

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

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (December 8) seized about 4.2 kilograms of suspected liquid cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$5.3 million at Hong Kong International Airport.

A male passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, yesterday. During Customs clearance, three personal hygiene product bottles containing suspected liquid cocaine were found inside his suitcase. The man was then arrested.

The arrested man, aged 21, has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. He will appear at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (December 10).

With the Christmas and New Year holidays approaching, there is a possibility that drug syndicates would need to traffic in dangerous drugs urgently in order to meet keen demand during the long holidays. Customs will further step up enforcement action to combat cross-boundary drug trafficking activities before the long holidays.

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](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).



---

## [Budget public consultation launched](#)

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government today (December 9) commenced the public consultation exercise for the 2020-21 Budget.

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, said, "Affected by the global economic slowdown, the adverse impact of China-US trade tensions and the series of local social incidents that often include violence, Hong Kong's economy has entered into a recession. A shadow looms over our economic prospects and the outlook for the next year is full of challenges. In preparing the 2020-21 Budget, I will adopt a strategic and forward-looking approach, with a view to 'support enterprises, safeguard jobs, stimulate the economy and smoothen livelihoods'. I sincerely invite members of the community to express their views and offer their insights to this Budget. This way, together we can help Hong Kong move forward."

To facilitate the expression of views by the community, the Government has introduced various channels for collecting opinions. Members of the public can find relevant information at the website [www.budget.gov.hk](http://www.budget.gov.hk) and share their comments through the said website, the dedicated Facebook page for the Budget ([www.facebook.com/Budget20to21](https://www.facebook.com/Budget20to21)), by email ([budget@fstb.gov.hk](mailto:budget@fstb.gov.hk)), by phone (2810 3768), by fax (2147 5770) or by post (Budget Consultation Support Team, 24/F, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong).

---

## [Hospital Authority announces laboratory test product incident](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for the Hospital Authority (HA) today (December 9) announced a laboratory test product incident:

The HA received notification from medical device manufacturer bio Merieux that two batches of varicella zoster virus test kits may give false positive results due to invalid calibration. As a result, the tests may not give accurate results on immunity against varicella zoster virus, which causes chickenpox.

Upon receiving the notification, the HA immediately suspended use of the batches of test kits concerned, and switched to other batches. The affected blood samples were also traced.

Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH), Hong Kong Children's Hospital (HKCH) and Kowloon West Cluster (KWC) had used the batches of test kits concerned, involving 411 people. TMH and HKCH repeated the tests for all 249 blood samples and the results were consistent. Among the 162 samples in KWC, 11 were from patients. Nine patients have been arranged to return to hospital to repeat the test, while the other two patients have had other confirmatory tests and retesting would not be needed. The remaining 151 samples belong to

hospital staff, performed for recruitment body checking and post-exposure contact tracing. The hospital will contact them to repeat the tests accordingly. If indicated, chickenpox vaccination will be arranged for the staff according to infection control protocols.

The HA is concerned about the incident and will continue to follow up with the product manufacturer. The HA will also liaise closely with the Department of Health on the latest developments.

---

## **Two restaurants in Western district fined for illegally emitting excessive cooking fumes**

Two restaurants, namely 11 Westside on Davis Street and Twelve Flavors on Sands Street in Kennedy Town, violated the requirements of the relevant statutory notices issued by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) by failing to reduce excessive cooking fume emissions. The restaurants were convicted and fined a total of \$20,000 at Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (December 9) and on November 11 respectively for contravening the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO).

During inspections targeting air pollution and nuisance caused by cooking fumes emitted by restaurants, EPD enforcement officers found that the two restaurants had failed to appropriately install or repair cooking fume control equipment and were emitting excessive cooking fumes and causing nuisance to residents nearby. The EPD then issued statutory notices under the APCO requiring the restaurants to install and repair cooking fume control equipment by a deadline with a view to reducing cooking fume emissions. Subsequently, the two restaurants were prosecuted by the EPD as they failed to appropriately install or repair cooking fume control equipment by the deadline, thereby violating the requirements of the notices. In addition, 11 Westside was convicted of an offence of the same kind in April this year.

The EPD is very concerned that 11 Westside violated the requirements of a statutory notice again and will continue to liaise with the company's management on a solution. The EPD will consider initiating prosecutions against the company directors concerned if the restaurant is found violating the requirements of a statutory notice again in future.

According to the APCO, it is an offence if restaurant operators do not comply with the requirements of a statutory notice and do not adopt effective remedial measures to abate excessive cooking fume emissions within a specified time limit. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000. A maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed on a second or subsequent conviction.

