

# Government issues Red Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) on certain European countries (Schengen Area) and highlights public health risks under Red OTA on Egypt

In view of the health risks arising from the outbreak of the COVID-19 in Europe, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (March 13) issued the Red Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) on certain European countries (Schengen Area), including Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Principality of Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Republic of Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. Besides, the Government alerted the public about the outbreak of COVID-19 cases and associated health risks in Egypt under the Red OTA currently in force.

\* Schengen Area in Europe (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Principality of Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Republic of Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland)

In view of the persistent and rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Europe, the Government has decided to issue the Red OTA on the certain European countries, known as the Schengen Area, including Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Principality of Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Republic of Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, based on public health considerations.

\* Egypt

The HKSAR Government had issued the Red OTA on Egypt on August 29, 2014 due to safety concerns. In view of the persistent and rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Egypt in the past few days, the Government alerted the public about the outbreak of COVID-19 cases and associated public health risks in Egypt under the existing Red OTA. The existing Red OTA remains in force.

The Red OTA urges members of the public planning to travel to the aforementioned countries to adjust travel plans and avoid non-essential travel. In general, members of the public are advised to consider delaying all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

For those who are already in the aforementioned countries, they should:

- pay attention to announcements by local authorities;
- put on a surgical mask all the time;
- avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities and crowded places;
- avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms;
- wear a surgical mask and inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once if experiencing a fever or cough; and
- perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing.

If it is unavoidable to travel to the aforementioned countries, the public should pay close attention to the latest situation of COVID-19 and the corresponding travel health advice issued by the Department of Health (DH). If assistance is needed, they may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) at (852) 1868 or contact the Chinese Embassy in respective countries at their consular protection hotline listed below:

Country	Consular Protection Hotline
Austria	(43) 68120192638
Belgium	(32) 27632006
Czech Republic	(420) 728939951
Denmark	(45) 39460866
Egypt	(20) 2-27363556
Estonia	(372) 5114016
Finland	(358) 40 8677838
France	(33) 153758840
Germany	(49) 3027588551
Greece	(30) 6973730680
Hungary	(36) 30-6925414
Iceland	(354) 893 2688
Italy	(39) 3939110852
Latvia	(371) 26189539
Principality of Liechtenstein	(41) 79 3070937
Lithuania	(370) 68607740
Luxembourg	(352) 621546555
Malta	(356) 77739008
The Netherlands	(31) 0684557449
Norway	(47) 93066621
Poland	(48) 506957563

Portugal	(351) 963355431
Slovak Republic	(421) 949 693 619
Republic of Slovenia	(386) 030640601
Spain	(34) 699089086
Sweden	(46) 0763383654
Switzerland	(41) 0764959218

After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of any recent travel history and any exposure to animals, and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong.

The Food and Health Bureau will closely monitor the situation. Any updates will be issued through the media, the Government's "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html)), the DH's webpage ([www.gov.hk/ncv](http://www.gov.hk/ncv)) and the Security Bureau's OTA webpage ([www.sb.gov.hk/eng/ota](http://www.sb.gov.hk/eng/ota)). Any enquiries on health information on COVID-19 may be addressed to the DH's hotline at (852) 2125 1122 (operating daily from 8am to midnight).

In addition, Hong Kong residents are encouraged to use the online Registration of Outbound Travel Information service ([www.gov.hk/roti](http://www.gov.hk/roti)) to register their contact details and itinerary when outside Hong Kong. The information provided allows the DH and AHU of the ImmD to disseminate practical information to them through appropriate means, including SMS on mobile phones, on a timely basis when necessary.

Apart from the aforementioned countries, the Government also issued the Red OTA on Iran, Korea, as well as Hokkaido in Japan, in light of the persistent and rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in these countries/regions.

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## **Airmail services to some destinations suspended or subject to delay**

Hongkong Post announced today (March 13) that, an updated list of destinations affected by the flight adjustments is as below. Airmail services to the following destinations are suspended or may be subject to delay:

Airmail services suspended

Service Type	Destination
Speedpost	Bahrain, Republic of Congo, Morocco, Senegal
Airmail (including Speedpost)	Saudi Arabia
Airmail (except Speedpost)	Dominican Republic, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Mali, Venezuela

Airmail services subject to delay (including Speedpost)

Asia	Mainland China, Israel, Japan, Maldives, Philippines, Korea and Taiwan
Europe	Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands and United Kingdom
North America	Canada and United States
Central and South America	Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Peru
Oceania	Australia and New Zealand

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## Savannah College of Art and Design (Hong Kong) to discontinue operation

The Government today (March 13) received notification from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) (Hong Kong) that starting from June 1, 2020, it would discontinue operation in its school campus at the Former North Kowloon Magistracy. The College would also not renew the related tenancy upon the expiry of the tenancy agreement on July 31, 2020.

A spokesman for the Government said, "We note the latest development plan of the College and respect its decision. We are grateful for the College's establishment of its Hong Kong campus, which has provided quality and world-class art and design post-secondary programmes for students since 2010, enabling the diversification of the tertiary education sector in Hong Kong and nurturing more local art and creative talents."

