

## **Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cannabis buds worth about \$35 million (with photo)**

â€‹Hong Kong Custom seized about 138 kilograms of suspected cannabis buds with an estimated market value of about \$35 million in Kwai Chung on March 12.

Through risk assessment, Customs on that day inspected a seaborne consignment, arriving in Hong Kong from Thailand and declared as carrying frozen pork, at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound. Upon inspection, Customs officers found around 138kg of suspected cannabis buds inside a container.

The investigation is ongoing.

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 Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/en/](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/en/)).



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## **Speech by CS at Kick-off Ceremony of Entertainment Expo Hong Kong 2025**

## (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at the Kick-off Ceremony of Entertainment Expo Hong Kong 2025 today (March 17):

麥美娟 (Deputy Director-General of the International Cooperation Department of the National Radio and Television Administration, Ms Yan Ni), Peter (Chairman of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, Dr Peter Lam), Leon (Hong Kong Entertainment Ambassador, Mr Leon Lai), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It is my great pleasure to join you all, once again, for the opening ceremony of the 21st Entertainment Expo Hong Kong.

This annual Expo is a vibrant showcase of Hong Kong's film, television, music and digital entertainment events. This year, the Expo features nine major events, each smartly designed to highlight the region's entertainment industry, its digital transformation and opportunities for cross-regional collaboration.

FILMART, one of the Expo's founding events, opens today and runs until March 20. As Asia's leading marketplace for the creative industries, it features over 760 exhibitors from more than 30 countries and regions this year.

A highlight of FILMART this year is Producers Connect, a series of events created to encourage coproductions and collaborations among producers from Hong Kong and around the world.

Another new feature is the AI Hub, which showcases AI innovations and promotes AI usage in the entertainment industry through conferences, forums and exhibitions.

The 49th Hong Kong International Film Festival will begin on April 10. It is Asia's longest-running international film festival, and a pioneer in introducing Hong Kong, Chinese-language and Asian cinema and filmmakers to the world.

The Festival will showcase over 300 screenings from more than 60 countries and regions, along with forums and masterclasses by distinguished international filmmakers.

This Thursday (March 20), the 12th Microfilm Production Support Scheme Awards Ceremony will take place. Awards will be presented, and winning works will be screened. The Scheme supports local advertising production companies and directors by providing funding, professional guidance, training, and promotion, helping them create original microfilms that showcase creativity and talent.

Then, there is the Hong Kong – Asia Film Financing Forum, which received

close to 400 submissions from 45 countries and regions this year. The Forum connects filmmakers with global partners for investment and co-production. Forty-eight film projects were selected for this year's Forum, and new to this year is a section focused on animated feature films at various production stages.

Entertainment Pulse and the Digital Entertainment Summit returns this year, offering in-depth discussions on content creation, generative AI applications and other hot topics.

New to the Expo is tomorrow night's Hong Kong Film Music Fiesta, a music concert celebrating Hong Kong's outstanding composers and filmmakers, and showcasing the unique charm of Hong Kong film music.

Last night, the 18th Asia Film Awards presentation ceremony honoured 30 outstanding films from 25 countries and regions. And on April 27, the 43rd Hong Kong Film Awards presentation ceremony will celebrate the best films from a great year for Hong Kong cinema.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Hong Kong SAR (Special Administrative Region) Government is deeply committed to supporting the development of the entertainment industry in the city. The Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency, under the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, provides instrumental support through its Film Development Fund and CreateSmart Initiative.

The Government also supports content development for streaming, TV variety shows, and film productions. The newly launched Film Production Financing Scheme 2.0 and Film Production Grant Scheme for Promoting Chinese Culture will bring far-reaching benefits to Hong Kong's cultural and creative industries.

My thanks to the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, our Hong Kong Entertainment Ambassador Leon, and all participating organisations for making this year's Entertainment Expo a success.

I would also like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the National Radio and Television Administration for their unwavering support of the event over the years.

I wish you all the best in business and entertainment at this year's Expo. And for those from out of town, I know you will have a memorable stay in Hong Kong, a global hub where East meets West for cultural exchange – and entertainment, too.

Thank you very much.

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# Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, March 17, 2025 is 106.4 (up 0.1 against last Saturday's index).

â€‹The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, March 15, 2025 was 106.3 (down 0.1 against last Friday's index).

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## DH announces latest situation of Legionnaires' Disease cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 17) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and reminded the public of the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, adding that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From March 9 to 15, the CHP recorded two LD cases, including one community-acquired case and one imported case. The details of the cases are as follows:

1. an 80-year-old male patient with underlying illnesses living in Southern District; and
2. a 62-year-old male patient with underlying illnesses, who travelled to the Mainland during the incubation period and was classified as an imported case.

The CHP is conducting epidemiological investigations to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any.

As of March 15, 33 LD cases had been recorded this year. In 2024 and 2023, there were 135 and 121 LD cases respectively.

Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers,

whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus that support breathing. People may become infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices; and
- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh-water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2  $\mu\text{m}$  filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
  1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
  2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
  3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;

4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

â€‹â€‹The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

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## Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on March 14 to noon today (March 17), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 358 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category, in the past three days (including last Saturday and Sunday). No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" ([www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme\\_rafs/programme\\_rafs\\_fc\\_01\\_30\\_Nuclear\\_Event\\_and\\_Food\\_Safety.html](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html)).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 150 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website ([www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological\\_testing/Radiological\\_Test.html](http://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html)).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website ([www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html](http://www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html)).

From August 24, 2023, to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 122 911 samples of food imported from Japan (including 80 683 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 28 378 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.