

## Bottled drinking water imported from Japan suspected to exceed WHO's guideline value

â€‹The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (February 22) noted that since a batch of bottled drinking water imported from Japan was found with excessive bromic acid, the following products concerned were recalled by the concerned vendor for the sake of prudence. The CFS is following up on the incident.

Product details are as follows:

(1)Product name: Natural Mineral Water  
Brand: Muji  
Place of origin: Japan  
Packing: 330 millilitres per bottle  
Expiry dates: on or before February 7, 2020

(2)Product name: Natural Mineral Water  
Brand: Muji  
Place of origin: Japan  
Packing: 500 millilitres per bottle  
Expiry dates: on or before January 25, 2020

(3)Product name: Sparkling Water  
Brand: Muji  
Place of origin: Japan  
Packing: 430 millilitres per bottle  
Expiry dates: on or before July 26, 2019

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS received a notification from MUJI (Hong Kong) Company Limited that bromic acid was detected in some of the drinking water products at a level exceeding 0.01 part per million per litre. For the sake of prudence, the vendor has voluntarily stopped sale of and removed from shelves the abovementioned products, and initiated a recall. Members of the public may call the vendor's hotline at 2694 9309 during office hours for enquiries about the recall."

"Bromate is the ionic form of bromic acid in aqueous solution. In the Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality of the World Health Organisation (WHO), a guideline value of 0.01 part per million per litre is set for bromate. The bromate in drinking water is formed during ozonation process of water. If a large amount of bromate is consumed, people may experience gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. It may also affect the kidney and nervous system in severe cases. Although there is evidence suggesting that bromate can cause cancer in animals, there is not yet sufficient data confirming that it can cause cancer in humans." the spokesman

added.

According to Section 54 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), all food for sale in Hong Kong, locally produced or imported, should be fit for human consumption. An offender is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

The CFS will continue to follow up and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health.

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## [HKETO Berlin hosts reception to welcome Year of the Pig \(with photos\)](#)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Berlin (HKETO Berlin) welcomed the Chinese New Year with cheer and greetings in Berlin, Germany, on February 21 (Berlin time). Marking the beginning of a new year on the traditional Chinese calendar, the Chinese New Year is an important festival to celebrate, seek good fortune and blessings, and enjoy time with families and friends.

The Chinese zodiac assigns an animal and its reputed attributes to each year in a repeating 12-year cycle. With the beginning of the year on February 5, it is the pig, with character traits such as amicability, compassion and generosity.

In his welcome speech at the reception, the Director of HKETO Berlin, Mr Bill Li, looked back at some of Hong Kong's achievements in the past year including the opening of two major mega infrastructure projects, namely the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, adding new highlights to Asia's world city. Both will significantly boost Hong Kong's connectivity and integration with the Mainland.

"Hong Kong's unique strengths will further enhance our city's status as the financial and innovation hub in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and bring forward long-term development opportunities for promoting sustainable growth in commerce, professional services, technology, tourism and culture," Mr Li added.

Business relations between Hong Kong and Germany have been strong and ever growing, with Germany continuing to be Hong Kong's largest trading partner in the European Union. Elaborating on HKETO Berlin's activities, Mr Li said, "On the ground, our Office participates actively in major events in Berlin, including the Asia-Pacific Week and IFA. On this solid foundation, a new trend of collaboration in innovation and research has just begun. In particular, the opening of an Invention Centre in Hong Kong by the

prestigious Fraunhofer Institute for Production Technology in October 2018 signifies a new chapter of partnership in the application of Industry 4.0. Furthermore, German technologies in electronic and electrical waste treatment as well as tunnel air filter systems have successfully set foot in Hong Kong."

From a global perspective, the rise of protectionism and trade friction in recent years might have cast a shadow over the world economy. Nonetheless, Mr Li emphasised that he was upbeat on Hong Kong. "Thanks to our competitiveness and adaptability, as well as our long-standing embrace of free and unfettered trade, Hong Kong can turn some of those global challenges into new opportunities," Mr Li said in closing his speech.

Following the Chinese New Year receptions organised by HKETO Berlin in Berlin, Hamburg and Frankfurt, more are to come in Munich, Zurich, Warsaw, Vienna, Bratislava, Ljubljana, Budapest, Dusseldorf and Prague in the weeks ahead.

