

CHP announces two new melioidosis cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (May 30) announced that two new melioidosis cases were recorded in the past week (May 23 to 29).

The first case involves an 88-year-old male with underlying illnesses who lives in Eastern District. He developed a cough in early April. On May 18, he attended Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital due to his health condition and was admitted for treatment on the same day. He subsequently developed a fever after admission.

The second case involves a 58-year-old male with good past health who lives in Kwun Tong. He developed an on and off fever, a cough with sputum and shortness of breath on May 8. He attended two hospitals on the Mainland and was admitted for treatment from May 10 to May 21. He returned to Hong Kong and attended Kwong Wah Hospital on May 21 and was admitted for treatment on the same day.

The clinical samples were of the two cases confirmed to be positive for *Burkholderia pseudomallei* upon testing.

The CHP is investigating the infection source of the cases. Epidemiological investigations are ongoing.

So far, seven melioidosis cases have been recorded in Hong Kong this year. In 2024, 23 melioidosis cases were recorded.

Person-to-person transmission and animal-to-human transmission are rare, but the bacteria causing melioidosis can survive in the local environment. Melioidosis is an endemic disease in Hong Kong, and melioidosis cases have been recorded in Hong Kong each year.

According to literature, melioidosis cases are more common after typhoons or rainstorms. The bacterium *Burkholderia pseudomallei* in soil and muddy water may become exposed to the ground after typhoons or rainstorms, and the bacteria could spread more easily with strong winds or rainstorms. As such, the number of melioidosis cases may increase.

With this in mind, where practicable, members of the public should stay indoors during typhoons and rainstorms, avoid travelling to areas with potential flooding, and do not wade in or have contact with muddy water and soil. In addition, high-risk individuals should avoid paths near stormwater drains where aerosols may be generated from contaminated water.

Members of the public should also take the following preventive measures against infection:

- Avoid contact with contaminated soil;
- Wear appropriate protective clothing or footwear when participating in activities with possible contact with soil or water, e.g. using gloves and wearing boots. High-risk individuals may also consider wearing a surgical mask;
- Wash or shower after exposure to contaminated water or soil;
- Always clean any wounds as soon as possible and cover them with waterproof dressings;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water after handling soil or gardening;
- Observe food hygiene and avoid drinking raw water; and
- Travellers can contract the disease through outdoor water sports. Risk of infection can be minimised by avoiding exposure to water sources (such as rivers, ponds or lakes) that might be contaminated.

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â€‹The CHP appealed to members of the public to seek medical advice if they develop symptoms, in particular people with diabetes or other immunocompromising conditions, in order to receive an appropriate medical diagnosis and treatment. For more information on melioidosis, please visit the website of the CHP at www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/24/101110.html.

Monetary Statistics for April 2025

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

According to statistics published today (May 30) by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, total deposits with authorized institutions increased by 0.6 per cent in April 2025. Among the total, Hong Kong dollar deposits decreased by 0.7 per cent, while foreign currency deposits increased by 1.6 per cent in April, mainly reflecting fund flows of corporates. In the year to end-April, total deposits and Hong Kong dollar deposits increased by 4.1 per cent and 4.4 per cent respectively. Renminbi deposits in Hong Kong increased by 7.4 per cent in April to RMB1,030.9 billion at the end of April, mainly reflecting fund flows of corporates. The total remittance of renminbi for cross-border trade settlement amounted to RMB1,362.1 billion in April, compared with RMB1,184.0 billion in March. It should be noted that changes in deposits are affected by a wide range of factors, such as interest rate movements and fund-raising activities. It is therefore more appropriate to observe the longer-term trends, and not to over-generalise fluctuations in a single month.

Total loans and advances decreased by 0.2 per cent in April, while increased by 0.5 per cent in the year to end-April. Among the total, loans for use in Hong Kong (including trade finance) and loans for use outside Hong Kong decreased by 0.1 per cent and 0.3 per cent respectively in April. The

Hong Kong dollar loan-to-deposit ratio remained virtually unchanged at 72.3 per cent at the end of April, as Hong Kong dollar loans and Hong Kong dollar deposits decreased at a similar pace.

Hong Kong dollar M2 and M3 both decreased by 0.6 per cent in April, while increased by 6.5 per cent and 6.6 per cent respectively when compared to a year ago. The seasonally-adjusted Hong Kong dollar M1 decreased by 1.0 per cent in April, while increased by 5.5 per cent compared to a year ago, reflecting in part investment-related activities. Total M2 and total M3 both increased by 0.7 per cent in April. Compared to a year earlier, total M2 and total M3 both increased by 9.3 per cent.

