

Appeal for information on missing man in Sheung Shui (with photo)

Police today (March 20) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Sheung Shui.

Ma Lok-ki, aged 30, went missing after he left his residence in Kan Tau Tsuen on March 14 noon. His family made a report to Police on March 17.

He is about 1.78 metres tall, 90 kilograms in weight and of fat build. He has a round face with yellow complexion and short black hair. He was last seen wearing a black jacket, blue jeans and white sport shoes.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of New Territories North on 3661 3128 or 6273 5787 or email to rmpu-ntn-1@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



Special scheme for delivering prescription medications to Hong Kong people in Guangdong and Fujian extends

to cases in which prescription drugs will run out by end April

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (March 20) announced that priority will be extended to process cases in which prescription drugs will run out on or before April 30, 2020, under the special scheme for delivering prescription medications to Hong Kong residents who are currently located in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces with urgent need for medications.

A Government spokesman said that in accordance with the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation, all persons who have stayed in the Mainland for any period during the 14 days preceding arrival in Hong Kong will be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Given the compulsory quarantine measures, some Hong Kong people in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces will be unable to do day trips to Hong Kong to attend follow-up consultations to replenish their medications and return to the Mainland on the same day as they had done previously. Although their family members may collect the prescription medications for them from clinics, they cannot deliver the drugs to the Mainland through ordinary mail services. To address the concern that the prescription medications taken by the aforementioned Hong Kong residents may soon be running out, the HKSAR Government introduced a special scheme on February 24, 2020, to deliver prescription medications to them with priority given to those currently located in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces who will run out of prescription medications by end March. The scheme is limited to the delivery of medications that are considered necessary and are prescribed by registered doctors for the Hong Kong residents concerned. Requests for delivery of other items (including over-the-counter medications and Chinese medicines) will not be entertained.

As at March 19, arrangements were made to deliver medications to more than 2600 Hong Kong residents in need. The spokesman said, "In light of the evolving situation of COVID-19, we will continue to deliver prescription medications to Hong Kong residents who are currently located in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces with urgent need for medications. Priority will be given to cases in which prescription drugs will run out on or before April 30, 2020."

Hong Kong residents who require the service may call the Social Welfare Department's 24-hour Hotline (Tel: 2343 2255), or the hotline of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions' Hong Kong office (Tel: 3652 5833) from 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday, for details.

Hong Kong Customs urges public to stop using one type of disinfectant alcohol with suspected false description on composition and toxic methanol (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs today (March 20) searched a hardware store and seized two bottles of disinfectant alcohol with suspected false descriptions of composition and toxic methanol content. A director of the store and a salesperson of the supplier of the product concerned were arrested. This is the third time in less than a month that Customs has seized disinfectant alcohol with suspected false descriptions of composition and methanol following cases last month and early this month. Customs appeals to members of the public to stop using the disinfectant alcohol concerned. Traders should also remove the product from their shelves.

Customs earlier received information alleging the sale of disinfectant alcohol with suspected false descriptions of composition at a hardware store in Yuen Long. Customs officers were then deployed for immediate action to test-purchase a type of disinfectant alcohol labelled as containing "75% ethanol". The product was put on sale in white plastic bottles labelled as holding 5 litres and was sold at \$300 per bottle. Samples were sent to the Government Laboratory to establish its composition and safety.

On March 18, Customs received the test results, which revealed that the disinfectant alcohol concerned had ethanol content of 73 per cent and methanol content of 1.6 per cent. The test also revealed that the net volume of the bottle of disinfectant alcohol was only 4,482 millilitres.

The composition and the volume of the disinfectant alcohol were different from the product descriptions according to the test results. It also contained toxic methanol. The product was therefore suspected to be in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO) and the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance (CGSO).

Noting the test results, Customs conducted immediate enforcement action today and searched the hardware store, seizing two bottles of disinfectant alcohol with suspected false descriptions of composition. A 55-year-old male director of the store and a 46-year-old saleswoman of the supplier were arrested. Customs officers also inspected a total of 120 retail spots in various districts today and no such product was found for sale.

Customs will further examine the seized disinfectant alcohol product to establish its safety.

Investigation is ongoing.

Customs reminds members of the public to observe the following safety tips when purchasing disinfectant alcohol:

- Pay attention to the product descriptions shown on labels, including the manufacturing date and the validity period;
- Avoid choosing disinfectant alcohol with unknown sources and limited information; and
- Purchase products from recognised brands at reputable shops.