#### About HKETO Berlin

HKETO Berlin is the official Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government representative in commercial relations and other economic and trade matters in Germany as well as Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Switzerland.



## Appeal for information on missing man in Hung Hom (with photo)

Police today (February 22) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Hung Hom.

Chan Ko, aged 83, went missing after he left his residence in Oi Man Estate yesterday (February 21) afternoon. His family made a report to Police on the same day.

He is about 1.5 metres tall, 60 kilograms in weight and of fat build. He has a round face with yellow complexion and short white hair. He was last seen wearing a black short-sleeved shirt, grey trousers and dark-coloured slippers.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of Kowloon West on 3661 8038 or 6043 1154 or email to [rmpu-kw@police.gov.hk](mailto:rmpu-kw@police.gov.hk), or contact any police station.



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## S for S speaks on police case involving Saudi female

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, at a media session after attending a public function today (February 22):

Reporter: Secretary, can you clarify whether the consulate officials from other countries can enforce the law here at our Hong Kong airport or even within the restricted area, or assign somebody to do it? Can you clarify that first? Because there is a case of two Saudi sisters saying that there had been an attempted kidnapping within the airport area. Have the Police received any report on that?

Secretary for Security: The Police have received two separate reports, one regarding missing person and one regarding request for investigation. The Police are dealing with them, so it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the details of the case. But one principle is important: that all people in Hong Kong must comply with the laws of Hong Kong. Any matter that relates to issues of law will be dealt with by the law enforcement agencies accordingly.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

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## [Hong Kong AEO Programme extends business opportunities under Greater Bay Area development and Belt and Road Initiative \(with photos\)](#)

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) held a joint seminar today (February 22) for the Hong Kong Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Programme participants on their business advantages from the Mainland-Hong Kong AEO Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) under the context of the Greater Bay Area (GBA) development and the Belt and Road Initiative.

Speaking at the seminar, Deputy Director General of the Department of Enterprise Management and Audit-Based Control of the GACC Mr Zhu Fang gave a briefing to the audience on how the status as an AEO helps in exploring business opportunities under the two development plans.

Under the current MRA with the Mainland, the average inspection rate for Hong Kong AEO cargo entering or leaving the Mainland, including the GBA, is 80 per cent less as compared with non-AEO counterparts. A substantially reduced examination rate and prioritised clearance could help the companies in reducing operating costs, strengthening competitiveness and marketability, and exploring the unlimited business opportunities in the markets of the Belt and Road region.

The MRA between the Mainland and Hong Kong was signed in October 2013 to raise the level of supply chain security management and speed up clearance



efficiency. It reinforces Hong Kong's advantages as an international logistics hub and confirms its role and function as one of the powerhouses in leading the regional development under the GBA development plan.

During the event today, the Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise (Excise and Strategic Support), Mr Jimmy Tam, also presented certificates to six new members of the AEO Programme. The newly accredited members are Hong Kong enterprises mainly engaged in import and export business.

Since its implementation in 2012, the number of companies accredited as AEOs under the programme has now risen to 50.

Mr Tam said that the department would develop along the policy agenda of smart customs clearance described in the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address under the four-pronged smart customs blueprint covering "application", "research and development", "analysis" and "fortification" to fulfil fully the new roles of "facilitator" and "promoter" as advocated by the current-term Government. Ways of refining the AEO Programme will also be explored so that a more business-friendly environment can be created, foreign investment can be attracted and enterprises will go global.

It was also announced at the ceremony that the MRA between Hong Kong and New Zealand signed during the 132nd Council Session of the World Customs Organization in Brussels, Belgium, last June started implementation today.

Currently, the C&ED has ratified MRAs with nine Customs administrations of the Mainland, India, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, among which seven are along the Belt and Road region, making the advantages of Hong Kong AEOs in exploring the markets there especially outstanding. MRAs with Canada, Israel and Mexico will also be concluded later this year.

About 140 guests, including consuls and customs attachés, as well as representatives from Hong Kong AEO members, trade associations and private sector stakeholders, attended the seminar and the ceremony.



