Foregone Revenue Analysis by a Tax Gap Analysis and a Policy Gap Analysis, pilot the system through trial programs, leverage AI-driven data analytics for compliance monitoring and risk management, engage stakeholders such as online marketplaces and logistics providers, and continuously monitor and adjust tax policies based on trade trends and feedback.

Developing nations in the Asia-Pacific region can significantly benefit from these reforms, as they offer cost-effective implementation with minimal infrastructure investment compared to traditional tax collection methods. It will boost digital trade by simplifying tax compliance, improve customs efficiency by allowing better resource allocation for security and risk assessment. It will also generate higher government revenue, ensuring a steady and predictable tax revenue stream for infrastructure and economic development.

Cross-border e-commerce presents immense opportunities for economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region, but customs authorities must modernize their operations to fully capitalize on this potential. By adopting a flat tax rate and vendor tax collection model, developing nations can enhance revenue collection, streamline customs clearance, and improve risk management. With strategic implementation and stakeholder collaboration, these reforms will pave the way for a more efficient, secure, and prosperous e-commerce landscape in the region.

# Regional Updates



Asia/Pacific Customs News #74





## Collaboration for a Successful CHOGM



**New Zealand Customs were welcomed at the ava ceremony held for all the international agencies.**

A small team from the New Zealand Customs Service joined more than 450 New Zealand personnel in Samoa for the high-profile Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), which ran from 21-26 October 2024.

This was a significant international event for any country to stage, and Samoa was the first Pacific Island state to do so. The event saw Heads of State and thousands of dignitaries arrive into Samoa, including King Charles III, which was his first time attending CHOGM as head of the Commonwealth.

New Zealand Customs worked closely with the Ministry of Revenue and Customs (Samoa Customs) to support them to carry out their duties during the summit. This support was provided through New Zealand Customs Pacific Customs Sector Development Programme, which is funded

by New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Planning for this major event took place throughout the year, with a CHOGM facilitation workgroup consisting of border and airport agencies from Samoa and New Zealand working together to implement border preparations.

Senior Policy Analyst Nicky Mark helped coordinate the New Zealand Customs team on the ground in Samoa's capital Apia. She said, "Prior to the event, we helped support Samoa Customs by providing new wireless radio units and systems, and new uniforms for Customs staff, as well as having implemented training across a range of airport entry and departure processes and undertaking a multi-agency leadership refresher workshop."

## New Zealand



“Part of our role during the event was assisting with risk-assessing passengers and processing incoming flights. The airport team was monitoring the unloading of VIP aircraft, which were carrying VIPs, delegates and support personnel, who were arriving on a mix of military, private, charter and commercial aircraft. It was an exciting and historic time to be at the airport to witness the arrival of so many dignitaries including Presidents, Prime Ministers and King Charles and Queen Camilla.”

“We have excellent relationships with both Samoan Police and Customs, and the New Zealand staff we deployed all had either family connections or other links to Samoa that gave them valuable, local know-how. We were pleased that our people could help our border partners in Samoa ensure this major international event was a success.”



**New Zealand and Samoa Customs monitoring the unloading of a VIP aircraft.**



**Awaiting the arrival of King Charles and Queen Camilla. There were a large number of airport staff watching this historic event.**



**Biosecurity and Customs heads waiting for a flight arrival with New Zealand Customs staff. From left, Supervising Customs Officer Deployment, Michael Annandale; Principal Biosecurity Officer Nafanua Malele; ACEO – Customs Border, Henry McCarthy; Senior Policy Analyst (Pacific), Shane Panettiere; Chief Executive Samoa Ministry of Customs and Revenue Fonoti Talaitupu Lia Taefu; Deputy Chief Executive Officer Samoa Customs Lealataua Sophia Laifai-Oloapu.**

“CHOGM highlighted the continuous partnership between our two customs agencies, and affirms the long-standing and collaborative relationship between Samoa and New Zealand. New Zealand will continue our work to support Customs administrations across the region to build a peaceful, stable, prosperous, and resilient Pacific,” said Nicky.



