

Government alerts public to hold private columbarium licence for storing ashes at agricultural land

In view of recent media reports relating to the storage of ashes at agricultural land, a spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (December 13) alerted members of the public that any premises (including agricultural land) which are bought for storing ashes must have a private columbarium licence (unless specified otherwise in the Private Columbaria Ordinance (the Ordinance)). Any person who after buying a piece of agricultural land stores ashes at the land without holding a private columbarium licence may contravene section 10 of the Ordinance. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and imprisonment of seven years.

The spokesman explained that, according to section 7 of the Ordinance, one can store no more than 10 containers of ashes in domestic premises, but the domestic premises stated in the Ordinance refers to premises used solely or principally for residential purposes and constituting a separate household unit.

If there are individuals or organisations claiming that the premises (including agricultural land) which they are selling can be used for storing human ashes without a private columbarium licence, members of the public should be cautious and seek legal advice when necessary, in order to protect their own interests and avoid being liable to criminal sanctions.

Furthermore, people operating any trade or business must comply with the provisions of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, including the requirements of not applying any false or misleading trade description to any goods or services and not providing consumers with any goods or services to which such a trade description is applied. Contravention of the relevant provisions of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment of five years.

The spokesman reiterated that a licensing regime has been set up under the Ordinance to regulate the operation of private columbaria. Anyone who operates, keeps, manages or in any other way has control of a columbarium without holding a specified instrument (except for those to which the Ordinance is not applicable as specified in sections 4 to 7 of the Ordinance) commits an offence. A private columbarium must obtain a license before it can sell or newly let out ash interment rights.

According to the Ordinance, to obtain a licence, one must satisfy the requirements on planning, land, buildings, management plan, right to use the premises, etc, and other requirements specified by the Private Columbaria Licensing Board. Details of the various requirements in relation to the application for a licence are provided in the "Application Guide for Private

Columbarium Licence and Other Specified Instruments". The Licensing Board will have regard to the public interest and other relevant factors when determining individual applications.

LegCo committee meetings

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

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Subcommittee on Three Regulations to Exempt the Toll for Franchised Buses Using Government Tunnels as well as the Tsing Ma and Tsing Sha Control Areas will hold its first meeting tomorrow (December 14) at 8.30am in Conference Room 2B of the LegCo Complex. During the meeting, members of the Subcommittee will elect a Chairman and meet with the Administration.

The meeting of the LegCo Finance Committee (FC) originally scheduled at 3pm tomorrow in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex will start at 3.15pm (or an earlier time between 3pm and 3.15pm). If the preceding House Committee meeting ends before 3pm, the FC meeting will start at 3pm.

Meanwhile, the closed meeting of the LegCo Public Accounts Committee (PAC) originally scheduled for Saturday (December 15) at 8.30am has been rescheduled.

PAC will hold a public hearing on Chapter 1 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 71 (Centre for Food Safety: Management of food safety) on Saturday at 9am in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex.

Secretary for Justice visits Kwun Tong District

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, visited Kwun Tong District today (December 13) to call on a primary school and a guide dogs centre and meet with District Council members.

Accompanied by the Chairman of the Kwun Tong District Council, Dr Bunny Chan, and the District Officer (Kwun Tong), Mr Steve Tse, Ms Cheng visited SKH Tak Tin Lee Shiu Keung Primary School in Lam Tin. She learnt about the school's creative English teaching project called SimCity, which helps students learn English in a fun and interactive way to boost their confidence

and communication skills in using English.

Ms Cheng was also briefed about the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education in the school. She watched the students' demonstrations on using coding programmes to control robots. She also encouraged students to actively participate in STEM activities to foster their creativity and technology knowledge.

Ms Cheng then proceeded to the Hong Kong Guide Dogs Association Jockey Club Education and Training Centre in Tsui Ping Estate. The Centre provides free professional trained dog services for people with visual impairment, autism and other disabilities. Regular public education programmes are also organised to enhance public awareness of guide dog services.

Before concluding her visit, Ms Cheng met with members of the Kwun Tong District Council and exchanged views on issues of concern.

Hong Kong Observatory launches real-time weather photos at International Commerce Centre (with photos)

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has further enhanced the regional weather information service on its website today (December 13) by adding real-time weather photos captured by two new cameras at the International Commerce Centre (ICC) in West Kowloon, as well as improving the resolution of weather photos at some locations.

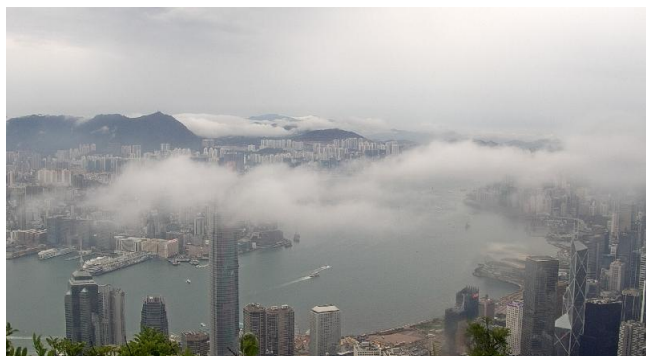
The two new cameras are installed on upper floors of the ICC. One of them faces southeast and the other faces southwest, overlooking the Victoria Harbour, Hong Kong Island and part of Tsim Sha Tsui. Many famous landmarks including Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, International Finance Centre and Central Ferry Piers, as well as a number of hiking and tourist hotspots such as the Hong Kong Trail and Victoria Peak, are also captured by the cameras.

Real-time weather photos help monitor regional weather conditions such as fog, showers and thunderstorms. By making use of the weather photos together with the meteorological data measured by the HKO's automatic weather stations at various locations, members of the public and tourists can better appreciate the weather changes over different regions of Hong Kong. For photography enthusiasts, weather photos assist them in planning outdoor photographic activities such as capturing scenery in the morning and at dusk, as well as a sea of clouds or a fireworks display.

A spokesperson for the ICC Management Services Office said, "We are very

pleased to collaborate with the HKO and highly support the service so that the public and tourists can better grasp the latest weather conditions over the harbour."

With the addition of weather photos at the ICC, the number of sites providing weather photos on the HKO's website has increased to 28. Members of the public can access the weather photos through the HKO's "Regional Weather in Hong Kong" webpage (www.hko.gov.hk/wxinfo/ts/index_e_webcam.htm) and mobile platform webpage (www.hko.gov.hk/m/wxphoto.htm). The newly added real-time weather photos at the ICC will also be made available through "MyObservatory", HKO's smartphone weather service application, in its next upgrade.



Fraudulent website related to China CITIC Bank International 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 China CITIC Bank International Limited on fraudulent website, 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 website concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the website 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.