

Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2019 to be introduced in LegCo

The Government will introduce the Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill 2019 in the Legislative Council (LegCo) to propose a number of miscellaneous amendments to various Ordinances for the purpose of updating and further improving the relevant legislation.

A spokesman for the Department of Justice said today (December 24) that the Bill will be gazetted on December 27, and will then be introduced to the LegCo on January 15, 2020.

The major proposed amendments include:

(1) To amend the High Court Ordinance (HCO) (Cap. 4)

To ensure that all cases are handled as expeditiously as is reasonably practicable, the Judiciary proposes the following amendments to the HCO:

(a) To amend section 34B(4) of the HCO to extend the use of a two-Judge bench of the Court of Appeal (CA) (i.e. two-Judge CA) to determine:

(i) applications for leave to appeal to the Court of Final Appeal against the decisions made by the CA consisting of less than three Justices of Appeal; and

(ii) appeals against the Court of First Instance's decisions to refuse to grant leave to apply for judicial review or to grant such leave on terms.

(b) To amend section 34B(5) of the HCO so that when the two-Judge CA in various types of proceedings cannot reach a unanimous decision, in addition to a party being allowed to apply to re-argue the case before a three-Judge CA, the Court may also make such an order on its own motion.

(c) To amend sections 4(2) and 5(2) of the HCO to clarify that an additional judge in the Court of First Instance or the CA has the power to dispose of cases on paper without physically "sitting" in court.

(2) To amend the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance (Cap. 1) so that references made to an Ordinance may be made according to the title, short title, citation, number or chapter number used in the verified copies of the Ordinance in addition to those used in copies of the Ordinance printed by the Government Printer.

(3) To amend the Chinese text of certain defence provisions containing the phrase "could not with reasonable diligence" to make it explicit that it refers to an objective test based on a hypothetical situation.

(4) To amend other miscellaneous and technical amendments, for example, to update the references to the titles of certain Ordinances, achieve

consistency in certain expressions and correct other minor errors.

Appointments to Youth Square Management Advisory Committee announced

The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) announced today (December 24) the re-appointment of two incumbent members and appointment of two new members to the Youth Square Management Advisory Committee (MAC) for a two-year term from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2021.

The Chairperson and non-official members of the MAC are as follows:

Chairperson

Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)

Ex-officio members

Vice-Chairperson of the Youth Development Commission, or a representative
Chairperson of the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education, or a
representative

Representative from the Eastern District Council

Representative from the Board of Management of the Chinese Permanent
Cemeteries

Newly appointed members

Mr Victor Lam Tsz-hung

Mr Jan Noel Shih

Re-appointed members

Mr Allen Che Wai-hang

Mr Stefan Chui Kai-hin

Existing members

Ms Christina Chan Sye-min

Mr Dave Ho

Mr Angus Ho Kwok-lai

Ms Lo Kam-ping

Mr Poon Siu-chi

Mr Yeung Hok-lam

The MAC also includes representatives from the HAB, the Education Bureau and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department as members.

A spokesman for HAB thanked the outgoing members, Ms May Chan Cheuk-kwan and Ms Samantha Kong Wing-man, for their support since their appointment to the MAC.

The MAC is a non-statutory advisory body to advise the Government on matters pertaining to the operation of Youth Square, including the overall strategy and objectives of Youth Square; themes and contents of youth development programmes; the use, allocation, leasing and charging arrangements of various facilities; the evaluation of the effectiveness of the use of Youth Square in promoting youth development programmes and monitoring the performance of the operator.

November's monthly ovitrap index for Aedes albopictus drops further

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (December 24) announced that the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for November dropped further to 1.1 per cent from 2.9 per cent in October, indicating that the infestation of *Aedes albopictus* in the areas surveyed was not extensive.

After months of enhanced collaborative efforts by various departments in mosquito prevention and control work, no area has recorded an Area Ovitrap Index (AOI) exceeding the alert level of 20 per cent since August this year. Moreover, FEHD's year-end clean-up operation will commence on December 31, during which mosquito preventive and control work will also be enhanced.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "*Aedes albopictus* is a kind of mosquito that can transmit dengue fever (DF) as well as the Zika virus infection. DF is commonly found in tropical and subtropical regions of the world, and has become endemic in many countries in Southeast Asia. The World Health Organization also issued warnings that the number of DF cases recorded in Asia this year was exceptionally high compared with last year. Since Hong Kong recorded this year's first local DF case last month and the dengue activity in neighbouring areas has remained high, while the breeding and activity of mosquitoes also continue in the winter season, the community must remain vigilant and continue to carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures. The FEHD and relevant government departments will continue their mosquito preventive and control work covering areas under their purview."

Among the 57 areas surveyed last month, positive ovitrap indices,

ranging from 0.8 per cent to 7.3 per cent, were recorded in 27 areas. As for the port areas, the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for November fell to 0.1 per cent from 0.4 per cent in October.

The spokesman added that as *Aedes albopictus* breeds in small water bodies, members of the public should carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures, including inspecting their homes and surroundings to remove potential breeding grounds, changing the water in vases and scrubbing the inner surface as well as removing the water in saucers under potted plants at least once a week, properly disposing of containers such as soft drink cans and lunch boxes, and drilling large holes in unused tyres. He also advised public and estate management bodies to keep drains free of blockage and level all defective ground surfaces to prevent accumulation of water. They should also scrub all drains and surface sewers with an alkaline detergent at least once a week to remove any mosquito eggs.

In addition, rural areas and the vicinity of shrubby areas are natural habitats for mosquitoes, other insects and animals. Members of the public living in rural areas may install mosquito screens on windows and doors if necessary. Those staying in the natural environment should take appropriate personal protective measures against mosquitoes, such as avoiding staying in the vicinity of shrubby areas for a long time, wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers, and applying DEET-containing insect repellent. Members of the public are reminded to make reports to relevant government departments via 1823 if mosquito problems are detected.

The spokesman reminded travellers to take the following precautionary measures when visiting areas where mosquito-borne diseases are prevalent during the Christmas and New Year holidays:

- * Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved clothes and trousers;
 - * Use insect repellents over exposed parts of the body when outdoors;
- and
- * Use mosquito screens or nets when a room is not air-conditioned.

Travellers returning from these places should seek medical advice if they have symptoms such as fever, severe headache or muscle and joint pain. They should also inform their doctor of their travel history.

The ovitrap indices for *Aedes albopictus* in different areas and information on mosquito prevention and control measures are available on the department website at www.fehd.gov.hk.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, December 24, 2019 is 106.5 (same as yesterday's index).

Police appeal to public to pay attention to traffic and road closure arrangement on Christmas Eve

It is expected that many people will participate in celebratory activities on Christmas Eve today (December 24). Police appeal to the public to stay tuned to the latest traffic and road closure arrangements. Kowloon Park Drive in Tsim Sha Tsui will be closed at 5pm today.

Police will closely monitor the situation in various districts. In case of emergency and mass gatherings, Police will conduct timely assessment of risks posed to public safety and public order, and will make respective traffic or road closure arrangements. Members of the public are advised to stay tuned to the latest announcements from Police and pay attention to possible changes of public transport services.