

## Temporary closure of some LCSD leisure and sports facilities

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) announced today (April 28) that some leisure and sports facilities will be temporarily closed to tie in with the 2021 Tissot UCI Track Cycling Nations Cup Hong Kong, China, which will be staged at the Hong Kong Velodrome (HKV) in Sai Kung District from May 13 to 16. Details are as follows:

(a) All facilities (including the Leisure Link Booking Office) of the HKV will be temporarily closed from May 3 to 19; and

(b) The main sports ground, activity rooms, table tennis rooms, changing rooms and toilets and the Leisure Link Self-service Kiosk at Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground will be temporarily closed from May 9 to 18 for use as the Event Logistics Centre including athlete rest areas and event materials storage facilities. The secondary sports ground will remain open as usual.

During the closure periods, members of the public may use similar facilities at Hang Hau Sports Centre, Tiu Keng Leng Sports Centre, Tsui Lam Sports Centre and Po Lam Sports Centre in the same district.

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## LCQ8: Maintaining Hong Kong's status and competitiveness in international community

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Lo Wai-kiok and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, in the Legislative Council today (April 28):

Question:

The National People's Congress made decisions, in May last year and March this year respectively, on implementing the National Security Law for Hong Kong in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) and improving the electoral system of SAR. The governments of certain western countries have alleged the relevant decisions to be in violation of the "one country, two systems" and the Basic Law, and imposed sanctions on certain SAR Government officials and organisations. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has taken measures to refute the allegation, including

explaining to government offices of foreign states in Hong Kong, the International Monetary Fund, international rating agencies, Hong Kong's major trading partners and chambers of commerce that such move of the Central Authorities has plugged loopholes of SAR's system, which can ensure the steadfast and successful implementation of "one country, two systems"; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) of its new thinking on enhancing Hong Kong's capability of responding to the complex and volatile international political and economic environment, and better seizing the opportunities of post-pandemic economic development; and

(3) given that Hong Kong has been implementing a low and simple tax regime, what strategies the Government has put in place to deal with the situation where governments of various countries, in response to the recent appeal of the United States Government, jointly set a uniform minimum rate of corporate profits tax that is applicable to multinational companies, so as to prevent Hong Kong's competitiveness from being undermined?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office, the Financial Secretary's Office, the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the Security Bureau, and the Information Services Department (ISD), the consolidated reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Lo Wai-kwok is as follows:

(1) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government places high importance on external engagement. On the one hand, through the efforts of the abovementioned bureaux and departments, as well as the overseas Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs), the Government has, as a whole, actively engaged in external promotion on Hong Kong's advantages to bolster Hong Kong's international image. On the other hand, the Government has regularly disseminated the latest information on Hong Kong to overseas communities through different channels and responded to biased reports to ensure that interlocutors have a proper understanding on Hong Kong's situation. With the rising geopolitical tensions in recent years, some overseas stakeholders have hyped issues on Hong Kong, making unfair comments and reports on issues including the implementation of the National Security Law and improving the electoral system, which has definitely affected Hong Kong's international image adversely. The Government has therefore made strenuous efforts in stepping up our relevant work.

Following the passage of "the Decision on establishing and improving the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the HKSAR to safeguard national security" by the National People's Congress on May 28, 2020, as well as the National Security Law by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on June 30, 2020, the HKSAR Government actively explained to the international communities and overseas stakeholders the legal basis for the National Security Law through different channels, and promptly rebutted the

corresponding false allegations by foreign countries to dispel misconceptions, including issuing press releases immediately through the ISD and ETOs to clarify the issues, publishing promotional pamphlets, placing newspaper advertisements, arranging principal officials from relevant policy bureaux to take part in media interviews, and to meet with the Consul-General in Hong Kong, major foreign chambers of commerce, and overseas stakeholders, etc. It was emphasised that the National Security Law is beneficial to political and social stability of Hong Kong and conducive to maintaining Hong Kong's investment and business environment in the long run, and that the legislation will not adversely affect the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong residents in accordance with the law.

