

CFS announces food safety report for August

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (September 28) released the findings of its food safety report for last month. The results of about 15 500 food samples tested were satisfactory except for nine samples which were announced earlier. The overall satisfactory rate was 99.9 per cent.

A CFS spokesman said about 1 700 food samples were collected for microbiological tests, some 4 600 samples were taken for chemical tests and the remaining 9 200 (including about 8 700 taken from food imported from Japan) were collected to test radiation levels.

The microbiological tests covered pathogens and hygienic indicators, while the chemical tests included pesticides, preservatives, metallic contaminants, colouring matters, veterinary drug residues and others.

The samples comprised about 4 500 samples of vegetables and fruit and their products; 700 samples of meat and poultry and their products; 1 800 samples of aquatic and related products; 900 samples of milk, milk products and frozen confections; 1 000 samples of cereals, grains and their products; and 6 600 samples of other food commodities (including beverages, bakery products and snacks).

The nine unsatisfactory samples comprised three vegetable and fruit samples detected with pesticide residues exceeding the legal limits; a dried apricot sample and a preserved leaf mustard sample detected with sulphur dioxide exceeding the legal limits; an eel sample detected with a trace amount of malachite green; a soft ice-cream sample found to contain coliform bacteria exceeding the legal limit; a white rice sample detected with excessive cadmium; and a plum sauce sample found to contain sulphur dioxide undeclared on its food label.

The CFS has taken follow-up action on the unsatisfactory samples, including informing the vendors concerned of the test results, instructing them to stop selling the affected food items and tracing the sources of the food items in question.

Since the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap 132CM) came into effect on August 1, 2014, as of August 31 this year, the CFS has taken over 153 900 food samples at the import, wholesale and retail levels for testing for pesticide residues. The overall unsatisfactory rate is less than 0.2 per cent.

The spokesman added that excessive pesticide residues in food may arise from the trade not observing Good Agricultural Practice, e.g. using excessive pesticides and/or not allowing sufficient time for pesticides to decompose

before harvesting. The maximum residue limits (MRLs) of pesticide residues in food set in the Regulation are not safety indicators. They are the maximum concentrations of pesticide residues to be permitted in a food commodity under Good Agricultural Practice when applying pesticides. In this connection, consumption of food with pesticide residues higher than the MRLs will not necessarily lead to any adverse health effects.

The spokesman reminded the food trade to ensure that food for sale is fit for human consumption and meets legal requirements. Consumers should patronise reliable shops when buying food and maintain a balanced diet to minimise food risks.

Celebrations to mark 69th National Day

A series of celebration activities will be held in Hong Kong on October 1 (Monday) to mark the 69th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. Major activities will include a flag-raising ceremony and a National Day reception in the morning, and a variety show and a fireworks display in the evening.

The flag-raising ceremony will be held at 8am at Golden Bauhinia Square outside the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) in Wan Chai. The Chief Executive will join some 2 400 people at the ceremony including community leaders, senior government officials, and members of uniformed groups and community groups.

The Police Band will perform at the ceremony and a mixed choir from St Paul's Co-educational College, Diocesan Boys' School and Diocesan Girls' School will sing the national anthem under lead singers Apollo Wong and Sandy Leung, followed by a fly-past and a sea parade by the disciplined services.

Members of the public are also welcome to watch the ceremony from a Designated Public Viewing Area with a capacity for about 1 000 viewers. An LED wall will be installed in the area to facilitate viewing of the ceremony. To ensure the smooth running of the flag-raising ceremony, people must remain in their respective areas and observe the regulations and directions given by the authorities on-site.

Hosted by the Chief Executive, the National Day reception will be held after the flag-raising ceremony at the Grand Hall, Level 3, HKCEC. About 4 000 invited guests will attend, including members of the Executive and Legislative Councils, the consular corps, government officials, community group leaders and members of various community sectors.

The two lead singers, the school choir and the Police Band will perform and sing the national anthem at the reception. In addition, there will be an

entertainment programme performed by the Hong Kong Dance Federation.