## Papua New Guinea



## Customs Detect and Seize a Record 15.02kg of Cocaine Bound for Australia with a Street Value of Over A\$5.2 million

The PNG Customs Service successfully foiled an attempted cocaine smuggling operation by apprehending two foreign nationals at Jackson's International Airport in Port Moresby after a record 15.02kg of cocaine were found in both of their luggage.

Customs Chief Commissioner David Towe said the drugs could have been sold for A\$5.2 million on the streets in Australia if PNG Customs had not detected and seized the illegal cargo.

"Customs is the premier border agency in PNG mandated to secure our borders and protect our communities from illegal and illicit activities like this," the Chief Commissioner stated. "Customs remains vigilant in its efforts to combat drug trafficking and protect the nation's borders from criminal elements."

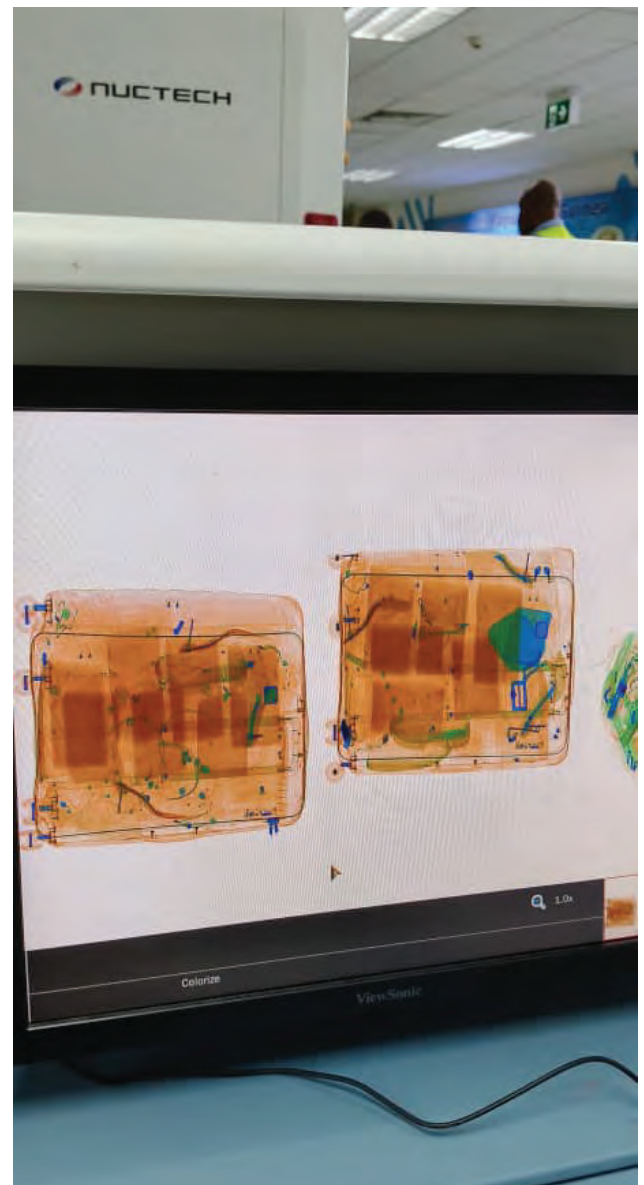
He said the two foreign nationals, both female, were Portuguese passport holders aged 20 and 23 respectively.

The individuals, who had entered PNG on December 2, 2024, under the guise of tourists, were detained on December 7, 2024, just moments before boarding a Qantas flight bound for Brisbane, Australia.

"As they were awaiting their departure, Customs officers intercepted and conducted an examination on their luggage", the Chief Commissioner stated.

"The inspection revealed that both passengers were in possession of a total of thirteen (13) pieces of a swathed concealed white crystalline powder."

Subsequent testing confirmed the presence of cocaine. The passengers were therefore detained and handed over to the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary for further investigations. The Chief Commissioner added that Customs will also conduct a parallel investigation relating to breaches of the *Customs Act*.



Images of the luggage after being put through the scanner.



