

Department of Justice releases “Prosecutions Hong Kong 2017”

The Prosecutions Division of the Department of Justice today (December 31) released its annual report, "Prosecutions Hong Kong 2017", which reviews the division's work and important cases last year.

In his letter presenting the report to the Secretary for Justice, the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr David Leung, SC, highlighted one of the most important guiding principles for the division's prosecutors: "As ministers of justice, we are dedicated to upholding the rule of law by conducting criminal prosecutions free from any interference. The responsibilities that we take up are heavy, the challenges and criticisms that we face are immense, but we have and shall continue to uphold the rule of law with professionalism, independence, and transparency."

In the Director's Overview, Mr Leung made clear his goal to enable prosecutors in the division to gain more exposure in court work and to enhance their advocacy skills. He also further elaborated on the key challenges for the division in 2017. For cases related to the Occupy Central Movement and incidents in Mong Kok involving violence in February 2016, as in any other case, "prosecutors...considered the decision of whether to prosecute and if so, the appropriate charge(s) purely on the available evidence and the principles set out in the Prosecution Code – nothing else," Mr Leung said. In respect of the review of sentences cases, he reiterated that "prosecutors only conduct review of sentences in the rarest of cases."

As to the continuing verbal abuses of prosecutors, Mr Leung emphasised that "while prosecutors are not immune from criticisms, they and their family members should not become victims of such unwarranted abuses. Prosecutors conduct criminal prosecutions not because of their personal interests. They do so on behalf of the public as ministers of justice..." And noting attacks on the presiding judges when the outcome of the cases with a political background do not tally with their expectation, Mr Leung stressed that "the public should have confidence in the judicial system and judicial officers of Hong Kong and refrain from lodging baseless attacks on judges."

Apart from the key challenges, Mr Leung also set out in the Director's Overview the important achievements made in 2017. Firstly, various measures were taken to strengthen the prosecution services at the magistracy level. Secondly, in May 2017, the Department of Justice organised the Criminal Law Conference in partnership with the Hong Kong Bar Association and the Law Society of Hong Kong. Thirdly, the division continued to actively reach out to its partners and the community by organising events such as the Prosecution Week and the "Meet the Community" Programme.

Apart from a detailed account of the main activities of and key cases handled by the different sub-divisions and units of the Prosecutions Division, this latest review also provides information on various trainings

as well as conferences, both locally and internationally, in which prosecutors participated during the year.

The review also contains two feature articles – one on "Anguish and Joy as DPP" and the other on "Surviving Practice as a Criminal Lawyer". For the former, Mr Keith Yeung, SC, shared his thoughts and feelings during his term as the Director of Public Prosecutions. For the latter, Mr Jonathan Caplan, QC, sets out his various reflections on his practice as a barrister over the last 25 years in both the United Kingdom and Hong Kong.

"Prosecutions Hong Kong 2017" is available at the website of the Department of Justice (www.doj.gov.hk/eng/public/yrreviewpd2017.html).

Funding results of Areas of Excellence Scheme 2018/19 announced

The following is issued on behalf of the University Grants Committee:

The Research Grants Council (RGC) announced today (December 31) the funding results of the Areas of Excellence (AoE) Scheme 2018/19 (Eighth Round). Three proposals were awarded a total of more than \$248 million. The list of awarded projects is set out in the Annex.

Announcing the results, the Chairman of the RGC, Professor Benjamin Wah, said, "I am pleased to announce that, after a vigorous peer-review process, three outstanding projects have been selected for funding in this round of the AoE Scheme exercise. The project teams of the three selected projects demonstrated strong potential to build upon their existing strengths to achieve excellence in the areas of metabolic medicine, slope safety and fundamental structure of matter. I am confident that these projects will create lasting impact and put Hong Kong on the world map."

Professor Wah added, "I would like to express our gratitude to the local research community for their continued support, as well as the RGC panel members and international experts for their invaluable contributions to the Scheme."

