

Transcript of remarks by SLW after passage of Social Workers Registration (Amendment) Bill 2024 (with photo)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, after the passage of the Social Workers Registration (Amendment) Bill 2024 by the Legislative Council this afternoon (July 3):

Reporter: Mr Sun, do you fear that this change will lead to existing social workers to resign and also discourage people from joining the industry, as some members have said about this amendment. Would this amendment also create more rifts in the society as it targets social workers who work with the public and also young people, especially with nearly all of the elected members in the body resigning before this amendment was passed? Thank you.

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: Thank you for your question. I think it is exactly the opposite. With the passage of the Amendment Bill, it provides a better, more secure foundation for the operation of the Social Workers Registration Board. We believe, with the Amendment Bill and the strengthened composition of the Social Workers Registration Board, it will encourage more young people to study social work and be a social worker. Secondly, with the Amendment Bill and a broadened Social Workers Registration Board, it will provide better protection and certainty to the profession. With this new Board, we believe it will strengthen the professional development of the whole profession and its role to ensure national security. Thank you very much.

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



Salesperson of medicine shop imprisoned for engaging in commercial practice involving misleading omission in selling Chinese herbal medicine

A salesman of a medicine shop today (July 3) was convicted of engaging in a commercial practice involving a misleading omission in the sale of a Chinese herbal medicine, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO), and was sentenced to immediate imprisonment for four weeks at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts.

Customs earlier received information from a Mainland visitor alleging that a staff member of a medicine shop in Mong Kok misled him in the course of selling cordyceps. After an investigation, it was revealed that the staff member had misled the visitor to believe that by purchasing one tael of cordyceps at the price of \$1,680, he would receive other goods worth about \$1,400 in total free of charge. After the cordyceps were ground into powder, the staff member revealed that the cordyceps were priced per mace, which was 10 times higher than what was expected. The visitor was forced to accept the transaction in the end.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO. Consumers should procure products from reputable traders. They are also reminded to check carefully the total price and unit price of the goods before making payment, and to retain the transaction receipts and related records, which can be used as the basis for follow-up action in case a complaint is lodged in the future.

Under the TDO, any trader who engages in a commercial practice that omits or hides material information or provides material information in a manner that is unclear, unintelligible, ambiguous or untimely, and as a result causes, or is likely to cause, an average consumer to make a transactional decision, commits an offence of misleading omissions. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violation of the TDO 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).

Shipping Legislation (Use of Fuels and Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2024 to be gazetted on Friday

The Shipping Legislation (Use of Fuels and Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2024 will be published in the Gazette this Friday (July 5) to amend the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) Ordinance (Cap. 548) and four pieces of subsidiary legislation to facilitate the use of new fuels by vessels in Hong Kong.

As announced in the Action Plan on Maritime and Port Development Strategy promulgated in 2023, in order to consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's position as an international maritime centre, the Government is committed to developing the city into a green maritime fuel bunkering centre and promoting the use of more environmentally friendly new fuels with less or zero carbon emissions.

The Bill refines the existing legislation to cater for the safe use of new fuels such as liquefied natural gas and methanol by vessels, taking into account the nature and characteristics of new fuels which are different from traditional marine petroleum fuels.

A spokesperson for the Transport and Logistics Bureau said, "Further to the Green Incentive Scheme for eligible Hong Kong-registered ships introduced on June 28, the Bill is another demonstration of the Government's effort and resolution in developing Hong Kong into a green port. We look forward to continuing to work with the maritime industry to ride the tide of maritime decarbonisation and strive to meet the International Maritime Organization's target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping by or around 2050."

The Panel on Economic Development of the Legislative Council, as well as the Local Vessels Advisory Committee and the Port Operations Committee of the Marine Department, have been consulted. Members supported the proposal.

The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council on July 10.

Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected dangerous drugs worth about \$1.2

million (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (July 2) seized about 5.5 kilograms of suspected cannabis oil, about 900 grams of suspected ketamine and about 600g of suspected methamphetamine, with a total estimated market value of about \$1.2 million, in Fo Tan. A man suspected to be connected with the case was arrested.

During an anti-narcotics operation conducted in the industrial area of Fo Tan yesterday evening, Customs officers intercepted a 31-year-old man and found about 10g of suspected ketamine on him. He was then arrested. Customs officers later escorted the man to his rented flat in an industrial building nearby for a search, and further seized about 5.5kg of suspected cannabis oil, about 860g of suspected ketamine, about 600g of suspected methamphetamine, and a batch of drug packaging paraphernalia therein.

The arrested man, who claimed to be unemployed, has been charged with two counts of trafficking in a dangerous drug. He will appear at the Shatin Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (July 4).

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking 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).



DoJ and SPC hold first high-level

joint meeting to accelerate interface work in GBA (with photos)

The Department of Justice (DoJ) and the Supreme People's Court (SPC) held their first high-level joint meeting in Huizhou today (July 3) to accelerate the work on the interfaces of mechanisms, regulatory frameworks and talent training relating to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), and to help different sectors seize the development opportunities in the GBA through the construction of the rule of law.

The meeting was co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, and the Director General of the Research Office of the SPC, Mr Zhou Jiahai. The DoJ and the SPC signed a memorandum of understanding in Beijing in mid-June on establishing a standing interface platform on judicial and legal co-operation in the GBA. Today's meeting was the first high-level joint meeting under the framework of the platform.

Mr Cheung said that the establishment of the platform aims to deepen communication and collaboration between the two sides through practical interface work led by senior leaders, so as to more efficiently integrate resources and needs, as well as promote research, talent training and professional exchanges more systematically. The platform will also facilitate the implementation of more specific measures, benefitting exchanges and interactions between the people and businesses in the two places, so as to promote the high-quality development of the GBA.

He said, "It is especially meaningful to hold the meeting at the beginning of the third year of the current-term Government. Advancing from stability to prosperity, Hong Kong has ushered in the opportune time for development. The DoJ will continue to spare no effort in promoting the rule of law development, thereby helping different sectors to dovetail with national development strategies and in particular to seize the opportunities in the GBA development. The meeting was held just three weeks after the signing of the memorandum of understanding, demonstrating both sides' determination to deepen the interface work and to enhance speed and efficiency. I would like to thank the SPC for its arrangements."

He mentioned that the establishment of the platform is an important measure under the DoJ's Action Plan on the Construction of Rule of Law in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area released in April 2024 for strengthening the interface of the communication mechanism with the Mainland, and also one of the policy initiatives in "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address", as well as the first standing interface platform between the DoJ and a central state organ.

At the meeting, the two sides actively and pragmatically took forward the collaboration in three major areas comprising the interfaces of mechanisms, regulatory frameworks and talent training. The progress of the key measures and the directions set for future co-operation are outlined

below.

(1) On the mechanism of mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters, both sides will review and enhance the relevant mechanism on an on-going basis, and jointly release notable cases relating to mutual legal assistance.

(2) On the measure of "allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law", both sides will press ahead with the implementation of the pilot scheme as soon as possible, and take forward the implementation of the measure of "allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to choose for arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong" in the nine Mainland cities in the GBA.

(3) The first GBA lawyers' practical training will be conducted on July 19 and 20 at the Guangdong branch of the National Judges College.

(4) Taking forward a practical training course for Mainland civil and commercial judges on common law and foreign-related civil and commercial legal issues this year, utilising Hong Kong's role in establishing the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy.

Mr Cheung said he hopes that the relevant initiatives will help better bring into play the unique advantages of "one country, two systems and three jurisdictions" of the GBA, so as to contribute to the construction of the rule of law in the GBA.