## Papua New Guinea

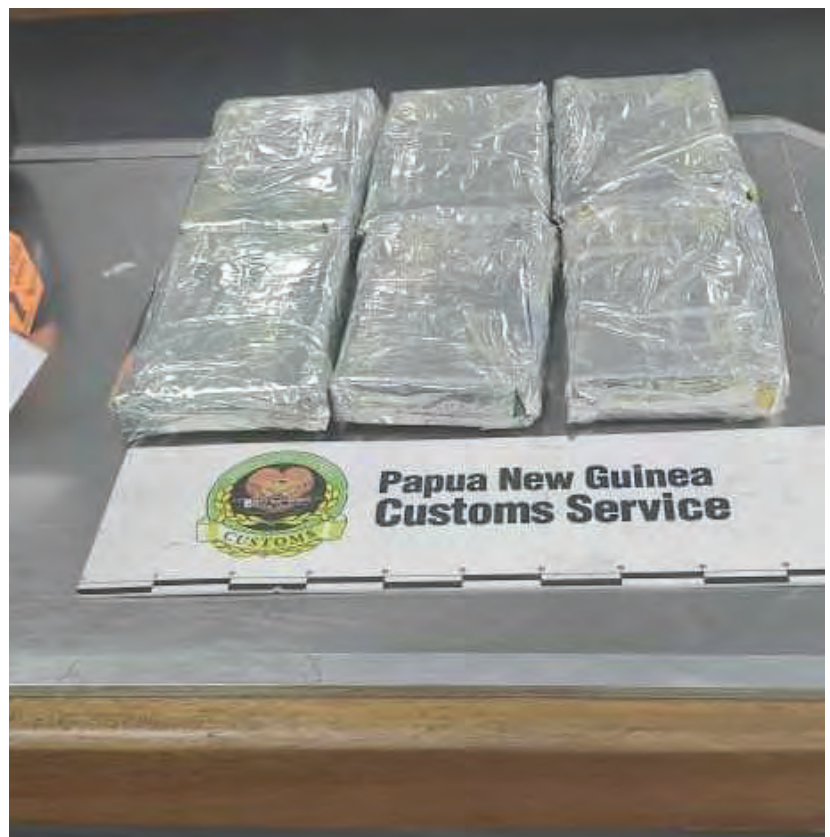


“Customs is committed and focused on identifying and disrupting those who attempt to import or export illicit substances at our borders,” the Chief Commissioner stated. “We will continue to work closely with our partners to protect the PNG community from the scourge of illicit drugs.”

“The PNG Customs Service is also committed to upholding the integrity of our borders and ensuring the safety and security of our citizens,” the Chief Commissioner added. “This successful interception sends a clear message that smuggling illicit substances will not be tolerated, and those who attempt such criminal acts will face the full force of the law.”

“We urge all travelers to adhere to Customs regulations and refrain from engaging in illegal activities that jeopardize the safety and well-being of our communities.”

**Authorized by**  
**David Towe**  
**Chief Commissioner of Customs**



Seized drugs displayed on the counter after detection.

## Thailand

## Participation of Thai Customs in Recent Activities :



A promotional poster for the panel discussion titled "Leveraging Digitalization in Customs for Inclusive Trade," held on 12 September 2024. The session featured Mr. Niti Wityatem, Deputy Director-General and Chief Information Officer of the Thai Customs Department, alongside distinguished panelists from WTO, WCO, and ICC, to discuss the role of digitalization in fostering inclusive trade.

## (1) WTO Public Forum 2024

On 12th September 2024, Mr. Niti Wityatem, Deputy Director-General participated as a panelist in the session "Leveraging Digitalization in Customs for Inclusive Trade" during WTO Public Forum 2024, together with Mr. Ian Saunders, Secretary General of the World Customs Organization, Ms. Angela Ellard, Deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and Ms. Valerie Picard, Head of Trade,

Geneva, Switzerland. The context behind this is because Customs administrations play a vital role in global trade, the adoption of digital solutions, such as Single Window systems, is therefore essential for fostering inclusive trade and supporting MSMEs (Micro, Small, And Medium Enterprises). Leveraging digital technologies and strengthening stakeholder collaboration can enhance efficiency, transparency, and accessibility, ensuring broader trade benefits.



