

TC instructs TIA to take actions on suspected food poisoning incident involving Mainland inbound tour groups

The Tourism Commission (TC) is highly concerned about reports today (September 10) regarding Mainland inbound tour groups seeking medical attention at hospital owing to suspected food poisoning. The TC has immediately contacted the Travel Industry Authority (TIA) to understand the situation and provide appropriate assistance to the visitors concerned.

The Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, attaches great importance to the well-being of visitors to Hong Kong. In light of two recent incidents involving suspected food poisoning of visitors, the TC has instructed the TIA to gather information of the current incident and cooperate with the Centre for Food Safety for their investigations. The TC has also directed the TIA to promptly contact the travel agent concerned as well as other travel agents arranging visits by the Mainland inbound tour groups to the relevant restaurants on the same day to understand more about the situation. The TIA noted that the incident reported today involved two Mainland inbound tour groups organised by the same travel agent, both of which visited two restaurants in Kowloon City receiving Mainland tour groups and some members of the tour groups also consumed other food they brought on their own. In addition, the TIA contacted another 68 travel agents which had organised visits by other tour groups to those two restaurants and confirmed that, apart from the 11 individuals from the two tour groups who felt unwell, all other members of the two groups and other tour groups have not exhibited similar symptoms. Should there be incidents breaching any codes and guidelines, the TIA will take actions to safeguard the well-being of visitors.

The TIA has also sent representatives to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to understand the situation and provide assistance to the affected visitors. It has also reminded the relevant travel agents and restaurant operators receiving Mainland inbound tour groups to be vigilant and ensure food and environmental hygiene, and to remind visitors to pay attention to personal, food and environmental hygiene for ensuring safety.

LegCo Panel on Transport begins duty

visit to Yangtze River Delta Region (with photos)

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The delegation of the Legislative Council Panel on Transport began the four-day duty visit to Shanghai and Hangzhou today (September 10), to gain insights into the latest development and implementation in smart mobility and the new energy transport industry.

Upon their arrival in Shanghai in the afternoon, the delegation visited the Shanghai Lingang hydrogen-powered medium-capacity T3 line (T3 line) to understand its design and operation. The public transport in the area utilises a digital rail system with magnetic markers embedded in road surface, and uses underbody sensors for real-time positioning and autonomous direction control of the tram wheels. Members then took a ride on the digital rail hydrogen-powered tram to experience how new energy vehicles provide low-carbon and efficient smart public transport service to citizens.

Members noted that the T3 line, a hydrogen-powered public transport route, commenced operations in 2023. Its features include integrating green transport of the area into the planning of Lingang to facilitate the development of hydrogen-powered transport industry chain.

Members then participated in an exchange session with representatives of Shanghai Pilot Free Trade Zone Lingang Special Area Administration (LSAA) and received a briefing on its medium-capacity planning and the development strategy of the hydrogen energy industry in LSSA. They also shared experiences regarding the application of hydrogen-powered public transport.

The delegation will continue its duty visit in Shanghai tomorrow (September 11).

A total of 10 members and non-members of the Panel on Transport join the duty visit. The Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, also leads a government delegation to join the duty visit.





Speech by FS at Gala Dinner of Philanthropy for Better Cities Forum 2024 (English only)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the Gala Dinner of the Philanthropy for Better Cities Forum 2024 today (September 10):

Commissioner Pan (Deputy Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Pan Yundong), Michael (Chairman of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Mr Michael Lee), Winfried (Chief Executive Officer of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, Mr Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges), distinguished speakers and guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is a pleasure to join you tonight at the closing gala dinner of this year's Philanthropy for Better Cities Forum. Over the past two days, you have engaged in meaningful and insightful conversations about the transformative power of philanthropy and how we can create real impact through giving and investing.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Hong Kong Jockey Club and to all of you for contributing to this remarkable cause.

The case for more impact investments

The global challenges we face are becoming increasingly acute. Three years of the pandemic have highlighted the need to enhance the resilience of our healthcare systems.

We are also witnessing the intensifying effects of climate change, with natural disasters impacting communities around the world.

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals – such as poverty reduction, improving access to quality education, and promoting gender equality – remain far off track at the halfway point.

