

# Office of The Ombudsman announces result of direct investigation (with photo)

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Ms Connie Lau, today (November 14) announced the completion of a direct investigation into the regulation of illegal burials outside permitted burial grounds (burials outside PBGs) by the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the Lands Department (LandsD).

This is the Office's second direct investigation into the issues regarding management of PBGs by government authorities, following the direct investigation report on "Management of Permitted Burial Grounds" published in 2015.

In this investigation, the Office focused on examining the inadequacies in the regulation of burials outside PBGs by the HAD and the LandsD. The investigation found that the departments did not have effective measures in place to ensure that indigenous villagers buried the deceased within PBGs. As there are no boundary markers for most PBGs, and the departments would not verify on-site the burial locations before approving the burial applications, incidents of burials outside PBGs have occurred from time to time.

The HAD may revoke the Burial Certificate for cases of burials outside PBGs, but this would entail the removal of the remains of the deceased. In practice, the departments concerned would take into account the fact that relocation of a grave is against the tradition of letting the deceased rest in peace. As a result, in dealing with burials outside PBGs, the departments concerned would only repeatedly advise the offenders to relocate the graves to PBGs without any further enforcement actions, thereby acquiescing to continued illegal occupation of government land without any consequences. The Office considered that the departments should introduce punitive measures against the offenders, so as to avoid giving the public an impression that some offenders in illegal burial cases received preferential treatment and were not required to pay any price for illegal occupation of government land.

To sum up, this investigation report has revealed that the departments concerned have the following three major inadequacies in the regulation of burials outside PBGs:

- (1) failing to formulate comprehensive and effective measures to ensure that the burial locations are correct;
- (2) a lax attitude in following up on cases of burials outside PBGs; and
- (3) allowing offenders to continue to violate the stipulated conditions at no cost.

In light of this, the Office has recommended that the HAD and the LandsD formulate specific measures to ensure that indigenous villagers are, before burying the deceased, fully aware of the boundaries of PBGs, and conduct site inspections with the holders of Burial Certificates in order to confirm the burial locations in advance. The departments should also explore introducing punitive measures to make those who illegally occupy government land pay for their misdeeds.

The investigation report has been uploaded to the Office of The Ombudsman website at [www.ombudsman.hk](http://www.ombudsman.hk) for public viewing.



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## Correctional officers stop assault on remand person in custody

Correctional officers stopped three remand persons in custody from assaulting another remand person in custody at Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre yesterday (November 13).

At 2.06pm yesterday, three male persons in custody attacked another male person in custody inside the exercise yard. Officers at the scene immediately stopped the assailants.

The victim sustained head injury. After examination and treatment by the medical officer of the institution hospital, he was transferred to a public hospital for further treatment.

The case has been reported to the Police for investigation.

The three assailants were remanded for the offence of murder and trafficking in dangerous drug respectively.

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## Red flag hoisted at Silverstrand Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (November 14) that due to big waves, red flag has been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

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## Regional Traffic Day of Hong Kong Island

Police yesterday (November 13) held the Regional Traffic Day on the Hong Kong Island to raise public awareness of road safety through stringent enforcement actions.

A total of 344 officers from Traffic Hong Kong Island and District Traffic Teams of Eastern, Wan Chai, Central and Western Districts were deployed to take enforcement actions at traffic black spots on the Hong Kong Island.

The operation resulted in the issue of 1,477 fixed penalty tickets and 73 summonses. Among the fixed penalty tickets and summonses issued, a total of 1,297 fixed penalty tickets were issued for illegal parking and the rest were for other traffic offences.

Police figures revealed that a total of 2,419 traffic accidents involving casualties occurred on the Hong Kong Island in the first ten months of 2018, of which involved 651 pedestrian injuries.

Police will continue to take regular enforcement actions to ensure road safety.

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## Speech by CS at Operation Santa Claus

## 2018 launch ceremony (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at the launch ceremony for Operation Santa Claus 2018 at Tai Kwun this evening (November 13):

Gary (Chief Executive Officer of South China Morning Post, Mr Gary Liu), Ka-wing (Director of Broadcasting, Mr Leung Ka-wing), ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my honour to join you all here tonight for the launch of this year's Operation Santa Claus.

The legend of Santa Claus goes back to the fourth century, to a Christian bishop named Nicholas. Saint Nicholas, as he eventually became, was a man known for his generosity, for giving gifts to the poor and needy.

The legend of Operation Santa Claus does not go back quite that far. It began in 1988, through the efforts of two media corporations, the South China Morning Post (SCMP) and Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), with deep and longstanding community roots. Thanks to their unwavering commitment, Operation Santa Claus has become a cherished Hong Kong institution.

To date, Operation Santa Claus has raised a remarkable HK\$275 million, including well over HK\$16 million last year. It is built on the dedication of people from all over Hong Kong. From today through the end of this year, individuals and groups will organise dozens of fund-raising events. Their efforts will help disadvantaged children and youth, families and elderly in need, as well as those with acute medical conditions, learning disabilities and many more.

This year, the Friends of Asia HK-5-A-Side Football (äº”äº”è³çf) Tournament under the theme of "Team Spirit" to be held on November 27 will be among this year's fund-raising highlights. Partnering with the Hong Kong Football Association and the Hong Kong Football Club, the tournament is open to footballers from corporations, junior football clubs and schools. All proceeds raised will be matched by Friends of Asia Hong Kong and donated to Operation Santa Claus.

But you do not need to kick a ball to take part in Operation Santa Claus. Be a donor, join a company, club or school fund-raising effort or set up your own. In the past, students have sold cupcakes and tossed pies to teachers, while business types have dressed up as superheroes, sung their hearts out and gone walkabout. Getting creative, having fun while helping people in need – that is the true spirit of Hong Kong.

On this positive note, I would like to express my warmest appreciation again to the organisers, the SCMP and RTHK, for their continuing dedication

for "changing lives for good". I wish this year's Operation Santa Claus another ringing community success and all of you an enjoyable evening at Tai Kwun.

Thank you.

