

Red flags hoisted at Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (December 12) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

People's Bank of China will issue Renminbi Bills through Central Moneymarkets Unit of Hong Kong Monetary Authority

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) will issue Renminbi Bills through the Central Moneymarkets Unit of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA). Please find attached the tender notice and the tender information memorandum of the Renminbi Bills to be issued by the PBOC. Please also find attached the tender-related information provided by the Issuing and Lodging Agent through the HKMA.

LC: Speech by CS for proposed resolutions moved under Legal Aid Ordinance and Criminal Procedure

Ordinance

Following is the speech (translated from Chinese) by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, for the proposed resolutions under the Legal Aid Ordinance (LAO) and the Criminal Procedure Ordinance in the Legislative Council (LegCo) today (December 11):

Mr President,

I move that my first motion, as printed on the Agenda, be passed to adjust the financial eligibility limits (FELs) for legal aid applicants. Later, I will sequentially move that the other two legal aid-related motions as printed on the Agenda be passed, seeking to adjust the Director of Legal Aid (DLA)'s First Charge and make the Legal Aid in Criminal Cases (Amendment) Rules 2024 to adjust the criminal legal aid fees respectively.

First, I introduce the first Resolution.

Legal aid services form an integral part of the legal system in Hong Kong. The policy objective of legal aid is to ensure that all those who comply with the regulations of the LAO and have reasonable grounds for pursuing or defending a legal action in the courts of Hong Kong will not be denied access to justice due to a lack of means. All legal aid applicants must satisfy both the means test and merits test as provided for in the LAO.

Currently, there are two legal aid schemes under the Legal Aid Department (LAD), namely the Ordinary Legal Aid Scheme (OLAS) and the Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme (SLAS). Different FELs are set for the two schemes in accordance with sections 5 and 5A of the LAO respectively. Pursuant to section 7(a) of the LAO, the LegCo may by resolution amend the relevant FELs.

Pursuant to the mechanism established in 1999, FELs are subject to review annually by making reference to the Consumer Price Index (C) (CPI(C)). According to the latest round of review, for the reference period from July 2023 to July 2024, the CPI(C) has increased by two per cent. Hence, we propose to adjust the FELs upwards by two per cent, namely:

- (a) from \$440,800 to \$449,620 for OLAS; and
- (b) from \$2,204,030 to \$2,248,110 for SLAS.

Mr President, I now introduce the second Resolution.

If a legally aided person is successful in recovering or preserving any money or property in the proceedings concerned, DLA has the right to retain thereunder such sums required for recovering the costs and other expenses incurred by LAD for the legally aided person under section 18A(1) of the LAO. Such right is called the DLA's first charge. However, according to section 18A(5) of the LAO, the DLA's first charge does not apply to the first \$9,540 of each monthly payment of maintenance payment. Separately, when DLA is

satisfied that the exercise of the DLA's first charge would cause serious hardship to the legally aided person, DLA may in accordance with the principles of fairness and justice exercise discretion to reduce the amount to be retained, provided that the sum to be reduced does not exceed the cap as specified in section 19B(1)(a) of the LAO.

Pursuant to section 22A of the LAO, LegCo may, by resolution, amend the rate of maintenance payments that is exempted from the DLA's first charge, as well as the cap on the amount by which may be reduced in cases of serious hardship.

In response to the increase in CPI(C) by two per cent for the reference period from July 2023 to July 2024 as mentioned above, we propose to accordingly adjust the two above-mentioned specific amounts upwards by two per cent, namely:

(a) the amount specified in section 18A(5) upwards from \$9,540 to \$9,730, and

(b) the cap on the amount specified in section 19B(1)(a) upwards from \$114,140 to \$116,420.

Mr President, my third Resolution seeks to make the Legal Aid in Criminal Cases (Amendment) Rules 2024 (Amendment Rules) to adjust the criminal legal aid fees.

At present, LAD pays fees to counsel and solicitors in private practice engaged to undertake litigation work for criminal cases on its behalf (i.e. criminal legal aid fees). The fees are stipulated in the Legal Aid in Criminal Cases Rules (the Rules). Pursuant to section 9A(1) of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance, any amendment to the Rules for adjusting the criminal legal aid fees are subject to the approval of the LegCo.

On the other hand, to ensure that neither LAD nor the Department of Justice (DoJ) would have unfair advantage in competing for the same pool of lawyers, DoJ draws reference to the same scale of fees to engage counsel and solicitors in private practice to appear for the prosecution in criminal cases (i.e. prosecution fees). Duty lawyer fees will be paid to lawyers who provide legal representation to defendants in Magistrates' Courts and Juvenile Courts through the Duty Lawyer Service.