As monthly monetary statistics are subject to volatilities due to a wide range of transient factors, such as seasonal funding demand as well as business and investment-related activities, caution is required when interpreting the statistics.

One man convicted and jailed for importing duty-not-paid cigarettes (with photos)

A 58-year-old man was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts today (May 30) for importing duty-not-paid cigarettes and failing to declare it to Customs Officers, in contravention of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (DCO).

On June 17, 2024, Hong Kong Customs and the Hong Kong Police Force mounted joint anti-smuggling operations at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Hong Kong Port. Through risk assessment and intelligence analysis, officers of Customs and the Police intercepted an inbound private car at the HZMB Hong Kong Port on that day. Upon inspection, Customs officers seized 130 600 sticks of duty-not-paid cigarettes from the front and rear passenger seats and the boot of the vehicle. The 58-year-old male driver was subsequently arrested and the private car was also seized. The estimated market value of the cigarettes seized in the case was about \$590,000 and the duty potential was about \$430,000.

Customs welcomes the sentence. The custodial sentence has imposed a considerable deterrent effect and reflects the seriousness of the offences.

Customs reminds members of the public that under the DCO, tobacco products are dutiable goods to which the DCO applies. Any person who imports, deals with, possesses, sells or buys illicit cigarettes commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years.

Customs will continue to combat cross-boundary smuggling activities with firm enforcement action.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).



[Six landlords of subdivided units under regulated tenancies convicted of contravening relevant statutory requirements](#)

Six landlords of subdivided units (SDUs), who contravened Part IVA of the Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) Ordinance (Cap. 7) (the Ordinance), pleaded guilty and were fined a total of \$44,600 today (May 30) at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts. Since the Ordinance came into force, the Rating and Valuation Department (RVD) has continuously strengthened enforcement

actions and has prosecuted a total of 1 056 cases to date. Among the 713 cases dealt with by the court, all were successfully convicted, which involved a total of 619 SDU landlords with fines ranging from \$400 to \$34,800, amounting to a total of \$1,765,910. In addition, 343 cases are pending hearing.

The offences of these six landlords include (1) failing to submit a Notice of Tenancy (Form AR2) to the Commissioner of Rating and Valuation within 60 days after the term of the regulated tenancy commenced; (2) failing to produce copies of the bills and provide an account in writing when requiring the tenant to pay for the reimbursement of the apportioned water and/or electricity charges; and (3) requesting the tenant to pay money other than the types permitted under the Ordinance (including requiring the tenant to pay an amount of rent for the second-term tenancy exceeding the maximum amount of rent permitted under the Ordinance). One of the landlords committed 26 offences under (2) and (3) and was fined \$24,600.

The RVD earlier discovered that the landlords failed to comply with the relevant requirements under the Ordinance. Upon an in-depth investigation and evidence collection, the RVD prosecuted against the landlords.

A spokesman for the RVD reiterated that SDU landlords must comply with the relevant requirements under the Ordinance, including prohibiting landlords from doing any act calculated to interfere with the peace or comfort of members of the tenant's household, with the intention of causing the tenant to give up occupation of the SDU; or requiring the tenant to pay an amount of rent for the second-term tenancy exceeding the maximum amount of rent permitted under the Ordinance, and also reminded tenants of their rights under the Ordinance, including a four-year (i.e. two years plus two years) security of tenure. He also stressed that the RVD will continue to take resolute enforcement action against any contraventions of the Ordinance. Apart from following up on reported cases, the RVD has been adopting a multipronged approach to proactively identify, investigate and follow up on cases concerning landlords who are suspected of contravening the Ordinance. In particular, the RVD has been requiring landlords of regulated tenancies to provide information and reference documents of their tenancies for checking whether they have complied with the requirements of the Ordinance. If a landlord, without reasonable excuse, refuses to provide the relevant information or neglects the RVD's request, the landlord commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine at level 3 (\$10,000) and to imprisonment for three months. Depending on the actual circumstances, and having regard to the information and evidence collected, the RVD will take appropriate actions on individual cases, including instigating prosecution against suspected contraventions of the Ordinance. In addition, the RVD has started a new round of publicity and education work to enhance public awareness about the key offences and penalties, emphasising that the RVD proactively checks whether landlords have committed the offences under the Ordinance.

