

## Regional flag day today

Three charities have been issued Public Subscription Permits to hold flag sales from 7am to 12.30pm today (July 24). They are, on Hong Kong Island, Riding for the Disabled Association Limited; in Kowloon, the Society for Community Organization Limited; and in the New Territories, Sai Kung District Community Centre, a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said.

Arrangements have been made with the charities to help people to distinguish among the three flag-selling activities.

Information on the three flag-selling organisations on July 24 is as follows:

Region	Name of organisation	Colour of collection bag	Colour of flag
Hong Kong Island	Riding for the Disabled Association Limited	Green	Brown
Kowloon	The Society for Community Organization Limited	Purple	Red
New Territories	Sai Kung District Community Centre	Green	Green

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities, including any updated information, covered by the issued Public Subscription Permits have been published on the GovHK website ([www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search](http://www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search)). Permits for flag days containing information on contact methods of the flag-selling organisations and the approved flag-selling activities have also been uploaded to the SWD's website ([www.swd.gov.hk/en/ngo/controlofc/flagdays](http://www.swd.gov.hk/en/ngo/controlofc/flagdays)) for reference. For enquiries, please call the SWD's hotline at 2343 2255, or the designated hotline of the 1823 Call Centre at 3142 2678.

In the case of suspected fraudulent flag day activities, people should not make any donation and should immediately report the matter to the Police, the spokesman added.

---

## FS begins visit to Beijing (with

## photos)

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, began his visit to Beijing today (July 23) to call on the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO) of the State Council, Mr Xia Baolong. He also paid visits to the National Financial Regulatory Administration (NFRA) and the Beijing International Data Exchange.

Mr Chan reported to Director Xia about the overall economic and financial situation of Hong Kong and the work of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government in pursuing economic growth and advancing development under the leadership of the Chief Executive. Such work includes attracting talent and enterprises, expediting the development of "new quality productive forces" through developing innovation and technology, promoting high-quality development, opening new markets, maintaining financial stability, etc. Mr Chan thanked HKMAO of the State Council and Director Xia for their staunch support to reinforcing and enhancing the status of Hong Kong as an international financial centre, and promoting the economic development of Hong Kong. Director Xia fully recognised the work of the HKSAR Government and the team of financial regulators. He said the Central Government is firmly committed to the implementation of the "one country, two systems" principle, supporting Hong Kong in leveraging its own strength to implement the spirit of the Third Plenary Session of 20th Communist Party of China Central Committee, to pool together international top talent, deepen co-operation within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area (GBA), and play a better role in the country's opening up to the world. Director Xia encouraged Hong Kong to engage in continuous innovation in such areas as finance, trade, and tourism, to showcase Hong Kong's unique advantage and glamour, in order to attract more capital, enterprises, talent and tourists to the city.

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui; the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Mr Eddie Yue; the Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Securities and Futures Commission, Ms Christina Choi and the Chief Executive Officer of the Insurance Authority, Mr Clement Cheung, also joined the meeting and reported their respective areas of work on regulation and market development.

In the afternoon, Mr Chan and the group met with the Minister of the NFRA, Mr Li Yunze, and discussed the economic development and financial situation of the Mainland and Hong Kong. They also exchanged views on the supervision and co-ordinated development in various financial areas such as banking, securities, asset and wealth management, insurance and pension finance, and expediting financial co-operation in the GBA. At the meeting, Mr Chan expressed his gratitude to the NFRA for its ongoing support to Hong Kong's development as an international financial centre, deepening the mutual access between capital markets of Mainland and Hong Kong, and mutual co-operation in insurance and other areas. With the concerted efforts of the regulators and the industry of the Mainland and Hong Kong, Hong Kong will be able to play an even greater role in the high-quality opening up of the

country and make greater contributions to the building of a strong financial country.

In the afternoon, Mr Chan also visited the Beijing International Data Exchange to gain an in-depth understanding of its development in data trading business. Mr Chan said Hong Kong is actively studying how to develop a robust data trading ecosystem to fully leverage on the potential of data as a factor of production. This will be conducive to the development of the data industry, and will help nurture new industries in Hong Kong and upgrade traditional sectors. He was pleased to note that a Memorandum of Understanding between the Exchange and the Hong Kong Cyberport had been signed to explore co-operation on data infrastructure, flow of data, etc.