This action was part of the "Guardian" operation, which had been running for 53 days as of yesterday (March 19) since its launch on January 27. More than 3 400 officers have been mobilised to conduct over 23 000 inspections at retail spots in various districts to ensure that common protective items sold in the market comply with the TD0 and the CGS0.

The "Guardian" operation will continue and Customs will carry on stepping up enforcement action to combat activities in violation of the relevant ordinances. The department will continue to make prompt public updates if irregularities are detected.

Customs reminds traders again not to take advantage of the current situation and not to sell products with false trade descriptions, and not to sell unsafe consumer goods. Immediate law enforcement action will be taken against the contravention of relevant ordinances and prosecutions will be made with sufficient evidence.

Under the TD0, any person who supplies goods with a false trade description in the course of trade or business, or is in possession of any goods for sale with a false trade description, commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Under the CGS0, it is an offence to import, manufacture or supply consumer goods unless the goods comply with the general safety requirements for consumer goods. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year on first conviction, and \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years on a subsequent conviction.

Members of the public may report any suspected violation of the TD0 or the CGS0 to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



OGCIO sends out SMS messages for activating "StayHomeSafe" mobile app

A spokesman for the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) said that SMS messages to activate the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app have already been sent out to inbound travellers arriving at Hong Kong via the Hong Kong International Airport by noon today (March 20).

From March 19 till noon today, over 7 400 new monitoring wristbands in supporting compulsory quarantine measures were distributed to persons arriving at the Hong Kong International Airport to use in pair with the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app.

"It took some time to rationalise the procedures on the very first day when we use the new monitoring wristbands with the mobile app. As such, some subject to quarantine may not be able to receive the PIN via SMS messages in short time. With more manpower deployed and workflow streamlined, the OGCIO has already sent out SMS messages to all persons entering Hong Kong via the airport by noon today," the spokesman said.

Please call hotline at 5394 3150 if any person under quarantine has yet to receive SMS messages or has any enquiries on the mobile app.

Government welcomes approval of concessionary low-interest loan with 100 per cent guarantee commitment by Finance Committee

The Government welcomed the approval of a new loan guarantee commitment of \$20 billion under the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau to introduce a new Special 100 per cent Guarantee Product under the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme (SFGS) by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council today (March 20). The Government plans to roll out the new product within April this year to provide timely assistance to tide those enterprises in need over during this difficult time.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, said, "The COVID-19 infections have dealt a severe blow to the economic activities and business sentiment in Hong Kong. Many enterprises suffer from a further plunge in business turnover, resulting in a liquidity problem. The situation is particularly acute amongst the small and medium enterprises (SMEs). There is an urgent need to further enhance the assistance to SMEs, thereby reducing business closures and layoffs.

"The Government will provide a 100 per cent guarantee for approved loans taken out by eligible enterprises. In other words, loans that originate from banks will be transferred to the Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation Limited after drawdowns, and all default risks will be borne by the Government with the provision of a 100 per cent guarantee, greatly enhancing the chances for enterprises in securing loans. The Government will provide a total loan guarantee commitment of \$20 billion," he said.

"The application requirements and procedures have also been simplified. Banks need to check mainly the eligibility of loan applicants when processing the applications. With a low interest rate fixed at Prime Rate minus 2.5 per cent per annum, guarantee fees waived and an option for a principal moratorium for the first six months, the new guarantee product will alleviate the burden of SMEs."

Details of the Special 100 per cent Guarantee Product are set out in the Annex.

Generally SMEs have difficulty in obtaining commercial loans due to their relatively small capacity. With the introduction of the 80 per cent and 90 per cent guarantee products under the SFGS in May 2012 and December 2019 respectively, more than 17 800 applications have been approved so far, involving a total loan amount of over \$74 billion, helping nearly 10 000 enterprises in tackling their liquidity problem.

On the other hand, to assist travel agents to tackle financial

difficulties, the Government has established the Travel Agents Subsidy Scheme under the Anti-epidemic Fund. Each eligible travel agent may receive a one-off subsidy of \$80,000. The Travel Agents Registry received over 1 700 registrations during the application period from February 21 to March 13. Amongst these registrations, 99 per cent of the travel agents have received the subsidy.