

Jockey Club Yan Oi Tong Swimming Pool reopened

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (July 18) that Jockey Club Yan Oi Tong Swimming Pool in Tuen Mun District, closed earlier due to urgent maintenance works, has been reopened.

DH alerts public to fraudulent EatSmart Restaurant Star + website and social media page

The Department of Health (DH) today (July 17) alerted members of the public to a suspected fraudulent website and Facebook page of the DH's "EatSmart Restaurant Star +" Campaign, and urged the public to avoid providing any personal information through hyperlinks from unknown sources at suspicious websites.

A spokesman for the DH said that the logo of the "EatSmart Restaurant Star +" Campaign and content of related activities were recently found being fraudulently used in the fake website and Facebook page (the link to the fraudulent website is restaurant-eatsmart.myfreesites.net/). The DH has reported the incident to the Police.

The spokesman reminded that the link to the website of the "EatSmart Restaurant Star +" Campaign is restaurant.eatsmart.gov.hk/; and the link to the Facebook page "æ~Ÿç'šæ%ç†ŸéŸè,†" which bears a blue tick verification badge is www.facebook.com/eatsmartrestaurant.dh/.

The spokesman stressed that the DH's social media page will not leave comments on its posts requesting event participants to click on any external links, nor request participants in any form to provide their bank or credit card information. Members of the public are urged to be discerning in distinguishing the authenticity of online information. They should not click on any hyperlinks from unknown sources with a view to forestalling losses. Those who have provided his/her personal information to the suspected

fraudulent page or through relevant hyperlinks are advised to consider reporting the matter to the Police.

Transcript of remarks by SCST at media session (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, and the Chairman of the Board of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, Mr Henry Tang, at a media session on relaxation of Enhanced Financial Arrangement for the West Kowloon Cultural District to take forward residential development today (July 17):

Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism: The Chief Executive in Council yesterday (July 16) agreed to relax the Enhanced Financial Arrangement (EFA) for the West Kowloon Cultural District approved back in 2016, with a view to helping the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority to tide over the financial challenges in the short and medium term.

The Authority is a statutory body established in 2008. With a one-off upfront endowment of \$21.6 billion, the Authority develops and operates the West Kowloon Cultural District on a financially self-sustaining basis.

With the completion of major cultural facilities in recent years, the West Kowloon Cultural District has become a cultural landmark in Hong Kong. The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau has all along maintained close liaison with the Authority, not only providing support for the development of arts and culture, but also closely liaising with the Authority on its financial situation and challenges.

The EFA was approved in 2016 for allowing the Authority to take forward hotel, office and residential development in the District under the Build-Operate-Transfer model, also known as the BOT model, enabling the Authority to maintain financial sustainability with additional stream of recurrent income from the hotel, office and residential development.

Nevertheless, market response to the BOT model was more lukewarm than expected. The Authority is now facing financial challenges as a result of the significant resources required to operate the arts and cultural facilities in the District. The mismatch with the revenue-generating commercial development and the pandemic in 2020 to 2022.

The Chief Executive in Council approved the sales of the residential developments within Zone 2 of the District by lifting the "BOT only" restriction for the residential developments. The maximum total residential gross floor area of 170 280 square metres permitted under the West Kowloon

Cultural District Development Plan remains unchanged.

The commitment of the Authority to operate the West Kowloon Cultural District project on a self-financing basis also remains unchanged. In agreeing to the Authority's proposal, the Government will impose the following conditions, (a) a triennial cap on operating deficits and a cap on the percentage of staff cost to the total annual operating expenditure; (b) the requirement to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Government the reasonableness of the cost estimates for any new capital projects before commitment; and (c) the requirement to consult the Development Bureau on tender schedules, setting the reserve price of the residential components of such tender and the tender award recommendations.

