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## \$1.4m cigarettes on seized boat

By WONG JOON SAN

POLICE investigations have revealed that six Chinese sailors, whose vessel was hijacked last Friday, were carrying \$1.4 million worth of cigarettes.

A police spokesman said checks with the Customs and Excise Department showed that duty had been paid on the 630 cartons of cigarettes.

"The seamen were bringing the cigarettes back to the fishing port of Shekou in China for sale," he said.

The Chinese territory vessel - Hoi Fung 77698 - was sailing between Lamma Island and Round Island about 2 am when a speed boat carrying three armed gunmen confronted them.

The gunmen, who are believed to have been armed with a machine-gun and a handgun, jumped on to the fishing vessel and started firing at the crew.

Four of them jumped into the sea and were later rescued by an unknown vessel which took them to Aberdeen.

They went to Queen Mary Hospital to seek medical treatment and later reported the incident to the police.

One of the seaman, aged 33, is still in hospital receiving treatment for gunshot wounds while the other three have been discharged.

It is believed the gunmen later towed away the fishing vessel, worth \$70,000, with the two other crew members on board.

Police have failed to locate the vessel or the two missing seamen.