

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (July 9) seized about 18 000 suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$50,000 and a duty potential of about \$30,000 in Yau Ma Tei.

During an anti-illicit cigarette operation in Yau Ma Tei yesterday evening, Customs officers intercepted a man and a woman and found about 1 000 suspected illicit cigarettes in the man's possession. Later, Customs officers further seized about 17 000 suspected illicit cigarettes from the woman's flat in the district.

The 29-year-old man and 35-year-old woman were arrested. Investigation is ongoing.

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 Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Speech by S for IT at STARTIT.asia Hong Kong 3rd Edition Startup & Ecosystem Mixer (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, at the STARTIT.asia Hong Kong 3rd Edition Startup &

Ecosystem Mixer today (July 10):

Consul General (Consul General of Italy in Hong Kong, Mr Clemente Contestabile), Mr Vitale (Executive Committee Member of the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and Macao, Mr Alessandro Vitale), distinguished guests, friends, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. A warm welcome to the Italian entrepreneurs. Welcome to Hong Kong. It is a great honour and pleasure for me to join STARTIT.asia once again.

To me, STARTIT.asia provides an excellent platform for the Italian start-ups to familiarise themselves with, and to experience, the fast-paced Asian business environment. It also enables the Italian entrepreneurs and investors to discover the benefits of their presence in Hong Kong, which help pave the way for expanding their business exposure across Asia and into Mainland China.

Italy, on top of being the world's design and fashion capital, is now rising as an innovation and technology hub. Its economy, being the eighth largest in the world, is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises. This is just like Hong Kong.

Hong Kong was home to more than 2 600 innovation and technology start-ups in 2018, which was up 18 per cent from 2017. Our start-up community is very robust and international, with about 35 per cent of the founders coming from outside of Hong Kong. The Government of the Hong Kong SAR has been scaling up its investment and support in the past three years, aiming to create a vibrant innovation and technology ecosystem in Hong Kong.

Let's look at some numbers. We've seen a phenomenal growth of venture capital investment in Hong Kong-based start-ups over the past few years. In 2014, only around HK\$1.2 billion venture capital funding was invested in our start-ups. In just four years' time in 2018, this amount went up to some HK\$18 billion, 13 times higher. The depth and liquidity of our capital market also ensure that Hong Kong's innovation and technology sector's financing needs can be well met. The Hong Kong Stock Exchange ranked first globally in six of the past 10 years on IPO funding raised. In 2018, we raised over HK\$288 billion through IPOs, beating both New York Stock Exchange and NASDAQ as the world's top IPO venue.

Last year, we enhanced our listing requirements in order to accommodate the emerging and innovative companies with weighted voting rights structure and pre-revenue biotechnology listing, making Hong Kong even more attractive to the new technology companies for public fund raising.

Indeed, industries like fashion and retail are applying innovation and technology to enhance competitiveness and bring new momentum and growth to their business. The Government of the Hong Kong SAR has been supporting the R&D in fashion and textile industries by funding the establishment of the Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel, or known as HKRITA,

since 2006.

I have witnessed the efforts of HKRITA in driving sustainability of the textile and apparel industry by putting award-winning recycling technologies into practice. The recycling garment production line, which can turn old garments into new wearable clothing, won a Gold Medal at the 47th International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva. I am very much impressed by HKRITA's commitment to pursue commercialisation of R&D results in the fashion and retail sector, helping Hong Kong's sustainable development and re-industrialisation.

The Policy Address last year proposed an allocation of HK\$2 billion to facilitate the advanced manufacturing sector to set up operations in Hong Kong. Another HK\$2 billion will be injected to launch the Re-industrialisation Funding Scheme to subsidise manufacturers on a matching basis to help them set up captive smart production lines in Hong Kong. We believe that these initiatives for developing high-end and high value-added production will help diversify and grow Hong Kong's economy in the long run.

To encourage more private venture capital funds to invest in Hong Kong start-ups, we have established a HK\$2 billion Innovation and Technology Venture Fund to co-invest with the private VCs. In addition, another HK\$7 billion was provided to the Hong Kong Science Park to enhance support for its tenants and incubatees. Up to 300 per cent super tax deduction on R&D expenses, without upper limit, is now available to all Hong Kong companies. All in all, the Hong Kong SAR Government has already invested over HK\$100 billion in innovation and technology development during the past three years. There is more to come. Hong Kong's innovation and technology ecosystem is more robust than it ever has been.

Once again, welcome to Hong Kong. I hope some or all of the STARTIT.asia entrepreneurs this year will join Hong Kong's growing tech start-up ecosystem. Let us drive the innovation and technology development in Hong Kong and move ahead together.

Thank you very much.

