

Government clarifies online rumours

In response to the rumours on an online platform claiming that the office buildings of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR, the Chief Executive's Office and the Legislative Council Complex will be guarded by the Chinese People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison from today (July 23), a Government spokesman clarified that the claims are totally unfounded.

Fresh beef sample found to contain sulphur dioxide

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (July 23) that a fresh beef sample was found to contain sulphur dioxide, a preservative which is not permitted to be used in fresh meat. The CFS is following up on the case.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS took the abovementioned fresh beef sample from a stall in Aberdeen Market for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained sulphur dioxide at a level of 281 parts per million."

According to the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap 132BD), it is an offence to add sulphur dioxide to fresh or chilled meat. The maximum penalty is a \$50,000 fine and six months' imprisonment.

The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the abovementioned irregularity.

Sulphur dioxide is a commonly used preservative in a variety of foods including dried fruits, pickled vegetables and meat products such as sausages and grilled burgers, but under the Regulation it is not permitted in fresh or chilled meat. Nonetheless, individual meat traders may illegally use sulphur dioxide to make meat look fresher. This preservative is of low toxicity. As it is water soluble, most of it can be removed through washing and cooking. However, susceptible individuals who are allergic to this preservative may experience breathing difficulties, headache and nausea.

The spokesman reminded the food trade to comply with the law and not to sell fresh or chilled meat adulterated with sulphur dioxide. Members of the public should purchase meat from reliable market stalls or fresh provision shops. They should avoid buying or consuming meat which is unnaturally red,

and maintain a balanced diet to avoid malnutrition or excessive exposure to chemicals from a small range of food items.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the case and take appropriate action. An investigation is ongoing.

Tender amounts submitted for site in Kai Tak

The Lands Department announced today (July 23) that in respect of the tender for the site New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 6553 at Kai Tak Area 4C Site 1, Kai Tak, Kowloon, which was awarded on June 26 to the successful tenderer, Fame Well Creation Limited (parent company: China Resources Land Limited and Poly Property Group Co., Limited), on a 50-year land grant at a premium of \$12,916,000,000, the tender amounts submitted by the unsuccessful tenderers in descending order are published on an anonymous basis as follows:

- (1) \$12,501,545,000
- (2) \$11,100,000,000
- (3) \$10,429,860,400
- (4) \$10,113,000,000
- (5) \$9,988,000,000

The information disclosed in this press release is for information only.

Operator and manager of unlicensed guesthouses fined

Two men were fined \$3,500 and \$4,000 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts and the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (July 23) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in December last year and January this year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected two suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Choi Yuen Road in Sheung Shui and King's Road in North Point. During the inspections, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented rooms in these guesthouses on a daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, these guesthouses did not possess licences under the Ordinance on the days of inspection. The men responsible for operating and managing the premises were charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

Manager and operator fined for illegal club operations

A man and a company were fined \$1,800 and \$3,000 respectively at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (July 23) for contravening the Clubs (Safety of Premises) Ordinance.

The courts heard that in December last year, officers from the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) of the Home Affairs Department conducted an inspection at a club on Foo Ming Street in Causeway Bay, which had been operating with a certificate of compliance (CoC).

OLA officers posed as customers and patronised the club for food without being asked to show their membership status or being invited to join the club as members. Condition 19 of the CoC was breached.

The man and the company, being the manager of the club and the CoC holder of the club respectively, were charged with contravening section 21(1) (a) and section 21(2) of the Ordinance.

A spokesman for the department reminded all CoC holders to comply with the conditions as stipulated therein. Enforcement action will continue to be taken against illegal club operations.