

Regional flag day today

Three charities have been issued Public Subscription Permits to hold flag sales from 7am to 12.30pm today (March 1). They are, on Hong Kong Island, The Jane Goodall Institute (Hong Kong) Limited; in Kowloon, Hong Kong Single Parents Association; and in the New Territories, Assembly Of God Grace Light Church, Limited, a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said.

Arrangements have been made with the charities to help people to distinguish among the three flag-selling activities.

Information on the three flag-selling organisations on March 1 is as follows:

Region	Name of organisation	Colour of collection bag	Colour of flag
Hong Kong Island	The Jane Goodall Institute (Hong Kong) Limited	Green	Beige
Kowloon	Hong Kong Single Parents Association	Red	White
New Territories	Assembly Of God Grace Light Church, Limited	Blue	Green

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/ngo/controlofc/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.

Fatal traffic accident in Tseung Kwan

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Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident happened in Tseung Kwan O yesterday afternoon (February 28), in which a man died.

At 6.10pm, a medium goods vehicle (MGV) driven by a 58-year-old man, a motorcycle driven by a 50-year-old man and a bus driven by a 62-year-old man were travelling along Wan Po Road southbound. When approaching the junction of Wan Po Road and Chun Yat Street, the MGV driver and the motorcyclist slowed down and stopped their vehicles due to traffic condition. The bus suspectedly failed to brake in time and rammed into the motorcycle.

The motorcyclist was trapped between the MGV and the bus and rescued by firemen. Sustaining serious head injury, the motorcyclist was rushed to Tseung Kwan O Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 8.52pm.

The bus driver was sent to Tseung Kwan O Hospital in conscious state. He was then arrested for dangerous driving causing death and is being detained for enquiries.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team 1 of Traffic, Kowloon East is under way.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3661 0264.

Immigration Department smashes illegal workers syndicate (with photos)

The Outside Investigation Section of the Immigration Department (ImmD) conducted a surprise raid to a dishwashing company and successfully neutralised an illegal worker syndicate yesterday (February 27). Six syndicate members and one illegal worker were arrested, and copies of forged Hong Kong identity cards were seized.

The ImmD discovered a dishwashing company suspected to have arranged illegal workers to various restaurants to perform dishwashing duties. After in-depth investigation and intelligence analysis, the illegal worker syndicate was identified. From December 2024 to February 2025, enforcement officers of the ImmD performed a number of territory-wide anti-illegal employment operations. A total of 25 restaurants were raided, and arrested a total of 14 suspected illegal workers. During investigation, it was found that the illegal workers had used forged Hong Kong identity cards, copies of forged Hong Kong identity cards or identity cards in relation to other

persons for job interviews. It is highly suspected that the company did not take practicable steps to ensure the employees are lawfully employable. After the illegal workers were employed, they were deployed to various restaurants to work, and were paid \$70 per hour, involving an estimated amount of around \$2 million.

During the operation yesterday, the ImmD had raided the office of the dishwashing company located in Lai Chi Kok, and arrested three male and three female Hong Kong resident staff aged from 24 to 39. They were all key members of the syndicate and were suspected of aiding and abetting illegal workers to take up employment and in possession of copies of forged Hong Kong identity cards. At scene, enforcement officers intercepted a 55 years old Chinese female overstayer. She was suspected of working illegally and in possession of suspected forged Hong Kong identity card. Twenty-two copies of suspected forged Hong Kong identity cards and employment records of the illegal workers previously arrested were unearthed. The investigation is still ongoing, and more persons involved in the case may be arrested.

An ImmD spokesman said, "Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him or her shall be guilty of an offence. Also, visitors are not allowed to take employment in Hong Kong, whether paid or unpaid, without the permission of the Director of Immigration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and upon conviction face a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to two years' imprisonment. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and penalties."

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. Under the Immigration Ordinance, the maximum penalty for an employer employing a person who is not lawfully employable, i.e. an illegal immigrant, a person who is the subject of a removal order or a deportation order, an overstayer or a person who was refused permission to land, has been significantly increased from a fine of \$350,000 and three years' imprisonment to a fine of \$500,000 and 10 years' imprisonment to reflect the gravity of such offences. The director, manager, secretary, partner, etc, of the company concerned may also bear criminal liability. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence.