At 7pm, the Organising Committee of Compatriots in Hong Kong in Celebration of the 69th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China will present a variety show at the Hong Kong Coliseum in Hung Hom.

A spectacular fireworks display will start at 9pm at Victoria Harbour to celebrate National Day. It will last about 23 minutes.

People planning to watch the fireworks display on either side of Victoria Harbour are requested to behave in a safe and orderly manner and follow the advice of police officers. They should also pay attention to the special traffic arrangements for the National Day celebration activities announced by the Government.

Statistics on Code on Access to Information for first quarter of 2018

The Government received a total of 1 895 requests for information under the Code on Access to Information in the first quarter of 2018, a spokesman for the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau said today (September 28).

The total number of requests received since the introduction of the Code in March 1995 and up to the end of March 2018 amounted to 63 233. Of these, 3 751 requests were subsequently withdrawn by the requestors and 3 088 requests covered cases in which the bureaux/departments concerned did not hold the requested information. As at March 31, 2018, 277 requests were still being processed by bureaux/departments.

Among the 56 117 requests which covered information held by bureaux/departments and which the bureaux/departments had responded to, 54 779 requests (97.6 per cent) were met, either in full (53 524 requests) or in part (1 255 requests), and 1 338 requests (2.4 per cent) were refused.

Any member of the public who is dissatisfied with the response of a bureau/department under the Code may request that the matter be reviewed. He or she may also lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman.

In the first quarter of 2018, the Ombudsman received 20 complaints relating to requests for information. In this quarter, the Ombudsman concluded 14 complaints, among which three were partially substantiated, four were unsubstantiated, six were settled after inquiries by the Ombudsman, and one was not pursued by the Ombudsman or outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction. As at March 31, 2018, the Ombudsman's investigations on 30 complaints were ongoing.

"The Code has provided an effective framework for the public to seek access to information held by the Government," the spokesman said.

Speech by CE at Belt and Road Conference opening ceremony (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Conference today (September 28):

Commissioner Xie Feng (Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), Melissa (President of the Law Society in Hong Kong, Ms Melissa Pang), ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I'm pleased to join you today for the Law Society's Belt and Road Conference. As we came in, Melissa thanked me for taking time out of my very busy schedule to attend today's event. That's true not because I am very busy attending a lot of functions, but with my annual Policy Address to be delivered in about 10 days' time, I am actually locking myself up to write my Policy Address, especially when one editorial in a Chinese newspaper yesterday said that since the Chief Executive has suffered a major setback in her popularity because of the aftermath of Super Typhoon Mangkhut, she'd better do a Policy Address that could recoup some of that loss. I also told Melissa that with a lady president of the Law Society, a historic one in Hong Kong, I feel duty-bound to support her and to come to today's event. Indeed, with a lady Secretary for Justice – although Teresa (Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC) has not made history as the first lady Secretary for Justice, the Honourable Elsie Leung, is in the audience – I feel doubly duty-bound to attend legal functions.

This is the Society's second conference devoted to the Mainland of China's far-reaching Belt and Road Initiative, highlighting its vast promise for the legal sector, for Hong Kong and for much of the world as well. I am pleased to note that today's conference has attracted over 650 professionals and more than 40 legal associations from nearly 20 countries and regions, all keen to get a better understanding and a competitive edge when it comes to law and technology in the building of the Belt and Road. I am also pleased to note that a concurrent event, the InnoTech Law Hackathon: Belt & Road Justice Challenge, which is organised by the Innotech Committee under the Law Society, will take place this afternoon. The event will focus on how technology can enhance access to justice in Belt and Road jurisdictions.

Technology will become increasingly critical to the success of the Belt

and Road Initiative, which is all about enhancing connectivity between countries. Originally envisioned as encompassing Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe, it has now extended its vision and its reach to Latin America. Given its vast political and geographical magnitude, connectivity can only be enhanced efficiently with the help of technology.

