



Ha Noi to raise smuggling fines

Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc has approved Ha Noi's proposal to increase administrative fines for smugglers and manufacturers of fake products.

He asked the Ministry of Finance to study the proposal and provide funding and equipment to Ha Noi to implement the plan.

The proposal was made at a meeting held on Wednesday to discuss ways to tackle trade fraud, smuggling and fake products this year.

 Ha Noi Police Department Director Nguyen Duc Chung also said the city should auction seized goods to prevent losses or damage. At present, authorised agencies have to wait until trials are finished to sell the assets.

Vice chairman of the municipal People's Committee, Nguyen Ngoc Tuan, who is also chairman of the city's Steering Committee on Trade Fraud, Smuggling and Fake Product Prevention and Control, said Ha Noi was a hot spot for consumption and production in the northern region.

To deal with this, the city has carried out inspections at wholesale markets, major storage facilities, train and bus stations, ports and the airport. Inspections have also been carried out at key transport routes linking Ha Noi with Lang Son, Mong Cai, Hai Phong, Lao Cai, Cao Bang and HCM City.

Last Friday, Market Watch forces and police stopped a car transporting four tonnes of cosmetics and 3.1 tonnes of spices of unknown origin.

In 2014, the city handled nearly 21,000 cases of smuggling and fake product production and trade, and prosecuted 154 people. The total administrative fines and the value of the seized products amounted to more than VND3.6 trillion (US\$171 million).

However, Chung said police still faced many difficulties in the fight against smuggling and fake goods.

For example, smugglers make use of a policy that allows people living along the border who are exempt from import taxes for products worth less than VND2 million (\$95) per person per day to smuggle goods, causing difficulties for authorised agencies.

Other participants at the conference also pointed out a shortage of manpower to carry out regular checks, especially when smugglers use the cover of night or rainy days to illegally transport goods.

Deputy PM Phuc said Ha Noi had made progress in this fight, but more was still needed, particularly with Tet approaching.

Apart from increasing inspections at high-risk areas such as wholesale markets and transport hubs, a mechanism was needed so members of the public could provide information about smugglers and counterfeiters, he said.

Source: VNS