Mr Chan will continue his visit to Beijing tomorrow (July 24).



---

**“GoGBA Seminar for Legal Sector”**  
**assists legal sector to seize**  
**opportunities in Greater Bay Area**

(with photos)

“The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development Office (GBA Office) of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) co-organised the "GoGBA Sector Series: GoGBA Seminar for Legal Sector" today (July 23) to explore how Hong Kong's legal services talents and enterprises can contribute to and benefit from the high-quality development of the Greater Bay Area (GBA), and make good use of the facilitation policies and measures provided by different cities of the GBA to develop their businesses in the region.

In her opening address at the event, the Commissioner for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Ms Maisie Chan, stated that the resolution adopted at the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China emphasised enabling the GBA to better play its role as engine of high-quality development, supporting Hong Kong and Macao in building themselves into international hubs for high-caliber talents, as well as improving relevant mechanisms for Hong Kong and Macao to play a greater role in the opening up of the country. At present, the GBA has entered a new phase of accelerated development with greater breadth and depth. The development of the GBA is set to bring more room for the development of Hong Kong professional services. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government will adopt a more in-depth approach and focus on exploring how talents and enterprises of different industries, including the legal profession, can capitalise on the significant opportunities brought about by the GBA, and at the same time help promote the high-quality development of the GBA.

Ms Chan added that under "one country, two systems", Hong Kong is the only common law jurisdiction within the country and a leading centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region, and has been well-trusted by international business communities and investors. In April this year, the Department of Justice (DoJ) released for the first time the "Action Plan on the Construction of Rule of Law in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area", which sets forth the guiding principle of "Three Interfaces, Two Connects and One GBA", promoting the interfaces of mechanisms, regulatory frameworks and talents, thereby enabling the GBA to capitalise on its unique strengths under "one country, two systems and three jurisdictions". Hong Kong's legal profession can play a crucial role in the high-quality development of the GBA.

At today's seminar, leaders from the Justice Bureau, Nansha District of Guangzhou, and the Qianhai Authority of Shenzhen were invited as guests to introduce the facilitation policies and measures for the legal services industry in Nansha and Qianhai respectively. During the panel discussion, a number of legal professionals from Hong Kong and Guangzhou shared their views on the unique advantages enjoyed by Hong Kong's legal professionals in GBA development, the demand for Hong Kong's legal services by Mainland enterprises, as well as the strategies for developing business in the GBA.



The "GoGBA Sector Series" is a joint initiative of the GBA Office and HKTDC, which aims to provide more specific, in-depth and targeted information and support to the industry. In addition to keynote speeches and panel discussions, small group advisory workshops and one-on-one consultation services were also arranged at the seminar, where experts answered questions and offered advice on the development of the Hong Kong's legal profession in the Mainland cities of the GBA. Furthermore, the DoJ and HKTDC will jointly organise a trade mission to visit Shenzhen and Foshan from August 6 to 8, to learn about the latest development of the legal profession in the GBA, and to promote further exchanges as well as mutual co-operation.

For more information about the GBA, please visit the dedicated website ([www.bayarea.gov.hk/en](http://www.bayarea.gov.hk/en)), which also covers the content of the Greater Bay Area Information Station ([www.bayarea.gov.hk/gbais/en](http://www.bayarea.gov.hk/gbais/en)) for easy browsing by members of the public.



---

## **DH conducts enforcement operation against illegal displaying smoking product advertisements (with photos)**

The Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office (TACO) of the Department of Health (DH) conducted an enforcement operation against illegal displaying smoking product advertisements in Sham Shu Po district today (July 23).

During the operation, officers from TACO seized three smoking product display boxes from two stores, which were suspected of contravening the provisions of the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance (Cap. 371) (the Ordinance) related to the prohibition of smoking product advertisement. TACO's investigation is ongoing.

In accordance with the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance (Cap. 371), no person shall display or cause to be displayed any smoking product advertisement. Any person who contravenes the prohibitions is liable on

summary conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000, and in the case of a continuing offence, to a further penalty of \$1,500 for each day during which the offence continues.