When we talk about trade along the Belt and Road today, innovation and technology is inevitably part of that discussion, and it's fintech that increasingly dominates the conversation. Fintech can enable cost-effective financial services, while promoting cross-border trade and investment along the Belt and Road. Given its clear potential in lowering the cost of doing business, fintech promises a level playing field for business, and that can only spark further innovation.

Apart from fintech, lawtech is also becoming increasingly important. Hong Kong positions itself as the region's legal and dispute-resolution services hub and has been consistently rated as the one of the most preferred seats of arbitration outside Europe. What distinguishes Hong Kong is the rule of law, backed by the trusted common law system, the independence of our judiciary, and the abundance of well-qualified legal professionals. On the latter, some 900 local solicitor firms and about 85 local firms practice here. They are well versed in both the international and the Mainland's legal and regulatory landscape, and will most assuredly play a pivotal role in the progress of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Traditionally, legal practitioners handle highly confidential information in their daily work. Without mature technology in providing a watertight protection for information security, the legal industry was not among the first to embrace the digital transformation. But now, given the substantial and continuing advances in cloud security, the legal sector is increasingly seeking innovation with a view to capturing the time and cost savings there for the taking.

In addition to machine learning for legal research and AI-driven programmes for providing simple legal advice, efficient and effective online legal services have an enormous potential, particularly in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative where a large geographical area is covered. In anticipation of a rise in cross-border transactions as a result of the Initiative, private sector stakeholders in Hong Kong, including the Law Society, are already actively exploring the creation of an e-platform known as the eBRAM, that is the Belt and Road Arbitration and Mediation Centre, to facilitate the conclusion of transactions as well as dispute resolution. The group in charge of eBRAM came to see me a month ago asking for money and I tried to respond as positively as I could.

Also because of the wide geographical coverage of the Belt and Road, there are inevitably language barriers that have to be overcome in the course of co-operation. In fact, the Belt and Road region is home to more than a thousand languages and dialects. Translation technology and language databases will be in considerable demand to meet the needs for effective communication, particularly when it comes to contracts. I have been told that

the eBRAM will also seek to address these issues. My Secretary for Justice will tell you more about this platform later this morning.

My Government has made innovation and technology a policy priority, which I believe will benefit all sectors, including the legal sector. Hong Kong's strengths lie in R&D, in technology adoption and start-ups and a deep talent pool. In terms of technologies, local universities and research institutions in Hong Kong possess strong capabilities in blockchain, AI, robotics, facial recognition and related fields. At the Hong Kong Science Park and Cyberport alone, some 300 tenants and incubatees focus on AI, robotics and data analytics.

AI technology is particularly important for the provision of online legal services. The Government will devote more resources to enhance Hong Kong's R&D and application capabilities in the AI field, train relevant talents and support technology start-ups to boost the development of AI technology in Hong Kong. On enhancing R&D capabilities, we have earmarked \$10 billion in this year's Budget for setting up two research clusters to attract the world's top scientific research institutions and technology enterprises to Hong Kong for conducting more midstream and downstream R&D projects in collaboration with our local universities and scientific research institutions. One of the research clusters will focus on AI and robotics.

I am pleased to note that we do have some achievements on the AI front already. Last year, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology became the first Asian institution admitted to the Partnership on AI to Benefit People and Society, an international consortium founded by such technology giants as Microsoft and Google to promote AI development. Just last week, SenseTime Group Limited, our home-grown unicorn, has been entrusted by the Ministry of Science and Technology of Mainland China to establish the "National Open Innovation Platform for Next Generation Artificial Intelligence on Intelligent Vision". And I have earlier announced that the renowned Institute of Automation under the Chinese Academy of Sciences has already agreed to join the aforementioned research cluster on AI and robotics.