HKMA and SASAC hold second “Connecting Belt & Road, Capturing Opportunities Together” High-level Roundtable (with photos)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council (SASAC) jointly held the second "Connecting Belt & Road, Capturing Opportunities Together" High-level Roundtable on July 9 and 10 in Hong Kong to discuss how Central State-owned Enterprises (CSoEs) can leverage on Hong Kong's advantages to facilitate their overseas investment and business expansion.

The roundtable focused on how CSoEs could leverage on Hong Kong's strategic role in Mainland China's reform and opening up as well as its unique advantages to "go out" for investment and expanding business overseas. The participants also exchanged with leading international institutional investors their experiences and challenges in infrastructure projects investment in emerging markets, and explored possible collaborative approaches and the latest global trends. They also looked into how Hong Kong could serve as a platform to raise the "environmental, social and governance" standards of infrastructure projects overseas. The event brought together some 30 senior executives from SASAC and six CSoEs, as well as high-level representatives from Hong Kong's financial and professional service sectors.

The Chief Executive of the HKMA, Mr Norman Chan, said, "With a mature capital market and world-class professional services, Hong Kong provides enterprises with well-diversified financing channels, and has always been the preferred platform for Mainland enterprises' to 'go out'. This is the second High-level Roundtable we co-organised with SASAC. We highly appreciate SASAC in supporting and encouraging CSoEs to make greater use of Hong Kong as a platform for expanding business overseas. We look forward to fostering closer collaboration between CSoEs and the Hong Kong business community to explore development opportunities together."

The Vice Chairman of the SASAC, Ms Zhao Aiming, said, "In the new era of China's reform and opening up, Hong Kong has unique advantages in facilitating the CSoEs to 'go out', evolve as world-class and globally competitive enterprises, and shape the new landscape of opening up with emphasis on the Belt and Road development. Leveraging its position as an international financial, shipping and trading centre, with its well-developed financial markets, sophisticated risk management services, and conducive tax policies, Hong Kong can play an irreplaceable role in fostering a favourable environment and broadening new horizons for the CSoEs to achieve market-oriented reforms, high-level openness and high-quality development. We hope that the CSoEs and Hong Kong could further strengthen their strategic ties and explore opportunities in Belt and Road projects with demonstrative effects; promote greater cooperation to develop the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area; further deepen collaborations to support enterprises in becoming more competitive globally, and at the same time, consolidating and enhancing Hong Kong's status as an international financial, trading and shipping centre. This enables CSoEs and Hong Kong to leverage each other's potentials and strengths, working together collaboratively in serving the needs of the country, realising win-win opportunities, and making greater contribution by jointly promoting the sustainable development of the Belt and Road Initiative."



Music concert production company and its director convicted for supplying services with false trade descriptions applied

A music concert production company and its female director were respectively fined \$10,000 and sentenced to 80 hours of community service today (July 10) after conviction for supplying services with false trade descriptions applied, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO), on June 19 at Kowloon City Magistrates' Court.

Hong Kong Customs earlier received information alleging that a music concert production company had engaged in unfair trade practices in the course of promoting music concerts.

After investigation, it was revealed that the company and its director falsely claimed on the promotional posters that the concerts were supported by a well-known organisation and with participation of two famous musicians.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to procure services at reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any trader who applies a false trade description to a service supplied to a consumer commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

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

CHP investigates two outbreaks of acute gastroenteritis

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (July 10) investigating two outbreaks of acute gastroenteritis (AGE) involving a kindergarten in Happy Valley and a primary school in Tsuen Wan, and hence reminded the public and management of institutions to maintain personal and environmental hygiene against AGE.

The outbreak at the kindergarten in Happy Valley involves six boys and 13 girls aged 3 to 5 and two staff members, who developed vomiting and diarrhoea since July 7. All of them sought medical attention but none required hospitalisation. They have all along been in a stable condition.

The outbreak at the primary school in Tsuen Wan involves 12 boys and 19 girls aged 6 to 13, who developed vomiting, diarrhoea and fever since July 8. Among them, 22 sought medical attention and two required hospitalisation. They have all along been in a stable condition.

Officers of the CHP have conducted site visits and provided health advice to the staff of the schools concerning proper and thorough disinfection, proper disposal of vomitus, and personal and environmental hygiene. The schools have been put under medical surveillance.

The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP advised members of the public to take heed of the following preventive measures against gastroenteritis:

- Ensure proper personal hygiene;
- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food and eating, after using the toilet or after changing diapers;
- Wear gloves when disposing of vomitus or faecal matter, and wash hands afterwards;
- Clean and disinfect contaminated areas or items promptly and thoroughly with diluted household bleach (by adding one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite to 49 parts of water). Wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Pay attention to food hygiene;
- Use separate utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Avoid food that is not thoroughly cooked;
- Drink boiled water; and
- Do not patronise unlicensed food premises or food stalls.

The public may visit the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk) or call the

Health Education Hotline (2833 0111) for more information.