

Regional flag day today

Three charities have been issued Public Subscription Permits to hold flag sales from 7am to 12.30pm today (March 9). They are, on Hong Kong Island, the Hong Kong Down Syndrome Association; in Kowloon, Hok Yau Club; and in the New Territories, Hong Kong & Macau Lutheran Church Social Service Limited, a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said.

Arrangements have been made with the charities to help people distinguish between the three flag-selling activities.

Information on the three flag-selling organisations on March 9 is as follows:

Region	Name of Organisation	Colour of Collection Bag	Colour of Flag
Hong Kong Island	The Hong Kong Down Syndrome Association	Yellow	Blue
Kowloon	Hok Yau Club	Dark Green	Green
New Territories	Hong Kong & Macau Lutheran Church Social Service Limited	Green	White

For enquiries, please call the SWD's hotline at 2343 2255, or the designated hotline of the 1823 Call Centre at 3142 2678. Information on flag days is available at the SWD's website (www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_whatsnew) and the GovHK portal (www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search). Permits for flag days containing contact information of the flag-selling organisations and information on the approved flag-selling activities have also been uploaded to the SWD's website (www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_controlofc/sub_recentlyap). For enquiries about the detailed flag-selling arrangements, please contact the individual flag-selling organisations.

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities covered by the Public Subscription Permit issued by the SWD have also been uploaded to the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/fundraising).

In the case of suspected fraudulent flag day activities, people should not make any donation and should immediately report the matter to the Police, the spokesman added.

Speech by CE at the reception to celebrate 70th anniversary of founding of the People's Republic of China and International Women's Day 2019 (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the reception to celebrate the 70th anniversary of founding of the People's Republic of China and International Women's Day 2019 today (March 8):

I am very pleased to join you all at this meaningful reception. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Over the past decades, we have witnessed our country's remarkable achievements in economic and social development. People's livelihoods as well as women's status have been significantly improved. Today, China is the world's second largest economy with significant influence in the international community, of which Chinese people have every reason to be very proud.

Today we also celebrate the annual International Women's Day. Since being elected, I have been fully aware of my responsibility that goes with being the first female Chief Executive of the Hong Kong SAR. In this regard, I am pleased to say that we are making some good progress in putting in place the initiatives announced in my Policy Address last October. These include, among others, the proposal to enhance maternity leave from 10 weeks to 14 weeks so that mothers will have more time to spend with and take care of their newborn babies. The additional four weeks' statutory maternity leave pay would be borne by the Government in full. We plan to introduce the legislative amendments to the Legislative Council by the end of this year.

The statutory paternity leave has also been increased from 3 days to 5 days, which came into effect on January 18 this year. Moreover, legislative amendments to prohibit direct and indirect discrimination on the ground of breastfeeding have been introduced to the Legislative Council. We are also working in full force to implement the various measures to enhance child care services, including improvement of manning ratios, formulation of service planning ratio, strengthening of training and increase in subsidy level.

In view of the challenges such as ageing population and keen competition for talent around the world, it is imperative that women are empowered and enabled to fully utilise their talent and develop their potentials, unhindered by traditional stereotypes or other barriers. My Government will do all we can towards that target, and look forward to your continued support.

I wish you all a very enjoyable evening. Thank you very much.



CSD issues statement on complaints handling mechanism regarding persons in custody

In response to the press conference held by Legislative Council members Mr Shiu Ka-chun, Dr Fernando Cheung, Mr Charles Mok and several others regarding the complaints handling mechanism of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) and inspection arrangement of Justices of the Peace, etc., the CSD issued the following statement today (March 8) :

The CSD all along attaches great importance to complaints. All persons in custody newly admitted into correctional institutions will be arranged to undergo an induction programme during which the staff will explain to them their rights to make complaints and the various channels of complaints. In addition, through "Information Booklet for Persons in Custody" issued to them and the electronic kiosks located at different places in the institutions, they will learn the details of various complaint channels. Notices on the rights of persons in custody to make complaints are displayed at prominent places in all institutions.

Currently, persons in custody can lodge their complaints through various channels. Internal channels include complaining to the institutional management, directorate officers of the CSD Headquarters during their inspection to the correctional institutions or the Complaints Investigation Unit (CIU) of the CSD. CIU is an independent unit appointed by the Commissioner of Correctional Services which will carry out investigation on each and every complaint case in a fair, impartial and comprehensive manner, or make referral to other law enforcement agencies for follow-up according to its circumstances. As for external channels, persons in custody may write to members of the Legislative Council, The Ombudsman, statutory bodies, other law enforcement agencies or government bureaux, etc. to lodge their complaints. Besides, they can choose to seek assistance from or lodge their complaints to the visiting Justices of the Peace during the latter's surprise inspections to their institutions.

Being the independent watchdog of public administration that vested with the power to investigate complaints against the Government departments, The Ombudsman can request the CSD to provide information to assist their investigation into the complaints or initiate direct investigation of his volition.

Moreover, persons in custody have the right to see their legal advisors. They can also request to see those specified persons prescribed by law, such as members of the Legislative Council and District Councils. Staff members of the CSD will not be present at their interviews with the above persons. Their conversation will not be heard by staff members of the CSD and whether the interview is related to any complaints is also unknown. The CSD handles the letters of persons in custody in accordance with the Prison Rules so as to protect the privacy of persons in custody where any letter to a specified person, including members of the Legislative Council and The Ombudsman, shall not be read. All the letters to and from a person in custody are handled and properly recorded by the clerical staff instead of staff members of the CSD.