The Government will also continue to fund R&D projects on AI through different schemes under the Innovation and Technology Fund. With the support of the Fund, the Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute has been collaborating with different financial institutions to develop blockchain applications in areas like trade finance, mortgage, digital identity management and insurance. The Institute has also worked with local banks to develop a smart investment platform which provides investment options through the use of AI, big data analytics and machine learning programme calculations, and developed AI technology on reading different handwritten Chinese characters for enhancing the efficiency of document processing. I believe that, when the technologies have become mature, they will have the potential to be adopted in legal services as well.

To encourage enterprises to conduct more R&D activities, including those on AI, blockchain and cloud technologies, we will shortly introduce a new tax

incentive under which their first \$2 million of eligible R&D expenditure will enjoy a 300 per cent tax deduction and 200 per cent for the remainder. The relevant legislation has already been introduced into the Legislative Council and I hope that it will be passed sooner rather than later.

And we have a series of measures to attract and to nurture talent on innovation and technology. Among them is a pilot fast-track Technology Talent Admission Scheme which enables enterprises to attract overseas technology talent in focused technology areas, including AI and cybersecurity. In addition, we have launched a \$500 million Technology Talent Scheme, including a Postdoctoral Hub, to provide funding support for enterprises to recruit postdoctoral talent for scientific research and product development. We will also subsidise enterprises to train their staff on high-end technologies.

We hope that all these efforts would create a conducive environment for innovation and technology development in Hong Kong. We would welcome the legal sector to join us and embrace innovation and technology, with a view to adding value to our existing business models. I am confident that innovation and technology, coupled with the quality, experience and expertise of our legal professionals, will make all the difference for Hong Kong and for the Belt and Road.

On that note, I wish you all a very rewarding conference, and a flourishing future built on innovation. Thank you very much.



[Auction of personalised vehicle registration marks on October 20](#)

The Transport Department (TD) today (September 28) announced that the next auction of personalised vehicle registration marks (PVRMs) will be held on October 20 (Saturday), at Meeting Room S421, L4, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai.

"A total of 218 approved PVRMs will be put up for public auction. A list of the marks was posted on the department's website, www.td.gov.hk, today," a department spokesman said.

The reserve price of all these marks is \$5,000. Applicants who have paid a deposit of \$5,000 should also participate in the bidding (including the first bid at the reserve price). Otherwise, the PVRM concerned may be sold to another bidder at the reserve price.

People who wish to participate in the bidding at the auction should take note of the following important points:

- (i) Paddle bidding will be used at this auction;
- (ii) The display of a PVRM on a motor vehicle should be in compliance with the requirements stipulated in Schedule 4 of the Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) Regulations;
- (iii) Any change to the arrangement of letters, numerals and blank spaces of a PVRM, i.e. single and two rows as auctioned, will not be allowed;
- (iv) Purchasers must make payment of the purchase price through the Easy Pay System (EPS) or by crossed cheque and complete the Memorandum of Sale of PVRM immediately after the bidding for the PVRM concerned. Subsequent alteration of the particulars in the memorandum will not be permitted. For an auctioned mark paid for by cheque, the first three working days after the date of auction will be required for cheque clearance confirmation before processing of the application for mark assignment can be completed; and
- (v) The purchaser shall, within 12 months after the date of auction, apply to the Commissioner for Transport for the PVRM to be assigned to a motor vehicle registered in the name of the purchaser. If the purchaser fails to assign the PVRM within 12 months, allocation of the PVRM will be cancelled and arranged for re-allocation in accordance with the statutory provision without prior notice to the purchaser.

"Upon completion of the Memorandum of Sale of PVRM, the purchaser will be issued a receipt and a Certificate of Allocation of Personalised Registration Mark. The Certificate of Allocation will serve to prove the holdership of the PVRM. Potential buyers of vehicles bearing a PVRM should check the Certificate of Allocation with the sellers and pay attention to the details therein. For transfer of vehicle ownership, this certificate together with other required documents should be sent to the TD for processing," the spokesman said.

For other auction details, please refer to the Guidance Notes – Auction of PVRM, which is available at the department's licensing offices or can be downloaded from its website, www.td.gov.hk.