

DH continues to clamp down on illegal waterpipe smoking in no smoking areas (with photos)

The Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office (TACO) of the Department of Health (DH) conducted an enforcement operation in Tsim Sha Tsui last night (February 21) against illegal waterpipe smoking activities in no smoking areas and a total of three fixed penalty notices (FPNs) were issued. The operation, codenamed "Pipepurge", was the surprise inspection and enforcement action carried out by TACO against illegal waterpipe smoking in no smoking areas following the operation last Thursday.

During the operation, officers from TACO (including plainclothes officers) carried out inspections and enforcement action at one bar in Tsim Sha Tsui, and issued a total of three FPNs to persons illegally smoking waterpipes. TACO's investigation is ongoing, and prosecution may also be taken against operators of the bar who are suspected of aiding and abetting smoking offences. TACO will also refer the cases to the Liquor Licensing Board for appropriate follow-up action.

Under the Ordinance, conducting a smoking act in a statutory no smoking area (such as indoor areas of bars or restaurants) is prohibited. Any person doing a smoking act in statutory no smoking areas is liable to a fixed penalty of \$1,500. Moreover, where smoking products (including waterpipes) are sold, in bars or otherwise, the restrictions on the promotion and sale of smoking products stipulated in the Ordinance apply. Offenders are liable on summary conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000. Venue managers of statutory no smoking areas are empowered by the Ordinance to request a smoking offender cease the act; if the offender is not co-operative, the manager may contact the Police for assistance.

In addition, under the Criminal Procedure Ordinance, any person who aids, abets, counsels or procures the commission by another person of any offence shall be guilty of the same offence.

"The DH will continue to closely monitor and take stringent enforcement action against illegal waterpipe smoking. Last year (2024), TACO conducted 162 operations against illegal waterpipe smoking activities in no smoking areas. A total of 162 FPNs were issued against smoking offenders, while 89 summonses were issued to staff members and operators of the bars/restaurants for other related offences," the Head of TACO, Dr Fung Ying said.

Dr Fung reminded the public that waterpipe is also a smoking product, and its combustion of fuel (e.g. charcoal) releases carbon monoxide. Exposure to a low concentration of carbon monoxide can lead to a range of symptoms such as dizziness, headache, tiredness and nausea; whereas exposure to a high concentration of carbon monoxide can lead to impaired vision, disturbed co-ordination, unconsciousness, brain damage or even death. People should seek

medical attention immediately if they suspect they are developing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Due to deeper inhalation and longer smoking sessions, waterpipe users usually inhale more toxins than they would when smoking cigarettes. A typical one-hour waterpipe smoking session exposes the user to 100 to 200 times the volume of smoke inhaled from a single conventional cigarette. Moreover, sharing a waterpipe apparatus increases the risk of transmitting infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis.

She cautioned against waterpipe smoking and the use of other smoking products. Smokers should quit smoking as early as possible for their own health and that of others. For more information on the hazards of waterpipe smoking, please visit www.livetobaccofree.hk/pdfs/waterpipe_leaflet_new.pdf.



[Japanese second-hand luxury retailer opens first overseas outlet in Hong Kong \(with photo\)](#)

Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) today (February 22) announced that Japanese second-hand luxury retailer, Otakaraya, opened its first overseas outlet in Hong Kong as part of its expansion plan in Asia and to prepare for entering the European and American markets.

Associate Director-General of Investment Promotion at InvestHK Mr Arnold Lau said, "We warmly welcome Otakaraya's decision to establish its first overseas base in Hong Kong, reaffirming the city's status as a premier international retail hub. The city offers an excellent business environment

and a diverse consumer market, providing a good development platform for international brands. We look forward to Otakaraya's success in Hong Kong and encourage more international brands to expand their business here."

Located in Jordan of Hong Kong, Otakaraya's first store specialises in buying and selling carefully selected luxury brand items, promoting the concepts of environmental sustainability and sustainable fashion. As consumer interest in second-hand luxury goods continues to grow, the new store not only brings fresh vitality to the Hong Kong market but also reflects local consumers' demand for high-end products.

The Director of E-FRAN HK Limited, Mr Takeshi Asai, said, "Otakaraya has more than 1 300 shops in Japan as of January 2025, making it one of the country's largest second-hand luxury retailers. Our target is to become a trillion yen company, and expanding into overseas markets is important for achieving this."

He added, "As an international city located in the heart of Asia, Hong Kong has a high concentration of premium brand boutiques, making luxury brand ownership widespread. The city also has a thriving culture of second-hand luxury goods. We believe that Hong Kong is the ideal location for our first overseas store."

Established in 2024, E-FRAN HK Limited will be responsible for the operations of "LUXURY BRAND BUY & SELL OTAKARAYA JAPAN" in Hong Kong, which specialises in buying and selling second-hand branded goods and luxury jewellery.

For more information about E-FRAN, please visit e-fran.jp.

To get a copy of the photo, please visit www.flickr.com/photos/investhk/albums/72177720323807933.



Red flags hoisted at Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second 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 (February 22) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Singapore ET0 sponsors Hong Kong Ballet's performances in Singapore to promote cultural exchange (with photos)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Singapore (Singapore ET0) supported and sponsored ALICE (in wonderland) four performances by the Hong Kong Ballet (HKB), one of Asia's premier dance companies, at the Esplanade Theatres on the Bay, Singapore, which the opening performance was held last evening (February 21).

ALICE (in Wonderland) was a magical production by the Artistic Director of HKB, Mr Septime Webre, which combines stunning choreography, captivating storytelling, and world-class artistry. The playful and theatrical costumes, colourful sets and beloved original score brought audiences to revisit the fantastical world of Lewis Carroll's classic tale in the year of its 160th. The well-received performance reflected Hong Kong's unique ability to blend tradition with innovation, creating performances that resonate with audiences worldwide.

About 100 guests, including the Executive Director of HKB, Ms Heidi Li, Mr Webre, representatives from the Chinese Embassy in Singapore, Singapore government ministries, Singapore National Arts Council, business, arts and education sectors, members of Singaporean communities, were invited to a reception hosted by the Singapore ET0 before the opening performance.

Speaking at the reception, the Director of the Singapore ET0, Mr Owin

Fung, said that "the performance was a testament to Hong Kong's vibrant arts and cultural developments. Through this event, we were showcasing Hong Kong's artistic excellence and promoting cross-cultural understanding and appreciation. Coinciding with the 30th anniversary of Singapore ET0, we will spare no effort to continue bringing Hong Kong's performing groups to Singapore as well as to ASEAN countries, which is essential to help bring our aspiration to become a hub for cultural events and exchange to the forefront".

This event also holds special significance as it recruited around 100 young dancers (aged 7 to 17) from Singapore for training and performance alongside around 50 dancers of Hong Kong Ballet. This not only enriches the cultural experience for both audiences and participants but also strengthens the bond between Hong Kong and Singapore. By nurturing our young talent and fostering collaboration, both places are building a bridge for mutual learning and cultural advancement.





Missing man in Tsuen Wan located

Â Â Â Â A man who went missing in Tsuen Wan has been located.

Â Â Â Â Lam Ngan-sang, aged 78, went missing after he left a hospital on Yan Chai Street on February 19 afternoon. His family made a report to Police on the next day (February 20).

Â Â Â Â The man was located on Tso Kung Street last night (February 21). He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.