Pursuant to the mechanism established in 1992, the fees mentioned above (i.e. criminal legal aid fees, prosecution fees and duty lawyer fees) are subject to review on a biennial basis to take into account changes in CPI(C) during the reference period.

According to the latest biennial review, the CPI(C) for the reference period (i.e. July 2022 to July 2024) increased by 3.9 per cent. As such, we propose to adjust the Fees upwards by 3.9 per cent accordingly.

We have informed the LegCo Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services of the outcome of the reviews regarding the proposed adjustments in the three resolutions mentioned above via an information paper in October

2024. Members raised no objection to the proposed increase. Subject to LegCo's approval of the Resolution, we will implement the proposal upon gazettal of the Resolution.

Separately, when LAD implements the increased criminal legal aid fees, the Government will accordingly adjust the scale of prosecution fees and duty lawyer fees administratively.

I appeal for Members' support for the above three Resolutions. Thank you, Mr President.

SFST starts visit to Indonesia (with photos)

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, started his visit to Jakarta, Indonesia, today (December 11) and met with financial officials and industry leaders there to strengthen financial co-operation between Hong Kong and Indonesia.

At his meeting with the Vice Minister of the Ministry of the State-Owned Enterprises of Indonesia, Mr Dony Oskaria, Mr Hui updated him about the various measures put forward in "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address" to explore new growth areas and forge deeper ties with the region of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Mr Hui welcomed Indonesian state-owned enterprises and high-quality innovative companies to take advantage of Hong Kong's internationalised fundraising platform for business growth and development.

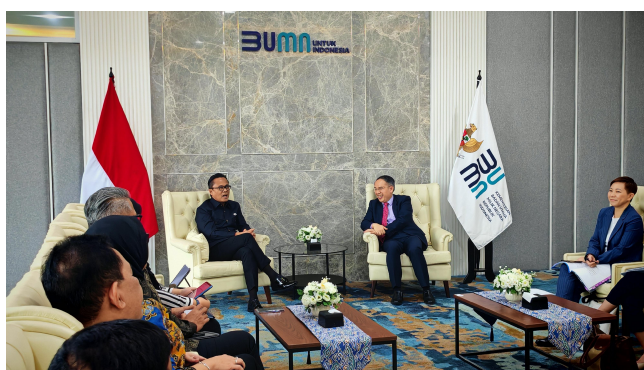
Mr Hui also visited the Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX) and had a meeting with the President Director of the IDX, Mr Iman Rachman. The IDX has been included on the list of Recognised Stock Exchanges by the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEX) since November last year. Highlighting that the market capitalisation of companies listed on the HKEX has recently reached some \$35,000 billion, which is ranked seventh in the world and fourth in Asia, Mr Hui encouraged Indonesian companies with a primary listing on the IDX's main market to seek a secondary listing in Hong Kong to connect with regional and global investors via Hong Kong's vibrant stock market. They also discussed green finance and opportunities for the IDX to leverage the HKEX, which is the world's only carbon market to offer Hong Kong dollar and Renminbi (RMB) settlement for trading of international voluntary carbon credits, to accommodate the needs of carbon trading in Indonesia.

Today, Mr Hui had a lunch meeting with the President of the Indonesian Chinese Entrepreneur Association (PERPIT), Mr Abdul Alek Soelystio, to update him on Hong Kong's strengths as the world's largest offshore RMB business

hub, having strong connectivity with the Mainland capital market. PERPIT is an important platform for economic and trade exchanges as well as business co-operation between Chinese Indonesian businessmen and Chinese businessmen and associations from all over the world.

At the dinner meeting with the Chairwoman of the Indonesian Employers' Association, Ms Shinta Widjaja Kamdani, Mr Hui updated her on the investment environment in Hong Kong, in particular the opportunities arising from a series of upcoming measures to facilitate management of global capital in Hong Kong.

Mr Hui will continue his visit to Jakarta tomorrow (December 12), which will include giving a keynote speech at a luncheon seminar co-organised by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Jakarta, the Indonesia Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and the Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited Jakarta Branch.



[LCQ13: Attracting strategic enterprises](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Lam Chun-sing and a written reply by the Deputy Financial Secretary, Mr Michael Wong, in the Legislative Council

today (December 11):

Question:

The Chief Executive announced in the 2022 Policy Address the establishment of the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises dedicated to attract high-potential and representative strategic enterprises from around the globe, particularly those from certain strategic industries, to set up or expand their operations in Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of strategic enterprises that have been attracted to Hong Kong to date, and set out in the table below a breakdown by the nature of their entry into Hong Kong (i.e. (i) establishing their foothold and (ii) expanding their operations in Hong Kong), the category of strategic industries (i.e. (a) life and health technology, (b) artificial intelligence and data science, (c) Fintech, (d) advanced manufacturing and new-energy technology and (e) others) as well as the respective industry to which such strategic industries belong;

