

Speech by CE at US Independence Day reception (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the United States of America Independence Day reception today (July 5):

Consul General (Consul General of the United States to Hong Kong and Macau, Mr Kurt Tong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I am delighted to join you all here at the United States of America Independence Day reception. A special welcome to Congressman (Rodney) Frelinghuysen of New Jersey with whom I had a very good discussion earlier this afternoon.

We are all here to celebrate the 242nd birthday of the US. We are here as well to champion the longstanding ties that connect Hong Kong and the US, as this year marks the 175th anniversary of US' diplomatic presence in Hong Kong.

My thanks to the Consul General for making clear just how valued our diplomatic ties have been, and how important they continue to be for both sides. The numbers certainly underline that. Last year, our bilateral merchandise trade came in at nearly US\$70 billion, up 2.5 per cent over 2016 totals. The US was our second-largest export market in 2017, behind only Mainland China. Hong Kong, meanwhile, was the US' ninth-largest export market.

Let me add that the US enjoyed a merchandise trade surplus with Hong Kong of US\$32.8 billion. That, ladies and gentlemen, was the highest trade surplus the US enjoyed with any single economy. And you will be interested to know that I actually mentioned this figure to President Donald Trump when we met at APEC meetings last November in Vietnam. Though I cannot be sure, apparently he was pleased. Among the commodities, we are particularly keen on meat and other agricultural products. In 2016, Hong Kong was the fifth-largest market for US beef and veal exports – and your sixth-largest market for agricultural products in general.

We are definitely not complaining about our trade deficit with America. Hong Kong always believes in free trade and we have become one of the world's largest trading economies because of free trade. In fact, the Washington-based Heritage Foundation has named Hong Kong the world's freest economy for the past 24 years in a row.

Hong Kong was also named the world's second-most competitive economy this year by the Swiss-based International Institute for Management Development, having occupied the first position for the two preceding years.

I should add that this year, the first place went to the US. But no grudge. And the World Bank has recognised Hong Kong as the World's fifth-easiest place to do business. The free flow of capital, information and people has earned us our international reputation, and will surely frame our future success, alongside our unique advantage under "One Country, Two Systems", our status as an international financial centre and the gateway to the Mainland of China, our enduring embrace of the rule of law, our world-class logistics and communications infrastructure, our level playing field for business and our low and competitive tax regime.

The American business certainly believes in Hong Kong. The Consul General just mentioned that more than 1 400 US companies operate in Hong Kong, and I understand that over half of them have actually chosen to set up their regional headquarters or regional offices here. They are certainly well taken care of here by the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong (AmCham). I am particularly grateful to AmCham's annual Washington Doorknock event, which is helpful in making the case for Hong Kong.

Beyond business, we have a long-standing and cordial relationship at government level through strong and valuable enforcement co-operation on various fronts, including counter-terrorism, money-laundering, drug-trafficking and strategic trade controls, etc. Our co-operation is broad, effective, and mutually beneficial. I am also grateful to the 100 000 US citizens living in Hong Kong for bringing the much loved US culture, creativity and dynamism to our city.

Ladies and gentlemen, despite our close ties, from time to time Hong Kong and America do have different views on matters. I would say that this is most natural in today's sophisticated and constantly changing world. However I do think and believe you would all agree that we have much more in common than our differences, and there is much room in various areas for us to strengthen our mutually beneficial relationship. We look forward to working with all of you here to maximise our common ground, and build even stronger ties between the two economies in the years to come.

On that note, please join me now in a toast to the United States of America on its 242nd birthday. Cheers.





[FS visits Tuen Mun District \(with photos\)](#)

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, visited Tuen Mun District this afternoon (July 5), where he met with members of the Tuen Mun District Council (TMDC) and also called at a secondary school and a youth service centre.

Accompanied by the District Officer (Tuen Mun), Ms Aubrey Fung, Mr Chan first visited the Church of Christ in China Tam Lee Lai Fun Memorial Secondary School and chatted with teachers and students. The School has been actively promoting STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education to develop students' potential. The students briefed Mr Chan on their innovative work and award-winning designs.

Mr Chan said that the Government is committed to fostering the development of innovation and technology (I&T) industry as well as creative industries, so as to diversify the economy and provide more opportunities for young people. He said that in this year's Budget more than \$50 billion has been allocated to support the development of the I&T sector, and to nurture more creative talent for Hong Kong.

Later, Mr Chan visited the Free Methodist Church Tuen Mun Children and Youth Integrated Services Centre. The centre provides comprehensive activities for youths to facilitate their all-round development. It also provides a platform for them to showcase their talent in arts and culture. Mr Chan added that in this year's Budget, additional resources have been allocated to promote the development of culture and arts. For example, \$20 billion has been set aside for the expansion and renovation of large performance venues, with a view to upgrading Hong Kong's cultural hardware.

