

## SDEV speaks to the media

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, at a media session after attending the Construction Quality Forum and Construction Innovation and Technology Fund Launching Ceremony today (October 2):

Reporter: Just now in your speech, you mentioned that there are a few very high profile quality issues with major projects, and that the Government will face it. But earlier, there are still concerns that with the restart of construction at Exhibition Centre Station, there are concerns about the safety issues because they lowered the acceptable levels for subsidence. What do you have to say to that?

Secretary for Development: I think the Acting Secretary for Transport and Housing, Dr Raymond So, has explained the rationale for restarting the construction very clearly, so I am not going to repeat that. From the Government's point of view, we will do everything possible to ensure that our construction industry can provide services that are of the highest standard possible. As I said in the speech just now, actually, if you look at our international track record, Hong Kong has been performing in a most impressive manner. For eight years in a row, we have been ranked number one by one of the leading organisations in the world. So, I think, on the one hand, we need to face our inadequacies frankly and honestly, but at the same time, we don't need to be too shy about our achievement. The fact is that Hong Kong has been leading in the world in the area of public infrastructure.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

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## Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (October 2) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From September 23 to 29, two community-acquired LD cases were reported. They are:

1. A male patient, aged 76 with underlying illnesses, who lived in the

- Mainland, and has passed away; and
2. A male patient, aged 89 with underlying illnesses, who lived in Wing Kwong Street, Peng Chau, and has passed away.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of September 29, 79 LD cases had been reported in 2018. In 2017 and 2016, there were 72 and 75 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may get infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

1. Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
2. Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
3. If using these devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not tap water. Also, clean and maintain them regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) and the filter needs to be changed periodically

according to the manufacturer's recommendations;

- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute the infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow medical advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile (not distilled or tap) water to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain them regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2-µm filters. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
  1. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
  2. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
  3. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
  4. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

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## [Suspected MERS case reported](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (October 2) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places of visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Female
Age	87
Affected area involved	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
High-risk exposure	Nil
Hospital	Ruttonjee Hospital
Condition	Serious

MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Pending
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"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed fever or lower respiratory symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

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## [Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected heroin \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (October 1) seized about 700 grams of suspected heroin with an estimated market value of about \$600,000 at Hong Kong International Airport.

A male passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, yesterday afternoon. During Customs clearance, a packet of suspected heroin was found underneath the insole of each of the shoes worn by him. He was then arrested.

The 19-year-old man has been charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. He will appear at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (October 3).

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is

a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).



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## [Import of poultry meat and products from Huishui County, Qiannan Buyi and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Guizhou Province suspended](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (October 2) that in view of a notification from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N6 sub-type avian influenza in Huishui County, Qiannan Buyi and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Guizhou Province, it has followed the existing approach for control of highly pathogenic avian influenza and taken recommendations from the World Organisation for Animal Health into account to suspend the import of poultry and poultry products, including poultry eggs, from an area within a radius of 3 kilometres from the said places for a period of 90 days, and from an area within a radius of 13km for 21 days, with immediate effect for the protection of public health in Hong Kong.

A spokesman for the CFS said that according to information from the General Administration of Customs, the outbreak does not affect any registered Mainland poultry farms for export to Hong Kong. No registered poultry meat or poultry egg processing plants are currently situated within the import restriction zone concerned.

The Centre will closely monitor the latest developments of the avian

influenza case in the province and take appropriate follow-up action as necessary.