According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$150,000 and to imprisonment for one year. In that connection, the spokesman would like to remind all employers not to defy the law by employing illegal workers. The ImmD will continue to take resolute enforcement action to combat such offences.



Government announces 2025-26 Land Sale List

The Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, today (February 28) announced the Government's 2025-26 Land Sale List.

"The 2025-26 Land Sale List covers eight residential sites, capable of providing about 4 450 flats. Apart from the eight sites available for sale, the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) plans to put up for tender its development projects Tuen Mun A16 Station (Package 1) and Tung Chung East Station (Package 2) in the coming financial year, providing a total of about 2 440 flats. In addition, the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) plans to relaunch its project at Kai Tak Road / Sa Po Road in Kowloon City, capable of providing about 810 flats. As for private development/redevelopment projects, with reference to the figures in the past decade, the supply in 2025-26 is estimated to be around 6 000 flats," Ms Linn said.

Taking into account the estimated land supply from Government land sale, projects of the MTRCL and the URA, as well as private development/redevelopment projects, the private housing land supply in 2025-26 is estimated to have a capacity to produce about 13 700 flats. Pursuant to the "Long Term Housing Strategy Annual Progress Report 2024" released by the Government in October 2024, the target for private housing land supply in 2025-26 is 13 200 flats, similar to the potential supply of this financial year.

As regards sites for commercial use, the 2025-26 Budget announced that the Government will not roll out any commercial sites for sale in the coming year, so as to allow the market to absorb the existing supply, having considered the high vacancy rate of offices in recent years and the relatively ample supply in the next few years. Therefore, no commercial has been included on the Land Sale List this year. In response to market feedback and to enhance the market attractiveness of sites, the Government will consider rezoning some of the commercial sites, which are expected to be

available for sale in the next few years, into residential use and allowing greater flexibility of land use. To tie in with the relevant work, the Government will extend the deadline for completing in-situ land exchange for commercial sites in the town centre of Hung Shui Kiu / Ha Tsuen New Development Area (HSK/HT NDA), with a view to studying whether the land use could be suitably adjusted without compromising the overall industry positioning of HSK/HT NDA.

As for industrial sites, the Government has identified three pilot areas to adopt the large-scale land disposal approach, respectively located in HSK/HT, Fanling North and San Tin Technopole. Each pilot area covers land for residential, industry and public facilities. The expressions of interest exercise will last until end-March, with the target to commence the tendering work for the three pilot areas progressively from the second half of 2025 to 2026. Ms Linn added that the Government could not rely solely on publicly-funded works projects to implement large-scale development. The Government has to dare to break new ground and innovate continuously, integrate the government with the market, and to adopt diversified development model such as public-private partnership, in-situ land exchange and large-scale disposal. The Government will explore allowing land owners to voluntarily surrender land planned to be resumed by the Government in the Northern Metropolis to offset or reduce the premium charged for the in-situ land exchange or large-scale land disposal. By paying less premium, developers can manage their cash flow with greater ease and are more incentivised to take part in the development of the Northern Metropolis. The measure also helps to alleviate pressure on public finance.

Reviewing the private housing land supply in 2024-25, Ms Linn noted that the Government sold four residential sites in this financial year, which have a total capacity to produce about 1 970 flats. The aggregate private housing land supply in 2024-25 from different sources is estimated to have a capacity to produce about 8 930 flats, amounting to around 68 per cent of the annual supply target (13 200 flats). Ms Linn added that the Government considers the achievement rate of private housing land supply in this financial year foreseeable and reasonable. Owing to the uncertain external environment in the past year, the slower-than-expected interest rates cut as well as the continued high level market supply, developers have remained rather conservative in land tenders. Hence, having considered the market situation, the Government has been rolling out sites for sale in a pragmatic and prudent manner over the past year despite having available land in hand, taking the initiative on land supply. In fact, the supply in the past few financial years have each exceeded the annual supply target, which is sufficient to offset the shortfall this year. The impact on the short-to-medium term market supply is not expected to be significant.

Reviewing the commercial land supply in 2024-25, given that the vacancy rate of commercial floor area still remains at a relatively high level, coupled with the several large-scale commercial sites sold in the past few years, the Government did not roll out any commercial site in this financial year.

On sites for industrial use, the tender of two sites in Yuen Long and Hung Shui Kiu for development of multi-storey buildings for modern industries (MSB) is now ongoing. The two sites could provide a total of about 550 000 square metres floor space.