Mr Chan also met with members of the TMDC to learn more about the latest developments in the district and exchange views on matters of mutual interest.

Consumers urged not to consume prepackaged ginger powder contaminated with aflatoxins

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 5) urged the public not to consume a batch of prepackaged ginger powder manufactured in India as it was found contaminated with aflatoxins. The trade should also stop using or selling the affected product immediately if they possess it.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Organic Ginger Powder
Brand: SpiceBox
Place of origin: India
Distributor: SpiceBox Organics Limited
Net weight: 50 grams per pack
Best-before date: March 30, 2019

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS collected the above-mentioned sample from a shop in the Mid-levels for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The results showed that it contained aflatoxins at a level of 20 micrograms (μg) per kilogram."

Under the Harmful Substances in Food Regulation (Cap 132 AF), the maximum permitted concentration for aflatoxins in food (except for peanuts or peanut products) is $15\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$.

The spokesman said, "The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity and the vendor has removed from shelves and stopped sale of the affected product according to the CFS' instructions. Should there be sufficient evidence, prosecution will be instituted. The Centre is also tracing the source and distribution of the affected product."

The World Health Organization (WHO)'s International Agency for Research on Cancer classified naturally occurring aflatoxins as carcinogenic to humans, and the Joint Food and Agriculture Organization/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives advised that intake of aflatoxins should be reduced to levels as low as reasonably possible although no health-based guidance value has been set. Aflatoxins can lead to liver cancer after long-term ingestion, and the risk for hepatitis B carriers is relatively high.

The spokesman urged members of the public who had bought the affected batch of the product to stop consuming it. To avoid excessive intake of mycotoxins, people should maintain a balanced and varied diet to minimise the risk from a small range of food items, and to avoid consuming food that looks

mouldy or damaged.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. Investigation is ongoing.

[CHP investigates case of severe enterovirus 71 infection](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (July 5) investigating a case of severe enterovirus (EV) 71 infection, and again urged the public and institutions to maintain strict hand, personal and environmental hygiene.

A girl, aged 17 with good past health, has presented with fever, rashes and vesicles over hands and feet, oral ulcer and sore throat since June 28. Subsequently, she developed headache, neck pain, drowsiness and confusion, and was admitted to United Christian Hospital for treatment on July 1. She was transferred to the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit for further management on July 4. The patient is now in a stable condition.

Her rectal swab specimen tested positive for EV71 upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was EV71 infection complicated with encephalitis.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient had no travel history during the incubation period and her home contacts have remained asymptomatic.

Separately, the CHP's epidemiological investigations also revealed that there is a hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) outbreak in the secondary school, Chinese Foundation Secondary School in Siu Sai Wan, where the patient attended. Apart from the patient, two girls aged 14 and 17 have developed HFMD symptoms since June 28. Both sought medical attention and no hospitalisation was required. They are now in a stable condition.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit to the school and advised the management on necessary infection control and preventive measures. The school has been put under medical surveillance. As a precautionary measure, the school was advised to suspend the two affected classes.

The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

"EV71 is one of the causative agents for HFMD. The infection is transmitted from person to person by direct contact with nose and throat discharges, saliva, fluid from blisters, or the stool of infected persons. Good personal and environmental hygiene are the most important measures to

prevent EV71 infection," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"HFMD is common in children while adult cases may also appear. It is usually caused by enteroviruses such as Coxsackie virus and EV71. It is clinically characterised by maculopapular rashes or vesicular lesions occurring on the palms, soles and other parts of the body such as the buttocks and thighs. Vesicular lesions and ulcers may also be found in the oral cavity. Sometimes patients present mainly with painful ulcers at the back of the mouth, namely herpangina, without rash on the hands or feet," the spokesman said.

"HFMD occurs throughout the year. A summer peak usually occurs in May to July. As young children are more susceptible, parents should stay alert to their health. Institutional outbreaks may occur where HFMD can easily spread among young children with close contact," the spokesman added.

To prevent HFMD, members of the public, especially the management of institutions, should take heed of the following preventive measures:

- * Maintain good air circulation;
- * Wash hands before meals and after going to the toilet or handling diapers or other stool-soiled materials;
- * Keep hands clean and wash hands properly, especially when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- * Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and oral discharges properly;
- * Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as furniture, toys and commonly shared items with 1:99 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes, and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
- * Use absorbent disposable towels to wipe away obvious contaminants such as respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, and then disinfect the surface and neighbouring areas with 1:49 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
- * Children with EV71 infection are advised to refrain from going to schools or group activities such as parties, interest classes and swimming until two weeks after fever has subsided and all the vesicular lesions have dried and crusted to prevent the spread of disease;
- * Avoid going to overcrowded places; and
- * Parents should maintain close communication with schools to let them know the latest situation of the sick children.

The public may visit the CHP's page on [HFMD and EV71 infection](#) for more information.

Fraudulent website 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 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.