

Flag-raising ceremony cancelled

Â Â Â Â Owing to the thunderstorm warning, the flag-raising ceremony to be conducted at Golden Bauhinia Square, Wan Chai at 8am today (July 19) will be cancelled.

Â Â Â Â If the thunderstorm warning is cancelled and weather conditions permit by then, the flag-raising ceremony may be resumed without further notice.

HKSAR Government strongly condemns and opposes US politicians' slandering remarks and despicable threats against Basic Law Article 23 legislation and efforts of HKSAR in safeguarding national security

â€‹The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) today (July 18) strongly condemned and opposed the United States (US) Congress' Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the US and the Chinese Communist Party and the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China for their letter to the US Government which made untruthful, slandering and smearing remarks against the legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law and the efforts of the HKSAR in safeguarding national security. The committee and commission also demanded that the US Government shall impose so-called "sanctions" on SAR government officials, judges, prosecutors and police officers, and made slandering remarks and despicable threats against the relevant personnel.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "The so-called 'sanctions' mentioned in the letter smack of despicable political manipulation to intimidate the HKSAR officials safeguarding national security. These grossly interfere in Hong Kong affairs which are China's internal affairs, and violate the international law and the basic norms governing international relations. The HKSAR despises such so-called 'sanctions' and is not intimidated by such a despicable behaviour. The HKSAR will resolutely continue to discharge the duty of safeguarding national security."

"Enacting local legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law and refining laws relevant to safeguarding national security are the constitutional

responsibilities of the HKSAR. In accordance with international law and international practice based on the Charter of the United Nations, safeguarding national security is an inherent right of all sovereign states. As a matter of fact, it is each and every sovereign state's inherent right to enact laws safeguarding national security, and it is also an international practice. The US has at least 21 pieces of laws safeguarding national security. It is therefore in no position to point its finger at the HKSAR for legitimately legislating to safeguard national security. US politicians once again targeted the HKSAR Government's work on safeguarding national security and made slandering, smearing, misleading and erroneous remarks against the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO), showing their despicable political manoeuvre and hypocrisy with double standards."

"The SNSO clearly specifies that the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Basic Law, as well as the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to Hong Kong, are to be protected in accordance with the law. US politicians neglected the relevant provision and lashed out wantonly, fully exposing their malicious intentions."

"As regards the conspiracy to commit subversion case mentioned in the letter, the reasons for verdict delivered by the court clearly confirmed that the criminal acts in the case aimed at undermining, destroying or overthrowing the existing political system and structure of the HKSAR established under the Basic Law and the 'one country, two systems' principle. Such criminal acts endangering national security had nothing to do with the so-called fight for democracy and human rights. In the 318-page judgment, the court has clearly set out the reasons and consideration underlying the conviction, and confirmed the occurrence of the offence of conspiracy to commit subversion. A total of 47 persons were charged in the case. Apart from the two defendants, against whom the evidence was found insufficient for the court to be sure of their participation in the conspiracy offence, the remaining 45 defendants were convicted, showing the scale and the seriousness of the criminal scheme."

"The HKSAR law enforcement agencies have been taking law enforcement actions based on evidence and strictly in accordance with the law in respect of the acts of the persons or entities concerned, and have nothing to do with their political stance, background or occupation. The suggestion that certain individuals should be immune from legal consequences for their illegal acts, including those involving subversion, is no different from advocating a special pass to break the law, and this totally runs contrary to the spirit of the rule of law."

"As guaranteed by the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights, all defendants charged with a criminal offence shall have the right to a fair trial by the Judiciary exercising independent judicial power. The courts of the HKSAR shall exercise judicial power independently, free from any interference."

"The HKSAR Government will, as always, resolutely, fully and faithfully implement the National Security Law, the SNSO and other relevant laws

safeguarding national security in the HKSAR, to effectively prevent, suppress and impose punishment for acts and activities endangering national security in accordance with the law. The HKSAR Government also strongly demands the US politicians to immediately stop interfering in Hong Kong matters which are purely China's internal affairs, and to stop smearing maliciously the laws safeguarding national security in the HKSAR as well as the law enforcement, prosecution and adjudication of the relevant cases."

