

Defendants in three cases of supplying unsafe surgical masks fined

Persons-in-charge of a clothing shop and a pharmacy as well as a pharmacy and its two directors were convicted and fined \$2,000 to \$50,000 today (March 31) at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts, Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts and Fanling Magistrates' Courts for supplying unsafe surgical masks in contravention of the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance (CGSO).

In view of the developments of the COVID-19 epidemic, Customs has conducted a territory-wide operation codenamed "Guardian" since January 27 last year to conduct spot checks and enforcement operations on common protective items, and test-purchased the three types of surgical masks concerned. After investigation, Customs confirmed that the total bacterial counts of the surgical masks exceeded the maximum permitted limit by 0.25 to 5.5 times, which failed to comply with the general safety requirements of the CGSO. The retailers connected with the cases included two pharmacies and a clothing shop.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the CGSO. Members of the public should observe the following tips when purchasing and using surgical masks:

- Check the trade descriptions of the surgical masks' packages during transactions;
- Check carefully before wearing the surgical masks and stop using the masks if they have stains or odd smells;
- Avoid buying or using loosely-packed surgical masks;
- Pay attention to the proper way of using surgical masks;
- Change surgical masks at a suitable time;
- Store surgical masks in dry places; and
- Purchase surgical masks at reputable retail shops.

Under the CGSO, it is an offence to supply, manufacture or import consumer goods unless the goods comply with the general safety requirements for consumer goods. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year on first conviction, and \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years on subsequent conviction.

Customs attaches great importance to the trade descriptions and safety of surgical masks. The "Guardian" operation is ongoing to ensure that the surgical masks being sold in the market comply with the CGSO and the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO). Law enforcement action will be taken immediately if any suspected violations are detected.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the CGSO or the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-

reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

OGCIO launches Multi-functional Smart Lampposts Virtual Exhibition

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) launched the Multi-functional Smart Lampposts Virtual Exhibition today (March 31) to showcase the operation of smart lampposts and the benefits they brought to the daily lives of members of the public, with a view to enhancing public understanding of the Multi-functional Smart Lampposts pilot scheme.

The Virtual Exhibition themed "Smart Lampposts Light Up Future", features a three-dimensional model and a virtual tour to a smart lamppost. Designed with reference to a typical 10-metre-tall smart lamppost, the model allows members of the public to rotate a smart lamppost at 360 degrees and explore its design and equipment from the inside out. The OGCIO also prepared short videos to illustrate applications of the smart lampposts for easy appreciation of its operations and effectiveness.

The virtual tour, which is divided into a number of exhibition zones including traffic, environment and weather, positioning, communications and open data, introduces various information and services provided by the smart lampposts. A game zone is also set up to enhance visitors' experience and bring more fun to them in visiting the exhibition.

The public are welcome to visit the Virtual Exhibition at the thematic website smartlamppost.ogcio.gov.hk starting today to learn more about the smart lampposts and the benefits they bring to the community and smart city development. Through the exhibition, the OGCIO aims to gain public support in taking forward this important smart city infrastructure.

Strategic directions of drug treatment and rehabilitation services for 2021-2023

The Narcotics Division of the Security Bureau today (March 31) promulgated the Three-year Plan on Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Services in Hong Kong for 2021-2023. The Plan recommends the strategic directions for

the drug treatment and rehabilitation (T&R) services between 2021 and 2023.

In February 2020, a working group comprising representatives from T&R agencies, counselling centres, academia, the medical services and government departments was formed to oversee the formulation of the Plan. Dr Ben Cheung, the then Chairman of the Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN), led the working group.

Speaking on the preparation of the Plan, Dr Cheung said, "The formulation of Three-year Plans has been a consensus-building process among stakeholders involved in the T&R services. The Narcotics Division conducted an extensive consultation exercise to tap views and ideas on drug-related issues from stakeholders of the anti-drug field in preparation of this ninth Three-year Plan. The Plan aims to recommend broad strategic directions for service providers to review and develop their own action plans and programmes having regard to the latest drug scene."

The ACAN Chairman, Dr Donald Li, said, "The steady decline in the number of reported drug abusers since its peak in 2008 reflects the joint efforts of the Government and the anti-drug sector over the past years. Yet, the evolving drug scene and emergence of new drugs continue to present new challenges to the anti-drug work. Thanks to the work of the working group and the Narcotics Division, the Plan provides useful directions to guide the T&R services in the coming three years."