To help curb illegal acts as soon as possible, members of the public should report to the RVD promptly any suspected cases of contravening the relevant requirements. Reporting can be made through the telephone hotline

(2150 8303), by email (enquiries@rvd.gov.hk), by fax (2116 4920), by post (15/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon), or in person (visiting the Tenancy Services Section office of the RVD at Room 3816-22, 38/F, Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, and please call 2150 8303 to make an appointment). Furthermore, the RVD has provided a form (Form AR4) (www.rvd.gov.hk/doc/en/forms/ar4.pdf) on its website to facilitate SDU tenants' reporting to the RVD.

The RVD reminds that pursuant to the Ordinance, a regulated cycle of regulated tenancies is to comprise two consecutive regulated tenancies (i.e. the first-term tenancy and second-term tenancy) for an SDU, and the term of each regulated tenancy is two years. A tenant of a first-term tenancy for an SDU is entitled to be granted a second-term tenancy of the regulated cycle, thus enjoying a total of four years of security of tenure. The RVD has been issuing letters enclosing relevant information to the landlords and tenants concerned of regulated tenancies in batches, according to the expiry time of their first-term tenancies, to assist them in understanding the important matters pertaining to the second-term tenancy, and to remind them about the procedures that need to be followed about two months prior to the commencement of the purported second-term tenancy as well as their respective obligations and rights under the Ordinance. These landlords and tenants may also visit the dedicated page for the second-term tenancy on the RVD's website (www.rvd.gov.hk/en/tenancy_matters/second_term_tenancy.html) for the relevant information, including a concise guide, brochures, tutorial videos and frequently asked questions. The landlords and tenants concerned are also advised to familiarise themselves with the relevant statutory requirements and maintain close communication regarding the second-term tenancy for handling the matters properly and in a timely manner according to the Ordinance.

For enquiries related to regulated tenancies, please call the telephone hotline (2150 8303) or visit the RVD's webpage (www.rvd.gov.hk/en/our_services/part_iva.html) for the relevant information.

[Speech by SJ at Global Forum on International Mediation \(English only\)](#)

Following are the welcoming remarks by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the Global Forum on International Mediation today (May 30):

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the inaugural Global Forum on International Mediation.

This morning, altogether 32 state parties including China signed the Convention on the Establishment of the International Organization for Mediation. This is undoubtedly a historic event since the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) will be the first international intergovernmental organisation devoted to the use of mediation in resolving international disputes. We all hope that the Convention will enter into force as soon as practicable.

While the Convention has already set out the framework and the essential terms concerning the operation of the IOMed, the state parties would need to consider and agree on further details to ensure the smooth operation of the Convention. To ensure and attract more state parties' support and participation, it is also necessary to raise people's awareness of mediation as a means of resolving international disputes and to enhance the capacity to use it in practice. In these circumstances, it is most pertinent to hold this Global Forum on International Mediation immediately after the signing ceremony of the Convention.

The IOMed will provide mediation services for the settlement of the following three types of international disputes: disputes between states, disputes between a state and a national of another state and international commercial disputes between private entities. This afternoon, we are extremely honoured and privileged to have a distinguished panel of moderators and speakers, who will share their views in two panels: the first one will focus on mediation of disputes among states, whereas the second session will focus on mediation of international investment and commercial disputes. Our distinguished moderators and speakers consist of leaders or former leaders of state parties, as well as from international organisations and multilateral development banks; and also experts and other key stakeholders in international mediation.

To set the scene, I would like to highlight the significance of mediation in resolving international disputes and the important role that Hong Kong will play in the operation of the IOMed.

Put simply, mediation is a process whereby the parties in dispute attempt to reach a mutually acceptable and amicable settlement of their dispute on a voluntary basis with the assistance of a third party who may facilitate a solution between the parties to the dispute but without the power to impose it upon the parties. As compared to traditional means of resolving international disputes such as litigation or arbitration, mediation is clearly more forward-looking, constructive and conducive to repairing the relationship between the two sides.

It is well-known that peaceful settlement of international disputes is one of the most fundamental principles of international law and international relations. The use of mediation as a means to settle international disputes peacefully is expressly mentioned in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations, and also the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations passed by the United Nations General

Assembly in 1970.

