

Update on number of dengue fever cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (December 28) reported the latest number of cases of dengue fever (DF), and again urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From December 21 to 27, the CHP recorded four imported DF cases. The patients had been to Cambodia (one case), the Philippines (one case), Thailand (one case) and Vietnam (one case) during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (December 27), 163 cases had been confirmed this year, of which 29 were local cases and 134 were imported cases. The imported cases were mainly from Thailand (36), Mainland China (29) and the Philippines (23).

DF remains endemic in some areas in Asia and beyond. The latest figures for 2018 revealed that 82 874 cases had been recorded in Thailand, 3 219 in Singapore (since December 31, 2017) and 195 in Japan. In the Americas, the latest figures indicated that 241 664 and 77 159 cases have been filed in Brazil and Mexico respectively in 2018.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing loose, light-coloured, long-sleeved tops and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or exposed parts of the body when doing outdoor activities.

To reduce the risk of infections spread by mosquitoes, apart from [general measures](#), travellers returning from areas affected by DF and Zika virus infection should apply insect repellent for 14 days or at least 21 days respectively upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor. DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;

- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged two months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public may refer to the CHP's [tips for using insect repellents](#) for details.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (December 28) released the latest grading of water quality of four gazetted beaches which are open all year round for swimming.

Four beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1).

Grade 1 beaches are:

C
l
e
a
r
W
a
t
e
r
B
a
y
S
e
c
o
n
d
B
e
a
c
h
G
o
l
d
e
n
B
e
a
c
h
R
e
p
u
l
s
e
B
a
y
B
e
a
c
h

Compared with the grading released last week, there was no change in the grading for these beaches.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, an EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. Latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's websites on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

[Hong Kong Observatory Almanac 2019 to go on sale](#)

The Hong Kong Observatory Almanac 2019 will go on sale on December 31.

The Almanac is bilingual and tabulated by month. It contains information including the traditional Chinese calendar, solar terms and moon phases, as well as the times of daily sunrise, sun transit, sunset, moonrise, moon

transit, moonset and high and low tides, with the times of meridian passage and the rising and setting of the sun and planets graphically illustrated. The Almanac also includes a detailed Sun Path Diagram and star maps of the four quarters of the year. In addition, information on the duration of twilight, determination of apparent solar time, details of solar and lunar eclipses, observation of meteor streams and planetary phenomena, as well as background information on calendars and the 24 solar terms are included.

At \$52 a copy, the Hong Kong Observatory Almanac 2019 is available for sale at the Hong Kong Observatory Resource Centre, the Publications Sales Unit of the Information Services Department and the Kowloon Map Publications Centre of the Lands Department. The public can also purchase the Almanac through the online Government Bookstore at www.bookstore.gov.hk.

Appointments to Education Commission announced

The Government today (December 28) announced the appointment of three members to the Education Commission (EC).

The newly appointed member is the Chairman of the Subsidised Primary Schools Council, Mr So Ping-fai, who is appointed for a one-year term. Two incumbent members, Dr Halina Poon Suk-han and Mr Henry Tong Sau-chai, have been re-appointed for a two-year term.

The three members have been appointed in their personal capacity with effect from January 1, 2019.

An Education Bureau spokesman said, "Given their rich experience in the education and professional sectors, we are confident that the three members will provide valuable advice and contribute to the work of the EC."

The new EC membership list, effective from January 1, 2019, is as follows:

Chairman

—

Mr Tim Lui Tim-leung

Ex-officio members

—

Permanent Secretary for Education, Mrs Ingrid Yeung Ho Poi-yan
Chairman, Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals,
Dr Carrie Willis Yau Sheung-mui
Chairman, Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education, Professor

Anthony Cheung Bing-leung
Chairman, Curriculum Development Council, Professor Tam Kar-yan
Chairman, Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Council, Dr Samuel Yung Wing-ki
Chairman, Quality Education Fund Steering Committee, Dr Gordon Tsui Luen-on
Chairman, Standing Committee on Language Education and Research, Mr Lester Garson Huang
Chairman, University Grants Committee, Mr Carlson Tong
Chairman, Vocational Training Council, Dr Roy Chung Chi-ping

Non-official members

Ms Kelly Chan Yuen-sau
Dr Fung Wai-wah
Ms Nancy Ho Lan-sang
Professor Alvin Leung Seung-ming
Dr Halina Poon Suk-han
Ms Shum Siu-fong
Mr So Ping-fai
Mr Henry Tong Sau-chai
Mr Wong Kam-leung
Dr Odalia Wong Ming-hung
Mr Dieter Yih Lai-tak

Government appoints Executive Director of Urban Renewal Authority

The Government announced today (December 28) that the Chief Executive has, on the recommendation of a selection panel, appointed Mr Ben Lui Sau-shun as Executive Director of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) for a term of three years with effect from January 1, 2019.

Mr Lui will assist the Managing Director of the URA in managing the URA's work on building rehabilitation, acquisition and clearance, works and contracts, and legal matters.

Mr Lui was selected through an open recruitment exercise for the Executive Director post of the URA. A consultancy firm was appointed by the Government to conduct the exercise and candidates were considered by a selection panel set up by the Development Bureau.

The Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, said, "Mr Lui is a professional engineer with extensive experience in implementing large scale development projects and facilities management. We look forward to working closely with him in his new capacity in furthering the important task of

urban renewal in Hong Kong.

"I would also like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mr Pius Cheng, who is retiring upon completion of his term of office, for his invaluable contributions towards the URA in various capacities over the years. Since taking up the position of Executive Director in 2014, with his profound knowledge and extensive experience, Mr Cheng has made significant contributions to the URA's work on urban renewal, in particular building rehabilitation."

The selection panel, chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands), comprises the Chairman of the URA, Mr Victor So Hing-woh; the Managing Director of the URA, Mr Wai Chi-sing; the Director of Lands (Official Non-Executive Director of the URA Board); and the Non-Executive Director of the URA Board, Mr Nelson Lam Chi-yuen.

Under the existing establishment of the URA, there are two Executive Directors underpinning the Managing Director of the URA in taking forward the work of urban renewal.

A brief biography of Mr Ben Lui is set out below:

Mr Ben Lui Sau-shun

Mr Lui is an engineer. He was Vice-President, Projects & Facilities (later retitled as Chief Project Development Officer) of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation from 2011 to 2017. He was Project Director of Kerry Development (China) Limited and Group Director of Projects of Shangri-La International Hotel Management Limited from 2006 to 2011.