As for the decision by the National People's Congress on improving the electoral system of the HKSAR, the HKSAR Government has so far held over 110 briefing sessions for various sectors, especially chambers of commerce and the financial sector to brief them on the background, principles and major content of improving the electoral system. The Government will continue to strengthen its explanatory and publicity work so that different sectors of the community will recognise the necessity and urgency of improving the electoral system as well as support the relevant work.

ISD has also been closely monitoring reports in the mass media and messages posted on major social media platforms. When it comes to its knowledge that rumours relating to the Government or false information are being widely circulated, the ISD would immediately make clarifications through various channels to curb the spread of rumours and address public concerns, including arranging relevant officials to explain to the media, and disseminating widely the correct information on the internet and social media platforms.

In addition, from June 2020 to end-March 2021, the ETOs have organised over 20 webinars for the Chief Executive and principal officials to conduct direct dialogue with various overseas stakeholders, including think tanks, academic institutions, as well as business organisations, to explain to them the situation in Hong Kong and directly address their concerns on the National Security Law. To maintain the confidence of the overseas communities in Hong Kong, it was emphasised to the audience that the legislation is fully justified and legitimate, with stability restored in Hong Kong and the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong residents in accordance with the law will continue to be upheld. In the meantime, the ETOs have proactively engaged the overseas communities through their network, providing updated information and explanation on Hong Kong's latest situations to their interlocutors, as well as issuing articles and responding to reports in a number of local media on the relevant subjects to dispel misconception.

(2) Against the background of rising protectionism in recent years, coupled with the unprecedented challenge to global economy brought about by the pandemic, the HKSAR Government will continue to proactively integrate into the overall development of the country to better seize the opportunities arising from national development and post-pandemic economic recovery. "The Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-Range Objectives

Through the Year 2035" (the 14th Five-Year Plan) adopted on March 11, 2021 sets out various measures on supporting Hong Kong to consolidate and enhance competitive advantages as well as to better integrate into the overall development of the country, and on proactively and progressively taking forward the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). Under the new development pattern which takes the domestic market as the mainstay while enabling domestic and foreign markets to interact positively with each other, and with the support of the 14th Five-Year Plan, Hong Kong's development opportunities are evident. Currently, the HKSAR Government is working at full steam on disease prevention and control, and proactively on vaccination for members of the public. Once the epidemic subsides later, given Hong Kong's own advantages and the advantages under the "one country, two systems" principle, the city will be able to proactively become a participant in domestic circulation and a facilitator in international circulation. We will take the GBA development as the best entry point to better integrate into the overall development of the country, which will bring continuous impetus to Hong Kong's economy.

The 14th Five-Year Plan also supports the HKSAR Government in continuing to foster co-operation and exchanges with countries and regions around the world, and fully utilising its unique status and advantages. In particular, Hong Kong will continue to make the best use of the advantages under the "one country, two systems" principle to tap into the business opportunities brought about by the twin engines of the country's economic development in the Belt and Road Initiative and the GBA development, while striving to establish close economic and trade relations with other economies including developing mutually beneficial economic and trade relations with economies around the world by leveraging on Hong Kong's status as a separate customs territory conferred by the Basic Law; continuing with the expansion of ETO network to enhance trade and economic relations between Hong Kong and its trading partners; promoting proactively regional economic co-operation and engaging member economies of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership with a view to commencing early discussions on Hong Kong's accession.

(3) The international community has been actively promoting the prevention of cross-border tax evasion in recent years. Jointly championed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and G20, the OECD sought to counter the base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) activities of multinational enterprises (MNEs) by promulgating in October 2015 the BEPS action plans. As an international financial and trading centre, Hong Kong has implemented all necessary measures as required under the BEPS action plans.

The OECD is now working on proposals to address the BEPS risks arising from the digitalisation of economy (BEPS 2.0 proposals), which include a global minimum tax rate. The global minimum tax rate targets those large MNEs with global revenue exceeding a specified threshold. If the tax paid by an MNE in a particular jurisdiction is lower than the global minimum tax rate, its parent company or subsidiary will be subject to additional taxes imposed by the jurisdiction where it is located. The target of the OECD is to reach a global consensus on the key policy features of the BEPS 2.0 proposals by mid-2021.

