

LegCo Finance Committee meeting

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Finance Committee (FC) originally scheduled at 3pm tomorrow (November 23) in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex will start at 3.30pm (or an earlier time between 3.15pm and 3.30pm). If the preceding House Committee (HC) meeting ends before 3.15pm, the FC meeting will start at 3.15 pm; if the preceding HC meeting ends between 3.15 pm and 3.30 pm, the FC meeting will start immediately after the HC meeting.

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs mounted an anti-illicit cigarette operation from November 20 to 21 and seized a total of about 1.9 million suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$5.2 million and a duty potential of about \$3.7 million at Man Kam To Control Point and Chek Lap Kok.

On November 20, Customs officers intercepted an incoming lorry declared as containing assorted goods at Man Kam To Control Point. About 300 000 suspected illicit cigarettes were found in 26 carton boxes mix-loaded with other goods on the vehicle. The 59-year-old male driver was arrested. After follow-up investigation, Customs officers further seized about 100 000 suspected illicit cigarettes at a logistics site in Chek Lap Kok on the same day.

Then, on November 21, Customs officers intercepted an incoming lorry declared as containing furniture at Man Kam To Control Point. About 1.5 million suspected illicit cigarettes were found concealed in 62 mattresses mix-loaded with other goods on the vehicle. The 67-year-old male driver was arrested.

The two lorries involved in the cases were also detained for investigation. Investigations are ongoing.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence.

The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182, or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



[Effective Exchange Rate Index](#)

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, November 22, 2018 is 105.6 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

[Sample of uncooked dumpling wrapper detected with non-permitted preservative sorbic acid](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (November 22) announced that a sample of uncooked dumpling wrapper was found to contain sorbic acid, a preservative not permitted to add in the food concerned. The CFS is following up on the incident.

"The CFS collected the above-mentioned sample from a food premises in Tsuen Wan for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained sorbic acid at a level of 102 parts per million. According to the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap 132BD), sorbic acid is not permitted in uncooked dumpling wrappers," a CFS spokesman said.

The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity and

instructed it to stop the sale of and remove the affected product from shelves. The CFS is tracing the source of the product concerned.

The spokesman said, "Sorbic acid is a preservative of low-toxicity. Based on the level detected in the above-mentioned sample, adverse health effects will not be caused by usual consumption."

The spokesman reminded the food trade that the use of preservatives in food must comply with the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap 132BD). Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the case and take appropriate action. Investigation is ongoing.

ECF approves 26 Environmental Education and Community Action Projects

The Secretariat of the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) today (November 22) said that a total of 26 projects have been approved under the first round of invitations for 2018/19 Environmental Education and Community Action (EE&CA) Projects with a total grant of around \$14 million.

The EE&CA Projects Funding Scheme provides grants for local non-profit-making organisations to implement projects to raise environmental awareness and knowledge of the public and to motivate behavioural change for environmental conservation. Other than general theme projects, projects on special themes including clean shorelines, climate change and biodiversity were approved. Details of the 26 approved projects are available on the EE&CA Projects website eeca.ecc.org.hk/english/projects/list_detail2018.html.

The 2019/20 First Round Invitation for EE&CA Projects is tentatively scheduled for the first quarter of 2019. Interested local non-profit-making organisations may refer to the EE&CA Projects website (eeca.ecc.org.hk/english/index.html) for details nearer the time.