An EPD spokesman reminded members of the food business that they should properly design and install effective air pollution control equipment such as electrostatic precipitators in the kitchens of food premises before their restaurants start operation. This should help them avoid emitting excessive cooking fumes and being prosecuted by the EPD, and prevent technical difficulties as well as additional costs for installing the equipment after the opening of their restaurants. In addition, restaurant operators have the obligation to arrange for experienced technicians to clean, check and repair their air pollution control equipment regularly with a view to ensuring that no excessive fumes or odours would be emitted, causing nuisance to residents nearby.

The EPD has drawn up guidelines ([www.epd.gov.hk/epd/sites/default/files/epd/english/environmentinhk/air/guide\\_ref/files/pamphlet\\_oilfume\\_eng.pdf](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/sites/default/files/epd/english/environmentinhk/air/guide_ref/files/pamphlet_oilfume_eng.pdf)) to inform members of the industry on the requirements for restaurants and help improve their performance in terms of environmental protection. These guidelines also help members of the industry know more about and use appropriate air pollution control equipment with a view to controlling and reducing cooking fume and odour emissions. In addition, the department has provided members of the industry with up-to-date information about environmental protection through talks of various kinds.

---

## Quarterly business receipts indices for service industries for third quarter of 2019

Business receipts in value terms of many major service industries showed decreases of different magnitudes in the third quarter of 2019 when compared with the third quarter of 2018, according to the provisional figures of business receipts indices released today (December 9) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD).

Comparing the third quarter of 2019 with the third quarter of 2018, double-digit decreases were recorded in business receipts of the accommodation services (-19.1%), retail (-17.5%), wholesale (-12.2%) and food services (-11.7%) industries.

On the other hand, the insurance industry recorded an increase of 6.8% in business receipts during the same period, followed by the banking (+5.5%) and courier (+5.0%) industries.

Analysed by service domain, business receipts of the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain decreased by 27.8% year-on-year during the same period, while those of the computer and information technology services

domain also decreased by 8.2% year-on-year.

On a seasonally adjusted quarter-to-quarter comparison, business receipts in value terms of almost all major service industries recorded decreases of different magnitudes in the third quarter of 2019 when compared with the second quarter of 2019. In particular, double-digit decreases were recorded in business receipts of the accommodation services (-20.4%), retail (-15.1%), real estate (-14.0%) and food services (-10.6%) industries. On the other hand, business receipts of the banking industry increased by 1.4% during the same period.

Comparing the third quarter of 2019 with the second quarter of 2019 and on a seasonally adjusted basis, business receipts of the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain decreased by 29.7%, while those of the computer and information technology services domain also decreased by 0.8%.

### Commentary

A Government spokesman noted that business receipts of many of the major service industries declined amid the notable economic downturn in the third quarter. Hard hit by the local social incidents involving violence, business receipts of the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain experienced the largest year-on-year fall since the SARS episode in 2003. As trading activities shrank in the face of the austere external environment and weaker demand for imports, business receipts of the import/export trade and wholesale industries also recorded visible declines.

The spokesman further pointed out that soft global economic outlook with mounting uncertainties and the local social incidents will continue to weigh on the service industries in the near term. In particular, ending violence and restoring social order are of utmost importance to the recovery of the consumption- and tourism-related industries. The Government will continue to monitor the developments closely.

### Further information

Table 1 presents the business receipts indices and their corresponding year-on-year rates of change in respect of selected service industries and service domains for the recent five quarters, while Table 2 shows the corresponding quarter-to-quarter rates of change in the business receipts indices for the recent five quarters based on the seasonally adjusted series.

The revised figures of business receipts indices for the third quarter of 2019 will be released at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp70.jsp?subjectID=7&tableID=093&ID=0&productType=8](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp70.jsp?subjectID=7&tableID=093&ID=0&productType=8)) and relevant publications of the C&SD starting from January 20, 2020.

Data for compiling the business receipts indices are mainly based on the Quarterly Survey of Service Industries conducted by the C&SD, supplemented by relevant data provided by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

A service domain differs from a service industry in that it comprises those economic activities which straddle different industries but are somehow related to a common theme. It may include all activities carried out by all establishments in a service industry that is closely related to the domain. For a service industry that is less closely related, however, only a portion of the establishments in the industry or even only part of the economic activities of the establishments is related to the domain. Taking the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain as an example, it includes all services of hotels and travel agents, and some (those involving visitors as customers) but not all of the services of restaurants, retailers and transport operators.

The classification of service industries follows the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification Version 2.0, which is used in various economic surveys for classifying economic units into different industry classes.

More detailed statistics are given in the report "Quarterly Business Receipts Indices for Service Industries, Third Quarter 2019". Users can download this publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp70.jsp?productCode=B1080006](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp70.jsp?productCode=B1080006)).

Members of the public who have enquiries about the business receipts indices may contact the Business Services Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7267 or email : [business-receipts@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:business-receipts@censtatd.gov.hk)).