

Financial Leaders Forum convenes sixth meeting

The Financial Leaders Forum (FLF), chaired by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, held its sixth meeting today (November 16).

With maintaining continual financial stability being one of the focuses of the FLF, Members were briefed today on the overall strategy of the Government and the financial regulators in this regard amidst the trade conflict between China and the US. They noted that the resilience of Hong Kong's financial markets, including the maturity of investors and robustness of the regulatory regimes, was well tested with proven effectiveness. Members shared the assessment of the Government and the financial regulators that Hong Kong is fully prepared to rise to challenges in the face of increased market volatilities and uncertainties.

In particular, Members noted that the Hong Kong Monetary Authority had conducted stress tests over the resilience of the banking system. The results indicated that even in extremely adverse situations, banks will still be able to meet the relevant capital and liquidity supervisory requirements.

At the same time, it was noted that the Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) had been vigilant in monitoring the capital markets, including the financial positions, operations and settlement status of brokers, as well as their ability to deal with different market situations. The SFC had also worked to ensure that the trading and risk management systems of the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong can adequately handle shocks under extreme market situations.

The Insurance Authority had been closely monitoring the insurance market and had performed stress tests on market volatility and increased credit spread to ensure the financial soundness of authorised insurers.

Members noted that the Government and the financial regulators will remain vigilant and continue to closely monitor developments in the trade conflict and the financial market situation, with a view to maintaining financial stability.

Members were also briefed on the strategies for capturing the opportunities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area) for Hong Kong's financial services sector. They opined that the freer flow of people, goods, capital and information within the Greater Bay Area should be promoted, and that Hong Kong's status should be enhanced as a global offshore Renminbi business hub and an international asset and wealth management centre, as well as a risk management centre.

In addition, Members took note of the latest development of Brexit and its possible implications for Hong Kong. The Government and the financial regulators will closely monitor the market development and the outcome of

Brexit negotiations.

[LegCo Members meet with Consuls-General and Honorary Consuls in Hong Kong \(with photos\)](#)

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

A luncheon between the Legislative Council (LegCo) Members and the Consuls-General (CGs) as well as Honorary Consuls (HCs) in Hong Kong was held today (November 16) in the LegCo Complex, which provided an opportunity for them to exchange views on the work of LegCo and issues of mutual concern.

The President of LegCo, Mr Andrew Leung, conducted a briefing for the attending CGs and HCs on the work of LegCo before the luncheon hosted by him.

The luncheon was attended by Mr Abraham Shek, Dr Priscilla Leung, Mr Paul Tse, Mr Chan Han-pan, Mr Kenneth Leung, Mr Dennis Kwok, Dr Helena Wong, Mr Ip Kin-yuen, Dr Elizabeth Quat, Dr Junius Ho, Mr Chan Chun-ying, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, Mr Lau Kwok-fan, Dr Cheng Chung-tai, Mr Jeremy Tam and Mr Au Nok-hin. A total of 17 CGs or their representatives and 10 HCs attended the briefing and luncheon.



[Update on food poisoning outbreak related to food premises in Kowloon](#)

Bay

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (November 16) reported an update on its investigations into an outbreak of food poisoning related to a food premises in Kowloon Bay announced on November 13.

After further investigations, the CHP identified an additional 38 persons, comprising 12 men and 26 women aged from 19 to 62, who developed abdominal pain, diarrhoea, vomiting and fever about two to 31 hours after having a dinner banquet at the food premises on November 9. Twenty of them sought medical attention but none required hospitalisation.

This brings the total number of persons affected to 48 so far, comprising 19 men and 29 women. The stool specimen of one patient tested positive for *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*. All affected persons identified have been in stable condition.

"Epidemiological investigations show that the additional affected persons had a meal at the food premises concerned before investigation and control measures instituted by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). We have alerted the FEHD to the updated investigation findings and investigations are ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

To prevent food-borne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
 - Avoid eating raw seafood;
 - Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
 - Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hot pot or barbecue meal;
 - Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
 - Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
 - Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
 - Drink boiled water;
 - Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
 - Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.
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Meetings of Legislative Council and its Committees

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

The Legislative Council (LegCo) and its Committees will hold 13 open meetings and three closed meetings during the week from November 19 to 23 in the LegCo Complex. Details of the meetings are available in the meeting schedule attached.

The information in the meeting schedule is subject to change. Please refer to the "LegCo Calendar" on the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk) for the latest details of meetings.

Members of the public are welcome to observe open meetings of LegCo and its Committees. Interested individuals and groups are advised to make advance booking of seats by calling the LegCo Secretariat at 3919 3399 during office hours. Members of the public can also listen to or watch all open meetings via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website.

Twelve immigration offenders arrested

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations, including an operation codenamed "Twilight", and joint operations with the Hong Kong Police Force and the Labour Department codenamed "Champion" from November 12 to 15. A total of nine illegal workers and three suspected employers were arrested.

During operation "Twilight", ImmD Task Force officers raided 21 target locations including commercial buildings, a dog shelter, a farm, residential flats, restaurants and a shopping mall. Eight illegal workers and two employers were arrested. The illegal workers comprised five men and three women, aged 34 to 58. Among them, a woman was a holder of a recognisance form, which prohibits her from taking any employment. In addition, two women were suspected of using and being in possession of a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Meanwhile, one man and one woman, aged 36 and 45, were suspected of employing the illegal workers.

In addition, during operation "Champion", enforcement officers raided four target locations in Sha Tin including a shop and restaurants. A female illegal worker, aged 39, was arrested. Meanwhile, one woman, aged 50, was suspected of employing the illegal worker and she was also arrested.

"Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties," an ImmD spokesman said.

The spokesman warned that it is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threat and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent interference, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant

departments.