

## [Transport Department alerts public to fraudulent websites purported to be from HKeToll](#)

The Transport Department (TD) today (November 22) alerted members of the public to fraudulent website addresses that pretend to be the HKeToll (see Annex) and seek to deceive users into making payments and obtain their credit card information.

The TD clarifies that the fraudulent websites have no connection with the HKeToll and has referred the case to the Police for follow-up. The TD reiterates that the HKeToll only uses "#HKeToll" as the sender ID for issuing SMS messages to users or vehicle owners. Users or vehicle owners must log in to the HKeToll website ([hketoll.gov.hk](http://hketoll.gov.hk)) or mobile app to pay outstanding tolls online.

Members of the public should stay alert when receiving messages without the prefix "#" but purportedly issued by the HKeToll or any unidentified messages, and should not visit suspicious websites or disclose any personal information. Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the websites concerned should contact the Police. For enquiries about the HKeToll, please call 3853 7333.

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## [Appointments to Social Welfare Advisory Committee](#)

The Government announced today (November 22) the appointment of Dr Ko Wing-man as the Chairman of the Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC); the appointment of seven new members, namely Miss Chow Tsz-ki, Ms Hsu Siu-man, Professor Patrick Ip, Dr Sanly Kam Shau-wan, Dr Chloe Suen Yin-wah, Miss Sze Lai-shan, and Professor Hector Tsang Wing-hong; as well as the reappointment of five incumbent members to SWAC. Their appointments will take effect on December 1 for a term of two years.

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, welcomed the appointments. He said, "Dr Ko has rich experience in community service and I am confident that he will be able to lead SWAC in providing valuable advice to the Government. I look forward to the members' sterling advice on the development of Hong Kong's social welfare policy."

He also thanked the outgoing Chairman, Mr Lester Garson Huang, for his

outstanding leadership during the past six years and the five outgoing members, Professor Bai Xue, Dr Cheung Sze-wing, Mr Andy Ho Wing-cheong, Dr Lam James Joseph and Ms Eva Wong Ching-hung, for their invaluable contributions to SWAC.

SWAC reviews social welfare services from time to time and advises the Government on matters of social welfare policy.

The membership list of SWAC with effect from December 1, 2024, is as follows:

Chairman

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Dr Ko Wing-man

Non-official members

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Miss Chow Tsz-ki  
Ms Hsu Siu-man  
Professor Patrick Ip  
Dr Sanly Kam Shau-wan  
Mr Frederick Lai Wing-hoi  
Ms Alice Lau Oi-sze  
Ms Anthea Lee Shuk-wai  
Dr Wingco Lo Kam-wing  
Professor Petrus Ng Yat-nam  
Mr Francis Ngai Wah-sing  
Dr Pan Pey-chyou  
Dr Chloe Suen Yin-wah  
Miss Sze Lai-shan  
Dr Ricky Szeto Wing-fu  
Ms Rebecca Tsai Ching-yu  
Professor Hector Tsang Wing-hong  
Dr Rizwan Ullah  
Mr John Wong Chung  
Professor Frances Wong Kam-yuet  
Mr Barry Wong Man-sing  
Ms Wendy Yuen Miu-ling

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## **Courts (Remote Hearing) Bill gazetted**

The Government published in the Gazette today (November 22) the Courts (Remote Hearing) Bill, which seeks to provide a clear legal basis for judges and judicial officers to order remote hearings for court proceedings at various levels of courts and tribunals where appropriate, having regard to all relevant factors, as well as the dual requirements of open justice and

fair hearing.

A Government spokesman said, "In response to rising expectations from court users and the community in recent years, the Judiciary has been taking proactive measures in making greater use of technology in enhancing the efficiency of court operations. Remote hearing is one of the Judiciary's key initiatives on the use of technology in this regard. In line with established practice, the Court will direct the use of remote hearings only if it is fair and just to do so, having regard to a host of relevant considerations. It is a case management decision of the Court in the exercise of its existing case management powers."

The major provisions of the Bill cover the following:

(a) the details of making a remote hearing order, including the factors to be considered by the Court;

(b) the operation of remote hearings, including the powers of judges, attendance of participants, as well as transmission of documents, presentation of objects and signing of documents;

(c) the scope and exceptions to the use of remote hearings;

(d) the safeguards for open justice in remote hearings; and

(e) the proposed new offences to criminalise unauthorised recording, publishing and broadcasting of court proceedings conducted through both physical and remote hearings.