To formulate response measures, the Government set up an Advisory Panel in June 2020 to review the possible impact of the BEPS 2.0 proposals on the competitiveness of the business environment of Hong Kong, and to make recommendations to the Financial Secretary on how to facilitate the sustainable development of Hong Kong as an international financial, trading and business centre in light of the changing international tax landscape. The Advisory Panel has consulted stakeholders from the business sector. Taking into account the preliminary views of the Advisory Panel, the Financial Secretary presented in the Budget this year the direction of the Government's response measures. The Financial Secretary indicated that Hong Kong would actively implement BEPS 2.0 according to international consensus while striving to maintain the key advantages of our tax regime, namely simplicity, certainty and fairness; minimise the compliance burden on the affected enterprises; and continue to enhance the business environment and competitiveness of Hong Kong. The Advisory Panel on BEPS 2.0 will submit a report to the Government after the BEPS 2.0 proposals are finalised. The Government will then carefully study the report with a view to formulating specific response measures.

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## LCQ2: Ventilation requirement for dine-in catering premises

Following is a question by the Hon Wong Ting-kwong and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (April 28):

Question:

To reduce the risk of the coronavirus disease 2019 spreading in catering premises, the Government announced on the 17th of last month that the seating areas of dine-in catering premises must be in compliance with the following requirement on or before the 30th of this month: (1) fresh air change per hour therein must be at six times or above, or (2) air purifiers meeting the specified specifications have been installed. Quite a number of catering business operators (the operators) have relayed to me that as they lack the knowledge about ventilation and air purifiers, they can hardly complete the ventilation works concerned and obtain a certificate of compliance issued by a registered specialist contractor (ventilation works category) (contractor) within such a short time. The expenditure to be incurred for complying with the requirement will also aggravate their already heavy financial burden. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will publish, for reference by the operators, the ranges of the fees to be charged by a contractor for (i) undertaking the works concerned and (ii) issuing the certificate; if so, of the details; if not,

the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will expeditiously provide subsidies and technical support for the operators, so as to facilitate their compliance with the requirement; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will exercise discretion to provide a grace period for the operators or postpone the commencement date of the requirement; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In the directions issued on March 17, 2021 in relation to catering business under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), the Secretary for Food and Health stipulated a requirement on air change or air purifiers to be complied with in dine-in catering premises. Operators are required to register on the website of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) on or before April 30, 2021 to declare that the seating areas of their premises have a minimum of six air changes per hour or air purifiers that meet the specified specifications installed according to the on-the-ground situation (including the site condition) and the manufacturer's manual. Certification issued by a registered specialist contractor (ventilation works category) has to be submitted at the same time.

At present, there is no uniform worldwide standard on ventilation requirements for catering premises to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Yet it is generally agreed that ventilation improvement measures could assist in infection control. The Government has made reference to various materials from other places, such as ventilation standards applicable to non-residential buildings, relevant scientific and clinical research, and information provided by the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers of the United Kingdom and others on design guidelines for ventilation systems at public venues (including catering premises). A balance has been struck between relevant factors including the effectiveness of the measures and their affordability to the trade.

We hope that the trade could fulfil the relevant ventilation requirement as soon as possible to protect the health of staff, customers and the public and to reinforce the public's confidence in patronising catering premises. We could then refrain from using a "stop and go" approach on the catering industry in the face of epidemic situations in future as far as possible.

My reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (2) To enable the smooth implementation of the requirement, the FEHD has established a Working Group comprising experts from a wide spectrum of backgrounds including public health, engineering, surveying and ventilation. The Working Group and relevant government departments are adopting a multi-

pronged approach to help catering business operators and ventilation works contractors fulfil the requirement. Apart from meeting with representatives of catering premises, specialist contractors (ventilation works category), electrical appliance suppliers, hotels and other relevant trades, site visits have been conducted at a number of catering premises (including a bar, a Chinese restaurant, a Hong Kong-style tea restaurant and a hotel restaurant).

