

[Hong Kong Customs seizes Part 1 Poison worth about \\$17 million in anti-"space oil" operations \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs launched a series of anti-"space oil" operations in November and detected nine cases of possession of etomidate (the main ingredient of "space oil"), a kind of Part 1 poison under the Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations. A total of 191 "space oil" infused capsules, and 16 kilograms of etomidate powder that can be used to produce about 48 000 "space oil" infused capsules, with a total estimated market value of about \$17 million, were seized. Seven persons suspected to be connected with the cases were arrested.

Based on risk assessment, Customs inspected eight express parcels, arriving from India to Hong Kong and declared as carrying Carbomer, at Hong Kong International Airport. After examination, 16kg of etomidate powder was seized from the parcels. Upon follow-up investigations, Customs conducted controlled delivery operations and arrested three parcel consignees. Also, two etomidate storage centres were shut down.

Furthermore, Customs dismantled a "space oil" distribution and storage centre in Sham Shui Po, seizing 178 "space oil" infused capsules there. Later, two persons-in-charge, a courier involved in the case, and a "space oil" buyer were arrested. Thirteen "space oil" infused capsules were also found from the arrested buyer.

All arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation. Investigations are ongoing, and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

Customs will continue to step up enforcement against "space oil" through intelligence analysis and maintain close contact with the logistics industry. The department reminds logistics companies to remain vigilant and report to Customs any suspicious activities.

Under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, any person who possesses any poison included in Part 1 of the Poisons List other than in accordance with provisions commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour report hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).



[WSD to host Water Save Carnival at HarbourChill, Wan Chai](#)

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) will hold the Water Save Carnival from December 5 to 15 at HarbourChill, Wan Chai. Under the theme "Save Water Today for a Sustainable Future", the carnival aims to raise public awareness about water conservation through a series of engaging and fun activities, working together to create a sustainable future without water shortages. The carnival features a variety of activities, including water conservation workshops, interactive games, and a Water Save Dave Mascot Meet-and-Greet. A Giant Crystal Droplet will be set up on-site, allowing the public to step inside for photos and pledge their commitment to the vision of "Cherish Every Drop, Sustain a Better Life".

At the workshops, participants can create their own tools or decorations, including water filters, droplet wind chimes, and Water Save Dave key holders, using their creativity. Water Save Dave will also meet and greet the public at specific times and take photos with them.

The interactive games at the carnival, including Detect Water-Saving Acts!, Repair the Pipe!, Hydro-Personality Test, Water-Saving Drum Master, Every Habit Counts, and Water-Saving Battle, aim to deepen public understanding of the importance of water conservation. Participants who complete designated activities will also receive Water Save Dave-themed souvenirs.

All activities at the Water Save Carnival are free of charge. Some of the activities require pre-registration. Details are available on the thematic webpage (waterconservation.gov.hk/en/carnival/index.html) or Water Save Dave's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/share/p/15EG8zPJ3J). Members of the public are most welcome to join.

LCQ7: Supporting patients with classic phenylketonuria

Following is a question by Dr the Hon David Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, in the Legislative Council today (November 27):

Question:

Classic phenylketonuria (PKU) is a rare amino acid disorder. Patients with PKU can only consume special formula food and supplements for the whole life, as eating ordinary food will result in serious complications and even death. However, some carers of PKU patients have relayed to me that, as Hong Kong does not produce any special formula food for patients with PKU, these patients can only purchase imported food from individual suppliers, yet the prices for such food products have surged exorbitantly in recent years. For example, the price of a brand's tinned formula milk powder increased by folds from \$93 per standard tin in 2022 to \$430 in 2024, while another brand's formula milk powder can even cost as much as \$860 per tin with a net weight of 500 grams. It is learnt that, currently, patients in some jurisdictions (e.g. the United Kingdom) are subsidised by their governments for the purchase of special formula food. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether it will consider including special nutritional formulas which are essential for PKU patients in the Hospital Authority Drug Formulary, or otherwise subsidising patients for purchasing special formula food and supplements; if it will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Hospital Authority (HA), the reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon David Lam is as follows:

Classic phenylketonuria (PKU) is a rare but treatable amino acid metabolism disorder, which is an inherited metabolic disorder. To prevent the excessive build-up of phenylalanine in the body, patients with PKU need to take a special nutritionally balanced and low-phenylalanine diet including the use of specified dietary products (e.g. disease specific formula, other supplement products, specially formulated low protein products, etc). Child patients have to limit their intake of high protein food such as general infant formula milk powder, meat and dairy products so that just small and sufficient amount of phenylalanine would be consumed to maintain a healthy body as well as normal growth and development. According to the HA's records, the number of PKU patients is 21.

