

Cluster of Candida auris cases in Princess Margaret Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) made the following announcement today (August 6):

An 85-year-old male patient in a medicine and geriatrics ward of PMH was found to be carrying *Candida auris* after screening on July 26. In accordance with the prevailing guideline, PMH conducted contact tracing and found one more patient, a 29-year-old male, carrying *Candida auris*. Both patients are asymptomatic and are being treated in isolation. One of them is in stable condition while the other patient is in serious condition due to underlying diseases.

The ward concerned has adopted the following enhanced infection control measures:

1. Enhanced patient and environmental screening procedures;
2. Applied stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene of staff and patients; and
3. Thorough cleaning and disinfection of the ward concerned.

The hospital will continue the enhanced infection control measures and closely monitor the situation of the ward. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Hong Kong Customs detects smuggling case involving ocean-going vessel and goods worth about \$150 million (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs on July 30 detected a suspected case of using an ocean-going vessel to smuggle goods to Malaysia at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals. A large batch of suspected smuggled electronic components with an estimated market value of about \$150 million was seized.

Through intelligence analysis and risk assessment, Customs discovered that criminals intended to use ocean-going vessels to smuggle goods and thus formulated strategies to combat related activities.

On July 30, Customs officers identified an ocean-going vessel preparing to depart from Hong Kong for Malaysia for inspection and seized a large batch of suspected smuggled goods, including integrated circuits, motherboards, capacitors, and used electronic components, inside a container which was declared as containing zinc flakes aboard the vessel.

An investigation is ongoing. The likelihood of arrests is not ruled out.

Customs is the primary agency responsible for tackling smuggling activities and has long been combating various smuggling activities at the forefront. Customs will keep up its enforcement action and continue to fiercely combat sea smuggling activities through proactive risk management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies, and carry out targeted anti-smuggling operations at suitable times to crack down on related crimes.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years upon conviction.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).



[Review of virtual banks](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) issued today (August 6) a report on its review of virtual banks (VBs) (the Report).

The review was conducted in 2024, several years after the eight VBs commenced their business in 2020, to look into their operations and impact on the Hong Kong banking system. The review aims to:

1. assess how well the three policy objectives of introducing VBs to Hong Kong have been delivered so far;
2. review the level of market acceptance, business and financial performance, and user response of VBs since their inception;
3. discuss the challenges facing VBs and the HKMA's policy initiatives to support their development; and
4. recommend the next steps for further development of the VB industry.

Based on the results of the review, the development of VBs in Hong Kong has so far achieved the three policy objectives of introducing virtual banking. Furthermore, virtual banking, the innovative banking model driven by the adoption of technology, is gaining wide market acceptance in Hong Kong, with a total number of 2.2 million depositors as at the end of 2023. The products and services offered by the eight VBs have also received positive response. In terms of business and financial performance, VBs faced challenges in launching their business at the beginning mainly due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and none of them had achieved profitability as at the end of 2023. Nevertheless, they recorded moderate business growth over the past three years, and their operating performance continued to improve, with aggregate operating income increasing seven-fold and net losses narrowing by 15 per cent from 2021 financial year to 2023 financial year.

The Chief Executive of the HKMA, Mr Eddie Yue, said, "Looking ahead, with the diversity of VBs and incumbent banks, the HKMA considers that the current number of virtual banking licenses is optimal and does not see any strong justification to introduce more new VB players to the market at this juncture."

In the meantime, the HKMA has commenced today a one-month public consultation on a proposal to rename "Virtual Bank" as "Digital Bank". It is expected that the proposed new name can better reflect the banking model of VBs in the present day.

[The Report](#) and [the public consultation paper of the renaming](#) can be viewed on and downloaded from the HKMA website.

[ExCo Non-official Members visit](#)

National Security Exhibition Gallery of HKSAR (with photos)

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

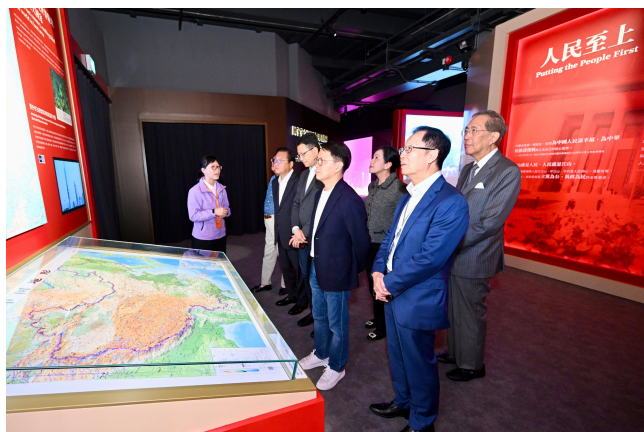
Non-official Members of the Executive Council (ExCo Non-official Members) today (August 6) visited the National Security Exhibition Gallery of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to learn more about the preparation work for the gallery's public opening from tomorrow (August 7) onwards. The gallery is located at the Hong Kong Museum of History and is organised by the Committee for Safeguarding National Security of the HKSAR.

ExCo Non-official Members were briefed by docents on the themes and valuable exhibits in various sections of the exhibition. ExCo Non-official Members commended the comprehensive content of the exhibition, which includes an introduction to the establishment and achievements of the new China, the relationship between the holistic approach to national security and the HKSAR, and the legislative background of the Hong Kong National Security Law and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance. The exhibits will help members of the public better understand the importance of national security to Hong Kong's prosperity and future development, and ExCo Non-official Members also noted that the exhibition could enhance public awareness on safeguarding national security with its interactive games and videos.

Also, ExCo Non-official Members noted that the National Security Exhibition Gallery is the first thematic gallery in the HKSAR dedicated to the systematic promotion of national security, and is the first sizeable education venue for national security in the city. They thanked the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR and the Office for Safeguarding National Security of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR for their support to the exhibition's successful organisation.

ExCo Non-official Members called on citizens to visit the exhibition gallery to enhance their understanding of national security and Hong Kong's distinctive advantages of enjoying strong support of the motherland while being closely connected to the world.

Joining the visit were ExCo Non-official Members Professor Arthur Li, Mr Jeffrey Lam, Mr Tommy Cheung, Mr Chan Kin-por, Dr Eliza Chan, Mr Stanley Ng and Mr Gary Chan.



[Fraudulent website and phishing instant messages related to The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited relating to a fraudulent website and phishing instant messages, which have been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the website

or instant messages concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.