On assisting catering business operators and specialist contractors (ventilation works category), the Working Group and relevant government departments have made the following progress:

(i) an online platform, with a link ([www.bd.gov.hk/en/resources/online-tools/registers-search/registrationsearch.html](http://www.bd.gov.hk/en/resources/online-tools/registers-search/registrationsearch.html)) to the webpage of the Buildings Department containing the list of 180 specialist contractors (ventilation works category), was launched by the FEHD on March 18, 2021 for registration in respect of catering premises;

(ii) a list of air purifiers meeting the specified specifications was announced and uploaded to the FEHD's website on April 1, 2021. The composite list ([www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/guide\\_general\\_reference/Information\\_air\\_changes\\_purification.html](http://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/guide_general_reference/Information_air_changes_purification.html)) will be updated from time to time based on supplementary information submitted. As at April 19, 2021, a total of 305 air purifiers met the specified specifications. According to the information obtained by the Working Group, there is a stock of around 36 000 air purifiers of models that meet the specified specifications available in the market (while individual demand and supply may be subject to commercial considerations); and

(iii) a Guide on Compliance with Requirement on Air Change/Air Purifiers in Seating Areas of Dine-in Catering Premises ([www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/guide\\_general\\_reference/guide\\_on\\_compliance\\_with\\_requirement\\_on\\_air\\_change.html](http://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/guide_general_reference/guide_on_compliance_with_requirement_on_air_change.html)) was promulgated on April 12, 2021 with a video uploaded to the FEHD's website ([www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/guide\\_general\\_reference/Reference\\_Video\\_for\\_ACH-Air\\_purifier.mp4](http://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/guide_general_reference/Reference_Video_for_ACH-Air_purifier.mp4)) to enable the trade to master the essential points on specific technical details and facilitate expeditious follow-up arrangements for the prompt compliance with the relevant ventilation requirement.

According to the information obtained by the Working Group from the Hong Kong Registered Specialist Contractors (Ventilation) Association, contractors in general will use specific calibration instrument to assess the per hour air change level of catering premises and then complete the registration at FEHD's website by providing the data as well as the certificate issued by them certifying the relevant air change level per hour and/or the air purifiers installed. The Association has set up a telephone hotline for catering business operators to directly contact contractors who are interested in providing the service. In addition, the Working Group has invited device suppliers to provide on the FEHD's website information (including price range) on their air purifiers that meet the specified specifications.

The Working Group and relevant Government departments will continue to enhance publicity and education with a view to assisting the trade in grasping the key concepts and relevant follow-up arrangements regarding enhancement of air change of premises and installation of air purifiers; organise a webinar for direct communication between catering business operators and specialist contractors (ventilation works category); and continue to meet with representatives of the trades and the stakeholders.

(3) According to the guideline issued on March 17, 2021, catering business operators must submit an application to the FEHD for extension of time if they cannot complete the registration before the deadline. The FEHD will consider each application on individual merits. Catering business operators need not be overly worried. If they have taken reasonably practicable steps in an attempt to meet the relevant requirement but still consider it necessary to apply for an extension, they can download the application form from the FEHD's website ([www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/guide\\_general\\_reference/Application\\_for\\_extension\\_of\\_time\\_for\\_registration\\_on\\_air\\_change\\_installation\\_of\\_air\\_purifier\\_in\\_catering\\_premises.html](http://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/licensing/guide_general_reference/Application_for_extension_of_time_for_registration_on_air_change_installation_of_air_purifier_in_catering_premises.html)) and submit their applications accordingly.

During the initial period of implementing the new requirement, the FEHD will focus on publicity, education and giving advice, and will monitor the relevant situation closely for timely adjustments to the arrangement.

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## US Dollar Liquidity Facility tender result

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

US Dollar Liquidity Facility tender result:

Tender date	:	April 28, 2021 (Wednesday)
Settlement date	:	April 29, 2021 (Thursday)
Repayment date	:	May 6, 2021 (Thursday)
Tenor	:	Seven Days
Amount applied	:	Nil
Amount allotted	:	Nil
Lowest interest rate accepted	:	Nil
Highest interest rate accepted	:	Nil

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## Import of poultry meat and products from Ostródzki District of Warmińsko-mazurskie Region in Poland suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (April 28) that in view of a notification from the General Veterinary Inspectorate of Poland about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N8 avian influenza in Ostródzki District of Warmińsko-mazurskie Region in Poland, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the district with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 13 500 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 39.08 million poultry eggs from Poland last year.

"The CFS has contacted the Polish authorities over the issues and will closely monitor information issued by the World Organisation for Animal Health and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.