The Commissioner for Narcotics, Ms Ivy Law, thanked Dr Cheung and members of the working group, as well as the anti-drug stakeholders for sharing candidly their invaluable experience and views.

Ms Law said, "With the benefits of the views received, the Plan sets out a host of 33 strategic directions to guide the T&R services in the coming three years. The Narcotics Division, in partnership with stakeholders, will continue to oversee and co-ordinate efforts as appropriate in pursuing T&R initiatives along the strategic directions."

The strategic directions in the Plan are grouped under seven aspects, namely "collaboration"; "prompt response to changing drug scene and social environment"; "early medical intervention and support"; "targeted services for different groups of drug abusers"; "aftercare services"; "capacity building of relevant personnel"; and "others". The full text of the Plan is available on the Narcotics Division's website (www.nd.gov.hk/en/index.htm).

T&R is an essential component of the multi-pronged anti-drug strategy, which also covers preventive education and publicity, legislation and law enforcement, external co-operation, and research.

Tender of 3-year Government Bonds under Institutional Bond Issuance Programme to be held on April 14

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), as representative of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSAR Government), announces today (March 31) that a tender of 3-year Government Bonds (Bonds) under the Institutional Bond Issuance Programme will be held on April 14 (Wednesday), for settlement on April 15 (Thursday).

A total of HK\$4.0 billion 3-year Bonds will be tendered. The Bonds will mature on April 15, 2024 and will carry interest at the rate of 0.36 per cent per annum payable semi-annually in arrears.

Under the Institutional Bond Issuance Programme, tender is open only to Recognized Dealers which are appointed as Primary Dealers. Anyone wishing to apply for the Bonds on offer can do so through any of the Primary Dealers on the current published list, which can be obtained from the Government Bond Programme's website at www.hkgb.gov.hk. Each tender must be for an amount of HK\$50,000 or integral multiples thereof.

Tender results will be published on the HKMA's website, the Government Bond Programme's website, the Reuters screen (HKGBINDEX), and Bloomberg (GBHK <GO>) not later than 3pm on the tender day.

HKSAR Government Institutional Bond Issuance Programme tender information

Tender information of 3-year Government Bonds under the Institutional Bond Issuance Programme:

Issue Number : 03GB2404

Stock code : 4245 (HKGB 0.36 2404)

Tender Date and Time : April 14, 2021 (Wednesday)
9.30am to 10.30am

Issue and Settlement
Date for tender amount : April 15, 2021 (Thursday)

Amount on Offer : HK\$4.0 billion

Maturity : 3 years
 Maturity Date : April 15, 2024
 Interest Rate : 0.36 per cent p.a. payable semi-annually in arrears
 Interest Payment Dates : October 15, 2021
 April 15, 2022
 October 17, 2022
 April 17, 2023
 October 16, 2023
 April 15, 2024
 Method of Tender : Competitive tender
 Tender Amount : Each competitive tender must be for an amount of HK\$50,000 or integral multiples thereof. Any tender applications for the Bonds must be submitted through a Primary Dealer on the current published list.
 Other details : Please see Information Memorandum available on the Government Bond Programme's website at www.hkgb.gov.hk or approach Primary Dealers.
 Expected commencement date of dealing on the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited : April 16, 2021

Price/Yield Table of the Government Bonds at tender for reference* only:

Yield-to-Maturity	Price	Yield-to-Maturity	Price
-0.640	103.04	0.360	100.00
-0.590	102.88	0.410	99.85
-0.540	102.73	0.460	99.70
-0.490	102.57	0.510	99.56
-0.440	102.42	0.560	99.41
-0.390	102.27	0.610	99.26
-0.340	102.11	0.660	99.11
-0.290	101.96	0.710	98.97
-0.240	101.81	0.760	98.82
-0.190	101.66	0.810	98.67
-0.140	101.50	0.860	98.53

-0.090	101.35	0.910	98.38
-0.040	101.20	0.960	98.24
0.010	101.05	1.010	98.09
0.060	100.90	1.060	97.95
0.110	100.75	1.110	97.80
0.160	100.60	1.160	97.66
0.210	100.45	1.210	97.51
0.260	100.30	1.260	97.37
0.310	100.15	1.310	97.23
0.360	100.00	1.360	97.08

*Disclaimer: The information provided here is for reference only. Although extreme care has been taken to ensure that the information provided is accurate and up-to-date, the HKMA does not warrant that all, or any part of, the information provided is accurate in all respects. You are encouraged to conduct your own enquiries to verify any particular piece of information provided on it. The HKMA shall not be liable for any loss or damage suffered as a result of any use or reliance on any of the information provided here.