While governments worldwide recognise the necessity of addressing these pressing issues, many lack the resources to pursue them, especially following the fiscal constraints caused by the pandemic. This is where the private and philanthropic sectors can step in to fill the gaps.

Fortunately, the global community is increasingly embracing impact investing. Asset owners, investors, and philanthropic foundations do not just allocate funds for charitable purposes but also seek financial returns and measurable social outcomes. This represents a paradigm shift, incentivising investments in impactful projects. Estimates suggest that the global impact investing market had grown to around US\$1.2 trillion in 2022.

Where Hong Kong can contribute

In Asia, impact investing has recorded substantial growth. East Asia, in particular, is seeing an annual growth rate of 21 per cent over the past five years. However, there remains considerable room for expansion. Some estimates indicate that 42 per cent of global wealth resides in Asia, but it receives only 14 per cent of global impact investment.

As Asia's leading international financial centre, Hong Kong is well positioned to support impact investing. Assets under management in our asset and wealth management sector is to the order of US\$4 trillion. As at June this year, there were over 230 ESG (environmental, social, and governance) funds authorised by our Securities and Futures Commission. Together they manage assets worth US\$170 billion. There are around 2 700 single family offices operating in the city, with over half of them managing assets of over US\$50 million.

More crucially, we offer a wide range of financial products that cater to the needs and appetites of impact investors.

For example, green bonds. Given our alignment with the best international green standards, Hong Kong is a trusted hub for both Mainland and foreign entities to issue green bonds. Last year, green debt arranged or issued in Hong Kong amounted to over US\$50 billion, with green bonds representing over one-third of Asia's total.

Another example is catastrophe bonds, which seek to share natural disaster risks with investors while offering attractive returns. Since 2021, there have been five catastrophe bonds issued in Hong Kong, covering events from earthquakes to storms, from the Chinese Mainland to Chile, and from Japan to Jamaica. They involved a total sum of over US\$700 million. Two of these bonds are listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

Looking to the future, we anticipate the introduction of more innovative financial products that will facilitate impact investing.

Beyond green finance, we want Hong Kong to become a philanthropic hub that connects people, capital and projects, while leading in ideas and thought leadership.

Hong Kong is an open and multicultural city with a truly global perspective. Here, global financial institutions, international foundations, charitable organisations, academics, professionals, and a diverse pool of talent converge, creating a vibrant network that advances the philanthropic cause.

The Government is committed to driving this progress forward. Over the past two years, the Wealth for Good Summits held in Hong Kong have successfully brought together influential family office owners and decision-makers to explore strategies for effective philanthropy and wealth legacy.

And this year, we are excited to launch a charity initiative called "Impact Link", a dynamic repository of high-potential, high-social-impact charitable programmes, which philanthropists around the world can access.

And it would be remiss of me not to talk of the good work of the Hong Kong Jockey Club, and the Institute of Philanthropy it established as a "think-fund-do" tank.

I am pleased to note that the Institute is dedicated to promoting philanthropic thought leadership at local, regional, and international levels, in collaboration with its funding partners. It supports both regional and global charity projects.

And at this Forum, the Jockey Club has taken a further step by launching the Commission on Asian Philanthropy, which brings together experts from the region to unleash the full philanthropic potential of Asia.

Closing

Ladies and gentlemen, the Forum over the past two days has served as a call to action. The insights shared by our speakers and participants have provided us with a wealth of knowledge and experience that will undoubtedly inspire new ideas and foster more collaborative efforts. I invite you to continue this conversation, to build networks, share ideas, and work together for a better philanthropic future. For us all.

Last but not least, I know that the Hong Kong Jockey Club will be hosting a cake-cutting ceremony for its 140th anniversary this evening. I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to the Club for its outstanding charity work for more than a century, and for its support to arts, sports, and culture, for the betterment of our community. Happy birthday!

Thank you very much.

