

China busts smugglers of iPhone 6 in Shanghai

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(AP)—China in recent days has busted a slew of smugglers bringing Apple iPhone 6 models into the country ahead of their official release here, with officials on Sunday reporting the latest seizure of 453 smartphones in Shanghai.

Hundreds more were seized during three separate busts Thursday through Saturday in Hong Kong, including from men with a speedboat who were loading contraband onto a wooden sampan-style boat in a mangrove, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

The latest seizure was from the luggage of two passengers arriving at the Shanghai airport from Tokyo, one of them Chinese and one of them Japanese, a woman at the Shanghai customs agency said, confirming state media reports. She said hundreds more have been confiscated individually from passengers who did not declare them.

Apple delayed its original plans to introduce the iPhone 6 in China this month, but did not comment on reports that it still hadn't received Chinese regulatory approval. The already-thriving black market for the phones in China, where Apple competes with less-expensive alternatives from local powerhouse Xiaomi, plus Lenovo and Samsung, has drawn a rebuke in Chinese state media.

The Global Times said in an editorial Friday that the frenzy over iPhone 6—including a scuffle among Chinese nationals queuing up at an Apple store in the U.S.—was making China "lose face." It said iPhones

apparently were hip, but that buyer's shouldn't buy into their marketing hype. "Please show that you despise those who already have the iPhone 6," the editorial read.

Apple became a target of state media critiques in March 2013 over alleged unfairness when it was reported that, under its warranty policy, it was fixing internal components of faulty iPhones in China while elsewhere it was replacing the entire phone. Apple later clarified that it would be replacing handsets in China and apologized about the concerns, and the furor subsided.

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