

## **Siu Sai Wan Community Hall temporary shelter opened**

In light of a fire that broke out at Sui Lok House in Siu Sai Wan Estate, and the subsequent power breakdown, the Eastern District Office (EDO) this evening (June 4) has opened a temporary shelter at the Siu Sai Wan Community Hall (G/F, Siu Sai Wan Complex, 15 Siu Sai Wan Road, Siu Sai Wan, Hong Kong) for residents in need.

The EDO will closely monitor the situation and liaise with other government departments to provide residents with appropriate assistance.

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## **Hong Kong Customs raids two suspected illicit cigarette storage centres with seizure worth about \$57 million (with photo)**

Hong Kong Customs on May 29 shut down two large-scale suspected illicit cigarette storage centres in Kwai Chung and Yuen Long. A total of about 12.6 million suspected illicit cigarettes with a total estimated market value of about \$57 million and a duty potential of about \$42 million were seized.

Customs had previously identified a cigarette smuggling syndicate active in the New Territories for in-depth investigations. Afterwards, Customs officers took action on the afternoon of May 29, and raided an industrial building unit on Ta Chuen Ping Street, Kwai Chung. About 1.3 million suspected illicit cigarettes were seized therein and a 37-year-old man who claimed to be a driver and was suspected to be connected with the case was arrested. Customs officers later escorted the man to the parking lot of the building and searched two light goods vehicles suspected to be involved in the case. About 1.1 million suspected illicit cigarettes were further seized inside the vehicles.

After a follow-up investigation, Customs officers on the same night seized about 10.2 million suspected illicit cigarettes inside a metal hut in Tan Kwai Tsuen, Yuen Long, shutting down another suspected illicit cigarette storage centre.

The arrested person has been released on bail pending further investigation. An investigation is ongoing and Customs will continue to trace the source and the flow of the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes.

Customs will continue its risk assessment and intelligence analysis for interception at source as well as through its multipronged enforcement strategy targeting storage, distribution and peddling to spare no effort in combating illicit cigarette activities.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, possession of, selling or buying illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/)).



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## [Hong Kong Customs signs AEO Mutual Recognition Arrangement Action Plan with United Arab Emirates Customs \(with photos\)](#)

The Assistant Commissioner (Excise and Strategic Support) of Customs and Excise, Mr Rudy Hui, yesterday and today (June 3 to 4) visited the General Administration of Customs of the United Arab Emirates (UAE Customs), and signed the Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) Action Plan with the Director of International Customs Relations of the Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs and Port Security of the United Arab Emirates, Mr Suoud Salem AlAgroobi, in Dubai, signifying the commencement of negotiation of the AEO MRA and marking an important step towards implementing the MRA in the near future. Also, the Customs Co-operative Arrangement (CCA) was discussed by both sides during their meeting with an aim to strengthening co-operation and exploring more collaboration opportunities.

During the visit, Mr Hui also toured the Zayed International Airport to understand the customs clearance on passengers of the UAE Customs.

Currently, Hong Kong Customs has signed 31 CCAs with the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, Macao Customs

Service, and 29 overseas customs administrations. At the same time, the department has ratified AEO MRAs with 15 economies, namely Mainland China, India, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Canada, Mexico, Indonesia, Macao, China, and Bahrain, nine of which are Belt and Road economies.

Hong Kong Customs has always been committed to maintaining a close co-operation with customs administrations around the world, and is dedicated to extending the CCA and AEO MRA networks to strengthen intelligence exchanges and information sharing, enhance customs clearance efficiency and establish a more seamless and convenient international link for various enterprises.



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## [Hong Kong SAR Government warmly welcomes introduction of sleeper](#)

# trains for XRL service to/from Beijing and Shanghai

A Government spokesman said today (June 4) that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government warmly welcomes the introduction of sleeper trains on the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL). This new service between the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station and the Beijingxi Station/Shanghai Hongqiao Station will commence on June 15, with trains departing in the evenings and arriving the following mornings. The initiative marks another significant milestone in the over five-year operation of the XRL Hong Kong Section.

The HKSAR Government has long been maintaining close communication with relevant Mainland authorities as well as the railway operators of the two places. Various measures such as increasing the number of stations directly connected with the West Kowloon Station and train frequencies, as well as introducing the Same-day Flexi-trip Arrangement and multi-ride tickets, have facilitated the flow of people by the XRL between Hong Kong and the Mainland, giving full play to the advantages of interconnectivity between the XRL Hong Kong Section and the national high-speed rail network.