The United Nations General Assembly has passed altogether four resolutions on "Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution" on June 22, 2011, September 13, 2012, July 31, 2014, and September 9, 2016, respectively. In the most recent one dated September 9, 2016, the UN General Assembly recognised mediation as an efficient and cost-effective tool in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution, and welcomed its increased use. It acknowledged the importance of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution and in seeking long-term political solutions for sustaining peace, and recognised that mediation needs to be further and more effectively used.

On the other hand, the role of mediation in resolving international commercial and investment disputes between a state and a foreign national or between private entities from different countries is also well acknowledged and recognised. As early as 1980, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) developed and adopted the UNCITRAL Mediation Rules, which were subsequently revised in 2021. And more recently, in 2024, UNCITRAL published the Guidelines on Mediation for International Investment Disputes. The United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation, which entered into force in September 2020, offered another example of international efforts in promoting mediation.

While mediation may be conducted on an ad hoc basis, there are clear advantages to conducting mediation with institutional supports. Institutional supports may include, for example, guidance on procedural aspects; assistance in communicating with the other party; identification of a pool of mediators and assistance in their selection and appointment; assistance in the logistic aspects of mediation including the organisation of in-person and remote meetings; as well as providing for data protection and cybersecurity measures.

In the circumstances, in order to promote and facilitate the use of mediation to resolve international disputes, it is most desirable to have an intergovernmental organisation devoted to the use of mediation to resolve international disputes. The establishment of the IOMed has filled a glaring omission in the past international dispute resolution system. The Organization will complement the other two intergovernmental organisations specialising in international dispute resolution, namely, the International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

The headquarters of the IOMed will be crucial to the implementation of the Convention. It represents the physical presence of the institution, and provides the platform to provide various mediation services. I am extremely grateful that the state parties to the Convention have agreed to establish the headquarters of the IOMed here in Hong Kong, which is a strong vote of confidence in Hong Kong. I would respectfully submit that Hong Kong is indeed an ideal place to host the headquarters of the IOMed.

Hong Kong is a special administrative region of China, which has taken the lead in the establishment of the IOMed. Under the principle of "one country, two systems", Hong Kong enjoys numerous unique advantages, which put it in the best position to serve as the headquarters of the IOMed. As President Xi Jinping said on December 20, 2024, in Macao at the ceremony celebrating the 25th anniversary of China's resumption of sovereignty over Macao, the principle of "one country, two systems" embodies the fundamental values of peace, openness, harmony and sharing. These are also the intrinsic values behind the Convention.

Hong Kong is a well-known world-class international financial, trading and shipping centre. Its geographical location, well-developed transportation services and liberal immigration policy ensure that people from around the world may and can come here easily. Hong Kong is also one of the safest and most friendly cities in the world. We offer diversified services in different aspects to suit the needs of people speaking different languages coming from different cultures, religions and countries.

But most importantly in the present context, under the principle of "one country, two systems", Hong Kong is the only common law jurisdiction in China, and the only bilingual common law jurisdiction using both Chinese and English in the world. We have a strong pool of legal professionals coming from different jurisdictions who specialise and are experienced in international dispute resolutions. The legal system of, and the legal services provided by, Hong Kong are highly international, reputable and efficient. It is undoubtedly an international legal services and dispute resolution services centre.

Hong Kong has been a keen supporter of mediation. The HKSAR Government has formulated a comprehensive set of policy initiatives, which aim at deepening the mediation culture in Hong Kong. For example, the Policy Statement on the Incorporation of Mediation Clauses in Government Contracts was issued in November 2024. As a matter of general policy, the Government will incorporate a mediation clause in all government contracts. By taking the lead, it is hoped that private entities would be encouraged to include mediation clauses in their contracts, thereby deepening our "mediate first" culture.

Turning to capacity building regarding international mediation, since 2018, the Department of Justice has been co-organising with reputable international organisations, almost on a yearly basis, Investment Law and Investor-State Mediator Training in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy under the Department of Justice was set up in November 2024, which may collaborate with the IOMed in organising capacity building programmes on international mediation in future.

Hong Kong is also continuously seeking to foster legal co-operation with other jurisdictions. It is our honour that, in a moment, the Department of Justice of the HKSAR Government will sign a Memorandum of Co-operation with Cambodia.

On this very happy and positive note, I would like to conclude by wishing you all a very fruitful and constructive Forum this afternoon. Thank you very much.