A spokesman for the DH stressed that the department has always been closely monitoring and taking stringent enforcement actions against violations of the Ordinance (including displaying or distributing smoking product advertisements) and follow up every relevant complaint seriously. From January 2023 to June 2024, TACO removed over 1 900 webpages, social media accounts or posts with smoking product advertisements. TACO also issued 123 summonses and 42 warning letters regarding offences of displaying or distributing smoking product advertisements during the same period.

To step up enforcement actions to combat the distribution of smoking product leaflets in public housing estates, TACO has carried out about 200 joint operations with the Police, the Housing Department (HD), and the Customs and Excise Department in various public housing estates throughout the territories since January this year. Furthermore, TACO, the Police and the HD have established a co-operation mechanism. When any smoking product leaflet distribution is detected at public housing estates, the housing estate staff will immediately contact the Police for assistance and subsequently refer the case to TACO for further investigation. Since 2021, TACO has successfully prosecuted 14 offenders (involved in 15 cases) for distributing smoking product leaflets. The highest penalty for these convicted cases was a fine of \$8,000.

TACO will continue to carry out relevant operations, and follow up and investigate every complaint regarding smoking product advertisements, as well as refer any suspected cases of illicit cigarettes that involve violations of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (Cap. 109) to the relevant department for further investigation.

In addition, the Government earlier announced the roll-out of 10 tobacco control measures in the short-term, including the introduction of plain packaging, and the prohibition of flavoured tobacco (menthol, and candy/fruit-flavoured tobacco). Scientific evidence shows that the packaging and added flavours of smoking products reduce awareness of the hazard of tobacco and in turn increase the chances of non-smokers (especially teenagers) to start smoking. These tobacco control measures will effectively mitigate the promotional effect of smoking products.

The spokesman reiterated that all smoking products, regardless of whether they are duty paid or not, pose significant health risks. Smokers should quit smoking as early as possible for their own health and that of others. Information on smoking cessation can also be obtained from [www.livetobaccofree.hk](http://www.livetobaccofree.hk).



---

## CHP investigates case of severe paediatric COVID-19 infection

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (July 23) investigating a case of severe paediatric COVID-19 infection and reminded the community to heighten vigilance against respiratory tract infection. The CHP stressed that vaccination can effectively prevent serious COVID-19 cases, and high-risk individuals (including pregnant women) should get vaccinated as soon as possible and receive booster doses at appropriate times. Meanwhile, the CHP also reminded high-risk persons to wear a surgical mask when visiting public places, and the public should also wear a surgical mask when taking public transportation or staying in crowded places.

The case involves a 17-year-old boy with underlying illnesses. He developed a fever, runny nose, cough, sputum and vomiting since July 20. He attended Kwong Wah Hospital on the same day and was admitted for treatment. The clinical diagnosis was COVID-19 infection complicated with pneumonia and

respiratory failure. He is now in critical condition and is still hospitalised.

Initial enquiries by the CHP revealed that the patient had not received a COVID-19 vaccine and had no travel history during the incubation period. Two of his home contacts had presented with symptoms. One had recovered and the other is in stable condition.

The CHP reminded high-risk people who have never been vaccinated or infected with COVID-19 that they should arrange vaccination as soon as possible and adopt additional hygiene measures to protect themselves. Parents are also reminded to arrange COVID-19 vaccination for their babies aged 6 months or above in order to reduce the risk of severe cases and fatalities. In addition, high-risk priority groups are recommended to receive a dose of COVID-19 vaccine at least six months after the last dose or infection, regardless of the number of doses received previously. For more information on the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme and the latest recommendation on the use of vaccines, please visit the CHP's website at [www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/106934.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/106934.html).

Currently, the overall local activity of COVID-19 is showing an increasing trend in the past few weeks. Apart from vaccination, in order to prevent infection of COVID-19, influenza and other respiratory illnesses as well as transmission in the community, the public should maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times and note the following:

- Surgical masks can prevent transmission of respiratory viruses from ill persons. It is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;
- It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Avoid touching one's eyes, mouth and nose;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub;
- Cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending classes at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, perform physical activity regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

â€‹The public may visit the [thematic website of COVID-19](#) and the CHP's [COVID-19 & Flu Express](#) for more information.