FEHD responds to media enquiries

â€‹In response to media enquiries, a spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (July 18):

â€‹The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the FEHD collects food samples at retail level for safety testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. While designated samples provided by retail outlets will not be accepted for testing, food samples are taken by staff of the FEHD who purchase the products as customer without revealing their identity to the vendors. If a sample fails to meet the established safety standards, the CFS will take appropriate risk management actions, including issuing press releases to inform the public of the related risks. According to the Microbiological Guidelines for Food, if ready-to-eat food contains *Bacillus cereus* at a level of less than 1 000 per gram, it is considered satisfactory; a level of 1 000 to 100 000 is considered borderline but requires further action; a level of more than 100 000 is considered unsatisfactory.

â€‹The CFS collected a sample of the bottled preserved bean curd concerned for testing from a retail outlet in Sai Ying Pun at the end of June. The test result showed that the sample contained *Bacillus cereus* at a level of 130 000 per gram. According to the Microbiological Guidelines for Food, if ready-to-eat food contains *Bacillus cereus* at a level of more than 100 000 per gram, it is considered unsatisfactory. The CFS has therefore strengthened relevant surveillance immediately, and purchased in early July a sample of another batch of the same bottled preserved bean curd product from a retail outlet in Jordan for testing. The test result showed that the sample contained *Bacillus cereus* at a level of 10 000 per gram, which is considered borderline but not satisfactory and further action is required. According to the Microbiological Guidelines for Food, the CFS shall collect a follow-up sample of another batch of the product (not designated samples provided by the retail outlet). The CFS staff then purchased a sample of another batch of the bottled preserved bean curd product from the above-mentioned retail outlet in Jordan again in mid-July. The follow-up test result showed that the sample contained *Bacillus cereus* at a level of 1 300 000 per gram, which is considered unsatisfactory. The CFS has informed the retailer and manufacturer concerned, and has instructed them to stop sales and to initiate recalls of the affected product immediately, as well as to continue improving the food

production process. The investigation is ongoing.

Furthermore, during an inspection of the food factory concerned by the CFS staff in the afternoon of July 4, it was found that some of the raw materials were improperly stored and the hygiene condition of the packaging area was not up to standard, which increase the risk of food contamination. The CFS staff immediately provided health education on food safety and hygiene to the person-in-charge and staff of the food factory, and requested them to review and improve the food production process, including proper storage of raw materials, and to carry out thorough cleaning and disinfection.

From 2021 to mid-July of 2024, the CFS collected under its routine Food Surveillance Programme more than 140 preserved bean curd samples that cover 26 brands, including 23 preserved bean curd samples produced by the manufacturer concerned, for testing. In addition to the two samples concerned, an excessive amount of *Bacillus cereus* was also found in a sample of another brand. The CFS has taken follow-up actions on the above-mentioned unsatisfactory samples in accordance with the established procedures, including informing the vendors concerned of the test results, instructing them to stop selling the affected products concerned and tracing the sources of the food items in question. The CFS has also announced the test results concerning the unsatisfactory samples and explained to the public the food safety risks involved.

Bacillus cereus is a spore-forming bacterium that grows best at 30 degrees Celsius to 37 degrees Celsius but stops growing at below 4 degrees Celsius. It is commonly found in the environment. Unhygienic conditions in food processing and storage may give rise to its growth. Consuming food contaminated with excessive *Bacillus cereus* or its heat-stable toxins may cause gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting and diarrhea. In general, the presence of more than 100 000 cells of *Bacillus cereus* per gram of food can cause food poisoning.

[Celebrating Hong Kong AI, culture and fashion at Victoria and Albert Museum \(with photo\)](#)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, London (London ETO) and the Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency (CCIDA) supported the Culture X AI 2024-2025: Kan Tai Keung X AiDLab X Hong Kong Fashion Designers Show on July 17 (London time) at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the United Kingdom.