Mr. Niti Wityatem, Deputy Director-General of Thai Customs, participating as a panelist at the WTO Public Forum 2024, where he highlighted the impact of customs digitalization on trade facilitation, particularly from the perspective of Thailand.



## Thailand



**Panelists at the WTO Public Forum 2024, including representatives from the WTO, WCO, ICC, and academia, highlighting their collaboration in promoting trade digitalization.**

This panel explores the role of digitalization and Single Window systems in promoting inclusive trade from a Customs perspective. With a focus on MSMEs, discussions highlight how these systems streamline procedures, expedite clearance, reduce costs, and improve compliance, enabling small businesses to compete effectively on the global stage. Additionally, the session addresses recent WCO initiatives aimed

at integrating MSMEs into the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programme, which enhances supply chain security and facilitates trade through simplified Customs procedures. This platform therefore serves as a forum for exchanging insights and identifying collaborative strategies to harness digitalization for the empowerment of MSMEs in international trade.

# WTO Public Forum 2024



## Thailand



## (2) 33rd ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee (ASWSC) Meeting



**ASEAN representatives at the 33rd ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee Meeting, reinforcing their commitment to digital trade integration and seamless customs procedures across the region.**

Mr. Phantong Loykulnanta, Principal Advisor on Duty Collection Management and Development, presided over the opening ceremony of the 33rd ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee (ASWSC) meeting, hosted by Thai Customs Department. The meeting was held from October 9- 11, 2024 at the Classic Kameo Hotel in Ayutthaya, Thailand. Joining him as part of the Thai Customs delegation were Miss Suntareeya Twichaprasit, Director of the Administration and Management of Information Exchange for Import, Export, and Logistics Division, who served

as the head of the Thai delegation, along with representatives from the Administration and Management of Information Exchange for Import, Export, and Logistics Division and the Information and Communication Technology Center. The discussion during the meeting covered the progress of ASEAN Single Window (ASW) data exchange initiatives, strategies and plans to enhance the system's efficiency, and consultation with ASEAN dialogue partners and international organizations focused on technical cooperation.



**Mr. Phantong Loykulnanta, Principal Advisor on Duty Collection Management and Development, presiding over the opening session of the 33rd ASEAN Single Window Steering Committee Meeting, held in Ayutthaya, Thailand, from 9-11 October 2024.**



**Delegates from ASEAN member states engaging in discussions on enhancing the ASEAN Single Window system, focusing on cross-border data exchange and trade facilitation improvements. The meeting was chaired by a representative from Singapore Customs.**



## Thailand



## (3) Pre-operational Meeting for the OPERATION LYNX – Phase 2



Customs officers and international representatives attending the pre-operational meeting for Operation LYNX – Phase 2, held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 24-25 September 2024. The meeting focused on strategies to combat illicit trade and excise tax evasion across borders.



Mrs. Sunsupa Klaisuban, Director of the Strategy and Planning Division, delivering the keynote speech at the Operation LYNX – Phase 2 pre-operational meeting, emphasizing the importance of intelligence-sharing and coordinated enforcement.

On Tuesday, 24 September 2024, Mrs. Sunsupa Klaisuban, Director of Strategy and Planning Division, delivered a keynote speech to the Pre-operational Meeting for the OPERATION LYNX – Phase 2, which is a cross border anti-smuggling



Mr. Mark Newman, a representative from the WCO Secretariat, providing opening remarks on Operation LYNX – Phase 2, underscoring global efforts to strengthen customs enforcement and security measures.

operation focusing on the threat posed by excise goods. The meeting, hosted by Thai Customs, takes place from 24-25 September 2024 at the Chatrium Residence Sathon, Bangkok.



