

LegCo Secretariat to lift Red alert

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Secretariat announced that the Red alert will be lifted at 8am on Thursday (July 11).

The Office Block of the LegCo Complex will be reopened. The Main Lobby and the conference facilities in the Complex will be closed for repair works. Holders of a valid admission pass may enter the Complex via the Public Entrance 2 and the Footbridge Entrance.

Meanwhile, all guided tours and services to the public in the Complex, including the Public Complaints Office, the LegCo Library, Archives and Children's Corner, remain suspended until further notice.

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Hong Kong Customs combats supply of antique coin by auction house with false trade description

Hong Kong Customs today (July 9) arrested a director of an auction house

suspected of having applied a false trade description to an auction item, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TD0).

Customs earlier received information alleging that an auction house held an auction of an antique coin with an alleged authentication label applied. The relevant authentication company later certified that the authentication label was fake.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested a 50-year-old male director of the auction house. A 59-year-old man who was the auction consignor of the coin was also arrested earlier.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TD0 and consumers to purchase products at reputable shops.

Under the TD0, any person who supplies goods with false trade description, or 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.

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

Managers of unlicensed guesthouses fined

A man and a woman were fined \$6,000 each at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts and the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (July 9) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in August and December last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected two suspected unlicensed guesthouses on King's Road in North Point and Pan Chung Road in Tai Po. During the inspections, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented rooms in these guesthouses on a daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, these guesthouses did not possess licences under the Ordinance on the days of inspection. The man and woman responsible for managing the premises were charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

Public housing applicant convicted by court for false statement

A spokesman for the Housing Department (HD) today (July 9) said that the HD spares no effort in combating false declaration made during application for public housing. A public rental housing (PRH) applicant and her husband, who concealed the net asset value of their bank deposits and investments over \$700,000, were convicted by the court yesterday (July 8) with the offence of making false statement knowingly.

In this case, the applicant submitted a PRH application form to the HD around March 2018 on which she declared the net asset value of her bank deposits was \$20,000 and that of her investments was about \$1,900, and her husband declared that he did not have any assets. In the subsequent investigation in May 2018, the HD unveiled that, at the material time, the applicant had bank deposits of around \$680,000 and several insurance policies with a cash value of about \$58,000, and her husband intentionally concealed the asset value of his bank deposits and investments of about \$10,000.

Both defendants were previously convicted by the presiding magistrate in Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts, who considered a fine as punishment could not reflect gravity of the offence. After considering their probation reports by the Court, the first defendant was ordered to pay a total fine of \$8,000, and the second defendant was sentenced to 90 hours of community service order yesterday.

The spokesman reminded that all PRH applicants making false statement to the Hong Kong Housing Authority during PRH application shall be guilty of an offence, contrary to section 26(1)(c) of the Housing Ordinance. The maximum penalty is a \$50,000 fine and imprisonment for six months while the PRH application will also be cancelled.