Ms Linn said that the Transport and Logistics Bureau has successfully tendered a logistics site in Tsing Yi. Recently, a few potential investors provided feedbacks on the two MSB sites with ongoing tender. While pursuing the policy objective, the Government is considering possible adjustments on the tender conditions in response to market feedback, and for this reason, will extend the tender closing date of these two sites. Further details will be announced in early March.

For the first quarter of 2025-26, i.e. April to June 2025, the Government will put up for tender a residential site in Tuen Mun, which is capable of producing about 525 flats. Ms Linn said that the site is located in a mature residential neighbourhood near a light rail station, and should be attractive to the market. In addition, for private development/redevelopment projects, two lease modification cases are expected to be executed in the first quarter, capable of providing a total of about 165 flats. The total private housing land supply for the first quarter is estimated to be about 690 units. Ms Linn added that an in-situ land exchange within the HSK/HT NDA is approaching its application deadline of end March. The development will bring about an additional supply of 1 600 flats for the first quarter if the application is concluded before the deadline.

Ms Linn reiterated that the Government will prudently roll out land in a paced and pragmatic manner for development and to maintain continuous and sustained land supply. Placing available sites on the Land Sale List does not mean that all sites are to be rolled out. The Government will continue to make reference to market situation and other supply sources, so as to announce the Land Sale Programme on a quarterly basis. Depending on the market situation, the Government may also put up additional sites to respond to market changes.

The 2025-26 Land Sale List can be found on the Lands Department's website (www.landso.gov.hk).

CHP of DH responds to media enquiries on B virus human infection

In response to media enquiries about a case of human infection of B virus (also known as herpes simiae virus) announced by the Department of Health (DH) on April 3 last year, the Controller of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the DH, Dr Edwin Tsui, today (February 28) responded as

follows:-

"In the fight against communicable diseases, the CHP adheres to the '3Rs' i.e. real-time surveillance, rapid intervention and responsive risk communication. The CHP has upheld the principles of openness and high transparency in providing the public and healthcare professionals with the latest information and epidemiological situation on communicable diseases as well as relevant prevention and health education through various appropriate channels. At the same time, the CHP conducts necessary epidemiological investigations on reported cases in a timely manner and takes appropriate follow-up, prevention and control measures to minimise the threat of communicable diseases to Hong Kong citizens.

The CHP confirmed the first case of B virus human infection in Hong Kong on April 3 last year, and immediately adopted a multi-pronged approach to prevent the virus from spreading locally. Apart from issuing a [press release](#) on the same day to announce the details of the case (including the case had been receiving treatment at the Intensive Care Unit with critical condition) and reminding the public of the precautions to be taken against the virus, the CHP also immediately notified the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department to take appropriate measures, including [stepping up patrols in country parks and reminding visitors not to feed monkeys](#).

As this was the first case of its kind in Hong Kong, the CHP immediately stepped up local medical surveillance. On April 5 last year, the CHP added the disease to the list of "Other communicable diseases of topical public health concern" and issued [letters](#) to doctors and hospitals in Hong Kong to provide them with clinical and epidemiological information on the case, reminding them to pay attention to the disease during medical consultations and to report suspected cases to the CHP for follow-up.

To continue to educate the public and raise their awareness about the B virus, the CHP has produced promotional leaflets and continued to provide relevant health information on its website and social media since April 5 last year. In addition, the CHP has reported the latest epidemiological investigation results of the case in the Communicable Disease Watch in June last year and yesterday (February 27), reminding the public and healthcare workers to exercise caution against the B virus.

Regarding this case, there was no delay in the CHP's investigation, disease control and prevention, and the publicity and education efforts. Nevertheless, the CHP is aware of comments that the CHP could have issued another press release on the day of the patient's death to inform the public. The CHP will review the current practice and consider announcing the crucial changes in the clinical conditions of special infectious disease cases as soon as practicable, in addition to announcing the results of the relevant epidemiological investigations, prevention and control work, and public education.

To date, only one case of B virus human infection has been recorded in Hong Kong. However, the virus is naturally carried in the saliva, urine and

stool of macaques, which are wild animals commonly found in Hong Kong. Members of the public must remain vigilant and stay away from wild monkeys, avoiding touching or feeding them. If bitten or scratched by a monkey, members of the public should rinse the wound with water as soon as possible and seek medical attention immediately."