

Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices at fitness centre

Hong Kong Customs today (December 7) arrested a male director and a male staff member of a fitness centre suspected of engaging in aggressive commercial practices in the course of selling fitness service, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information alleging that staff members of a fitness centre in Mong Kok imposed undue influence in selling fitness services to three customers who were forced to procure fitness club membership valued at \$14,000, \$21,600 and \$80,000 respectively.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested two 26-year-old men.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested men have been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to procure services at reputable shops. Before making any purchase decision, consumers should be cautious in providing their identity cards or credit cards to a salesperson. Consumers should firmly refuse signing any documents if they do not clearly know the content and price of the service to be provided, or have no intention to purchase the service.

Under the TDO, any trader commits an offence of engaging in aggressive commercial practices if harassment, coercion or undue influence is used to impair consumer's freedom of choice or conduct, causing the consumer to make a transactional decision. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years. The management staff will also be liable if the offence is committed with their consent or connivance or is attributed to their neglect.

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).

CS and S for IT visit Tai Po District

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, joined by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, this afternoon (December 7) visited the first recycling mill in Hong Kong, and met secondary school students in the District. They also had a meeting

with members of Tai Po District Council (TPDC) to exchange views on various issues.

Accompanied by the Acting District Officer (Tai Po), Ms Iris Lee, and the Chairman of the TPDC, Mr Cheung Hok-ming, Mr Cheung and Mr Yang began with the visit to a recycling mill in the Precision Manufacturing Centre of the Tai Po Industrial Estate. They toured the production lines to observe how the textile upcycling system developed by the Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel was applied at the production level. The recycling mill uses innovative technologies to provide a solution for textile waste recycling and adds value to the local textile industry. The production lines make use of the latest technologies to first sanitise used textile, then automatically separate and upcycle it into yarn which can be used for fabric and garment production.

Mr Cheung was pleased to note that this research and development achievement was highly recognised by the international community and won a gold award in this year's "International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva". He stressed that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government strived to promote re-industrialisation, develop high-end manufacturing industries which leverage new technologies and smart production but require limited land space, and proactively inject resources for the development of innovation and technology (I&T) in Hong Kong.

Mr Cheung and Mr Yang then visited the Valtorta College and met students from a number of secondary schools that had participated in a programme for promotion of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education in Tai Po secondary schools. Mr Cheung and Mr Yang received a briefing from students on robotic projects that they created for the programme and listened to their views on I&T development in Hong Kong. Funded by the Hong Kong Young Industrialists Council, the education programme aims to instill creative and logical thinking in students, with a view to nurturing future I&T talent for Hong Kong.

Mr Cheung applauded the innovative mind and potential shown by the secondary students and encouraged them to keep up their good work. He emphasized that the HKSAR Government spared no effort in promoting STEM education and that the Policy Address had announced a number of new measures including the launch of the Life-wide Learning Grant to support STEM education in schools.

Before the visit was concluded, Mr Cheung and Mr Yang met members of TPDC to listen to their views on I&T development in Hong Kong and other development issues of concern to the local community.

Application for renting remaining flower show fast food stall at upset price to start on December 17

Among the 55 commercial stalls of the Hong Kong Flower Show 2019, 54 were let at the auction held on December 5. The remaining fast food stall will be leased at its upset price on a first-come, first-served basis, starting from 9.30am on December 17 (Monday).

The fast food stall measures 5 metres x 10m. The letting price is \$30,310. The Licensee of this fast food stall shall sell sandwiches, bakery products (such as cookies) and ready-to-eat traditional snack food (such as bean pudding, cha kwo, sesame rolls, peanuts, glutinous rice balls and almond biscuits) during the Licence Period.

Those wishing to rent the stall must be 18 years old or above and ordinarily resident in Hong Kong under section 2 of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) or any company incorporated in Hong Kong. Where the renter is a company, the authorised representative of the company must produce the following documents: (i) the company's Certificate of Incorporation and Business Registration Certificate; and (ii) an authorisation letter showing that the representative is authorised to act on the company's behalf in the rental and to sign the Licence Agreement on the company's behalf. Interested parties should approach the Secretariat of the Hong Kong Flower Show in person at 11/F, Leisure and Cultural Services Headquarters, 1-3 Pai Tau Street, Sha Tin.

Organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the 10-day flower show will be held from March 15 to 24, 2019, at Victoria Park. The 55 commercial stalls in the showground comprise 38 flower and gardening stalls, seven fast food stalls, three handicraft stalls, two beverage stalls, two agricultural produce stalls, two photographic equipment stalls and one book stall.

For enquiries, please call 2601 8260 or visit www.hkflowershow.hk/en/hkfs/2019/commercial.html.

Contractors fined for violation of safety legislation

Hsin Chong Construction (Asia) Limited and Gammon E&M Limited were fined

\$40,000 and \$28,000 respectively at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (December 7) for violation of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance and the Construction Sites (Safety) Regulations. The prosecutions were launched by the Labour Department.

The case involved a fatal accident that occurred on October 21, 2017 at a building construction site in Kowloon Bay. While a worker was carrying out air-conditioning work, he fell a distance of 7.55 metres from the false ceiling to the ground. He sustained severe injuries and passed away two days later.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (December 7) released the latest grading of water quality for four gazetted beaches which are open all year round for swimming.

Four beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Clear Water Bay Second Beach
Golden Beach
Repulse Bay Beach
Silverstrand Beach

Compared with the grading released last week, there was no change in the grading for these beaches.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, an EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the

department's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.