

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cocaine (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (December 26) seized about 600 grams of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$680,000 at Hong Kong International Airport.

A female passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Sao Paulo, Brazil via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia yesterday afternoon. During Customs clearance, the batch of suspected cocaine was found concealed inside the interlining of the jacket worn by her and three pieces of clothes inside her baggage. The woman was then arrested.

The arrested woman, aged 19, has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. She will appear at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (December 28).

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



Dried shrimp sample and fresh pork sample found to contain sulphur

dioxide

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (December 27) that a loose-packed dried shrimp sample was found to contain a preservative, sulphur dioxide, at a level exceeding the legal limit, and a fresh pork sample was found to contain sulphur dioxide which is not permitted to be used in fresh meat. The CFS is following up on the cases.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "Subsequent to announcing earlier that a dried shrimp sample taken from a retail outlet in Tin Shui Wai was found to contain excessive sulphur dioxide, and a fresh pork sample taken from a fresh provision shop in Sha Tin was detected with sulphur dioxide, the CFS took a dried shrimp sample of the same kind and another fresh pork sample from the two premises respectively for testing during follow-up investigations. Similar irregularities were detected. The dried shrimp sample was detected with sulphur dioxide at a level of 72 parts per million (ppm), exceeding the legal limit of 30 ppm while the fresh pork sample was found to contain the preservative at a level of 14 ppm."

The spokesman said that according to the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap 132BD), it is an offence to add sulphur dioxide to fresh or chilled meat. Should preservatives be added to food allowed with such addition, the use must comply with the Regulation. Offenders are liable to a maximum penalty of \$50,000 fine and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

The CFS is tracing the sources of the affected products. Should there be sufficient evidence, prosecution will be instituted.

Sulphur dioxide is a commonly used preservative in a variety of foods including dried vegetables, dried fruits, pickled vegetables, salted fish products and meat products such as sausages and grilled burgers. Individual meat traders have been found illegally using sulphur dioxide to make meat look fresher. This preservative is of low toxicity. As it is water soluble, most of it can be removed through washing and cooking. However, susceptible individuals who are allergic to this preservative may experience breathing difficulties, headache and nausea.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the cases and take appropriate action. Investigation is on-going.

Smart Identity Card Replacement

Centres commenced operation

Nine newly established Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres in Hong Kong commenced operation today (December 27).

The Immigration Department (ImmD) began the first phase of the territory-wide identity card replacement exercise, which is from today to March 30 next year, by first replacing the smart Hong Kong identity cards (HKICs) of members of the Immigration Service, police officers and labour inspectors, allowing them to get familiar with the features of new smart HKICs for fighting against illegal immigration and illegal employment. Also, the Chief Executive, members of the Executive Council and the Legislative Council, and Principal Officials have an option to replace their existing smart HKICs at this phase so as to promote the new smart HKICs.

During the second phase, which is from January 21 to March 30 next year, ImmD will arrange Hong Kong residents who were born in 1985 or 1986 to replace their existing smart HKICs. Afterwards, during the third phase, which is from April 1 to June 1 next year, Hong Kong residents who were born in 1968 or 1969 will be arranged to replace their smart HKICs. ImmD will announce the replacement exercise timetable for other age groups in due course.

The ImmD appeals to members of the public to use the website www.gov.hk/newicbooking, ImmD Mobile App, or 24-hour telephone booking hotline 2121 1234 for booking and encourages applicants to pre-fill the form via the Internet or ImmD Mobile App in order to further enhance the efficiency and convenience of the replacement process. For details of the new smart HKICs, members of the public may visit the website www.smartid.gov.hk.

For enquiries, please contact ImmD by calling the enquiry hotline at 2824 6111, by fax to 2877 7711 or by email to enquiry@immd.gov.hk.

Labour Department highly concerned about fatal work accident today

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about the work accident that happened in Yau Tong in the afternoon today (December 27), in which a male scaffolding worker fell from the external wall of a residential building and sustained fatal injury. The LD is saddened by the death of the worker and has expressed its deepest sympathy to the victim's family.

The LD's spokesman said, "We commenced immediate on-site investigation

as soon as we were notified of the accident and issued suspension notices to the contractors/employer involved to suspend the use, erection, alteration and dismantling of the truss-out scaffold concerned. The contractors/employer cannot resume the work process until the LD is satisfied that measures to abate the relevant risk have been taken.

"We will complete investigation as soon as possible to identify the cause of the accident, ascertain the liability of the duty holders and recommend improvement measures. We will take actions pursuant to the law if there is any violation of the work safety legislation."

The general duty provisions of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance require employers to provide safe working environments, safe plant and safe systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the above provisions are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for six months.

In regard to today's accident, the LD will issue a Work Safety Alert through its website and email, giving a brief account of the accident concerned to duty holders, workers' unions, professional bodies of safety practitioners and others, and reminding the industry of the importance of following safety precautionary measures to prevent recurrence of similar accidents.

The LD will also remind the employer concerned of the liability for employees' compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, assist family members of the deceased to claim employees' compensation and closely follow up on the case. For those with financial difficulties, the LD will assist them to apply for appropriate emergency funds. Subject to the needs and wishes of family members of the deceased, the LD will also liaise with the Social Welfare Department for financial or other assistance.

For the sake of securing the safety and health of employees at work, the LD appeals to employers to provide plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health. Employees should co-operate with their employers, adopt all safety measures and use personal protective equipment provided properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of other workers.

Public urged not to buy or consume slimming product with undeclared controlled ingredients (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (December 27) appealed to the public

not to buy or consume a slimming product named "BBS Super Fast" as it was found to contain undeclared and controlled drug ingredients that might be dangerous to health.

â€‹ Following a public enquiry, the DH collected a sample of the above product from the market for analysis. Test results from the Government Laboratory revealed that the sample contains sibutramine, fluoxetine and orlistat, which are all Part 1 poisons under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap 138) (the Ordinance).

â€‹ The DH's investigation is continuing.

â€‹ Sibutramine was once used as an appetite suppressant. Since November 2010, products containing sibutramine have been banned in Hong Kong because of increased cardiovascular risk. Fluoxetine is used for treatment of mood disorder and may cause hallucination and insomnia. Meanwhile, orlistat is used for the treatment of obesity. Its side-effects include faecal urgency, fatty stool, increased frequency of defecation, faecal incontinence, headache and abdominal pain. Severe liver injuries may also be induced.

â€‹ According to the Ordinance, all pharmaceutical products must be registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong before they can be legally sold in the market. Part 1 poisons could only be sold at pharmacy under the supervision of a registered pharmacist. Illegal sale or 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.

â€‹ The DH spokesman strongly urged members of the public not to buy products of unknown or doubtful composition, or to consume products from unknown sources. All registered pharmaceutical products should carry a Hong Kong registration number on the package in the format HK-XXXXX. Safety, quality and efficacy of unregistered pharmaceutical products are not guaranteed.

â€‹ Weight control should be achieved through a balanced diet and appropriate exercise. The public should consult healthcare professionals before using any medication for weight control.

â€‹ The public may visit the Drug Office's pages for health messages on [weight control and slimming products](#) and [information on slimming products with undeclared Western drug ingredients](#).

â€‹ People who have purchased the product should stop taking it immediately. They can also submit the product to the Drug Office of the DH at Room 1856, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, during office hours for disposal.

