

# Labour Department highly concerned about fatal work accident that happened today

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about a fatal work accident that happened in Wong Tai Sin today (January 22), in which a male worker was found lying on the ground behind a tail lift truck and was certified dead later in the hospital. The LD is saddened by the death of the person and expresses its deepest sympathy to his family.

The LD's spokesman said, "We commenced an immediate on-site investigation as soon as we were notified of the accident, the employer concerned was advised of relevant safety precautions and urged to comply with occupational safety and health regulations to ensure the safety of worker."

The spokesman added, "We will complete investigation as soon as possible to identify the cause of the accident, ascertain the liability of the duty holders and recommend improvement measures. We will take actions pursuant to the law if there is any violation of the work safety legislation."

The general duty provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance require employers to provide safe working environments, plant and safe systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the above provisions are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The LD will also remind the employer concerned of the liability for employees' compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, assist family members of the deceased to claim employees' compensation and closely follow up on the case. For those with financial difficulties, the LD will assist them to apply for appropriate emergency funds. Subject to the needs and wishes of family members of the deceased, the LD will also liaise with the Social Welfare Department for financial or other assistance.

For the sake of securing the safety and health of employees at work, the LD appeals to employers to provide plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health. Employees should co-operate with their employers, adopt all safety measures and use personal protective equipment provided properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of other workers.

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## **No.3 alarm fire in Central (3)**

A fire broke out at 5-9 Robinson Road in Central today (January 22) at 12.01pm, and was upgraded to No. 3 alarm at 1.24pm. The fire was surrounded at 2.20pm, put under control at 2.39pm. It was largely put out at 3.43pm.

Firemen used two jet and mobilised two breathing apparatus teams to fight the blaze.

Six persons felt unwell. Four persons were sent to Queen Mary Hospital for treatment. Two persons were sent to Ruttonjee Hospital for treatment.

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## **Permanent Secretary for Environment and Ecology (Food) tests positive for COVID-19**

A spokesman for the Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB) said today (December 21) that the Permanent Secretary for Environment and Ecology (Food), Miss Vivian Lau, has tested positive for COVID-19. She is undergoing isolation in accordance with the guidelines of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health.

Miss Lau last went to work on December 15. She wore masks and followed relevant disease prevention measures at work, including conducting polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid tests and rapid antigen tests regularly. She has no recent travel history.

The EEB has conducted thorough cleaning and disinfection operations at the office concerned and will continue to implement disease prevention measures vigorously.

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## **HKSARG welcomes WTO ruling that US' origin marking requirement is**

## inconsistent with WTO rules

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (December 21) welcomed the ruling made by the Panel established under the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) that the origin marking requirement imposed on Hong Kong products by the United States (US) is inconsistent with WTO rules.

The Panel has submitted its report to the DSB, which clearly ruled that the US' origin marking requirement imposed upon Hong Kong products is inconsistent with the most-favoured-nation treatment requirement in respect of origin marking under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994. The Panel also completely refuted the US' invocation of security exceptions, and recommended the US to bring the measure into conformity.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, said, "We welcome that the Panel has fully affirmed the status of Hong Kong, China as a separate customs territory. The ruling has once again confirmed that the US has disregarded international trade rules, attempted to impose discriminatory and unfair requirements unilaterally, unreasonably suppressed Hong Kong products and enterprises, and politicised economic and trade issues.

"The revised origin marking requirement is politically motivated and a vain attempt to interfere with Hong Kong's internal affairs through weaponising trade. The US' despicable intent and ulterior motives will neither stand nor be accepted by the international community. Not only is the requirement imposed on Hong Kong products by the US unwarranted, it also seriously violates WTO rules. It completely disregards the rules-based multilateral trading system and irresponsibly infringes on Hong Kong's rights as a member of the WTO. The HKSAR Government strongly condemns such a measure.

"The Panel has in its report categorically refuted the erroneous and groundless views of the US, and gave a clear ruling that the US has violated WTO rules. I have written to the US Trade Representative, urging the US to respect the ruling and immediately withdraw the requirement which violates WTO rules," Mr Yau stressed.

Under "one country, two systems", the special status of the HKSAR is conferred by the motherland through the Basic Law. Pursuant to Articles 116, 151 and 152 of the Basic Law, the HKSAR is a separate customs territory and may, using the name "Hong Kong, China", participate in international organisations such as the WTO, and develop mutually beneficial economic and trade relations with economies around the world.

The special status of Hong Kong has been widely recognised and respected by the international community. The rights and obligations of Hong Kong in the WTO are on par with that of other WTO members. The "Made in Hong Kong"

marking on Hong Kong products has been accepted internationally for many years. This not only shows factually that Hong Kong is a separate customs territory and complies with relevant WTO rules, but also provides consumers with clear and accurate information on product origin.

Since November 10, 2020, the US has required that all products exported from Hong Kong to the US may no longer be marked as originating in "Hong Kong", but must be marked to indicate "China". The HKSAR Government swiftly and robustly advanced an objection via bilateral and multilateral means. The WTO's DSB agreed at its meeting on February 22, 2021, to Hong Kong, China's request to establish a panel to consider the dispute.

The HKSAR Government will continue to closely monitor and follow up on the development of the issue, and will maintain communication with the trade via different means.

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## **Hospital Chief Executive of Ruttonjee & Tang Shiu Kin Hospitals, Tung Wah Eastern Hospital and Cheshire Home, Chung Hom Kok tests positive for COVID-19**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority spokesman said today (December 21) that the Hospital Chief Executive of Ruttonjee and Tang Shiu Kin Hospitals; Tung Wah Eastern Hospital; and Cheshire Home, Chung Hom Kok, Dr Lau Ka-hin has tested positive for COVID-19. He is undergoing isolation in accordance with the guidelines of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health.

Dr Lau last performed duties yesterday (December 20). He wore masks and followed relevant infection control measures at work, including conducting daily rapid antigen tests. He has no recent travel history.

The hospital will conduct thorough cleaning and disinfection operation at the office concerned and will continue to implement disease prevention measures vigorously.