Background of the AoE Scheme

The AoE Scheme was launched in 1998. The objective of the Scheme is to support the University Grants Committee-funded universities to build upon their existing strengths and develop them into areas of excellence. A total of 21 AoE projects from various disciplines have been funded in the past seven rounds of the exercise.

Details of the approved projects are posted on the RGC website (www.ugc.edu.hk).

Statistics on innovation activities for 2017

According to the statistics on Hong Kong innovation activities released today (December 31) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the gross domestic expenditure on research and development (GERD) of Hong Kong in 2017 amounted to \$21,280 million, representing an increase of 8% when compared with 2016. The GERD as a ratio to the Gross Domestic Product in 2017 was 0.80%. Analysed by performing sector, the expenditure on research and development (R&D) activities performed in the business, higher education and government sectors amounted to \$9,412 million, \$10,837 million and \$1,031 million respectively in 2017.

R&D activities refer to creative and systematic work undertaken so as to increase the stock of knowledge for devising new and improved products/processes/applications and improve existing products/processes/applications.

More detailed statistics on Hong Kong innovation activities, together with the concepts and methodology, are given in the report "Hong Kong Innovation Activities Statistics 2017". Users can download this report free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp120.jsp?productCode=B1110010). The report presents the latest statistics on R&D activities in Hong Kong, with analyses of R&D activities performed in the business, higher education and government sectors. It also contains detailed statistics on technological innovation activities (including product and process innovation) and non-technological innovation activities (including organisational and marketing innovation) in the business sector.

Enquiries about the statistics on Hong Kong innovation activities can be directed to the Science and Technology Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7290 or email: stb1@censtatd.gov.hk).

Reports containing key statistics on various major industry sectors in 2017 published

The following five reports presenting the key statistics on the business performance and operating characteristics of various major industry sectors in 2017 have been published by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD):

- (i) Key Statistics on Business Performance and Operating Characteristics of the Industrial Sector in 2017;
- (ii) Key Statistics on Business Performance and Operating Characteristics of the Building, Construction and Real Estate Sectors in 2017;
- (iii) Key Statistics on Business Performance and Operating Characteristics of the Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail Trades, and Accommodation and Food Services Sectors in 2017;
- (iv) Key Statistics on Business Performance and Operating Characteristics of the Transportation, Storage and Courier Services Sector in 2017; and
- (v) Key Statistics on Business Performance and Operating Characteristics of the Information and Communications, Financing and Insurance, Professional and Business Services Sectors in 2017.

The key statistics presented in these reports were compiled from the results of the 2017 Annual Survey of Economic Activities conducted by the C&SD. They contain a wide range of statistics reflecting the business performance and operating characteristics of various major industry sectors in 2017, mainly including:

- * number of establishments;
- * number of persons engaged;
- * value of sales of goods, business receipts and other income;
- * compensation of employees;
- * operating expenses;
- * gross surplus;
- * value added; and
- * gross additions to fixed assets.

Apart from statistics relating to 2017, summary statistics for 2015 and 2016 are also contained in these reports to facilitate reference and comparison.

The statistics in the aforementioned reports are complementary to those relatively timely but less detailed statistics on the current situation of various major industry sectors as provided by the relevant quarterly or monthly surveys. They together constitute a comprehensive series of sectoral economic statistics to facilitate readers in grasping the salient features and developments of various major sectors.

Users can download these reports free of charge from the website of the

C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp70.jsp).

Enquiries regarding the reports can be directed to the relevant Sections of the C&SD shown in the attached table.

Import of poultry meat and products from Munger district, Bihar state, India, suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (December 31) that in view of a notification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Munger district, Bihar state, in India, 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 Hong Kong currently has an established protocol with India for import of poultry eggs but not for poultry meat. In the first nine months of this year, no poultry eggs were imported into Hong Kong from India.

"The CFS has contacted the Indian authorities over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the OIE on avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.