With the relaxation, the Authority will have sufficient funding to sustain 10 years of operation. During this period, the Authority will leverage its experience, expertise and assets accumulated over time to develop and implement revenue-generating and commercialisation measures. At the same time, the Authority will exercise strict control over operating costs, fulfilling its commitment to operate the West Kowloon Cultural District project on a self-financing basis.

Reporter: Firstly, for the Secretary, to what extent would the residential sale proposal help ease the financial crisis at the West Kowloon Cultural District? And what steps would the Government takes to ensure the hub's financial stability and independence? And for Mr Tang, does the Authority still plan to reduce the number of opening days or raise ticket prices with the new funding option? And also, what KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and control mechanisms are you looking for? Thank you.

Chairman of the Board of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority: Sorry, what opening dates are you referring to?

Reporter: Because you earlier mentioned that the hub would consider to reduce the number of opening days of the museums if the funding proposal is not allowed. So would you still consider to do that? And also what kind of KPIs are you looking for at the moment? Thank you.

Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism: I would never say it's a financial crisis. I would say we are facing some financial challenges in the operation of the West Kowloon Cultural District. And as I explained in my opening remarks, with the relaxation, the West Kowloon Cultural District, the residential development now in the West Kowloon Cultural District could be disposed on a sales mode instead of the BOT. In 2016, when we decided that under the enhanced financial arrangement, there were some 170 odd thousand square metres residential development already given to the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority, to generate an additional stream of income. But in the past few years, with very great effort of the Authority, the BOT tender did not seem to meet with the appetites of the contractors or developers in Hong Kong. So the current proposal is still making use of the 170 000 square metres residential property, but in a different way. Instead of having a constant stream of income in future, we are now cashing in for a

lump sum upfront, which could help release the financial challenges or the requirement at present, which I think will be able to sufficiently, as I said in the opening remarks, sufficient to sustain the Authority's operation for at least 10 years, which will provide ample time for us to, as the Chairman has said, for them to develop further on the various commercialisation as well as industrialisation of the arts and cultural activities that the Authority has been doing in the past two or three years, which we are confident that the Authority will be able to come up with more proposals in the coming years.

Chairman of the Board of the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority: When I said, If the Government does not approve our plan, then we will have to think of more drastic measures in order to control our costs, including, but not exclusive to, closing certain number of dates in our museums. And that was a worst-case scenario. So therefore, considering that the Government has been very kind, and we have both agreed to the certain KPIs that we adhere to, we won't have to take any of those drastic measures. We will be able to continue to operate, but we will continue to operate as we have always done under a discipline that we only spend what we need to spend, and we will control our cost diligently and very seriously.

At the same time, we will continue to look for ways to increase our revenue, such as we will review some of the cost recovery measures that we are now charging, such as our charging scheme. And secondly, we will also think of new ways to make money. For example, in M+ there are a whole bunch of ways to make money. Let's say the screen in the front, we will consider whether we want to rent it out for rental income, for arts and culture-related materials.

At the same time, right now, I can go to a major museum in London or in New York and rent a gallery for an event. But in Hong Kong, I can't do that. So, there are ways that I can make more revenue without disrupting the operations of the museums, and I will look for ways to do that.

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

[AFCD laid charges against Mainland fishermen deckhands suspected of using snake cages for fishing and local coxswain \(with photo\)](#)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (July 17) laid charges against five Mainland fishermen deckhands suspected of

engaging in fishing using snake cages (a type of cage trap banned in Hong Kong waters) on a local fishing vessel in waters off Shek Kwu Chau and a local coxswain onboard.

A joint operation was conducted by the AFCD together with the Hong Kong Police Force yesterday (July 16). A local fishing vessel was suspected of engaging in fishing using snake cages and was intercepted at around 5.30pm for investigation. Some fishing gear (including snake cages and winches) on board was seized by the AFCD.

After investigation, charges were laid against the six men who were suspected to have violated the Fisheries Protection Ordinance (Cap. 171). They will appear at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (July 18).

