

S for IT to leave for Guangzhou for Mainland/Hong Kong Science and Technology Co-operation Committee meeting

The Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, will leave for Guangzhou tomorrow (December 4) for the 13th meeting of the Mainland/Hong Kong Science and Technology Co-operation Committee.

The Mainland/Hong Kong Science and Technology Co-operation Committee is tasked to organise and co-ordinate technological exchange and co-operation between the two places. The upcoming meeting will be co-chaired by Mr Yang and the Vice Minister of Science and Technology, Mr Zhang Jianguo.

Mr Yang will return to Hong Kong on Wednesday afternoon (December 5). During his absence, the Under Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Dr David Chung, will act as Secretary for Innovation and Technology.

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (December 3) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From November 25 to December 1, one community-acquired LD case was reported. The male patient, aged 71 with underlying illnesses, lives in Block 4, Harmony Garden, 9 Siu Sai Wan Road, Eastern District.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of December 1, 99 LD cases had been reported in 2018. In 2017 and 2016, there were 72 and 75 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to

stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may get infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

1. Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
2. Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
3. If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres (μm) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute the infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2 μm filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank,

keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and

- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:

1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme invites new round of applications

The Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme (PASS) is inviting a new round of applications today (December 3) from non-profit-distributing organisations such as professional bodies, trade or industrial organisations and research institutes.

The PASS, with a total allocation of \$200 million, aims at funding non-profit-making industry-led projects to increase exchanges and co-operation between Hong Kong's professional services and external counterparts, promote relevant publicity activities, and enhance the standards of Hong Kong professional services through capacity building programmes.

The maximum grant under the PASS for each approved project is \$3 million or 90 per cent of the total eligible project cost, whichever is lower. A wide range of professional services is covered by the PASS, including accounting, legal, building and construction, healthcare, information and communications technology, design, as well as technical testing and analysis. Sector-specific projects and cross-sectoral projects are both welcome.

So far, 31 projects have been funded under the PASS, including seminars, forums, workshops, exchange events, exhibitions, and research and studies. Costs directly incurred for implementing a project, such as manpower cost, venue and set up cost, production and promotion cost, and the project team's travel and accommodation cost outside Hong Kong, are typically eligible for funding under the scheme. More details about PASS and the funded projects are

available at www.pass.gov.hk.

The PASS receives applications all year round and they are processed on a quarterly basis. The deadline for the upcoming round of applications is February 28, 2019.

A briefing session will be held on December 13 for organisations interested in applying for PASS funding. For registration for the briefing session or other enquiries, please contact the PASS Secretariat at 3655 5418 or pass@cedb.gov.hk.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, December 3, 2018 is 105.3 (down 0.6 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, December 1, 2018 was 105.9 (up 0.1 against last Friday's index).

CE meets Secretary of CPC Shanxi Provincial Committee (with photo)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, met the Secretary of the CPC Shanxi Provincial Committee, Mr Luo Huining, at Government House this morning (December 3).

Welcoming Mr Luo's first visit to Hong Kong in his capacity as the Secretary of the CPC Shanxi Provincial Committee to attend a promotional event on attracting investment in Shanxi, Mrs Lam wished his visit in Hong Kong every success. Mrs Lam said that the exchanges between Shanxi and Hong Kong have become more frequent with close economic and trade ties and there is much room for development.

Noting that Shanxi has rich energy resources and a strong industrial base, Mrs Lam said that Hong Kong has the unique advantage of "One Country, Two Systems" with a well-established legal and judicial system, efficient professional services and a large pool of professional and management talents and can provide a platform for Shanxi enterprises to attract foreign investment and "go global". She added that Hong Kong is an international financial centre and welcomes Shanxi enterprises to list in Hong Kong. On

people-to-people exchanges, she said she was pleased to note that Shanxi has rich heritage and expressed the hope that Shanxi can arrange heritage exhibitions in Hong Kong to deepen Hong Kong people's understanding of Shanxi. She also briefed Mr Luo on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's enhanced internship programmes in the Mainland launched in recent years for places including the Palace Museum, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Wolong National Nature Reserve in Sichuan and said she hopes that the Shanxi Government could provide similar internship opportunities for young Hong Kong people in the future.

