

Operator and managers of unlicensed guesthouses fined

Three men were each fined \$20,000 at the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (May 4) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in July and September last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) from the Home Affairs Department, when searching the Internet for intelligence about unlicensed guesthouse activities, identified three suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Lohas Park Road in Tseung Kwan O and Sceneway Road in Lam Tin. The OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented rooms in the guesthouses on a daily basis through an Internet platform.

According to the OLA's records, these guesthouses did not possess licences under the Ordinance on the days of lodging. The men responsible for operating and managing the premises were charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and can lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment. Guesthouse licensees may advertise or offer to provide sleeping accommodation on the Internet. To assist the public and the tourists to identify licensed guesthouses, the licensees should indicate clearly "Licensed guesthouse" in all promotional advertisement materials or advertisements related to the guesthouse.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA by the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaenq@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (May 4), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 15 patients (seven male and eight female, aged 2 to 84) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of

coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

There are 151 patients under isolation currently. So far, 900 patients who had COVID-19 confirmed or probable infection have been discharged upon recovery.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

\$60 million allowance under AEF in support of cleansing and security staff paid in March

A Government spokesman said today (May 4) that the Government has been making use of the Anti-epidemic Fund to provide allowances to eligible cleansing and security workers engaged by service contractors of the Government and the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA). The first round of funding, which is the allowance for March, amounted to some \$60 million, benefiting some 60 000 workers of over 340 contractors.

Under the measure of the Fund, front-line cleansing workers, toilet attendants and security workers employed by the service contractors can receive a monthly allowance of \$1,000 for a period of no fewer than four months throughout the epidemic period. Eligible workers who have performed duties in March 2020 have received the \$1,000 allowance applicable to that month. Arrangements have been made for the April allowance to be issued concurrently with the salary of that month.

The Government spokesman indicated that front-line workers are not required to submit any application for the allowance. On a monthly basis, procuring departments of the Government and the HA will obtain the headcount of eligible recipients of the allowance from their contractors; relevant funding will be transferred through the contractors to the workers concerned. The departments and the HA have entered into agreements with their contractors to ensure that the latter transfer the allowance to eligible workers. Front-line workers with enquiries may contact their contractors or the relevant departments.

The allowance aims to provide financial support to cleansing and security staff engaged by government and HA service contractors in anti-epidemic efforts, and gives recognition for their committed services at this critical juncture.

Import of poultry meat and products from Békés County in Hungary suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (May 4) that in view of a notification from the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N8 avian influenza in Békés County in Hungary, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products, including poultry eggs, from the county with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that Hong Kong has currently established a protocol with Hungary for the import of poultry meat but not for poultry eggs. According to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 170 tonnes of frozen poultry meat from Hungary in the first three months of this year.

"The CFS has contacted the Hungarian authorities over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the World Organisation for Animal Health and the relevant authorities on avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

Fatal traffic accident in Tai Po

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Tai Po this morning (May 4) in which a 64-year-old man died.

At 6.43am, a public light bus (PLB) driven by a 71-year-old man and a light goods vehicle (LGV) driven by the 64-year-old man were travelling in sequence along Lam Kam Road towards Tai Po. When approaching Lam Tsuen San Tsuen, the PLB and LGV reportedly collided.

Sustaining no superficial injury, the 64-year-old male driver was rushed to Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 7.32am.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, New Territories North is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3661 3800 or 3661 3858.