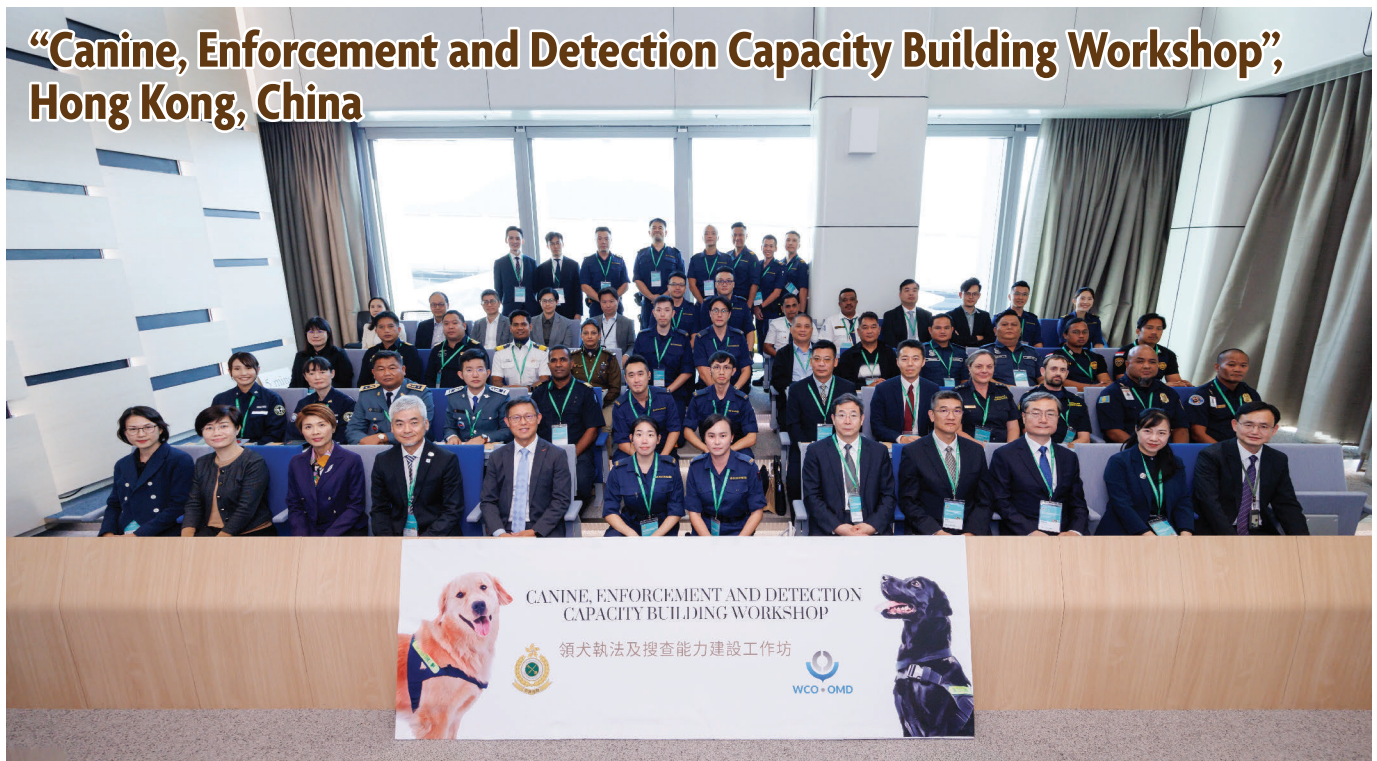
# Capacity Enhancement



Asia/Pacific Customs News #74



## Hong Kong, China



The Director General of the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Sun Zhijie (front row, fifth right); the Assistant Commissioner of Hong Kong Customs, Mr. Rudy Hui (front row, fifth left), the Head of The Asia Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building, Mr. Jun Tajima (front row, fourth left), and other guests attending the opening ceremony for the Workshop.

The “Canine, Enforcement and Detection Capacity Building Workshop” was hosted by Hong Kong Customs (HKC) in Hong Kong, China from 26 to 29 November 2024.