Where special nutrition and special dietetics products are indicated clinically for relevant patients during their stay in public hospitals, relevant costs are covered by their in-patient fees. As for out-patient services, if patients are prescribed with special nutrition and special dietetics products based on the assessment of clinical teams, they may purchase the relevant items at their own expense in the community. Patients or families with financial difficulties may approach the Medical Social Services Unit of hospitals or clinics for application for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme or Disability Allowance. For these patients with financial difficulties and unique clinical conditions, medical social workers will also assist in soliciting other financial assistance (e.g. donation) to subsidise their additional nutritional needs. At present, Hong Kong Children's Hospital also administers fund-raising activities for children suffering from rare diseases to support their relevant expenses.

The Hospital Authority Drug Formulary (HADF) has been implemented with a view to ensuring equitable access by patients to drugs prescribed based on their needs through standardisation of drug policy and drug utilisation in all public hospitals and clinics. Only registered pharmaceutical products (or commonly known as drugs, which are used for prevention and treatment of diseases) in Hong Kong that are cost effective as well as of proven safety and efficacy are covered by the HADF. It is not appropriate to include in the HADF any food or supplements such as special formula milk powder or special food products that are beyond the scope of drugs. The HA will continue to closely monitor the supply and usage of relevant special nutrition and special dietetics products or nutrition supplements, and maintain communication with suppliers regarding the supply situation for Hong Kong patients to address patients' needs.

Persons in custody at Shek Pik Prison attain good examination results (with photos)

A total of 99 persons in custody (PICs) at Shek Pik Prison (SPP) of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) were presented with certificates at a ceremony today (November 27) in recognition of their study efforts and academic achievements.

In the past year, a total of 230 PICs at SPP passed 381 papers with 221 distinctions and credits in various distance learning courses and public examinations organised by the Hong Kong Metropolitan University (HKMU), the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority and Caritas Institute of Community Education, covering subjects including Chinese language, English language, mathematics, economics, business finance, business statistics,

business administration, Putonghua, accounting and book-keeping. The 99 PICs who were awarded certificates today had passed 149 papers with 109 distinctions and credits. Among them, two PICs were awarded Bachelor's Degrees in Business Administration, two were awarded Bachelor's Degrees in General Studies, one was awarded a Bachelor's Degree in Language and Translation, and two were awarded Associate Degrees in General Studies by the HKMU.

Officiating at the ceremony, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Community Synergy for Rehabilitation Association (CSRA), Dr Cook Chiu, said that the CSRA is fully supportive of the rehabilitation work of the CSD, and set up the Community Synergy for Rehabilitation Association – Perseverance Education Fund in November 2022 with the aim of supporting needy PICs to pursue continuing education and vocational training. He encouraged the PICs to seek continuous improvement with perseverance and build a solid foundation for their rehabilitation.

During the ceremony, volunteer tutor and harmonicist Ramiel Leung partnered with PICs to stage a harmonica performance. In addition, singer Jade Kwan, together with a band composed of PICs at SPP, performed music onstage to convey gratitude to their family members as well as community members and organisations that have helped them rehabilitate.

In the sharing session, a PIC shared his experience in the course of pursuing his studies with perseverance and rehabilitation, and expressed gratitude for his family members' unwavering support.

Also attending the ceremony were representatives of non-governmental and community organisations, community leaders and family members of the certificate recipients.

Situated on Lantau Island, SPP is a maximum security institution with a capacity of 426 penal places for male adult PICs.





Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, November 27, 2024 is 106.5 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).