

Appointments to Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony

The Secretary for Home Affairs has appointed four new members to the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony (CPRH), a Government spokesman announced today (May 31). Five incumbent members have also been reappointed to the Committee in the same appointment exercise. Their term of office will run from June 1, 2018, to May 31, 2020.

The following is the list of the non-official members of the CPRH:

New members:

Mr Syed Ekram Elahi
Ms Rita Gurung
Mr Avinash Chandiram Hotchandani
Dr Chura Bahadur Thapa

Reappointed incumbent members:

Ms Mimi Cheung Yee-may
Mr Vijay Harilela
Mr Derek Hung Chiu-wah
Mr Akil Khan
Ms Rigam Rai

Other incumbent members:

Mr Mohamed Ibramsa Sikkander Batcha
Ms Ping Somporn Bevan
Dr Theresa Cunanan
Mrs Poonam Vijayprakash Mehta
Mr Hafiz Mohammad

The CPRH is a non-statutory advisory body set up to advise the Government on matters relating to fostering racial harmony in the community and to enhancing mutual understanding among people of different ethnic origins. Chaired by the Deputy Director of Home Affairs, the Committee includes representatives from the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, the Education Bureau, the Labour Department and the Information Services Department. The Race Relations Unit of the Home Affairs Department provides secretariat support to the Committee.

Temporary closure of Hammer Hill Road Swimming Pool

Attention TV/radio announcers:

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

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 31) that due to power failure, Hammer Hill Road Swimming Pool in Wong Tai Sin District has been temporarily closed until further notice.

LegCo Finance Committee meeting

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

The meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Finance Committee originally scheduled at 3pm tomorrow (June 1) in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex will start at 4pm.

DH calls on smokers to support World No Tobacco Day

The Department of Health (DH) today (May 31) reminded members of the public that smoking may cause heart disease, stroke and many kinds of non-communicable diseases, and called for smokers to support World No Tobacco Day by quitting smoking as early as possible for the health of themselves and their families and friends.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has marked May 31 as World No Tobacco Day annually to highlight the health risks associated with tobacco use and advocate effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption. The theme this year is "Tobacco and heart disease".

"It is a well-established fact that smoking is an important risk factor in many chronic diseases, including heart disease and other cardiovascular

diseases. That also includes ischaemic heart disease (IHD) (also known as coronary heart disease). Smoking raises the level of lipids in blood while the toxins in the tobacco damage the cells that line the coronary arteries, causing accumulation of fatty deposits in the inner walls of coronary arteries and narrowing of lumens. It will obstruct blood flow through the coronary arteries, causing chest pain when there is insufficient oxygen to the heart muscle and finally muscle damage. Similarly, stroke may be triggered if the blood flow of blood vessels in the brain is hindered," a spokesman for the DH said.

"In Hong Kong, heart disease was the third leading cause of death in 2016, amounting to 6 200 deaths (about 13 per cent of deaths from all causes). As early as 1998, a local study showed that the risk of dying from IHD in male smokers aged 35 to 69 was nearly 60 per cent higher than that of non-smoking males. Among women, the risk was nearly doubled for smokers compared to non-smokers. For stroke, the same local study showed that the risk of dying from stroke in male smokers aged 35 to 69 was 75 per cent higher than that of non-smoking males, while the comparative risk from women was nearly 30 per cent higher," the spokesman added.

In addition, the spokesman emphasised that the hazards of secondhand smoke cannot be neglected. According to the WHO, tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure contribute to more than 10 per cent of all heart disease deaths. A study revealed that the risks of dying from IHD and stroke in non-smokers aged 60 or over who were exposed to secondhand smoke at home were nearly 40 per cent and 50 per cent higher respectively than the risks for those who were not. The result also showed that the risk of a non-smoker dying from stroke increased if the number of smokers in the same household increased.

"Secondhand smoke from smokers will harm family members as well. Smokers should quit smoking as early as possible for their own sake and that of their families. Besides, the Government has launched 'Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong' since May 4 this year. It defines nine local targets on four non-communicable diseases (namely cancers, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases) and four behavioural risk factors, to be achieved by 2025. One of the targets is to achieve a 30 per cent relative reduction in the prevalence of current tobacco use in persons aged 15 and above," the spokesman urged.

Smokers who intend to quit smoking can call the DH's Integrated Smoking Cessation Hotline on 1833 183. The hotline is operated by registered nurses, providing professional counselling services on smoking cessation. Cases will be referred to suitable social service agencies for follow-up when necessary.

SFST continues San Francisco visit to forge financial collaboration (with photos)

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, continued his visit to San Francisco, the United States, today (May 30, San Francisco time).

Mr Lau started the day by visiting Wells Fargo Innovation Labs, which comprises a team of product strategists, developers and project managers to enhance the banking services of Wells Fargo through innovative use of technologies for meeting customer needs.

Mr Lau met with its Head of Strategic Payment Solutions, Mr Ashish Sharma, and the R&D team experts to learn more about the bank's research projects and their application of financial technology (Fintech) for a better customer experience. Wells Fargo is one of the largest banks in the United States and was ranked 25th in the Fortune 500 in 2017.

Mr Lau then addressed a business luncheon hosted by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in San Francisco to promote Hong Kong as a premier global financial hub in Asia. He told the attending business leaders that Hong Kong has pledged to develop into a preferred listing platform for both initial public offerings and secondary listings.

He also highlighted Hong Kong's active role in enabling the financial services sector to capitalise on the vast opportunities presented by the global trend of green financing and the Belt and Road Initiative.

Later in the afternoon, Mr Lau visited the ClimateWorks Foundation and met with its Director of Sustainable Finance, Mr Ilmi Granoff, and Associate Director, Mr Tim Stumhofer. He briefed them on Hong Kong's commitment to develop into a regional hub for green finance and efforts in promoting the green bond market.

In the evening, Mr Lau attended a dinner with Directors of the Hong Kong Association of Northern California to learn more about the business environment in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Mr Lau will continue his visit to San Francisco tomorrow (May 31, San Francisco time) before arriving back in Hong Kong on June 2.

