

## Community comes together to fight against drugs on World Drug Day (with photos/video)

To echo the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (World Drug Day), the Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) held a preventive education and publicity event today (June 26) to unite different sectors of the community in the fight against drugs.

Members of the ACAN and its two sub-committees, the Sub-committee on Preventive Education and Publicity and the Sub-committee on Treatment and Rehabilitation; representatives of the Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau; as well as youth members of the Junior Police Call and the "Customs YES", distributed anti-drug leaflets and souvenirs to members of the public in Causeway Bay today, reminding them to stay vigilant against drugs and to "Say No To Drugs" at all times, whether in Hong Kong or elsewhere during the peak travel season in the fast approaching summer holidays. While distributing leaflets and souvenirs printed with the anti-drug ambassadors Agent Don't and Agent Hope, participants at the event also took the opportunity to remind members of the public to pay close attention to product labels during online or in-store shopping, and not to buy products that may contain drugs, especially those with cannabis or cannabidiol (CBD) as an ingredient, to avoid breaching the law inadvertently.

The Chairman of the ACAN, Dr Donald Li, first led more than 50 participants to chant the anti-drug slogan "Let's Stand Firm. Knock Drugs Out!", showing their determination to fight against drugs together. Dr Li then urged different sectors of the community, government departments, the anti-drug sector as well as members of the public to continue working in concerted efforts to combat drug problems and build a drug-free Hong Kong together.

Dr Li said that with the full resumption of normalcy in society, there will be more large-scale entertainment events, social gatherings and outbound travel. Members of the public should remember to stay away from drugs at all times while having a good time.

Dr Li added, "Drugs ruin lives. It is scientifically proven that any drug, be it cannabis or cocaine, will cause long-term and irreversible health damage. Taking drugs not only causes harmful effects to your physical and mental health, but also affects your life and the lives of your family members. Some abusers may even get involved in drug trafficking or other crimes, leaving their lives shattered. Today is World Drug Day. I would like to remind members of the public to firmly say 'No' in the face of drug temptation." Dr Li also encouraged members of the public to show care and concern for those around them and be sensitive to their emotions, and to provide support to those in need, with a view to steering them away from the

drug abyss. To seek information or assistance from professional social workers, members of the public can make use of instant messaging applications WhatsApp and WeChat by sending messages to 98 186 186, or calling the 24-hour hotline 186 186.

The ND added that the Government will continue to promote anti-drug messages through different channels to debunk myths about drugs wrongly held by some quarters. Two programmes (from 7.30pm to 8pm and from 8pm to 8.30pm) on a free TV channel tonight will feature anti-drug messages, and encourage viewers to follow the message "Let's Stand Firm. Knock Drugs Out!" in their lives. Meanwhile, law enforcement agencies are sparing no effort to combat drugs and will continue to cut off drug supplies at source. As for drug abusers, the Government encourages them to seek help. Hong Kong provides drug treatment and rehabilitation services to cater for various needs of drug abusers of different backgrounds. The Government will continue to stand united and work in collaboration with different sectors of the community to safeguard public health.

Furthermore, located on the roof floor of the Low Block of the Queensway Government Offices, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Drug InfoCentre (HKJC DIC) is a facility that helps members of the public strengthen their determination to resist drugs. To enrich visitors' experience, the HKJC DIC is equipped with various interactive multimedia facilities and devices, including an interactive game that detects movements and an imaging device that shows the harmful effects caused by drug abuse. In addition to exhibitions, visitors are welcome to join guided tours and other anti-drug events at the HKJC DIC free of charge. Please visit the website of the HKJC DIC ([druginfocentre.hk/en/index.html](http://druginfocentre.hk/en/index.html)) for more details.





## [Open call for Hong Kong House at Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale 2024-2026 \(with photo\)](#)

The Art Promotion Office (APO) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department is now inviting Hong Kong artists and artists' teams to submit artwork proposals for Hong Kong House at the Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale 2024-2026 to showcase Hong Kong artists and cross-disciplinary creative talents' exceptional works to global audiences through this international arts platform.

