

[Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices at education centre](#)

Hong Kong Customs today (December 17) arrested a female director of an education centre suspected of engaging in commercial practices involving misleading omission and having wrongly accepted payment in the promotion of pre-nursery course, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information alleging that a female director of an education centre was suspected of omitting material information in the course of sale of pre-nursery course, i.e. the education centre was not qualified to deliver such course. The education centre was also suspected of collecting payment for the course even after a petition for winding up had been lodged. The centre eventually closed and was unable to deliver the course.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested a 36-year-old woman.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested woman has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Under the TDO, any trader who engages in a commercial practice that omits or hides material information and as a result causes, or is likely to cause, an average consumer to make a transactional decision commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

In addition, under the TDO, any trader commits an offence if at the time of acceptance of payment, the trader intends not to supply the product or intends to supply a materially different product, or there are no reasonable grounds for believing that the trader will be able to supply the product within a specified or reasonable period. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TDO to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

[Appeal for information on missing man](#)

[in Yau Ma Tei \(with photo\)](#)

Police today (December 17) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Yau Ma Tei.

Chiu Yick-biu, aged 60, went missing after he left an elderly home on Reclamation Street yesterday afternoon (December 16). Staff of the elderly home made a report to Police on the same day.

He is about 1.8 metres tall, 63 kilograms in weight and of thin build. He has a pointed face with yellow complexion and short grey hair. He was last seen wearing a black coat, grey trousers and grey shoes.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of Kowloon West on 3661 8038, 9020 6542 or email to rmpu-kw@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



[Transcript of remarks by CE at media session in Beijing](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session in Beijing to conclude her duty visit this afternoon (December 17):

Reporter: Mrs Lam, you did not answer the reporter's question just now about whether independence or national security issues such as Article 23 was mentioned, was part of the discussion with the state leaders. And also a second question, Premier Li Keqiang did mention, did highlight the fact that Hong Kong as a separate customs territory, it hasn't been easy over the past year for Hong Kong to keep a stable economic growth due to this fact. So, did state leaders express concerns that this might continue to be a problem looking forward in 2019, and also what should Hong Kong do about it?

Chief Executive: It's not quite correct to say that I did not answer the question. The question is not answerable because you're asking me to disclose details of my conversation with the leaders, which is not the norm and is not appropriate, because the purpose of my reporting duty is to give the leaders the latest situation in Hong Kong and to receive the leaders' instruction and advice, and it is only normal that I could not disclose what exactly was said and what was not said. But, if you're interested in national security or enactment of local legislation on Basic Law Article 23, I would refer you to what I have said in the Policy Address, and that is exactly still my position today – whoever asked me this question, that would be my position today. I just hope that people will understand that national security is of critical importance, especially with all the changes we have seen in other parts of the world, so to act responsibly to safeguard national security is not only the constitutional duty of myself as the Chief Executive, but should be the duty of every national in the People's Republic of China, including the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

As far as the economy, actually if you have heard what Premier Li said, I thought he was very pleased with what we have achieved that the growth so far this year – based on the first three quarters, a real growth of 3.7 per cent, and as you have captured from my sound bite, 3.7 per cent is considerably higher than the average of 2.7 per cent in the past decade. I'm not sure what you're referring to about the instabilities and uncertainties, but Hong Kong will continue to strengthen our fundamentals, including financial services, professional services, logistics and tourism. At the same time, we will grow the new sectors, especially innovation and technology, and that was also what Premier Li has commended us for, that in the past year we have been very active in growing this sector – innovation and technology. And the Central Authorities have given us extreme support in the innovation and technology. We have signed two agreements on co-operation arrangement with the Ministry of Science and Technology as well as the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Things are moving very fast as far as innovation and technology is concerned and I am pretty optimistic about the development of this new economic sector, but nonetheless, 2019 will be a year full of uncertainties, and perhaps some downside risks. That's why I've been saying in public, especially to the industry people, that the Government will stand by their side. If there's anything they need in order to meet this challenge and to relieve their pressure, my government is very happy and very committed to provide those assistance.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Transcript of remarks by S for S after FCC meeting

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, at a media session at Central Government Offices, Tamar, after the Fight Crime Committee meeting this afternoon (December 17):

Reporter: First question is about online romance scam. Does it worry you that the number of cases has increased despite a lot of publicity and education campaigns? Are these campaigns failing? Looking forward, what can the authorities do? What else can they do to increase people's awareness? Also, may I trouble you to tell us in English what the government will do to assist the four men jailed in the Philippines? What it has done and what it will do in future?

Secretary for Security: Thank you for your questions. Regarding the increase in the number of deception cases, in particular romance deceptions, of course, I pay special attention to this trend. It is a reflection of the nature of the crime itself. First of all, it is because there is a relatively low cost on the criminals. And also even though the successful rate may not be high, the amount of money that can be deceived in one single case can be a lot. I have said in Cantonese that in one case, one victim over four years, because of the deception, the victim lost over \$180 million. So, that is a lot. It is because of the low cost on the criminals and because of the likely big amount of money that can be deceived in one single case, we have to accept the fact that this crime is likely to be like drugs, robbery or any other crime that will be with us for a long time. So, what is important is that the law enforcement agencies will inform the public as soon as possible the new modus operandi so that prospective victims can take precaution and protect themselves. We altogether work against this crime. We, together, publicise and raise the awareness of prospective victims. When we are in doubt, then we seek help. There is a hotline which is 24/7 and an anti-deception centre where any member of the public can ring at any time to ask for help or information. Since its establishment in 2017, it has received over 30 000 calls from the public and stopped at least 500 cases in which money has been stopped from getting out of Hong Kong. So far, the amount of money that has been stopped amounts to \$1.3 billion. So, that is something that we should try to inform the public so that whenever they have any doubt then they seek help.