Only a vessel registered under the Ordinance can be used for fishing in Hong Kong waters and only the fishing methods listed on its Certificate of Local Fishing Vessel Registration can be employed for fishing by the vessel. The conditions of Certificate of Registration of Local Fishing Vessel regarding cage traps stipulate that any collapsible cage traps should not be connected in any way to another; or should not exceed five metres in any of its extended dimensions. Hence, fishing using snake cages is in breach of the registration conditions. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000 and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

The spokesman stressed, "The Government is committed to combatting illegal fishing activities in Hong Kong waters. The AFCD will continue to step up patrols and take stringent enforcement action."



Scientific Committees under CHP
discuss use of COVID-19 and measles

vaccines

The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases (JSC) under the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) convened a meeting yesterday (July 16) to discuss and issue the updated consensus interim recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in Hong Kong.

The JSC reviewed the COVID-19 situation in Hong Kong and noted that relevant surveillance indicators, including the positive detection rate of respiratory specimens and viral load from sewage surveillance, showed an increase in the overall local activity of COVID-19 in the past few weeks, while the number of severe and fatal cases remained stable. Having reviewed the latest epidemiology, scientific evidences of relevant vaccines, recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO) and overseas vaccination practice, the following recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccines were made by experts:

1. Booster vaccination for high-risk priority groups in 2024/25

The JSC recommended that the prevailing arrangements could remain applicable. In other words, a booster dose is recommended to be given at least six months after the last dose or COVID-19 infection (whichever is later), regardless of the number of doses received previously, for the following high-risk priority groups for enhanced protection:

- older adults aged 50 or above including those living in residential care homes;
- persons aged 18 to 49 years with underlying comorbidities;
- persons with immunocompromising conditions aged six months and above;
- pregnant women; and
- healthcare workers.

2. Use of JN.1 lineage COVID-19 vaccines

Experts reviewed the distribution of SARS-CoV-2 variants from sewage surveillance and human infection cases, and noted JN.1 together with its descendant lineages remained the predominant circulating strains locally. However, there was no information that suggested JN.1 would cause more severe disease. Experts recommended that JN.1 lineage vaccine, when available in Hong Kong, should be used for appropriate persons. Experts reiterated that currently available COVID-19 vaccines (including inactivated virus and mRNA vaccines) remain effective in reducing severe COVID-19 infection and death.

3. Simplified arrangements for initial vaccination

Taking reference from the WHO recommendations, the JSC considered the

majority of the population had acquired some immunity against COVID-19 during the pandemic and hence recommended to simplify the initial vaccination arrangements. Experts recommended that a person who has never received COVID-19 vaccine is considered to have completed initial vaccination by receiving one dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine or two doses of inactivated vaccine, instead of the three initial doses previously recommended.

Details of the interim recommendations are available on the CHP's website at www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/24008.html.

Measles vaccination

The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) reviewed the local situation of measles on the same day. Experts acknowledged the two-dose measles vaccination coverage has been consistently maintained at a high level locally, well above 95 per cent, and noted that a local university had recently published results of a research conducted on local measles virus antibodies seroprevalence (2021). Experts also reviewed the results of seroprevalence studies conducted by the DH during 2022 to 2024, showing that the measles antibody level across all ages and specific groups (including foreign domestic helpers, people working or studying in tertiary institutions born outside Hong Kong, and airport workers) attained a level of 95 per cent or above. As such, experts reaffirmed the recommendation for measles vaccination for non-immune adults in Hong Kong published by the SCVPD in 2019, i.e. adults non-immune to measles, including those who had not received two doses of measles-containing vaccines in the past, or have unknown vaccination status or unknown immunity against measles, are advised to consult their doctors and complete their measles vaccination promptly. Moreover, experts also suggested the DH to continue monitoring the measles antibody level of local population.

The CHP reminded members of the public to remain vigilant against COVID-19 locally, and stay alert to the measles situation outside Hong Kong. High-risk individuals should receive vaccination to protect themselves as appropriate.