The Echigo-Tsumari Art Triennale (ETAT) is one of the largest international art festivals in the world and has been held once every three years in the Echigo-Tsumari region, Niigata Prefecture of Japan, since 2000. Using art as a catalyst, the Triennale provides a platform to present projects and initiatives which aim to reveal existing assets of the region and build the relationship between humans and nature through artistic creation, appreciation and participation. Hong Kong House, located in Tsunan town in the Echigo-Tsumari region, was set up by the APO and has been a

centre for collaboration with the ETAT since 2018. It serves as a showcase of Hong Kong art talent and a sustainable platform for arts and cultural exchanges.

In conjunction with the ninth Triennale, the APO is calling for artwork proposals. The artwork proposals should highlight the unique history and culture of Echigo-Tsumari region as well as feature distinctive and abundant nature that has the power to connect various cultures. Genres of artwork are not limited to visual art. Proposals that encompass various fields, such as design, handicraft, technology etc are welcomed. The selected three artists or artists' teams will reside in Tsunan to feature their artworks and carry out fringe activities in 2024, 2025 or 2026 respectively.

Participants must submit their proposals before 8pm on August 11 (Friday). All proposals must be delivered to the Exchange and Extension Team of the APO (Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre, 7A Kennedy Road, Central, Hong Kong) by post or by hand. The APO will announce the result in October on the website. For application forms and project details, please visit the website at [www.apo.hk/en/web/apo/there\\_hongkonghouse\\_2024-26\\_call\\_for\\_artwork\\_proposals.html](http://www.apo.hk/en/web/apo/there_hongkonghouse_2024-26_call_for_artwork_proposals.html) and Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/apo.hkhouse](https://www.facebook.com/apo.hkhouse) or call 2512 3018, 2512 3019 or 2512 3020.



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## [Consultation begins on review of three-tier banking system](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) has issued today (June 26) a public consultation paper on review of the three-tier banking system.

The current three-tier structure of the banking system (i.e. licensed banks (LBs), restricted licence banks (RLBs), deposit-taking companies (DTCs)) had a history of four decades and aimed to strike a balance between

flexibility of market entry and protection of small depositors. The HKMA has recently conducted a review of the three-tier banking system in Hong Kong to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Based on the results of the review, the HKMA proposes to simplify the three-tier banking system into two tiers. The main proposals in the consultation paper are as follows:

- to maintain LBs as the "first-tier institutions" and merge DTCs into the second-tier institutions, which will continue to be called RLBs;
- to keep the requirements on the "second-tier institutions" unchanged, including the minimum capital requirement (HK\$100 million); the minimum deposit size requirement (HK\$500,000); and no restriction on deposit maturity; and
- to provide a transition period of 5 years for existing DTCs to upgrade to the "second-tier institutions" (i.e. RLBs) or LBs.

Chief Executive of the HKMA, Mr Eddie Yue, said, "The review aims to simplify the structure of Hong Kong's banking system, enhancing its vital role in strengthening Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre, and to revitalise institutions in the category of deposit-taking companies and enhance their flexibility and efficiency in conducting business and meeting customers' needs."

The public consultation has commenced today and will last until September 25. The consultation paper is available on the HKMA website ([www.hkma.gov.hk/media/eng/regulatory-resources/consultations/20230626e1.pdf](http://www.hkma.gov.hk/media/eng/regulatory-resources/consultations/20230626e1.pdf)). Interested parties are invited to submit their comments to the HKMA on or before the deadline.

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## **Speech by Acting SITI at celebration ceremony of Insighta "For Humanity. Saving Lives with Early Cancer Detection" (English only)**

Following is the speech by the Acting Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Ms Lillian Cheong, at the celebration ceremony of Insighta "For Humanity. Saving Lives with Early Cancer Detection" today (June 26):

Professor Chai (Chairman of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)

Council, Professor John Chai), Professor Tuan (Vice-Chancellor and President of the CUHK, Professor Rocky Tuan), Professor Lo (Founding Scientific Director of Centre for Novostics of InnoHK, Professor Dennis Lo), Danny (Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Prenetics Global, Mr Danny Yeung), Albert (Chief Executive Officer of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, Mr Albert Wong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It gives me great pleasure to join you all here today and witness the celebration ceremony of Insighta, a joint venture by Prenetics and Professor Lo.

The cutting-edge research behind Insighta's technology is just introduced by Danny. It is conducted by the Centre for Novostics led by Professor Lo, which is one of our 28 research centres under InnoHK, a major Government initiative that aims to transform Hong Kong into a global innovation powerhouse with two research clusters – Health@InnoHK on healthcare and AIR@InnoHK on AI (artificial intelligence) and robotics. InnoHK has successfully built collaborations with more than 30 world-renowned universities and research institutes, pooling around 2 000 researchers locally and from all over the world.

