

Meetings of Legislative Council Committees

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

Details of the meetings of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Committees to be held in the LegCo Complex during the week from February 8 to 12 are available in the meeting schedule attached.

The information in the meeting schedule is subject to change. Please refer to the LegCo Calendar on the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk) for the latest details of meetings.

Members of the public can watch or listen to the meetings, including meetings conducted by videoconferencing, via the Webcast system on the LegCo Website. To observe the proceedings of the meetings which are not conducted by videoconferencing at the LegCo Complex, members of the public may call 3919 3399 during office hours to reserve seats.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (February 5), 66 COVID-19 confirmed patients were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 9 750 patients with confirmed or probable infection have been discharged.

At present, there are 672 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 231 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 585 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in 23 public hospitals and a community treatment facility, among which 24 patients are in critical condition, 24 are in serious condition and the remaining 537 patients are in stable condition.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

Details of the above-mentioned patients are as follows:

Patient condition	Case numbers
Discharged	6434, 9106, 9180, 9208, 9398, 9505, 9570, 9620, 9645, 9673, 9675, 9690, 9737, 9806, 9808, 9845, 9856, 9860, 9875, 9896, 9900, 9908, 9918, 9928, 9934, 9999, 10007, 10013, 10075, 10084, 10090, 10097, 10101, 10106, 10111, 10112, 10119, 10122, 10138, 10147, 10159, 10164, 10166, 10188, 10195, 10200, 10208, 10222, 10235, 10283, 10310, 10317, 10318, 10354, 10365, 10391, 10392, 10396, 10412, 10427, 10441, 10442, 10461, 10468, 10488, 10532
Critical	1989, 3496, 6125, 6547, 6607, 6754, 6794, 7021, 8018, 8078, 8323, 8900, 9049, 9135, 9267, 9438, 9612, 9907, 9959, 10196, 10238, 10358, 10367, 10417
Serious	6386, 7076, 7305, 7468, 7653, 8126, 8221, 9040, 9055, 9166, 9550, 9662, 9733, 9734, 9793, 9858, 9867, 9880, 9905, 9998, 10023, 10083, 10134, 10503

Red tides sighted

Seven red tides have been sighted over the past week, an inter-departmental red tide working group reported today (February 5).

Staff of the Environmental Protection Department and the Marine Department spotted the first and second red tides on January 29 at Victoria Harbour and Tuen Mun Ferry Pier respectively. On January 31, members of the public spotted the third red tide at West Lamma Channel. On February 1, staff of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department spotted the fourth and fifth red tides at Stanley Main Beach, Hong Kong Island, and Approach Beach, Tuen Wan, respectively. On February 2, staff of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) spotted the sixth red tide at Ma Wan Fish Culture Zone. The seventh red tide was spotted by mariculturist at Deep Bay yesterday (February 4).

Apart from the third and seventh red tides, which still persist, the other five red tides have dissipated. No fish deaths associated with the seven red tides have been reported as at today.

A spokesman for the working group said, "The second red tide was formed by *Noctiluca scintillans*, while the fourth and seventh red tides were formed by *Akashiwo sanguinea*. Both algae are commonly found in Hong Kong waters and are non-toxic. The other four red tides were formed by *Phaeocystis globosa*, which is commonly found in Hong Kong waters as well. According to overseas literature, *Phaeocystis globosa* can produce foam that may cause harmful effects to fish."

The AFCD urged mariculturists at Ma Wan, Cheung Sha Wan, Lo Tik Wan, Sok Kwu Wan and Po Toi fish culture zones and related oyster farmers at Deep Bay

to monitor the situation closely and increase aeration where necessary.

Red tide is a natural phenomenon. The AFCD's proactive phytoplankton monitoring programme will continue to monitor red tide occurrences to minimise the impact on the mariculture industry and the public.

Thirteen persons arrested during anti-illegal worker operations (with photo)

The Immigration Department (ImmD) mounted a series of territory-wide anti-illegal worker operations, including operations codenamed "Twilight" and joint operations with the Hong Kong Police Force codenamed "Champion", from February 1 to yesterday (February 4). A total of eight suspected illegal workers and five suspected employers were arrested.

During operations "Twilight", ImmD Task Force officers raided 35 target locations including factories, a garage, garbage collection depots, premises under renovation, a recycling site, restaurants, a salon and warehouses. Five suspected illegal workers and four employers were arrested. The suspected illegal workers comprised three men and two women, aged 30 to 59. Among them, two men were holders of recognisance forms, which prohibit them from taking any employment. In addition, one man and two women were suspected of using and being in possession of forged Hong Kong identity cards and one man was suspected of using and being in possession of a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Meanwhile, three men and one woman, aged 23 to 69, were suspected of employing the illegal workers.

In addition, during operations "Champion", enforcement officers raided 49 target locations in Kwai Chung, Tsing Yi and Tsuen Wan including factories and residential buildings. Three suspected illegal workers and one suspected employer were arrested. The suspected illegal workers comprised two men and one woman, aged 35 to 47. Among them, one man was a holder of a recognisance form, which prohibits him from taking any employment. Meanwhile, one man, aged 35, was suspected of employing the illegal workers.

"Any person who contravenes a condition of stay in force in respect of him 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," an ImmD spokesman said.

The spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a

removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases. It is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. 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. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threats and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.



Government appoints directors to HKEX Board

The Government has appointed Ms Nisa Leung and re-appointed Mr Rafael Gil-Tienda and Mr Stephen Yiu as members of the Board of Directors of the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEX) for a term of around two years from the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the HKEX in 2021 until the conclusion of its AGM in 2023.

Announcing the appointments today (February 5), the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, said, "The appointments to the Board of Directors of the HKEX represent an important safeguard of the interest of the public. Mr Gil-Tienda, Mr Yiu and Ms Leung are well-respected and experienced professionals in the financial services and business sector. They also have immense experience in public services.

"Ms Leung has extensive experience in the venture capital market and corporate finance. Her knowledge and expertise on the trends and development of the emerging and innovative sector, particularly the biotechnology and healthcare industries, will strengthen the HKEX's capability of meeting the fundraising needs of innovative companies and contribute to the HKEX's strategies to promote Hong Kong as a premier fundraising platform."

On the impending retirement of Ms Anita Fung from the HKEX Board at the conclusion of the 2021 AGM of the HKEX, Mr Chan expressed his gratitude to Ms Fung for her dedicated services and invaluable counsel to the HKEX over the past six years.

The Board of Directors of the HKEX comprises a maximum of six directors appointed by the Financial Secretary, a maximum of six directors elected by shareholders, and the Chief Executive of the HKEX.

The other incumbent directors appointed by the Financial Secretary are Mrs Laura Cha May-lung, Mr Benjamin Hung Pi-cheng and Mrs Susan Chow Woo Mo-fong.

"I am confident that all the directors will work closely together to further the development of Hong Kong as a capital raising and risk management platform in the best interest of the public at large," Mr Chan said.

The above appointments are made under the Securities and Futures Ordinance. The Ordinance, together with the HKEX's Articles of Association, empowers the Financial Secretary to appoint not more than six persons to be members of the Board of Directors of the HKEX where the Financial Secretary is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so in the interest of the investing public or in the public interest.