As a newly established World Customs Organization (WCO) Regional Dog Training Centre (RDTC) for the Asia Pacific (A/P) Region, HKC is committed to enhancing canine-based law enforcement capabilities and fostering regional collaboration among A/P members. Following the successful hosting of the 6th WCO Global Canine Forum in March 2024, HKC organized another significant event, a four-day workshop named **“Canine, Enforcement and Detection Capacity Building Workshop”** from 26 to 29 November 2024. Thirty-seven representatives from members of the WCO A/P Region, mainly dog handlers, dog

instructors and frontline officers responsible for customs clearance duties, gathered together with fruitful discussions and experience sharing at the Workshop.

The Workshop aimed at enhancing members’ capacities in the area of canine operation, frontline enforcement as well as detection capabilities. Key agenda items included a series of presentations and discussions focusing on best practices in canine enforcement, training and breeding, and visiting facilities of HKC. Participants shared experiences on emerging smuggling trends and challenges, and explored innovative initiatives and operational strategies to enhance their canine professionalism and enforcement capacity.





## Hong Kong, China

The opening ceremony was officiated by Mr. Sun Zhijie, the Director General of the Anti-Smuggling Bureau of the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC), who welcomed participants and emphasized the vital contributions of detector dogs in supporting customs enforcement and promoting anti-drug initiatives. During the Workshop, the participants also visited the newly established RDTCC of HKC and enjoyed dog demonstrations, gaining insights into the achievements and latest developments of the Hong Kong Customs Canine Force. On the last day, the Workshop concluded with a closing ceremony, where Ms. Phoebe Wong, the Assistant Commissioner of

knowledge exchange and collaborative networks among customs organizations worldwide.

The four-day workshop yielded fruitful results. Members not only benefited from the practical knowledge and invaluable insights, but also built up partnerships and connections with their neighbouring canine enforcement counterparts that will bolster collective efforts in combating transnational smuggling activities. It showcased the commitment of HKC and its WCO counterparts in advancing the field of canine enforcement and ensuring international standards of excellence.



Guests visited the newly established Regional Dog Training Centre of Hong Kong Customs and enjoyed dog demonstrations, gaining insights into the achievements and latest developments of the Hong Kong Customs Canine Force.

Guests visited the Kwai Chung Customhouse to learn about the latest drug enforcement work of the Hong Kong Customs.





## Thailand



## Capacity-building and Enhancement Efforts

Summary of Workshop/Training arranged by HRD3, Customs Academy, Thai Customs Department

To align with the Thai Customs Department's strategies, which emphasize "Developing human resource competency, innovation, and organizational management," the Human Resource Management (HRM) Division has implemented a range of capacity building programs to support these organizational goals.



Participants of WCO Regional Workshop on Training Management for Asia-Pacific (A/P) Members, held from 19-21 November 2024 at the WCO Regional Training Center, Bangkok, Thailand.

### (1) WCO Regional Workshop on Training Management for Asia-Pacific (A/P) Members

A regional workshop titled **"WCO Regional Workshop on Training Management for Asia-Pacific (A/P) Members"** was organized from 19 to 21 November 2024. The workshop provided an opportunity for the participants to discuss their perspectives on the tentative

"Compendium of Training Management in Asia-Pacific". The compendium serves as a comprehensive collection of training management knowledge derived from various practices and experiences on organizing training programs across Asia-Pacific countries.



Mr. Jun Tajima, Head of the ROCB A/P, presenting the draft document "Compendium of Training Management in Asia Pacific" during the WCO Regional Workshop on Training Management for Asia-Pacific (A/P) Members.



A workshop in progress, where members actively engaging in discussions and exchanging views on Training Management in the auditorium on the 4th floor of WCO Regional Training Center, Bangkok, Thailand.



## Thailand



## (2) The celebration of the 20th ROCB A/P Anniversary



Mr. Theeraj Athavanich, Director-General of Thai Customs Department, delivered the opening remarks at the ROCB A/P 20th Anniversary Celebration, held on 20 November 2024 at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre (QSNCC), Bangkok, Thailand.