Organised by the Laboratory for Artificial Intelligence in Design

(AiDLab) which was jointly established by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) and the Royal College of Art (RCA), and funded by CCIDA, the unique showcase featured the collaborative efforts of renowned design master and ink painter, Dr Kan Tai-keung, and five esteemed Hong Kong fashion designers: Aries Sin, Derek Chan, Sophia XinLi, Tak Lee, and Wilson Choi. Each designer presented collections crafted using AI, highlighting the convergence of cutting-edge technology and artistic expression in the fashion industry.

The Director-General of the London ETO, Mr Gilford Law, delivered the opening remarks welcoming around 300 guests at the pre-show reception. "Today marks a significant step towards positioning Hong Kong as an international hub that integrates creativity and innovation in the arts. The collaboration between PolyU and RCA through AiDLab reflects Hong Kong's strategic focus on integrating AI into its creative industries, aligning with its vision to become a global centre for innovation and technology," he remarked.

The Assistant Commissioner for Cultural and Creative Industries, Mrs Lowell Cho, also delivered a speech as the lead sponsor of the event. "Culture X AI 2024-2025: Culture and Future Mode is one of the pioneering projects sponsored by the CCIDA to promote the use of AI among Hong Kong's cultural and creative industries. We are delighted to see the fusion of creativity and innovation among Dr Kan and the five up-and-coming Hong Kong fashion designers. Their design collaborations, together with the application of AI, will not only guide us through the five key phases of Dr Kan's creative career, but also signify how AI can assist human's original creative muses to reach their full potential in terms of aesthetics and craftsmanship," she added.

The Culture X AI 2024-2025: Kan Tai Keung X AiDLab X Hong Kong Fashion Designers Show is one of the six key events of the Culture X AI project of the AiDLab. The project aims at showcasing the best of Hong Kong's culture, design and innovation practitioners on the world's stage.



CE warmly congratulates victorious conclusion of Third Plenary Session of 20th CPC Central Committee

“The Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC Central Committee) concluded in Beijing today (July 18). The session adopted the Resolution of the CPC Central Committee on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization. The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, extended his warmest congratulations to the victorious conclusion of the session. He said that the session holds great significance as it was a very important meeting convened at the crucial period of building a great country in all respects and achieving national rejuvenation through the Chinese path to modernisation.

The communique of the session stated that the session gave a highly positive assessment on the successful implementation and major achievements of the comprehensive deepening of reforms during the new era. The session studied the issues of comprehensive deepening of reforms and advancing Chinese modernisation, holding that the current and upcoming period is a crucial in building a great country in all respects and achieving national rejuvenation through the Chinese path to modernisation. It noted that Chinese modernisation has been advanced continuously through reform and opening up, and it will surely embrace broader horizons through further reform and opening up. The session also pointed out that the overall objectives of further deepening reform comprehensively are to continue improving and developing the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and modernise the country's system and capacity for governance.

Mr Lee said that he was deeply encouraged by the continuous enhancement in the breadth and depth of the country's comprehensive deepening of reform, and the ongoing acceleration of further modernisation of the country's system and capacity for governance. The 20th National Congress of the CPC put forward a series of major reform measures, while the session focused on further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernisation, which has a profound impact on Hong Kong and the world.

"History has proven that Hong Kong has been playing an active role in the country's reform and opening up. As a 'super connector' and 'super value-adder' connecting the Mainland with the world, Hong Kong gives full play to its role of going global and attracting foreign investment for the country. At present, momentous changes of a like not seen in a century are accelerating across the world. The country has entered a crucial period of development in which strategic opportunities, risks, and challenges are concurrent. Hong Kong should firmly grasp the enormous opportunities brought by the country's further and comprehensive deepening of reforms in advancing Chinese modernisation. Hong Kong should continue to leverage its unique advantages of enjoying strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world and its important role in deepening reforms of the

country, better integrating into the national development thereby. All sectors of the community should earnestly learn and implement the spirit of the session, give full play to the power and value of the principle of 'patriots administering Hong Kong', and fulfill Hong Kong's responsibilities, seize Hong Kong's opportunities, and make Hong Kong's contributions on the country's journey of further deepening reforms comprehensively to advance Chinese modernisation," Mr Lee said.