CFS urges public not to consume batch of fruit jam with possible presence of mould

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (September 10) urged the public not to consume a batch of fruit jam imported from Austria as the product might contain mould. The trade should stop using or selling the affected batch of product concerned immediately if they possess it.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Double Fruit Spread Garden Strawberry (70% Fruit) [Natturrein 70% Fruchtreich Garden Erdbeere]

Brand: Darbo

Place of origin: Austria

Net weight: 200 grams

Best-before date: June 21, 2026

Batch/lot number: 0422616 – L 173 4

Importer: Goodwell Sam Cheong Grocery Company Limited

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS received a notification from the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed of the European Commission that the above-mentioned product might contain mould and is being recalled. Upon learning of the incident, the CFS immediately contacted the local importer concerned for follow-up. A preliminary investigation found that the above-mentioned importer had imported into Hong Kong the affected batch of product concerned."

For the sake of prudence, the importer concerned has stopped sales, has removed the affected product from shelves and has initiated a recall according to the CFS's instructions. Enquiries about the recall can be made to the importer's hotline at 3972 8980 during office hours.

The spokesman advised members of the public to stop consuming the affected product and seek medical treatment if they feel unwell after consuming the product concerned.

The CFS will alert the trade to the incident, and continue to follow up and take appropriate action. An investigation is ongoing.

HKSAR Government strongly disapproves of and rejects smears by “Media Freedom Coalition” against press freedom in Hong Kong

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (September 10) strongly disapproved of and rejected the fact-twisting remarks and baseless smears by "Media Freedom Coalition", whose members are claimed to be from foreign countries including the United States and the United Kingdom, against the verdict of a "conspiracy to publish and/or reproduce seditious publication" case, the safeguarding of freedom of the press, etc, in the HKSAR.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "We have emphasised time and again, and it is necessary to reiterate that Hong Kong citizens enjoy freedom of the press and freedom of speech as protected under the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights. In fact, the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance clearly stipulate that human rights shall be respected and protected in safeguarding national security. The rights and freedoms, including the freedoms of the press, of speech and of publication, enjoyed by Hong Kong people under the Basic Law and the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applicable to the HKSAR, are protected in accordance with the law."

The spokesman stressed, "Like all other places in the world, such rights and freedoms are not absolute. Journalists, like everyone else, have an obligation to abide by all the laws. Their freedom of commenting on and criticising government policies remains uninhibited as long as they do not violate the law. The court, in its reasons for verdict, has analysed in detail the duties and responsibilities of the media, specifically highlighting that, according to Article 19(3) of the ICCPR, when the media and relevant personnel publish opinions, information and articles, they must observe and discharge 'special duties and responsibilities', including protection of national security or public order.

"The reasons for verdict have also pointed out clearly that the ideology of Stand News was localism which excluded China, and that it even became a tool to smear and vilify the Central Authorities and the HKSAR Government during the 'anti-extradition amendment bill incidents'. The court found that the relevant articles, without any objective basis, attacked the NSL and the Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 200) and relevant law enforcement and prosecutorial process; spread hatred and anti-government sentiment with disinformation; attacked the law enforcement by the Police and glorified the behaviour of rioters – in other words, they were not based on facts.

"The court further cited precedents from the European Court of Human

Rights regarding press freedom, pointing out that the European Convention on Human Rights does not guarantee a wholly unrestricted freedom of speech even with respect to press coverage on matters of serious public concern. The most crucial point is that journalists must act in good faith and on accurate factual basis and provide reliable and precise information in accordance with the tenets of 'responsible journalism' in order to enjoy the protection of their rights to freedom of speech and press freedom.

"In the past, the US and some Western countries had also carried out law enforcement actions against the dissemination of disinformation, incitement of hatred, and glorification of violence in their own countries. Recent examples include a British journalist reportedly being arrested by the UK police for allegedly violating the UK Terrorism Act while working on coverage related to Palestine. The disparagement of the HKSAR District Court's verdict by the relevant countries only exposes their double standards.

"Hong Kong is a society underpinned by the rule of law and has always adhered to the principle that laws must be obeyed and lawbreakers held accountable. The law enforcement agencies of the HKSAR have been taking law enforcement actions based on evidence and strictly in accordance with the law in respect of the acts of the persons or organisations concerned, which have nothing to do with freedom of the press, or the background of any person or organisation."

The spokesman said, "The HKSAR will continue to resolutely discharge the responsibility of safeguarding national security and effectively prevent, suppress and impose punishment for acts and activities that endanger national security in accordance with the law, and safeguard the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong people in accordance with the law at the same time."