The spokesman added, "We understand that the SCAD has notified all the affected students and their parents of the decision, and that the College has formulated teach-out plans for their students. The College states that it is committed to ensuring all students complete their degree programmes, including options for students to transfer to two other campuses or pursue e-learning."

Self-financing post-secondary institutions enjoy a high degree of autonomy in administration. Their decisions on the teaching and operation arrangements are made after taking into consideration factors including the vision and mission of the school-sponsoring bodies and institutions, the demand for the relevant programmes, as well as the long-term development of the institutions. The arrangements should also be in the best interest of students.

The Government expects the SCAD to duly consider the interest of its students and staff members before making its teaching and operation arrangements. The Government will continue to maintain communication with the College on related matters, and follow up on other arrangements for students including teaching and learning.

Besides, the Government would take over the historic building after the expiry of the tenancy (i.e., on August 1, 2020) in accordance with the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement to ensure that the historic building is properly returned. The building will be put into Batch VI of the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (Revitalisation Scheme) to invite revitalisation proposals from non-profit-making organisations, details of which will be announced in due course.

The Former North Kowloon Magistracy is one of the projects under Batch I of the Revitalisation Scheme and has been revitalised into SCAD (Hong Kong) by the SCAD Foundation (Hong Kong) Limited which commenced operation in September 2010 for the provision of non-local higher education courses in art and design. Under the Revitalisation Scheme, the Grade 2 historic building was rehabilitated and properly preserved. This revitalisation project also received an Honourable Mention in the 2011 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

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## **Anti-epidemic Fund starts to disburse subsidies to fishermen**

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said today (March 13) that the Government provides subsidies to owners of fishing vessels or fish collector vessels with Mainland deckhands under the Anti-epidemic Fund to assist the fisheries industry to tackle the financial difficulties arising from the COVID-19 epidemic. The disbursement of subsidies to the vessel owners of the first batch of successful applications has started.

The starting date for application for the subsidy was March 5, and the deadline for applications is April 17. Thirty-five applications have been

approved involving subsidies of \$6,680,000. The department will process the remaining applications as soon as possible in order to provide assistance to eligible owners of fishing vessels or fish collector vessels.

Owners of fishing vessels or fish collector vessels who have not yet submitted application can download the application form from the AFCD's website ([www.afcd.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/what\\_fis/what\\_fis.html](http://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/what_fis/what_fis.html)). Applicants should submit the completed application forms together with copies of the required documents by mail to the Fisheries Enforcement and Special Projects Division of the AFCD at 8/F of Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon; or place them in the drop-in boxes at the lift lobby of Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, and Aberdeen, Castle Peak, and Shau Kei Wan Wholesale Fish Markets under the Fish Marketing Organization (FMO). Vessel owners who are not in Hong Kong can authorise an agent to handle their applications.

For more details, please contact the department at 2150 7100 or 2150 7108, or view the department's website ([www.afcd.gov.hk](http://www.afcd.gov.hk)).

Regarding the subsidies to live marine fish wholesale traders in the Wholesale Fish Markets under the FMO, the department has stepped up its efforts to process the related applications. Subsidies will be disbursed to the successful applicants as soon as possible.

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## [Public urged not to buy or consume liquids for e-cigarettes with undeclared nicotine content \(with photo\)](#)

The Department of Health (DH) today (March 13) appealed to the public not to buy or consume two liquids intended for use with electronic nicotine delivery systems, commonly known as e-cigarettes, as they were found to contain undeclared nicotine.

Acting upon a public complaint, the DH purchased samples of two liquid products for e-cigarettes, namely "c0«â™"â°0è¾fa0i2.0" and "ammoé¾âE-çfÿâ¼¹" at a retail store in Sham Shui Po for analysis. Test results from the Government Laboratory revealed that both samples contained nicotine, which is a Part 1 poison controlled under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap 138).

An operation was conducted against the above retail store today. During the operation, two men aged 61 years and 32 years were arrested by the Police

for suspected illegal sale and possession of Part 1 poisons and unregistered pharmaceutical products.

The DH's investigation is continuing.

According to the Ordinance, nicotine-containing e-cigarette products are classified as pharmaceutical products requiring registration with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong before they can be sold in Hong Kong. In addition, Part 1 poisons can only be sold at pharmacies under the supervision of a registered pharmacist. Illegal sale and possession of Part 1 poisons and unregistered pharmaceutical products are criminal offences. The maximum penalty for each offence is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment.

Members of the public who have purchased the above products should stop using them immediately and consult healthcare professionals for advice if they are in doubt or feeling unwell after use. They may submit the products to the DH's Drug Office in Room 1801, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, during office hours for disposal.

Smokers are advised to quit smoking for their own health and that of others. They are encouraged to make use of smoking cessation services through the DH's Integrated Smoking Cessation Hotline (1833 183). Information on smoking cessation can also be obtained from the DH's Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office website ([www.taco.gov.hk](http://www.taco.gov.hk)).

