

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cocaine (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (October 18) seized about 700 grams of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$850,000 at Hong Kong International Airport.

A male passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Sao Paulo, Brazil via Dubai, the United Arab Emirates yesterday afternoon. Customs officers intercepted the passenger, who was about to depart for Siem Reap, Cambodia for inspection. Upon examination, the batch of suspected cocaine was found concealed inside the metal frame of the suitcase he was carrying. The man was then arrested.

The arrested man, aged 35, has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. He will appear at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (October 20).

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty 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).



Relief fund for farmers and fishermen affected by Super Typhoon Mangkhut

being issued

Local farmers and fishermen who suffered serious losses caused by Super Typhoon Mangkhut and registered with and are eligible for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) assistance from an emergency relief fund can successively receive funds after being notified by the department.

An AFCD spokesman said today (October 19) that an appropriate amount of the relief fund would be released for the affected farmers and fishermen according to established criteria. During the application period, the department received applications from 1 649 farmers, 478 marine fish farmers and 54 pond fish farmers. As at today, the department has granted a total of \$760,422.50 to 147 farmers, and \$1.54 million and \$262,405.30 to 99 marine fish farmers and 25 pond fish farmers respectively. Due to the large number of applications, the department has been stepping up its efforts to process the remaining cases, in order to provide assistance to eligible local farmers and fishermen as soon as possible.

Moreover, farmers who require further assistance can apply for farming loans at the office of the AFCD's Agricultural Extension Section at 5/F, Yuen Long Government Offices, 2 Kiu Lok Square, Yuen Long, or call 2476 2424 for enquiries.

Capture fishermen can still apply for the relief fund on or before October 31 at 8/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, or the Fisheries Liaison Assistants' Offices at the Wholesale Fish Markets of the Fish Marketing Organization and the Cheung Chau Liaison Office, or call 2150 7099 for enquiries. Fish farmers and fishermen who need further assistance can apply for fisheries loans at the above offices, or call 2150 7095 for enquiries.

Update on number of dengue fever cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (October 19) reported the latest number of cases of dengue fever (DF), and again urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From October 12 to 18, the CHP recorded eight imported DF cases. The patients had been to Mainland China (five cases, including two epidemiologically linked cases), India (one case), Thailand (one case) and Vietnam (one case) during the incubation period.

A spokesman for the DH advised members of the public that according to the health authority of Guangdong, increasing numbers of local DF cases have been recorded in Guangdong recently, from 204 local cases in August to 948 local cases in September. The health authority of Guangdong announced that Guangdong has entered the peak season of DF and the number of local cases recorded was higher than the average in the same period from 2015 to 2017. Members of the public are reminded to adopt personal protective measures against mosquitoes to prevent mosquito-borne diseases such as DF when visiting Guangdong.

As of yesterday (October 18), 128 cases had been confirmed this year, of which 29 were local cases and 99 were imported cases. The imported cases were mainly imported from Thailand (31), Mainland China (19) and the Philippines (16).

DF remains endemic in some areas of Asia and beyond. The latest figures for 2018 revealed that 66 372 cases had been recorded in Thailand, 2 252 in Singapore (since December 31, 2017) and 145 in Japan. In Taiwan, 153 local cases have been recorded to date in 2018. In the Americas, the latest figures indicated that 44 048 cases have been filed in Mexico in 2018.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

To reduce the risk of infections spread by mosquitoes, apart from general measures, travellers returning from affected areas should apply insect repellent for 14 days (DF) or at least 21 days (Zika virus infection) upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor. DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;

- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public may refer to the CHP's tips for using insect repellents for details.

Thai court dance and hip-hop combine for new interpretation in dance (with photos)

Two distinguished Asian dancers cross khon (traditional Thai court dance) and modernist forms of hip-hop to give a new interpretation in dance in "Negotiation", to be presented this November in Hong Kong.

Khon artist Pichet Klunchun, the founder of Thailand's first contemporary dance group, and Laotian dancer-choreographer Olé Khamchanla, the initiator of the dance company KHAM in France, confront and listen to each other to interweave old and new customs. Unfolding the cultural dialogue and turning macho confrontation into fraternal harmony, the two dancers reframe the art of dance to reconnect the audience members with each other, uniting diversity and diversifying unity to fully reconcile physical, mental and spiritual being.

Pichet Klunchun is one of the most audacious artists in the Thai cultural scene, bold enough to reinterpret traditional Thai choreographic culture in a new and modernised approach. He started learning khon at the age of 16 from one of the greatest masters, Chaiyot Khummanee. He is considered the only artist who has successfully developed his own art from khon.

A native of Laos, Olé Khamchanla honed his skills under different masters. As a resident artist in the company A'CORPS during 1997 and 2011, he co-created several shows which established his status as a choreographer.

"Negotiation" is one of the highlights of the New Vision Arts Festival (NVAF). It will be staged at 8pm on November 2 and 3 at the Hong Kong City Hall Theatre. Tickets priced at \$140, \$200 and \$260 are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk). For credit card telephone bookings, please call 2111 5999.

Organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the NVAF is celebrating its ninth edition this year and is being held from October 19 to November 18. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2370 1044 or visit www.newvisionfestival.gov.hk.



Government announces extension of Pilot Scheme for Arbitration on Land Premium

The Government announced today (October 19) the extension of the Pilot Scheme for Arbitration on Land Premium for two years from October 24, 2018 to October 23, 2020.

The Pilot Scheme was introduced by the Government in October 2014 for a trial period of two years initially to facilitate early agreement on land premium payable for lease modification/land exchange applications, with the objective of expediting land supply for housing and other uses. The Pilot Scheme was subsequently extended for two years until October 23, 2018.

Given the limited number of completed arbitration cases and the general support from stakeholders to retain the avenue for arbitration, the Government has decided to extend the Pilot Scheme for another two years until October 2020 in order to allow time for both the Government and the development sector to gain more experience. Meanwhile, the Government has received feedback from stakeholders on certain implementation details of the Pilot Scheme, such as concerns over the absence of an upper limit for the arbitral award becoming a disincentive for potential applicants to come forward and calls for relaxing the thresholds for triggering arbitration. Taking into account feedback received, the Government will engage with the professionals and stakeholders concerned to explore room for refining the implementation details during the period of extension.

The Government will continue to select suitable lease modification and land exchange cases according to the general criteria published in the Information Note relating to the Pilot Scheme, and invite applications for determination of the amount of land premium through arbitration. Private land owners can also make requests for arbitration on suitable land lease modification/land exchange applications under processing.

Until mid-October 2018, the Lands Department (LandsD) issued a total of 32 invitations, of which one case has completed arbitration. In another two cases, while agreeing in principle to arbitration, the applicants decided, after consideration, to accept the land premium proposed by LandsD, hence obviating the need for arbitration. The remaining 29 invitations were declined by the applicants, who either chose to continue to negotiate the premium with the LandsD or withdrew their applications for lease modification/land exchange. In addition, the LandsD rejected an application for arbitration involving no increase in residential floor area.