"Taking into account limitations, risks and concerns in adopting remote hearings for some court proceedings having regard to the paramount consideration of ensuring administration of justice, the Bill sets out express exceptions to the use of remote hearings, including hearings of all proceedings relating to national security and criminal trials in all other cases," the spokesman said.

"As the lack of a physical setting may render remote hearing more susceptible to unauthorised recording and publishing of court proceedings, the Bill contains new offences to criminalise such conduct which may prejudice or interfere with the court proceedings," the spokesman added.

Two rounds of consultation on the draft Bill were conducted in February 2021 and June 2022 respectively. In general, public response to the use of remote hearings for civil and criminal proceedings in court, and the proposed legislative exercise has been positive. Key stakeholders including the Hong Kong Bar Association, the Law Society of Hong Kong and law enforcement agencies have also indicated support for the proposed legislation on remote hearings. They also support the increased use of technology to enable more flexible means of disposing court proceedings, which is conducive to enhancing the Court's efficiency and enabling the Court to better tackle unforeseen situations.

The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council for first

reading on December 4.

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## [Health Bureau instructs Hospital Authority to take forward deepening of reform work](#)

The Health Bureau (HHB) announced today (November 22) that it has completed examining the review report submitted by the Hospital Authority (HA) in respect of the review conducted earlier in relation to systemic issues involved in hospital management. Agreeing with the direction of the 31 recommended measures and corresponding action plan, the HHB has instructed the HA to accord priority to taking forward the reform work aiming to enhance the latter's governance and structure, with a view to enhancing the overall quality and safety of public healthcare services and upholding public confidence in the public healthcare system.

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, said, "I would like to express my gratitude to the HA's Review Committee on the Management of the Public Hospital System for its in-depth review, which is comprehensive in scope and covers a wide range of the HA's issues, namely governance, appraisal, accountability and distribution of responsibilities, operations, risk management, procedural compliance and more. The review also involves multiple levels ranging from the HA Head Office to hospital clusters, hospitals departments and staff. I agreed with the direction of measures recommended by the Review Committee in the report and have instructed the HA to implement various enhancement measures in a timely manner while monitoring the implementation progress and effectiveness on an on-going basis, and submitting progress reports to the HHB on a regular basis."

The review report also pointed to the need to examine whether the HA's existing governance and management structure can continue to meet the present-day needs and circumstances of the complex public hospital system. In this connection, the HA will establish a Governance and Structure Reform Committee under the HA Board with the Chairman of the HA Board, Mr Henry Fan, being the Reform Committee Chairman to steer the implementation of recommendations made in the review report regarding governance, accountability and distribution of responsibilities, and relevant reform work. To ensure that timely policy directions and guidance will be given to the Reform Committee, the Permanent Secretary for Health and the Under Secretary for Health will serve as members of the Reform Committee.

Professor Lo said, "Confronted with pressures on the healthcare system due to an ageing population, a growing prevalence of chronic diseases and persistent increases in medical costs, we must deepen reforms regarding

systemic and structural issues in overall public hospital management, so that our public healthcare system can provide the public with healthcare services with quality, safety and effectiveness in a sustainable manner and meet today's community needs while ensuring our valuable healthcare resources are put to good use. This work aligns precisely with the theme of this year's Policy Address, 'Reform for Enhancing Development and Building Our Future Together'."

In light of a number of hospital incidents, the HHB instructed the HA in June this year to conduct a comprehensive review of the systemic issues and the need for reform with regard to the management of public hospitals, and submit a report and recommendations to the HHB. To this end, the HA established the Review Committee to examine the HA's performance across various areas including governance, appraisal, accountability and distribution of responsibilities, operations, risk management and procedural compliance, and subsequently submitted to the HA Board a report and recommendations for enhancements. Having studied in detail the recommendations made in the report, the HA Board and its management team submitted the report and its action plan to the HHB on October 8.

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## **Review of objections to 2024-2025 rateable values completed**

The Rating and Valuation Department (RVD) has reviewed about 72 000 objections received from March 18 to May 31 regarding the new rateable values in the Valuation List and the Government Rent Roll and issued Notices of Decision (Form R22A) in respect of these objections in phases.

A spokesman for the RVD today (November 22) said that anyone who lodged an objection during the above period and has yet to receive a Notice of Decision by November 30 should contact the RVD's Customer Service Officer at [enquiries@rvd.gov.hk](mailto:enquiries@rvd.gov.hk) or 2150 8833.

The spokesman said that any alterations in rateable values resulting from the review will take effect retrospectively from April 1 this year, and adjustments to the amount of rates and Government rent payable will be made in subsequent demands.