

Enhancements of SME Export Marketing Fund and Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales

The Trade and Industry Department (TID) will roll out enhancement measures on the SME Export Marketing Fund (EMF) and the Dedicated Fund on Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales (BUD Fund) on August 1.

The ASEAN Programme under the BUD Fund will be launched on that day to provide funding support to individual non-listed Hong Kong enterprises for enhancing their competitiveness and furthering business development in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) market. Enterprises can obtain a maximum funding of \$1 million on a matching basis for projects aiming to develop the ASEAN markets. In addition, the cumulative funding ceiling per enterprise for the current EMF and the Mainland Programme under the BUD Fund will be doubled. Details of the various enhancement measures are in the Appendix.

"The Belt and Road Initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area development plan will bring about tremendous business opportunities for Hong Kong enterprises. With the shifting of the global economic centre to Asia and developing economies, the Free Trade Agreement concluded in November 2017 will also help Hong Kong enterprises tap these fast-growing markets," a spokesperson for the TID said.

"The enhancements to be introduced will provide enterprises, in particular SMEs, with a wider funding scope, a higher grant ceiling and more streamlined application requirements and vetting mechanisms for exploring new markets and new business opportunities, and for responding to changes in the business environment and their operational needs," he said.

The guides and application forms of the above funding schemes applicable after enhancement have been uploaded to the websites of the EMF (www.smefund.tid.gov.hk/eindex.html) and the BUD Fund (www.bud.hkpc.org/en).

For enquiries, please contact the EMF Section (Tel: 2398 5127) and the BUD Fund Secretariat (Tel: 2788 6088).

Red flag hoisted at Silverstrand Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (July 20) that due to big waves, red flag has been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

CFS to adjust import control measures on Japanese food from July 24

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (July 20) that with effect from noon on July 24, the import of vegetables, fruits, milk, milk beverages and dried milk from four Japanese prefectures, namely Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba and Gunma, into Hong Kong are permitted with conditions while the import ban on the abovementioned products from Fukushima will remain in force. The relevant Food Safety Order issued by the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH) was published in the Gazette today.

According to the Order, each consignment of vegetables, fruits, milk, milk beverages and dried milk from the four prefectures must be accompanied with radiation certificates issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of Japan which will show the prefecture that the products come from and attest that the radiation levels of the products do not exceed the guideline levels of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex). The exporter concerned must also hold and produce a valid exporter certificate issued by the MAFF to certify that those food products exported to Hong Kong are readily available for sale in Japan (i.e. the radiation levels of the food products comply with the Japanese levels which are more stringent than the Codex guideline levels) and are fit for human consumption as far as radiological protection is concerned.

A CFS spokesman said, "Ensuring food safety is the Government's prime consideration. Since March 24, 2011, the CFS has tested more than 490 000 samples of food products imported from Japan. The test results showed that none of the samples had radiation levels exceeding the Codex guideline levels. The Japanese authorities collected over 2 million food samples for radiation testing, with the vast majority complying with the Codex guideline levels. No samples of food products imported from Japan were detected to have any radiation levels by the CFS since September 2016.

"Moreover, international expert organisations have already confirmed the safety of Japanese food in terms of radiation levels, and more and more economies have lifted their import bans or restrictions on Japanese food totally or partially, with or without conditions."

The spokesman added that the measures listed in the Order are similar to the existing import requirements on game, meat, poultry, poultry eggs and aquatic products from the four prefectures, and are buttressed by the exporter certificate as an additional safeguard. The CFS will also continue to conduct radiation tests on every consignment of food products imported from Japan, and strengthen inspection and radiation testing on vegetables, fruits and milk products from the four prefectures.

"By adopting two levels of gatekeeping, i.e. the Japanese Government's gatekeeping work at the places of export and the CFS' gatekeeping work at the import level, we can continue to safeguard food safety effectively. The CFS will enhance communication with the MAFF in respect of information and intelligence exchange, and maintain close communication with the trade on the related arrangements to ensure smooth operation," he stressed.

The CFS will continue to update the latest figures and test results on food products imported from Japan on its website (www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/japan_nuclear_incidents.html) every working day for public inspection.

The DFEH issued an order on March 24, 2011, to prohibit the import of all vegetables, fruits, milk, milk beverages and dried milk from five Japanese prefectures, namely Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba and Gunma. All chilled or frozen game, meat and poultry and poultry eggs and all live, chilled or frozen aquatic products from the five prefectures must be accompanied by a certificate issued by the competent authority of Japan certifying that their radiation levels do not exceed the Codex guideline levels before they are imported to Hong Kong. Otherwise, the food products will be prohibited from import to Hong Kong.

Abolition of Sai Yeung Choi Street South pedestrian precinct in Mong Kok

A spokesman for the Transport Department (TD) said today (July 20) that the pedestrian precinct at the following road sections in Mong Kok will be abolished with effect from August 4:

- (a) the section of Sai Yeung Choi Street South between Argyle Street and Shantung Street;
- (b) the section of Sai Yeung Choi Street South between Shantung Street and Dundas Street;
- (c) the section of Nelson Street between Sai Yeung Choi Street South and Fa Yuen Street; and
- (d) the section of Soy Street between Sai Yeung Choi Street South and Fa Yuen Street.

A notice was published in the Gazette today. The TD will arrange the removal of the traffic signs of the prohibited zones concerned and will also adjust traffic light signals to tie in with the re-opening of the roads.

The spokesman said that after the abolition of the Sai Yeung Choi Street South pedestrian precinct in Mong Kok, the TD will continue to monitor the traffic conditions and pedestrian flow of the roads in the vicinity and will appropriately implement traffic control and improvement measures at the road sections concerned when necessary.

Government announces re-appointments to Hong Kong Tourism Board

The Government today (July 20) announced the re-appointments of Mr Victor Chan Kok-wai and Mr James Tong Wai-pong to the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB).

Mr Chan is re-appointed for a term of two years from July 19, 2018, to July 18, 2020, while Mr Tong is re-appointed for a term of two years from August 16, 2018, to August 15, 2020.

"During the past four years, Mr Chan and Mr Tong have provided valuable suggestions on various aspects of the HKTB's work. We are delighted that they have accepted the re-appointments," a spokesman for the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau said.

Appointments to the HKTB are made by the Financial Secretary under section 9 of the Hong Kong Tourism Board Ordinance (Chapter 302), under authority delegated by the Chief Executive.