

[2020 Mainland-Hong Kong Joint Funding Scheme opens for applications](#)

The Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) today (April 24) launched the 2020 Mainland-Hong Kong Joint Funding Scheme to invite proposals for applied research and development (R&D) projects jointly conducted by institutions in Hong Kong and the Mainland under two specific themes, namely "Biotechnology: Research on Prevention and Treatment of Neurological Diseases; Research on Prevention and Treatment of Cancer; and Research on Modernisation of Chinese Medicine" and "Artificial Intelligence". Applications will be accepted from today until June 15.

The Scheme aims to support and encourage further R&D collaboration between Hong Kong and the Mainland. An element of co-operation between the two places is expected in each project proposal. Applications must be submitted simultaneously by the Hong Kong and Mainland institutions to the ITC and the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) respectively, and the R&D work must be conducted in both places. The ITC and MOST will provide funding to the Hong Kong and Mainland applicant organisations respectively, and will monitor project progress according to their own requirements.

Further information is available on the Innovation and Technology Fund website (www.itf.gov.hk/l-eng/MHKJFS.asp). For enquiries, please contact the Secretariat of the Fund (Tel: 3655 5678; email: enquiry@itf.gov.hk).

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cocaine and crack cocaine \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (April 22) seized about 1 kilogram of suspected cocaine and about 225 grams of suspected crack cocaine with a total estimated market value of about \$1.4 million in Yuen Long.

During an anti-narcotics operation in Yuen Long yesterday evening, Customs officers intercepted a 28-year-old man and found about 225g of suspected crack cocaine inside his shoulder bag and trouser pocket. The man was then arrested.

After follow-up investigation, Customs officers escorted the arrested man to a residential premises nearby where about 1kg of suspected cocaine as well as a batch of drug manufacturing and packaging paraphernalia were further seized.

Investigation is ongoing.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

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



[Transcript of remarks by SCMA on Liaison Office and National Anthem Bill](#)

The following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, at a media session in the Legislative Council Building today (April 23):

Reporter: Is the Liaison Office (the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) (LOCPG) not governed by any law under the Basic Law? It's a question that has been asked by many reporters but you have been ignoring that. Second question is what are you going to do with the National Anthem Law concerning the impact of LegCo's House Committee? Critics have cited your hard-line approach regarding previous immigration issues in handling opposition in other countries as one of the reasons why you have been promoted to this post, as well as your loyalty to the Central Government. How will you respond to those critics?

Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs: The LOCPG is representing the Central People's Government to oversee the implementation of the Basic Law and "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong. Of course, they have the right and obligation to see whether the Basic Law and "one country, two systems" are being implemented rightly in Hong Kong. So, it is not reasonable for them (the critics) to make such a remark. When situation so arises, they

(the LOCPG and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council) made the comments which I think it is okay.

Reporter: So it's not governed by any law under the Basic Law? And my other two questions – House Committee and National Anthem Law?

Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs: For the National Anthem Bill, we are still waiting for the House Committee to have the Chairman (elected) so that the meeting can start and we can resume second reading.

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

[Hong Kong Customs detects largest frozen meat smuggling case this year \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (April 22) conducted an anti-smuggling operation and detected a suspected smuggling case using speedboats and barges in the waters off Hong Kong International Airport. About 162 tonnes of suspected smuggled frozen meat with an estimated market value of about \$6.5 million were seized and 15 persons were arrested. This is the largest frozen meat smuggling case detected by Customs this year.

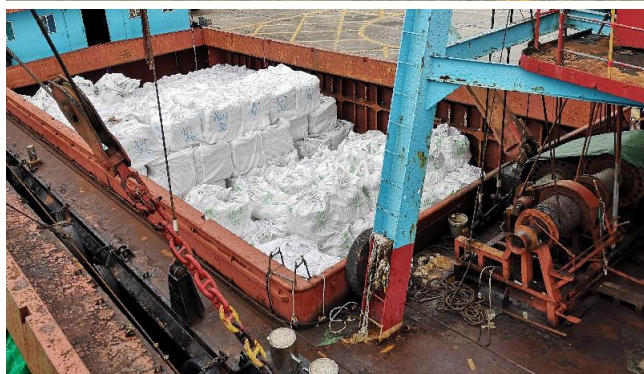
Customs officers spotted four suspicious vessels, comprising two speedboats and two barges, in the waters off Hong Kong International Airport yesterday. When the two speedboats were leaving Hong Kong, Customs officers took immediate action and seized the batch of suspected smuggled frozen meat on board the two barges.

In the operation, 15 men suspected to be in connection with the case, aged between 23 and 65, were arrested.

Investigation is 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.

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



[Transcript of remarks by SFST at media session](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, at a media session before attending the Legislative Council meeting today (April 23):

Reporter: Secretary, critics have highlighted your background in the DAB (Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong). Would that have any impact on your new post? Secondly, one of your major tasks is to handle the \$10,000 cash handout. Is it possible that the process could speed up so people can get money as soon as possible?

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury: Thanks for the questions. In response, first of all, regarding my previous role in the DAB, basically I was a member of the standing committee, but to me, that role basically enabled me to better understand, through the lens of a political party, the pulse of Hong Kong. As all of you know, the role of political parties is really to aggregate interest of different people and to present them holistically as the view or as the platform of the party concerned. So my involvement in a political party previously enabled me to have a better understanding of the overall situation in Hong Kong which I am sure will enable me to better perform my role now.

Reporter: The second question regarding the cash handout?

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury: Regarding the cash handout, definitely I share the community's view that the speedier the better. That's why I think I have been working also with my colleagues to see if there is any room for further expedition of the process. That is something that I have in mind.

Reporter: There are reports saying that through transactions, you and your wife have avoided paying tax in buying property. What does that say about your personality or integrity? Second, will you advocate a fair tax system, perhaps to eliminate this sort of behaviour and maintain a better tax income for the Government?

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury: In terms of those transactions you mentioned, basically they are all conducted within the legal parameters. That's number one. Number two is that I will definitely observe the disclosure of interests requirements stipulated in the relevant regulations under this current regime. So basically I see no issue with that.

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