Category of strategic industries	Industry	Nature of attracting enterprises to Hong Kong	
		(i)	(ii)
(a)		
Sub-total			
.....		
Sub-total			
(e)		
Sub-total			
Total			

(2) among the enterprises mentioned in (1), of the respective numbers of those which (i) are leading enterprises, and (ii) plan to set up their global or regional headquarters in Hong Kong;

(3) whether it knows, among the enterprises mentioned in (1), the number of those which have already commenced operation, together with a breakdown by the category of strategic industries (i.e. (a) life and health technology, (b) artificial intelligence and data science, (c) Fintech, (d) advanced manufacturing and new-energy technology, and (e) others) as well as the respective industry to which such strategic industries belong; whether it has compiled statistics on (i) the numbers of local and non-local staff employed (broken down by type of post), (ii) the numbers and types of research and development centres and production bases set up or planned to be set up by those enterprises which have already commenced operation, and (iii) the respective amounts of new investments involved; and

(4) what targeted measures the authorities have put in place to strengthen

the nurturing and training of local talents from the aforesaid strategic industries, so as to facilitate the development of such industries in Hong Kong and provide the relevant talents with more room for development?

Reply:

President,

Since its establishment at the end of 2022, the Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises (OASES) has successfully attracted a number of enterprises to set up or expand their businesses in Hong Kong, thereby accelerating the development of various industry ecosystems. My reply to the Hon Lam Chun-sing's questions is as follows:

(1) to (3) So far, the OASES has successfully attracted 66 strategic enterprises to establish their presence in Hong Kong. Approximately 60 per cent of these enterprises have set up their operations, while the remaining 40 per cent have expanded their existing businesses in the city, or are planning to do so. The distribution of the 66 strategic enterprises by industry is as follows:

Industry of Strategic Importance (Note)	No. of strategic enterprises		
		Life and health technology	22
Artificial intelligence and data science	24		
Financial technology	8		
Advanced manufacturing and new energy technology	12		
Total	66		

Note: As the scope of business of certain strategic enterprises may be cross-industry, the type of industry set out in the above breakdown is determined on the basis of the enterprises' core business in Hong Kong.

Among the 66 strategic enterprises that the OASES has attracted, nearly half of them are leading enterprises. Eighty per cent of the strategic enterprises attracted to Hong Kong plan to establish their global or regional headquarters in Hong Kong. Sixty-four of the strategic enterprises have already commenced their operations, and the breakdown of these enterprises by industry is as follows:

Industry of Strategic Importance	No. of strategic enterprises that have commenced operations		
		Life and health technology	22
		Artificial intelligence and data science	23
Financial technology	8		
Advanced manufacturing and new energy technology	11		
Total	64		

All of the 66 strategic enterprises that have been attracted to Hong Kong have either established or plan to establish research and development centres and/or production bases in Hong Kong. It is estimated that over the coming years, they will invest about \$42 billion in total and create around 17 000 jobs. Since the enterprises that have already commenced operations are still in the initial stages, and that details of their recruitment and

investment plans involve internal business information, the OASES is currently unable to provide such information.

(4) The Government has all along encouraged the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities to offer programmes which cater for Hong Kong's development needs, expand the talent pool of important areas such as innovation and technology, and strengthen Hong Kong's competitiveness. In the 2022 Policy Address, we announced our target that by the 2026/27 academic year, there will be 35 per cent of students of the UGC-funded universities in STEAM subjects and 60 per cent in subjects relevant to Hong Kong's development into the eight centres (Note 1) in the 14th Five-Year Plan. The Government and the UGC will join hands with the universities in pursuit of the aforesaid target through the triennial Planning Exercise, thereby nurturing more talents that match the manpower needs for Hong Kong's strategic development. As regards the self-financing post-secondary education sector, self-financing institutions similarly have the flexibility to develop programmes that meet market needs and adjust the intake places of relevant programmes.

Furthermore, to attract and nurture future talent, the 2024 Policy Address announced a series of policies, including the establishment of the Committee on Education, Technology and Talents, the establishment of the Steering Committee on Strategic Development of Digital Education, and continued efforts to promote Hong Kong as an international hub for post-secondary education, among others. These measures aim to develop Hong Kong's high-calibre talents and contribute to the high-quality development of the strategic enterprises, benefiting both the country and Hong Kong.

The OASES also provides employees of target enterprises with one-stop facilitation services in areas such as visa application and education arrangement for their children, etc, and works closely with the Immigration Department to provide appropriate assistance for the strategic enterprises' applications for various talent schemes.

Note 1: The eight centres include: international financial centre, international innovation and technology centre, East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange, international trade centre, international shipping centre, international aviation hub, centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region as well as regional intellectual property trading centre.