

## Yellow fire danger warning

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Yellow fire danger warning

The fire danger situation today (October 19) is yellow and the risk of fire is high. People are urged to prevent fires breaking out and hikers should also be vigilant.

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## Territory-wide flag day today

The Hong Kong Society for the Aged has been issued a Public Subscription Permit to hold a territory-wide flag sale from 7am to 12.30pm today (October 19), a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said.

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities, including any updated information, covered by the issued Public Subscription Permits have been published on the GovHK website ([www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search](http://www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search)). Permits for flag days containing information on contact methods of the flag-selling organisations and the approved flag-selling activities have also been uploaded to the SWD's website ([www.swd.gov.hk/en/ngo/controlofc/flagdays](http://www.swd.gov.hk/en/ngo/controlofc/flagdays)) for reference. For enquiries, please call the SWD's hotline at 2343 2255, or the designated hotline of the 1823 Call Centre at 3142 2678.

In the case of suspected fraudulent flag day activities, people should not make any donation and should immediately report the matter to the Police, the spokesman added.

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## Remarks by SCST and AD of AFCD (Inspection and Quarantine) on incident of animal death at HKZBG at media session

Following is the remarks by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung; and the Assistant Director of Agriculture, Fisheries

and Conservation (Inspection and Quarantine), Dr Thomas Sit, on the incident of animal death at the Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens (HKZBG) this afternoon (October 18):

Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism: Eight monkeys were found dead in the Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens on October 13, while two others feeling unwell were being isolated, and one of which passed away on October 14.

With concerted efforts from relevant departments, expedited autopsies, pathologic diagnosis and tests, and after discussions among the relevant departments, it is confirmed that the monkeys' death is due to infection of melioidosis. We are saddened by the passing of the nine monkeys.

Under normal circumstances, melioidosis infection is through contact with contaminated soil and surface waters but not person-to-person or animal-to-person.

The park had soil digging works in early October. Together with the following possibilities, the monkeys might have had contact with the bacteria.

- Staff working at the Mammals Section carried the contaminated soil with the shoes they wore to the cages, or
- Infected monkeys with high counts of bacteria in close contact with other monkeys etc.

In addition, the incubation period for melioidosis in primates is about a week, and this matched with the period after the soil digging works. The nine monkeys died of melioidosis may be related to the soil digging works in proximity.

The LCSD has already taken several precautionary measures after animals were found dead:

- 1) The Mammals Section of the Gardens (HKZBG) has been closed since October 14.
- 2) Thorough disinfection and cleaning have been carried out in the animal cages involved.
- 3) Appropriate protective gear have been provided to staff who work there and staff's health condition is being closely monitored. At present, their health is normal.
- 4) Staff concerned are all tested negative for the bacteria.

We will continue monitoring the mammals in the gardens and remind staff to pay attention to their own condition, and to report immediately if any of them feels unwell.

Reporter: Did the monkeys show any symptoms of the disease? Why operators did not realise that prior to their death? Because this is also a disease which can also affect human, is there a need to close the whole facility to prevent visitors from being affected?

Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism: Let me tackle the second question first, whether there is a need to close down the whole garden. As I said, we have taken all the cleansing and disinfection measures on the cages. So, with all these measures, we believe that it is now clean and free of the bacteria. We have also cordoned off the whole Mammal Section for the time being, so there will be no sort of contact between normal citizens and the animals. At this stage, I think these measures are sufficient to protect both the citizens as well as the animals in the zoo.

Assistant Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (Inspection and Quarantine): As far as I know, according to the vet in charge of the Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens, he said before that the animals have already lost their appetite. They were a bit of inappetence and a bit quieter than normal. The onset of all the clinical signs only took two days, and then there was a sudden death of animals. The vet has already taken all the measures to treat the monkeys. However, these affected monkeys could not make it. And he had to perform post-mortem and isolate other animals to prevent further spread of the disease.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the remarks.)

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## Fatal traffic accident in Tsing Yi

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident happened in Tsing Yi this afternoon (October 18) in which a man died.

At 12.48pm, a motorcycle driven by a 22-year-old man was travelling along Lantau Link towards Kowloon. It reportedly rammed into a stationary light goods vehicle.

Sustaining head and multiple body injuries, the motorcyclist was rushed to Yan Chai Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 5.01pm.

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

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3661 1348 or 3661 1446.

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## Speech by SCST at Hong Kong Performing

# Arts Expo Gala Dinner

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, at the Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo Gala Dinner today (October 18):

Kenneth (Chairman of Hong Kong Arts Development Council, Mr Kenneth Fok), Wilfred (Chairman of Hong Kong Arts Development Fund Advisory Committee, Dr Wilfred Wong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening.

It is with great pleasure that we gather here this evening to celebrate the immense success and conclusion of the inaugural Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo (HKPAX).

This inaugural Expo was participated by over 1 400 arts leaders and practitioners from around 60 countries and regions. There were over 100 performances, leadership talks, workshops and networking events of HKPAX, cutting across a variety of art forms. The Expo serves as a testament to the city's commitment and efforts to cultivating artistic brilliance, fostering cultural exchange and dialogue, and delivering enthralling collaborative and cross-cultural performances for the delight of all public and visitors. It has also consolidated Hong Kong's status as a global arts hub, further achieving our mission to develop Hong Kong into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange.

I am sure that you have had a taste of our unique glamour at HKPAX. Together with the 2024 Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Culture and Arts Festival to be kicked off tomorrow, the two mega arts events will complement each other and enable Hong Kong to further give play to its role of "bringing in" different cultures while enabling Chinese culture to "go global". Furthermore, I know some of you will join the tour to Shenzhen and Guangdong. You will be able see for yourself a fast developing cultural landscape with many new infrastructure and collaboration opportunities in the Mainland.

It is also our endeavour to develop our arts infrastructure to bring in more local and international arts productions. Besides the stunning West Kowloon Cultural District and other venues that you have spent time during HKPAX, I am excited to share with you the completion of many more new venues, including the Lyric Theatre Complex in West Kowloon, the East Kowloon Cultural Centre and also a new world-class stadium that can house 50 000 audience in Kai Tak Sports Park in Kowloon. We will be more than delighted to welcome you to Hong Kong again, to experience many more exciting arts and cultural events in these new venues as well as to bring in and stage your incredible productions here.

I hope in addition to experiencing our rich and vibrant cultural

offerings, in the past five days you have also made new friends, reconnected with familiar faces, as well as explored exciting opportunities for future collaboration, and on this basis, you will continue to join hands in promoting arts and culture.

Before I close, I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has contributed to the success of HKPAX. Your dedication and passion have made HKPAX a remarkable celebration that we all cherish.

And now, I would like to say a few words in Cantonese.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the speech.)