

HKETO Jakarta celebrates Chinese New Year in Brunei (with photos)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Jakarta (HKETO Jakarta) hosted a spring reception in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, tonight (February 12) to celebrate the Chinese New Year and promote bilateral relations between Hong Kong and Brunei.

In his welcoming remarks, the Director-General of HKETO Jakarta, Mr Law Kin-wai, highlighted Hong Kong's business advantages and promoted the ample opportunities under the Belt and Road Initiative and the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. He also briefed the guests about the latest economic and social situation in Hong Kong, and garnered their support for HKETO Jakarta, Invest Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) in promoting closer exchanges between the two places.

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Brunei Darussalam, Ms Yu Hong; the Regional Director of South East Asia and South Asia of the HKTDC, Mr Peter Wong; and over 100 key local business representatives and guests from the Bruneian community attended the reception, sharing the joy and well wishes with each other in the festive season.

HKETO Jakarta will be holding further Chinese New Year celebration programmes in other Association of Southeast Asian Nations countries under its purview in February and March.



CHP investigates suspected case of paralytic shellfish poisoning

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (February 12) investigating a suspected case of paralytic shellfish poisoning affecting a family of four.

The case involves one male and three females aged 6 to 55, who presented with tongue numbness and vomiting from immediately to 10 minutes after consuming sea snail at home yesterday (February 11). Two of them attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Tin Shui Wai Hospital on the same day and no hospitalisation was required. All patients have been in a stable condition all along.

Initial enquiries revealed that the sea snail was purchased from a seafood stall in Tin Shui Market in Tin Shui Wai. Investigations by the CHP and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department are continuing.

"Paralytic shellfish poisoning toxin was a natural toxin sometimes found in bi-valve shellfish. It is heat-stable and cannot be destroyed through cooking," a spokesman for CHP said.

"The symptoms of paralytic shellfish poisoning are predominantly neurological and the onset is usually within minutes to hours after ingestion of the shellfish. Initial symptoms may include tingling, numbness of the mouth and extremities, headache, dizziness and gastrointestinal discomfort. In the majority of cases, symptoms resolve completely within a few days. In severe cases, difficulty in swallowing and speech, paralysis with respiratory arrest and even death may occur," the spokesman added.

The spokesman reminded members of the public that they should seek medical advice immediately if they develop shellfish poisoning symptoms and save any leftovers for investigation and laboratory testing.

To reduce the risk of shellfish poisoning, the public should:

- * Buy shellfish from reliable and licensed seafood shops;
 - * Remove the viscera, gonads and roe before cooking and discard any cooking liquid before consumption;
 - * Eat a smaller amount of shellfish in any one meal; and
 - * When symptoms occur after consuming shellfish, seek medical advice immediately.
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Contractor convicted and fined for carrying out illegal works in conservation area in Pok Wai, Yuen Long (with photos)

A contractor who carried out illegal site formation works in a conservation area in Pok Wai, Yuen Long, and caused mud and dust dispersion which adversely affected the environment, was convicted today (February 12). The contractor, the land occupier and the construction worker concerned were fined a total of \$25,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today for contravening the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) and the Air Pollution Control (Construction Dust) Regulation.

An Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spokesman said that the department received a report last July from a member of the public that illegal site formation works were being conducted in a private lot in Pok Wai, Yuen Long. During the inspection, the EPD officers successfully intercepted a dump truck and an excavator, which were involved in soil dumping and bulldozing works at the lot concerned. The illegal works caused mud and dust dispersion which adversely affected the environment. After investigation and evidence gathering, the department subsequently initiated prosecution against the contractor, the land occupier and the construction worker concerned in accordance with the EIAO and the Regulation.

The spokesman said that the area concerned belongs to a conservation area under the Nam Sang Wai Outline Zoning Plan, which aims to preserve the ecological value and functions of existing fish ponds in the area. According to the EIAO, it is an offence to conduct earthworks at a conservation area without an environmental permit issued by the EPD. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and six months' imprisonment. In addition, according to the Regulation, site formation is classified as notifiable work and contractors are required to notify the EPD in accordance with the statutory requirements and adopt dust emission control measures. Anyone who fails to notify the EPD about site formation works commits an offence and is liable to a fine of \$25,000. Anyone who conducts construction works without adopting the measures stipulated by the Regulation to prevent the dispersion of dust is liable to a fine of \$50,000.



Cluster of Influenza A cases in Yan Chai Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Yan Chai Hospital (YCH) made the following announcement today (February 12):

Three male patients (aged 55 to 61) in a medical ward and one staff member of YCH have presented with upper respiratory tract infection symptoms since February 4. Appropriate viral tests were arranged and the test results were positive for Influenza A. One of the patients was discharged upon recovery; one patient is being treated under isolation and is in a stable condition; and one of the three patients passed away due to his own underlying illness and Influenza A. The staff member concerned is currently on leave.

Admission to the ward has been suspended. Infection control measures have already been stepped up according to the established guidelines. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The cases have been reported to Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow up.

Woman fined for operating unlicensed

guesthouse

A woman was fined \$15,000 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today (February 12) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in May last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), Home Affairs Department, inspected a suspected unlicensed guesthouse on Hoi Wan Street in Quarry Bay. The OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room in the guesthouse on a daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, the guesthouse did not possess a licence under the Ordinance on the day of inspection. The woman responsible for operating the premises was 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".