

HKSAR Government welcomes WTO rulings that US' global tariffs on steel and aluminium imports violate WTO rules

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (December 10) welcomed the rulings made yesterday (December 9) by the panels established under the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) that the United States' (US) imposition of global tariffs on steel and aluminium imports is inconsistent with WTO rules.

A Government spokesman said, "We welcome the rulings made by the panels of the WTO DSB. As a staunch supporter of the rules-based multilateral trading system, we strongly urge the US to fulfil its obligations as a WTO Member and withdraw the erroneous measures earliest possible. The panels' rulings clearly show that the US has abused the concept of national security with the sole aim to politicise economic and trade issues."

Since March 23, 2018, the US, allegedly for national security reasons, has imposed tariffs of 25 per cent and 10 per cent on steel and aluminium imports respectively on a global scale, including Hong Kong, and only certain economies are excluded. As a matter of fact, there is only a minimal amount of aluminium products exported from Hong Kong to the US, and there are no local steel products exported to the US. These minimal exports cannot be threatening or damaging the US' national security.

The HKSAR Government has been following up the issue through various channels, opposing the unreasonable and unjust measures by the US. On the bilateral level, apart from filing formal representations to the US administration to express opposition, the HKSAR Government has also urged the US administration to exclude Hong Kong from the subject tariff measures. On the multilateral level, in response to the requests made by China, India, Norway, Russia, Switzerland and Türkiye, the WTO DSB established panels in 2019 to examine the subject disputes, with Hong Kong participating as a third party. The HKSAR Government stated strong opposition to the US' implementation of the subject tariff measures.

The spokesman said, "The HKSAR Government will continue to monitor the developments closely and follow up. We will maintain our communication with the industry through various channels, review the situation, consider and take corresponding policies and actions to safeguard Hong Kong's trade interests and rights."

SLW tests positive for COVID-19

A spokesman for the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) said today (December 10) that the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, has tested positive for COVID-19 through a rapid antigen test. He is undergoing isolation in accordance with the guidelines of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health.

Mr Sun last went to work on December 8. He wore masks and followed relevant disease prevention measures at work, including conducting polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid tests and rapid antigen tests regularly. He has no recent travel history.

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

Red flag hoisted at Silverstrand Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (December 10) that due to big waves, red flag has been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at the beach.

Yellow fire danger warning

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Yellow fire danger warning

The fire danger situation today (December 10) is yellow and the risk of fire is high. People are urged to prevent fires breaking out and hikers should also be vigilant.

Territory-wide flag day today

Association for the Rights of Industrial Accident Victims Limited has been issued a Public Subscription Permit to hold a territory-wide flag sale from 7am to 12.30pm today (December 10), a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said.

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities, including any updated information, covered by the issued Public Subscription Permits have been published on the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search). Permits for flag days containing information on contact methods of the flag-selling organisations and the approved flag-selling activities have also been uploaded to the SWD's website (www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_controlofc/sub_flagdays) for reference. For enquiries, please call the SWD's hotline at 2343 2255, or the designated hotline of the 1823 Call Centre at 3142 2678.

In the case of suspected fraudulent flag day activities, people should not make any donation and should immediately report the matter to the Police, the spokesman added.