In regard to the case involving the four Hong Kong citizens who were convicted in court in the Philippines for drug offences, today the Honourable James To has reflected the families' requests and concern through a meeting

with Immigration Officers who are responsible for offering help to Hong Kong residents who need help overseas. I have actually spoken to officials of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (OCMFA) and expressed the concern of the HKSAR Government in regard to this matter. The officials are very receptive to what I have said which includes asking them for special attention to this case, whatever they can do to ensure that the legal and other rights of the four Hong Kong residents are fully protected and they will have a fair and just trial. Officials from the Chinese Embassy (the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of the Philippines) made visits to the four Hong Kong residents so as to offer help as far as possible. The OCMFA officials are very receptive and have indicated that they would do all they can to help. That is the first thing I want to inform you.

The second thing is I shall be writing to the Consul-General of the Philippines in Hong Kong (CG) to reflect the concern of the HKSAR Government in regard to this case and also to urge the CG to assist to ensure that the rights of the Hong Kong residents are fully protected and the trial in regard to this case should be dealt with in a very fair and speedy manner. I shall discuss with my colleagues of the Immigration Department subsequent to their meeting with the Honourable James To and then I will write to the CG either today or tomorrow.

Reporter: Do you personally think that the sentence and conviction of the four Hong Kong men are fair and grounded? What else could you do at the moment to help the group and also their family members?

Secretary for Security: I will leave the case to run its course of justice. I think justice is important. A fair trial will do justice to the four Hong Kong residents. In regard to what we can help them, I have earlier informed you and I want to inform the Hong Kong people that the Hong Kong Immigration Officers have met with the Honourable James To who has relayed some of the concerns and requests of the family members. We will, of course, do the best we can to ensure that their legal rights and also human rights are fully protected. We, of course, think that a fair and speedy trial to ensure that justice is done for the four Hong Kong residents is important. I have already spoken to the officials of the OCMFA and they are very receptive to my requests and they have promised that they will do everything they can to ensure that the rights of the four Hong Kong residents will be protected and also to accede to their requests for necessities or personal needs. They will be making more visits to the four Hong Kong residents. I shall also be writing to the Philippine CG as I have mentioned earlier to repeat those points.

CHP investigates hand, foot and mouth disease outbreaks in three schools

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (December 17) investigating outbreaks of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) in two secondary schools and one primary school, and again urged the public, schools and institutions to maintain strict hand, personal and environmental hygiene.

The first outbreak affected four male and 16 female students aged 12 to 17 at a secondary school in Sha Tin. They have developed oral ulcers, rash and vesicles on hands or feet, and fever, since November 2. All of them sought medical attention but none required hospitalisation.

The second outbreak was at a secondary school in Kwai Chung, affecting 16 male and three female students aged 16 to 18, as well as one female staff member. They have developed oral ulcers, rash over hands or feet and fever since December 7. All of them sought medical attention and one required hospitalisation.

The third outbreak affected 18 male and two female students aged 6 to 10 at a primary school in Wan Chai. They have developed fever, rash over hands or feet and oral ulcers since November 24. All of them sought medical attention but none required hospitalisation.

All patients of the above outbreaks are now in a stable condition.

Officers of the CHP have conducted site visits to the schools and advised the management on necessary infection control and preventive measures. The schools have been put under medical surveillance. Investigations are ongoing.

"HFMD is common in children while adult cases may also appear. It is usually caused by enteroviruses (EVs) such as Coxsackie virus and EV71. It is clinically characterised by maculopapular rashes or vesicular lesions occurring on the palms, soles and other parts of the body such as the buttocks and thighs. Vesicular lesions and ulcers may also be found in the oral cavity. Sometimes patients present mainly with painful ulcers at the back of the mouth, namely herpangina, without rash on the hands or feet," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"HFMD occurs throughout the year. While the disease activity is usually higher from May to July, a smaller peak may also occur from October to December. As young children are more susceptible, parents should stay alert to their health. Institutional outbreaks may occur where HFMD can easily spread among young children with close contact," the spokesman added.

To prevent HFMD, members of the public, and especially the management of institutions, should take heed of the following preventive measures:

- Maintain good air circulation;
- Wash hands before meals and after going to the toilet or handling diapers or other stool-soiled materials;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly, especially when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and oral discharges properly;
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as furniture, toys and commonly shared items with 1:99 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes, and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
- Use absorbent disposable towels to wipe away obvious contaminants such as respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, and then disinfect the surface and neighbouring areas with 1:49 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
- Children who are ill should be kept out of school until their fever and rash have subsided and all the vesicles have dried and crusted;
- Avoid going to overcrowded places; and
- Parents should maintain close communication with schools to let them know the latest situation of the sick children.

The public may visit the CHP's page on [HFMD and EV71 infection](#) and [Public Health Advice for Play Facilities](#) for more information.