

Around 180 persons arrested for participating in unauthorized assemblies in Central and Causeway Bay

At around 1pm today (May 27), protestors gathered on Pedder Street, Central and Hennessy Road near Percival Street, Causeway Bay, behaving in a disorderly manner and disturbing public peace. In Central, protestors occupied roads and caused obstruction to the traffic. Police adopted a measured and restrained approach and reminded the protestors to leave as their acts were in breach of the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245). However, Police warnings were ignored. Officers took enforcement actions and arrested some 180 persons for participating in unauthorized assembly.

Police respect the public's freedom of expression. However, it should be exercised within legal bounds. Protestors are urged to leave immediately. Police will continue to enforce the law.

Phishing email related to The Bank of East Asia, Limited

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by The Bank of East Asia, Limited on phishing email, which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the email concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the email should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

Update on suspected food poisoning cases involving sandwiches

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (May 27) provided an update on its investigation into the suspected food poisoning cases involving sandwiches announced since May 21, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent food-borne diseases.

The CHP has today identified 26 more clusters of suspected food poisonings related to those sandwiches. The newly reported clusters involved 22 males and 39 females aged 2 to 67. They developed gastroenteritis symptoms including abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea and fever about three to 57 hours after consuming the sandwiches. Among them, 49 sought medical consultation and 12 required hospitalisation.

As of 4pm today, the CHP has identified a total of 89 clusters of suspected food poisonings affecting 215 persons. Among them, stool specimens of six affected persons and one food remnant sample tested positive for Group D Salmonella.

All affected persons are now in stable condition. Investigations are proceeding.

"Prolonged storage of food at room temperature may allow pathogens to grow and produce toxins. Members of the public should avoid consuming cooked or ready-to-eat food that has been kept at room temperature for several hours," a spokesman for the CHP said.

To prevent food-borne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hot pot or barbecue meal;
- Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
- Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
- Drink boiled water;
- Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
- Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.

Man fined for operating unlicensed guesthouse

A man was fined \$10,000 at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (May 27) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The court heard that in November last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) from the Home Affairs Department, when searching the Internet for intelligence about unlicensed guesthouse activities, identified a suspected unlicensed guesthouse on Tai Po Road in Sham Shui Po. The OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room in the guesthouse on a daily basis through an Internet platform.

According to the OLA's records, the guesthouse did not possess a licence under the Ordinance on the day of lodging. The man responsible for operating the premises was charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and can lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment. Guesthouse licensees may advertise or offer to provide sleeping accommodation on the Internet. To assist the public and the tourists to identify licensed guesthouses, the licensees should indicate clearly "Licensed guesthouse" in all promotional advertisement materials or advertisements related to the guesthouse.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA by the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme 2020-21 opens for application

The Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office (PICO) today (May 27) announced that the Strategic Public Policy Research (SPPR) Funding Scheme 2020-21 is now open for application.

The SPPR Funding Scheme, together with the Public Policy Research (PPR) Funding Scheme, both managed by PICO, are unique in Hong Kong in that they are the only government-subsidised funding schemes dedicated to fostering and supporting public policy research in Hong Kong. The total annual provision for the two schemes is around \$30 million. Both schemes aim to promote public policy research and evidence-based research to facilitate public policy discussion. Specifically, the SPPR Funding Scheme aims to support longer-term public policy research on strategic themes, build up research capacity, and facilitate collaboration among institutions/think tanks on the strategic themes. Applications for the SPPR Funding Scheme are invited once a year while those for the PPR Funding Scheme are accepted throughout the year.

Thirteen strategic themes have been identified for the SPPR Funding Scheme 2020-21, namely (a) Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area; (b) Belt and Road Initiative; (c) Big Data/Smart City; (d) Innovation and Technology/Artificial Intelligence/Re-Industrialisation; (e) Alternative Procurement Models for Major Infrastructure Projects; (f) Developing Green Finance in Hong Kong; (g) City Branding Strategy for Hong Kong; (h) Consolidating Hong Kong's Position as an International Logistics Hub; (i) Transitional Housing; (j) Children, Youth and Family Development; (k) Ageing Population; (l) Healthcare System Innovation; and (m) Manpower Supply and Development.

A sum ranging from \$3 million to \$5 million may be granted to each successful SPPR project. The duration of research projects will normally last from three to five years. Projects with a shorter duration will be considered if strong justifications are provided.

Applications for the SPPR Funding Scheme 2020-21 should be submitted on or before July 31.

Assessments will be conducted by the independent Assessment Panel set up by PICO which is chaired by and comprises experienced academics. The Panel will determine the assessment criteria and details of the two funding schemes. Applications will be assessed by the Panel and each shortlisted application will be assessed by the Panel as well as local and non-local reviewers, who are academics and experts outside the Panel. To ensure policy relevance of the research proposals, suggestions and views of relevant government bureaux/departments will also be sought for reference by the Assessment Panel. A declaration of interests system is in place to ensure that the assessments are fair and impartial.

Research quality and the strategic relevance to the public policy development of Hong Kong are the primary considerations in evaluating research proposals under the SPPR Funding Scheme. In considering a research proposal, the Assessment Panel will also take into account factors such as deliverables of the research, the research team's capability, the feasibility and practicality of the proposal, the implementation schedule, and the proposed budget. Institutional support towards capacity building in public policy research (e.g. infrastructure support or matching funds) and any external funding sources and support will also be taken into consideration.

For details of the SPPR Funding Scheme, including eligibility criteria, the strategic themes, composition of the Assessment Panel, the application method and other related information, please visit PICO's website (www.pico.gov.hk/en/PRFS).