

Office of The Ombudsman announces procedures for application for information of the Office after website update

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

The Office of The Ombudsman today (May 19) announced the procedures for applying for information of the Office after the website update. Starting tomorrow (May 20), members of the public may apply for information that is not on the Office's website but can be made available by completing the form of "Application for Information of the Office" on its website, or by email or in writing. Upon receiving the application, the Office will handle it in accordance with the Ombudsman Ordinance. For details, please refer to the Procedures for Application for Information of the Office on its website.

The Office reviews and updates from time to time the content published on its website to ensure its accuracy and relevance, facilitating public browsing and search for the latest and most relevant investigation reports and information. In the previous website update in 2022, the Office also removed outdated investigation reports and only retained reports from the past 10 years.

Given that in recent years, the recommendations made to government departments and relevant public organisations have generally been implemented within around two years, the investigation reports published before April 2023 are no longer up to date and even misleading to the public. Consequently, after a thorough review, the Office has removed investigation reports and content that no longer reflect the current situation, retaining only those from the past three years. The update can also prevent the website from being inundated with obsolete data and hindering public access to and search for required information.

Same as the handling of the website update in 2022, all the investigation reports and files involved have been preserved for the long term and not destroyed in this round of website update. Members of the public who wish to apply to the Office for information may do so through the aforesaid procedures.

As always, after investigating complaints about maladministration, including cases related to non-compliance with the Code on Access to Information, the Office will consider publishing investigation reports in accordance with the Ordinance. Therefore, there is no need to separate these reports into different categories.

In addition to disseminating the latest information, the Office's website is set up primarily for the public to lodge complaints conveniently.

The Office will continue to review and update its website information and optimise user experience. Where necessary, proper modifications and adjustments will be made to ensure accuracy, relevance and effective management of online information.

CEDB and GACC sign Cooperation Arrangement on Single Window between Mainland and Hong Kong (with photos)

The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) signed the Cooperation Arrangement on Single Window today (May 19) to further strengthen collaboration and exchanges on Single Window between Hong Kong and the Mainland, as well as to enhance system connectivity between the two places.

The Cooperation Arrangement was signed by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, and the Minister of the GACC, Ms Sun Meijun.

Mr Yau said that the Mainland is Hong Kong's largest partner in trade in goods with frequent cross-boundary trade. An efficient and convenient cargo clearance process between the two places is of utmost importance. As an important trade facilitation measure, Single Window provides a one-stop electronic platform for the trade to lodge various types of trade documents for trade declaration and cargo clearance. The CEDB and the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) have been maintaining close liaison with the GACC on the development of Single Window, and sharing experiences and exploring opportunities for collaboration with the Mainland authorities through the established Single Window Expert Group. The signing of the Cooperation Arrangement will allow collaboration and interconnectivity of the systems of the two places to reach new heights, enhancing the existing mechanism of exchange and co-operation, as well as exploring different areas of collaboration.

The implementation of Single Window will enhance the efficiency of cargo clearance in Hong Kong and consolidate Hong Kong's status as an international trade centre and logistics hub. The CEDB is implementing Single Window in three phases, with Phase 1 and Phase 2 in full service since 2020 and 2023 respectively, covering a total of 42 types of trade documents. Phase 3 services will be rolled out in batches from 2026 onwards. By then, the system will be connected with the Mainland's Single Window.

In addition, to promote the development of cargo clearance facilitation

between the two places, the GACC and the C&ED launched the Mainland-Hong Kong "Single Submission for Dual Declaration" Scheme in November 2024, covering all cargo imported from the Mainland to Hong Kong through land boundary control points. The Scheme helps enterprises save time and manpower required for declaration and minimise operating costs. To enhance the facilitation, the Scheme will cover all cargo passing through land boundary control points between the two places starting from today, enabling industry stakeholders to reuse road cargo information when submitting to the systems of both sides, thereby further facilitating the trade and enhancing efficiency.

The Scheme will be reprovisioned in Phase 3 of Single Window. The Government will maintain close collaboration with the GACC to explore the feasibility of extending the relevant functions to other trade documents and transport modes.



[One man convicted and jailed for handling duty-not-paid cigarettes \(with photo\)](#)

A man was sentenced to 84 days' imprisonment and fined \$4,000 at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (May 19) for handling duty-not-paid cigarettes, in contravention of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO).

Customs officers intercepted a 63-year-old man who was pushing a bike for inspection at the Chung Ying Street Checkpoint in Sha Tau Kok on February 10. A total of 7 200 duty-not-paid cigarettes, with an estimated market value of about \$28,000 and a duty potential of about \$23,000, were seized from the nylon bag on the bike.

Customs welcomes the sentence. The custodial sentence has imposed a considerable deterrent effect and reflects the seriousness of the offences.

Under the DCO, tobacco products are dutiable goods to which the DCO applies. Any person who imports, deals with, possesses, sells or buys 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 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/en/).



Flag-lowering ceremony cancelled

Owing to the thunderstorm warning, the flag-lowering ceremony to be conducted at Golden Bauhinia Square, Wan Chai at 6pm today (May 19) will be cancelled.

If the thunderstorm warning is cancelled and weather conditions permit by then, the flag-lowering ceremony may be resumed without further notice.

CE meets Minister of General Administration of Customs (with photo)

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, met with the Minister of the General Administration of Customs, Ms Sun Meijun, at Government House today (May 19) to exchange views on strengthening enforcement and co-operation between Hong Kong and Mainland Customs. Also attending the meeting were the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan; the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau; the Acting Secretary for Security, Mr Michael Cheuk; the Director of the Chief Executive's Office, Ms Carol Yip; and the Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Chan Tsz-tat.

Mr Lee welcomed Ms Sun and her delegation to Hong Kong to attend the World Customs Organization (WCO) Asia/Pacific Regional Heads of Customs Administrations Conference. He expressed his gratitude to the General Administration of Customs for supporting the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department in its bid for the Vice-Chairperson for the Asia/Pacific region of

the WCO (2024-2026), which was elected in June last year. Such an election not only reflects the support of the country and the Asia-Pacific region for Hong Kong but also consolidates Hong Kong's role as a "super-connector".

Mr Lee also mentioned Ms Sun's presence at the signing ceremonies of co-operation documents between the General Administration of Customs and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, which aim to promote the safety and seamless flow of people and goods between the Mainland and Hong Kong, as well as co-operation on exporting Hong Kong dairy and meat products to the Mainland. These initiatives will enhance Hong Kong's position as an international trade and shipping centre, laying a solid foundation for further co-operation between Hong Kong and Mainland Customs.

On enforcement co-operation, Mr Lee said that Hong Kong and Mainland Customs have been working together to combat cross-boundary smuggling activities and prevent and detect smuggling of contraband through various measures, including the exchange of intelligence and conducting joint operations. He said he hopes that Hong Kong and Mainland Customs in future can continue to maintain close co-operation on immigration and customs clearance, anti-smuggling and anti-drug trafficking, as well as trade facilitation.