At the ROCB A/P 20th Anniversary Celebration event, the delegates experienced a Muay Thai performance, which was a part of the Cultural Performance show, highlighting the rich heritage of the host country.

During the workshop, **the celebration of the 20th ROCB A/P Anniversary** was co-organized by the Asia/Pacific Regional Office for Capacity Building (ROCB A/P) and Thai Customs Department on 20 November 2024. The event marked two decades of dedication of ROCB A/P to enhancing the capacities of WCO Member

in A/P Region and particularly the outstanding contribution by Thai Customs to support the WCO's capacity-building activities. There were more than 150 distinguished delegates from Customs administrations in the region attending the event.



Customs Executives together with distinguished delegates from various Customs administrations attending the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the ROCB A/P.



## Thailand

### (3) The Customs Administrative Technique Training Seminar for Thai Customs

Furthermore, Thai Customs Department and Korea Customs Service had collaboratively arranged “**The Customs Administrative Technique Training Seminar for Thai Customs**” from 26 to 29 November 2024. The training focused on enhancing knowledge and skills of Thai Customs officials on CITES Investigation techniques, Technology for Human resources development, and E-commerce clearance

The training also featured a study visit to the Suvarnabhumi Airport Cargo Clearance Customs Office and DHL Express Cargo. This program is well recognized as a great opportunity to strengthen collaboration on capacity building between Thai Customs and Korea Customs Service on these significant issues.



A snapshot of Mrs. Yian Choi, an expert from the Korea Customs Service (KCS), delivering a lecture on the Flow Chart of Electronic Origin Data Exchange System (EODES) to Thai Customs officers under the topic “Origin Management System” of the training called “The Customs Administrative Technique Training Seminar”.



Behind the scenes photo of the Korea Customs Service (KCS) experts and Thai Customs officers visited DHL Express Cargo in the Suvarnabhumi Airport to observed and learned about import-export procedures for express shipments.



## Thailand



After observation, a group photo featuring experts from the Korea Customs Service (KCS) and Thai Customs officers was taken during their study visit to the Suvarnabhumi Airport Cargo Clearance Customs Office

#### (4) National Training on Strategic Trade Control Enforcement (STCE) Programme for Thai Customs



The opening ceremony of National Training Course on Strategic Trade Control Enforcement (STCE) Programme for Thai Customs, held from 16–19 December 2024 at the WCO Regional Training Center, Bangkok, Thailand.

Recent training titled **“National Training on Strategic Trade Control Enforcement (STCE) Programme for Thai Customs”** was conducted on 16–19 December 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand by the WCO's Strategic Trade Control Enforcement (STCE) programme. The training program is designed to enhance knowledge and skills of Thai Customs officials to identify dual-use items which can be utilized for development of weapons of mass destruction. The participants will also learn

how to take necessary actions to prevent the proliferation of such items that are a threat to national and international security.

In the future, AI technology may continue to evolve. However, human resources will remain a critical component in every Administrations worldwide. The Thai Customs Department is committed to providing impactful and valuable contribution to support the WCO's capacity-building activities consistently.

# Customs Appreciation



Asia/Pacific Customs News #74



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Hong Kong, China

# Tse Hoi-lun Helen

## Senior Inspector



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Ms. Tse serves as a Senior Inspector with the Hong Kong Customs, where she plays a pivotal role in enhancing regional trade facilitation through the Free Trade Agreement Transshipment Facilitation Scheme (FTA Scheme ). Her contributions have enabled more goods passing through Hong Kong to enjoy tariff concessions provided under relevant trade agreements of the Mainland of China signed with its trading partners, assisted enterprises to explore overseas markets, and strengthened Hong Kong's status as a regional logistics hub.