Financial results for the 11 months ended February 28, 2021

The Government announced today (March 31) its financial results for the 11 months ended February 28, 2021.

There was a surplus of HK\$19.7 billion in the month of February. Expenditure for the 11-month period amounted to HK\$723 billion and revenue HK\$510.1 billion, with the cumulative year-to-date deficit at HK\$193.6 billion after receipt of net proceeds of HK\$19.3 billion from issuance of green bonds under the Government Green Bond Programme (Green Bond).

The fiscal reserves stood at HK\$966.7 billion as at February 28, 2021.

Detailed figures are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

TABLE 1. CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT (Note 1)

	Month ended February 28, 2021 HK\$ million	11 months ended February 28, 2021 HK\$ million
Revenue	55,895.0	510,049.3
Expenditure	(55,511.7)	(722,978.1)
Surplus/(Deficit) before issuance of Green Bond	383.3	(212,928.8)
Net proceeds from issuance of Green Bond	19,303.6	19,303.6
Surplus/(Deficit) after issuance of Green Bond	19,686.9	(193,625.2)
Financing		
Domestic		
Banking Sector (Note 2)	(20,500.2)	195,232.9
Non-Banking Sector	813.3	(1,607.7)
External	–	–
Total	(19,686.9)	193,625.2

Government Debts as at February 28, 2021 (Note 3)

HK\$27,150 million

Debts Guaranteed by Government as at February 28, 2021 (Note 4)

HK\$79,022 million

TABLE 2. FISCAL RESERVES

	Month ended February 28, 2021 HK\$ million	11 months ended February 28, 2021 HK\$ million
Fiscal Reserves at start of period	946,995.7	1,160,307.8
Consolidated Surplus/(Deficit) after issuance of Green Bond	19,686.9	(193,625.2)

Fiscal Reserves at end of period (Note 5)	966,682.6	966,682.6

Notes:

1. This Account consolidates the General Revenue Account and the following eight Funds: Capital Works Reserve Fund, Capital Investment Fund, Civil Service Pension Reserve Fund, Disaster Relief Fund, Innovation and Technology Fund, Land Fund, Loan Fund and Lotteries Fund. It excludes the Bond Fund, the balance of which is not part of the fiscal reserves. The Bond Fund balance as at February 28, 2021, was HK\$151,941 million.

2. Includes transactions with the Exchange Fund and resident banks.

3. These were the Green Bonds of US\$3,500 million (equivalent to HK\$27,150 million as at February 28, 2021) including US\$1,000 million and US\$2,500 million issued under the Government Green Bond Programme in May 2019 and February 2021 respectively, which were denominated in US dollars with maturity from May 2024 to February 2051. They do not include the outstanding bonds with nominal value of HK\$118,171 million and alternative bonds with nominal value of US\$1,000 million (equivalent to HK\$7,757 million as at February 28, 2021) issued under the Government Bond Programme (with proceeds credited to the Bond Fund). Of these bonds under the Government Bond Programme (including Silver Bonds with nominal value of HK\$20,871 million, which may be redeemed before maturity upon request from bond holders), bonds with nominal value of HK\$17,433 million will mature within the period from March 2021 to February 2022 and the rest within the period from March 2022 to March 2034.

4. Includes guarantees provided under the SME Loan Guarantee Scheme launched in 2001, the Special Loan Guarantee Scheme launched in 2008, the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme launched in 2012 and a commercial loan of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation.

5. Includes HK\$219,691 million being the balance of the Land Fund held in the name of "Future Fund", for long-term investments initially up to December 31, 2025. The Future Fund also includes HK\$4,800 million, being one-third of the actual surplus in 2015-16 as top-up.