The new DNA diagnostic technology developed by Professor Lo and his team is a shining illustration of Hong Kong's strengths. I understand that this technology is expected to contribute to cost-effective multi-cancer early detection screening, enable timely treatment of cancer and benefit patients and communities around the world. I am therefore very much delighted to see that the technology will be commercialised by Insighta, a local start-up translating the research of the Centre for Novostics under InnoHK into applications and now with a significant capital contribution of US\$100 million from Prenetics Global, thank you. It is an exemplary model which demonstrates that both top-notch upstream research and technology transfer can be conducted in Hong Kong with great success.

Hong Kong's research capabilities in biotechnology as well as life and health sciences have long been internationally recognised. We are home to five of the world's top 100 universities, two of the world's leading 40 medical schools and also numerous award-winning scholars and researchers. Hong Kong also has a vibrant biotech ecosystem which is conducive to the growth of life and health tech-related start-ups. We are now Asia's largest and the world's second-largest fundraising hub for biotech companies.

The Government has rolled out a series of initiatives to enhance the development of life and health technology in Hong Kong. This year's Government Budget announced that HK\$6 billion would be set aside to provide subsidies for universities and research institutes to set up life and health technology research institutes, so as to foster cross-universities, cross-institutional and multidisciplinary co-operation, in a bid to facilitate the transformation of R&D (research and development) outcomes related to life and health technology.

Moreover, the Government has earmarked HK\$10 billion for a new funding

scheme, namely the Research, Academic and Industry Sectors One-plus Scheme, which will fund, on a matching basis, at least 100 university research teams with clear potential to become successful start-ups. The goal is to boost collaboration among our academic, research and industry sectors. I am confident that it will help drive the commercialisation of our very outstanding R&D outcomes, including those of life and health technology.

Also, the Government is building the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park in the Lok Ma Chau Loop. I am sure many of you have heard of that, with life and health technology being one of the priority development areas. In addition, our bureau, together with the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises, are working very hard to draw high-potential companies from all over the world to Hong Kong. We will offer a range of special measures and services to entice top global companies that fit our strategic needs. Life and health technology companies are of course high on our priority list. I am confident that there will be enormous opportunities for our life and health technology start-ups, researchers, investors and entrepreneurs.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation and all the stakeholders who have been supporting our InnoHK initiative. I am confident that the research centres under InnoHK will continue to conduct high-quality R&D of global importance and translate their research into applications that benefit humankind, as the Centre for Novostics led by Professor Lo demonstrated here today. Together, let us continue to transfer more R&D outcomes from our world-class scientists and foster an even more vibrant innovation and technology ecosystem in Hong Kong. Thank you.

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## **Man convicted of managing unlicensed employment agency**

The Labour Department (LD) today (June 26) reminded members of the public to obtain a licence before operating an employment agency (EA), or else they may face prosecution.

The reminder was made after a man was convicted of managing an EA without a valid licence and fined \$18,000 at Eastern Magistrates' Courts today.

The LD detected a man suspected of managing an unlicensed EA in 2022 and instigated an investigation into the suspected offence. As the investigation revealed sufficient evidence that the man was managing an unlicensed EA, the LD decided to take out prosecution.

All establishments or persons operating a business in Hong Kong for the purpose of obtaining employment for another person or supplying personnel to an employer are governed by Part XII of the Employment Ordinance and the Employment Agency Regulations. Irrespective of the modus operandi or the types of jobs involved, all EAs must obtain a licence issued by the LD before undertaking any EA activities. Except for the EA licence holder or his or her associate, no one shall operate, manage or assist in the management of an EA. Offenders may face prosecution.

The LD reminds EAs to operate in full compliance with the law as well as the Code of Practice for EAs at all times. Failure to do so may lead to prosecution and/or revocation of licence. The maximum penalties for the offences of unlicensed operation of an EA or overcharging commission from job seekers are a fine of \$350,000 and imprisonment for three years.

For enquiries about matters related to EAs or complaints about malpractices of EAs, please call the Employment Agencies Administration of the LD at 2115 3667, or visit its office at Unit 906, 9/F, One Mong Kok Road Commercial Centre, 1 Mong Kok Road, Kowloon.