The China State Railway Group Co., Ltd (China Railway) announced this morning that the ordinary-speed train services between the Hong Kong Hung Hom Station and Beijing/Shanghai will be upgraded to XRL sleeper train services. The new sleeper trains to be introduced to the XRL Hong Kong Section will significantly reduce rail travel times, almost by half, between Hong Kong and Beijing from over 24 hours to about 12.5 hours and between Hong Kong and Shanghai from 19.5 hours to about 11 hours. With the number of passenger seats largely increased to 600, the comfortable XRL sleeper trains will take the cross-boundary rail service experience to a new level. The operation mode of evening departures and morning arrivals will allow passengers to arrive at their destinations after a comfortable overnight journey, enriching travel options for both leisure and business travellers as well as saving a night of hotel charges.

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, said, "I wish to express my gratitude for the Central Government's care for Hong Kong, as well as the strong support from China Railway and various Mainland authorities. The train service to be introduced is a high-speed rail train with sleeper berths, departing in the evenings and arriving in the mornings. It will be more comfortable and faster, reducing the travel time by about half, and will cover a wider range of destinations, including popular tourist attraction cities. The upgraded train service will further meet the travel demand of wide-ranging passengers for cross-boundary journeys. It carries great significance in facilitating the cross-boundary flow of people, solidifying the people-to-people bonds between the Mainland and Hong Kong, and enabling Hong Kong to better integrate into the national development."

The launch of the XRL sleeper train service will further leverage the

advantage of the "co-location arrangement" at the West Kowloon Station. In the past, the Intercity Through Train (ITT) service adopted the "separate-location arrangement" immigration clearance procedure, which limited the number of Mainland destinations that could be connected, constraining the development potential of the services. The new sleeper trains connecting the Hong Kong West Kowloon Station and the Beijingxi Station/Shanghai Hongqiao Station will fully capitalise on the advantage of the "co-location arrangement". The trains will also stop at intermediate stations including Shijiazhuang in Hebei and Hangzhou in Zhejiang, providing cross-boundary travellers a more comfortable long-haul experience and enhancing the economic and trade co-operation as well as people-to-people exchanges between Hong Kong and a wider range of provinces and cities on the Mainland.

The Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, said, "This is the second announcement on the enhancement of the XRL Hong Kong Section services within less than a week, which is truly heartening. Last Thursday (May 30), the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), after discussion with China Railway, announced the commissioning of a new long-haul route to Hunan Province with six new destinations that directly connect to popular tourist destinations including Zhangjiajie and Fenghuanggucheng, adding impetus to the economic and tourism development of Hong Kong and Hunan. The new sleeper trains will operate from Fridays to Mondays, tailored to meet the passenger needs and provide them with a more convenient, comfortable and high-quality cross-boundary rail service, enhancing the travel experience for both business and leisure passengers."

The XRL Hong Kong Section connects to the 45 000-kilometre nationwide XRL network. The number of destinations directly connected to the XRL Hong Kong Section has progressively increased from 44 since its commissioning to 78 starting from June 15, including all stations covered by the ITT. With at least 200 XRL train trips running every day, passengers of Hong Kong and the Mainland are provided with a convenient and fast cross-boundary transport service.

The MTRCL will soon announce the details and ticketing arrangements of the XRL sleeper train service. The HKSAR Government will continue to work with the MTRCL to maintain close communication and co-ordination with the relevant Mainland authorities and railway operators to enhance the services of the XRL Hong Kong Section, so as to provide a more efficient, convenient and safe cross-boundary railway service for passengers and travellers of the two places. Committed to living up to the trust placed by the Central Government, the HKSAR Government will make comprehensive preparations and co-ordination on all fronts to ensure that through this new service, Hong Kong residents and visitors can fully experience the vast and superior XRL network of the Mainland through the connection of the XRL Hong Kong Section, and feel the importance and care that the Central Government attaches to Hong Kong.

Since the commissioning of the XRL Hong Kong Section in 2018, the cross-boundary rail service between the Mainland and Hong Kong has entered a new era. The XRL Hong Kong Section, which connects to the nationwide high-speed rail network with convenient, efficient and comfortable services and the advantage of great efficiency of the "co-location arrangement" at the Hong



Kong West Kowloon Station, has attracted a large number of passengers. It also plays an important role in the highly accessible transport network and economic circle in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and strengthens Hong Kong's position as a regional transport hub.

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## [Appeal for information on missing woman in Mong Kok \(with photo\)](#)

Police today (June 4) appealed to the public for information on a girl who went missing in Mong Kok.

Cheung Sin-yu, aged 12, went missing after she was last seen at MTR Prince Edward Station on June 1 afternoon. Her family made a report to Police on the next day (June 2).

She is about 1.54 metres tall, 34 kilograms in weight and of thin build. She has a round face with yellow complexion and long black hair. She was last seen wearing a black vest, a white jacket, blue jeans, black and white sneakers and carrying a white tote bag.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing girl or may have seen her is urged to contact the Regional Missing Persons Unit of New Territories South on 3661 1173 or 5683 7041 or email to [rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk](mailto:rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk), or contact any police station.