## Key Achievements:

- **Expansion of FTA Scheme Coverage:** Ms. Tse led the successful expansion of the FTA Scheme from three to seven economies, to include Singapore, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Nicaragua in 2024. This achievement demonstrates her ability to foster international partnerships and enhance cross-boundary trade facilitation, particularly with the Asia-Pacific (A/P) region.
- **Innovative and Strategic Communication Tactics:** Ms. Tse developed tailored communication strategies for each potential counterpart, emphasizing reciprocity and the benefits of collaboration. Her systematic and goal-oriented strategy has been instrumental in securing successful partnerships and enhancing Hong Kong's international image as a reliable trade facilitator and enabler.
- **Alignment with Regional Initiatives:** The extension of the FTA Scheme supports regional trade facilitation efforts, deepens the engagement among A/P members, and aligns with the strategic goals of the A/P region, fostering economic growth and cooperation.

Ms. Tse's dedication, strategic thinking, and leadership have been crucial in advancing Hong Kong's trade facilitation in the A/P region, making her a valuable asset not only to the Hong Kong Customs, but also to the broader customs community. Her efforts reflect the collaborative spirit and commitment to trade facilitation among A/P members.



India

# Raman Misra

Senior Intelligence Officer



## Key Achievements:

Mr. Raman Misra is serving in the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, Government of India since 1995. He serves as a Senior Intelligence Officer at Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).

At DRI, he has worked to combat smuggling using various tools, data analytics, and emerging technologies. He along with his team generated 125+ intelligence inputs, leading to seizures worth ₹4,800+ crores, including 471 kgs of heroin, 176 kgs of cocaine, and 20 kgs of meth and played a key role in investigating commercial frauds worth ₹1,433 crores and exposing fake GST invoice scams of ₹63 crores. He has also intercepted smuggling of foreign-origin gold, foreign currency, wildlife, and high-value electronics.

He has received multiple commendations, including the Samman Patra and recognition from the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), a statutory body under the Government of India, for his efforts in wildlife protection. He is also a recipient of the WCO Certificate of Merit on the occasion of International Customs Day 2025.



Sri Lanka

# Hasantha Kaushalya

Deputy Director of Customs

## Key Achievements:

Mr. Hasantha Kaushalya has played a pivotal role at Sri Lanka Customs in enforcing Customs regulations, safeguarding state revenue, and combating transnational crimes. As a WCO Accredited Customs Expert (ACE) in illegal wildlife trade (IWT), he has led numerous international missions, developed training modules, and strengthened collaboration between customs, the private sector, and other stakeholders to combat IWT effectively across all domains, including e-commerce. He also serves as a key customs resource person in formulating national policies, strategies, and guidelines related to his area of expertise. Commended by the WCO Secretary General, he is a recipient of the WCO Certificate of Merit and the Sri Lanka Wildlife Law Enforcement Excellence Award.

# RECENT AND UPCOMING WCO EVENTS



<b>February 2025</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> Global Meeting of the Regional Entities established by the WCO Members and the Council Vice-Chairs' Offices	<b>Brussels, Belgium</b> <b>24 - 25 February 2025</b>
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	16 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Capacity Building Committee	<b>Brussels, Belgium</b> <b>26 - 28 February 2025</b>
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<b>March 2025</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Integrity Sub-Committee	<b>Brussels, Belgium</b> <b>3 - 4 March 2025</b>
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	75 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Harmonized System Committee: Pre-sessional Working Party	<b>Brussels, Belgium</b> <b>5 - 7 March 2025</b>
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	75 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Harmonized System Committee	<b>Brussels, Belgium</b> <b>10 - 21 March 2025</b>
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	45 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Enforcement Committee	<b>Brussels, Belgium</b> <b>24 - 28 March 2025</b>
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	110 <sup>th</sup> Session of the Finance Committee	<b>Brussels, Belgium</b> <b>31 March - 2 April 2025</b>
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<b>April 2025</b>	Conference on Simplification of Procedures and Best Practices for E-commerce	<b>Hong Kong, China</b> <b>15 - 17 April 2025</b>
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<b>June 2025</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> Asia/Pacific Regional Heads of Customs Administrations Conference	<b>Hong Kong, China</b> <b>18 - 22 May 2025</b>
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# ASIA/PACIFIC <sup>VOLUME</sup> #74 CUSTOMS NEWS

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**Navigating the E-commerce Landscape:  
Innovations and Collaborations**