

LegCo committee meetings

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Bills Committee on Inland Revenue (Profits Tax Exemption for Funds) (Amendment) Bill 2018 will hold a meeting at 8.30am tomorrow (January 16) in Conference Room 3 of the LegCo Complex. During the meeting, members of the Bills Committee will meet with the Administration.

Meanwhile, the first meeting of the Subcommittee on Exemption from Profits Tax (People's Bank of China Debt Instrument) Order originally scheduled for tomorrow at 8.30am has been cancelled.

Appointments to Quality Education Fund Steering Committee

The Education Bureau today (January 15) announced the appointment of members to the Quality Education Fund Steering Committee (QEFSC).

The following members have been appointed to the QEFSC:

- * Ms Kelly Chan Yuen-sau
- * Ms Angela Leung Wai-tuen
- * Mr Pang Chor-fu
- * Mr Yeung Sai-man

The following members have been re-appointed to the QEFSC:

- * Dr Eugene Chan Kin-keung
- * Dr Ho Yuk-fan
- * Ms Jane Leung Chui-chun
- * Dr Brian Lo Kin-hang
- * Miss Bella Lo Sung-yi
- * Dr Mak Chi-keung
- * Mr Shum Yiu-kwong

The members' appointments take effect from January 16, 2019 for a term of two years.

"I am confident that with the appointments of the members, the Quality Education Fund (QEF) will continue with its excellent work in the promotion of quality school education in Hong Kong," said the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung.

He also thanked the outgoing members Dr Lam Sek-kong, Ms Shum Siu-fong, Professor Tse Chi-kong and Mrs Bonnie Woo Chan Tak-chi for their contributions to the QEFSC in the past years.

The QEF was established in early 1998 with capital of \$5 billion to fund community initiatives which promote quality education in Hong Kong. The QEFSC advises on the policies and operation of the QEF and also makes recommendations to the Fund's Trustee on the awards of grants.

Since its establishment, the Fund has supported over 10 000 projects with grants totalling around \$4.6 billion.

MD announcement

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

The Marine Department today (January 15) reminded masters, coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels navigating in Hong Kong waters to proceed at a safe speed and exercise extreme caution because restricted visibility of less than 2 nautical miles has been reported.

Appropriate sound signals shall be made when underway or at anchor. All vessels must comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collision at Sea.

Also, when radar is used without the benefit of adequate plotting facilities, the information obtained from the equipment is rather limited and should be construed accordingly.

Visibility reports are broadcast by the Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) on VHF channels 02, 12, 14, 63 and 67.

In the event of an accident, a report shall be made immediately to the VTC at Tel: 2233 7801.

Transcript of remarks by CE at media

session before ExCo meeting

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (January 15):

Reporter: Mrs Lam, would you take back the statement that angered and offended so many lawmakers, or apologise for it though? Second question, pan-democratic lawmakers are saying that they will vote down the next Budget if the Government doesn't withdraw the plan, and they are asking pro-government lawmakers to also join them. What do you make of that – is that holding the next Budget hostage? And on the second topic about Andy Chan's hearing, does yesterday's hearing already count as him having argued his case simply because he didn't answer any question because his lawyers aren't present and do you think, just why can't the hearing be, well, postponed or rescheduled?

Chief Executive: On the last question first, I could not comment because it is an appeal case to be handled by the Executive Council, and thereafter, as the Chairman of the Executive Council, I will need to deal with this appeal case, so it is inappropriate for me to comment on the processing of this appeal case.

On the first two questions, I have already explained that on the two occasions that I spoke on the subject of the age definition of elderly CSSA recipients, I was merely responding to questions in a factual, and in my sort of straight talk style. So, in the Legislative Council when one member urged me to withdraw the proposal, my response was to explain to her that it was no longer a proposal, it was something that has been approved in the context of the 2018-19 Estimates. If individual members felt uncomfortable with that sort of straight talk then I will be more diplomatic in future. But I still need to talk about the facts because nobody could change the facts. On this sort of linkage between the CSSA age limit with the next Budget – if I heard you correct, you were talking about the next Budget, that is the 2019-20 Budget of the Financial Secretary – if you ask me, of course, I said it is totally unreasonable because members of the Legislative Council have yet to see the content of the next Budget. I have not seen the content of the next Budget. So, to suggest that because of unhappiness over one policy issue, or maybe other policy issues in time to come, that they should now in advance say that they are not going to approve the next Budget, I don't think this is a very responsible way of dealing with Legislative Council business. At the end of the day, the community will be hurt if there isn't a Budget to support the various activities and services of the government departments.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected smuggled bird nest (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (January 14) seized about 49 kilograms of suspected smuggled bird nest at Shenzhen Bay Control Point with an estimated market value of about \$1.85 million.

Customs officers intercepted an outgoing coach at Shenzhen Bay Control Point for inspection yesterday and seized the batch of bird nest inside the air duct in the cabin.

The 52-year-old male driver was arrested. Investigation is ongoing.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

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