Should persons in custody wish to lodge complaints to the visiting Justices of the Peace, they may request to see the Justices of the Peace alone. The visiting Justices of the Peace may initiate an investigation into the complaint immediately or refer the complaint to other external organisations. Furthermore, the Justices of the Peace may request to visit the institution concerned again outside the period of their tour of duty for follow-up investigation into the complaint. Visits of Justices of the Peace are not arranged by the CSD and the actual date and time of the visits will not be disclosed to the CSD or the institution concerned. The existing mechanism of visits by Justices of the Peace is functioning well and is also an effective system for persons in custody to lodge complaints. Among the 414 visits conducted by the visiting Justices of the Peace in 2018, the CSD received 187 complaints cases lodged by the persons in custody.

Chaplains of the CSD are independent clergymen appointed in accordance with the laws. He shall have access to persons in custody at all reasonable times and the persons in custody can lodge complaints to the Chaplains at any time. The Chaplains have the duty to report any impropriety in the prison which may come to his knowledge.

The CIU of the CSD is appointed by the Commissioner of Correctional Services. It is an investigation unit responsible for handling and investigating complaints of which its operation is independent of other sections of the Department. The findings of the CIU will be submitted to the Correctional Services Department Complaints Committee (CSDCC) for auditing and endorsement. The CSDCC is chaired by the Civil Secretary of the CSD (an Administrative Officer Staff Grade "C"). The complainants may appeal to the Correctional Services Department Complaints Appeal Board (CSDCAB) if they are not satisfied with the findings. The CSDCAB is chaired by the Deputy Commissioner of the CSD and comprises community stakeholders who are familiar with correctional operations. The CSD reviews and enhances the complaints handling mechanism from time to time with a view to increasing the transparency and credibility of the Department in handling complaints in an open, fair and impartial manner. To widen the structure of the CSDCAB and further strengthen the mechanism to scrutinize appeals, the number of members of the CSDCAB was increased from 10 to 18 in April 2018. Apart from Justices of the Peace, religious persons who are acquainted with correctional operations were also appointed. The independence of the CSDCAB ensures that the appeal cases are handled fairly.

The CSD attaches great importance to the conduct, integrity and ethics of its staff. Any staff members found to have breached the law will be dealt with seriously by the CSD.

Government launches Solar Harvest scheme to support development of solar energy

To combat climate change the Government is actively taking a multi-pronged approach, which includes promoting the development of renewable energy (RE). The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) has launched "Solar Harvest – Solar Energy Support Scheme for Schools and Welfare Non-Governmental Organisations" with the aim of installing solar photovoltaic (PV) systems at eligible schools and welfare non-Governmental organisations (NGOs). The scheme opened for applications today (March 8) and the closing date for the first batch of applications is April 4.

A Government spokesman said that Solar Harvest will implement the initiative to promote the use of RE announced by the Chief Executive in the 2018 Policy Address. Under the scheme, the EMSD will provide eligible non-Government and non-profit-making schools, as well as welfare NGOs which are receiving recurrent subventions from the Social Welfare Department (SWD), with a one-stop service including conducting site visits and technical assessments at their premises, design of the solar PV systems, procuring and

installing the equipment, and system testing. The EMSD will also help the schools and welfare NGOs apply to join the Feed-in Tariff (FiT) Scheme. All expenses in relation to the solar PV system installation and application to join the FiT Scheme will be fully covered by Solar Harvest.

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"The Government and the two power companies have implemented the FiT Scheme as an initiative to provide various sectors with financial incentives to invest in distributed RE. The Government has launched Solar Harvest to provide eligible schools and welfare NGOs with further financial and technical support for the installation of solar PV systems. We hope that through the collaboration of the Government, power companies, schools and welfare NGOs, we can encourage students and young people to get a better understanding of RE, and to 'cultivate' and 'harvest' electricity together. We also hope that schools can make good use of the solar PV systems installed to enrich the teaching of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and environmental education, with a view to fueling the interest of students and young people in exploring science and promoting low-carbon living," said the spokesman.

In addition to launching Solar Harvest, the Government will continue to install solar PV systems at suitable government schools. As regards for-profit schools, the FiT Scheme can help the schools recover the cost of installing solar PV systems and pay for the expenses on maintenance and repair.

Eligible schools and welfare NGOs which are receiving recurrent subventions from the SWD interested in joining Solar Harvest are invited to download the form from the EMSD's website (re.emsd.gov.hk). For enquiries, please contact the EMSD by telephone during office hours at 3155 3977 or by email (solarharvest@emsd.gov.hk).

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected counterfeit goods \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs conducted an anti-counterfeiting operation in January and February and seized a total of about 23 000 suspected counterfeit goods with an estimated market value of about \$3.2 million.

Through intelligence exchange with the US Customs and Border Protection and the customs administrations of some European Union member states, Hong Kong Customs took enforcement action in January and February and stepped up inspection against suspicious express consignments destined for the United States and countries in Europe.

During the operation, a total of about 23 000 suspected counterfeit

goods including mobile phones, electronic products, shoes and clothing were seized with an estimated market value of about \$3.2 million.

Hong Kong Customs will continue to strengthen intelligence exchange with the Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to combat counterfeit products.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who imports or exports any goods to which a forged trade mark is applied commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

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

