

Regional flag day today

Three charities have been issued Public Subscription Permits to hold flag sales from 7am to 12.30pm today (August 23). They are, on Hong Kong Island, the Hong Kong AIDS Foundation Limited; in Kowloon, Rehabilitation Alliance Hong Kong; and in the New Territories, Hong Chi Association, a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said.

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

Information on the three flag-selling organisations on August 23 is as follows:

Region	Name of Organisation	Colour of Collection Bag	Colour of Flag
Hong Kong Island	The Hong Kong AIDS Foundation Limited	Red	Red
Kowloon	Rehabilitation Alliance Hong Kong	Red	Light Blue
New Territories	Hong Chi Association	Green	White

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). 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/index/site_pubsvc/page_controlofc/sub_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.

HKSAR Government strongly opposes Japan's discharge of nuclear-contaminated water at Fukushima

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government announced today (August 22) that in response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at Fukushima, the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, has instructed the Environment and Ecology Bureau and relevant departments to initiate import control measures to safeguard food safety and the health of Hong Kong citizens.

Mr Lee said, "Food safety and public health are the primary concerns of the HKSAR Government. The Japanese Government insisted on proceeding with discharging the nuclear-contaminated water which has been in contact with the nuclear fuel. The decision of conducting such an unprecedented and large scale discharge, which would last for 30 years, has blatantly ignored the inevitable risk on food safety and the irreversible contamination and damages to the marine environment. It is an irresponsible act which shifted the issue from oneself to another. The HKSAR Government strongly opposes such move."

The nuclear-contaminated water in Fukushima had direct contact with active raw nuclear materials. There are currently around 1.3 million cubic metres of radioactive nuclear-contaminated water, which involves at least 30 radionuclides, stored in some 1 000 tanks at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station (FNPS). The Japanese Government plans to discharge the nuclear-contaminated water for a period of 30 years, with an annual discharge volume of up to 15 million cubic metres. There were plenty of examples round the world that immense efforts in design were trumped by human errors or other unpredictable causes, thus leading to mistakes and catastrophic outcomes. While it is impossible to have a foolproof design and operation, nuclear activities and relevant radionuclides will have long-lasting adverse impact on our future generations. Should anything go wrong with the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water in Fukushima, environment, ecology and food safety will be inevitably damaged. Experts have also pointed out that the radioactive substances could accumulate in the marine environment as well as inside the organisms. Therefore, the impact and risk brought about by the discharge in Fukushima on the marine ecology and food safety should be accorded with high level of concerns and prevention. The worries and concerns of the Hong Kong citizens are reasonable, normal and natural. It is necessary for the Government to make comprehensive and effective protection.

The Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, said, "Safeguarding food safety and public health in Hong Kong is the responsibility of the HKSAR Government. In the light of the potential serious risk, we must take relevant precautionary measures to safeguard food safety and health of public citizens."

The HKSAR Government, from August 24 onwards, prohibits the import of

all aquatic products originating from the ten metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Chiba, Tochigi, Ibaraki, Gunma, Miyagi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, once the Japanese side commences the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water. These aquatic products include all live, frozen, chilled, dried, or otherwise preserved aquatic products, sea salt and unprocessed or processed seaweed. Relevant Food Safety Order will be gazetted tomorrow (August 23).

Apart from prohibiting aquatic products of relevant metropolis/prefectures from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will perform its gatekeeping role at the import level, continue enhancing the testing on imported Japanese food to achieve dual protection. In fact, the CFS has since mid-June expanded the scope of testing to cover all Japanese aquatic products and stepped up tests on related processed food imported from Japan.

In addition, the HKSAR Government will maintain the existing import control measures on certain food products against the five prefectures, i.e. Fukushima, Chiba, Tochigi, Ibaraki and Gunma, since the 2011 Fukushima nuclear incident. At present, vegetables, fruits, milk, milk beverages and dried milk originating from Fukushima are banned from importing into Hong Kong while such foods originating from the four prefectures nearby Fukushima, i.e. Chiba, Tochigi, Ibaraki and Gunma, are allowed to be imported on the condition that they are accompanied with a radiation certificate and an exporter certificate issued by the Japanese authority. Chilled or frozen game, meat and poultry and poultry eggs originating from the above five prefectures are allowed to be imported on the condition that they are accompanied with a radiation certificate issued by the Japanese authority which shows the radiation levels do not exceed the Codex guideline levels.

With the view to enabling members of the public could have a better grasp of the latest safety information on imported Japanese food products, the Environment and Ecology Bureau will make public announcements every working day regarding the radiological testing results of the imported food from Japan, as well as the results of environmental radiation monitoring and radiological testing on local catch. The CFS, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and Hong Kong Observatory will announce relevant results on their respective websites.

The HKSAR Government will continue to maintain communication with the Japanese food import trade, the catering sector and the Japanese authority, and closely monitor the latest situation regarding food import from Japan and the discharge plan of the FNPS, with the view to safeguarding food safety and public health of citizens in Hong Kong.

HKMA and IFFO hold first Blended Finance Roundtable

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and HKMA Infrastructure Financing Facilitation Office (IFFO) held the first Blended Finance Roundtable today (August 22), bringing together a diverse range of influential stakeholders to discuss harnessing the power of blended finance to foster innovation and collaboration in addressing global climate challenges.

The Roundtable was chaired by Senior Advisor (Market Outreach) of the HKMA and General Manager of the IFFO Mr Rami Hayek, and was attended by leaders from banks, international organisations, family offices, and philanthropies.

Through knowledge and experience sharing, panel discussions, and interactive dialogues, participants discussed the regional and domestic outlook, opportunities and challenges, and best practices associated with blended finance, and explored innovative and actionable ways to scale up blended finance.

About IFFO

As part of the HKMA, the IFFO's mission is to facilitate infrastructure investments and their financing by working with a cluster of key stakeholders. The functions of the IFFO are:

- providing a platform for information exchange and experience sharing;
- building capacity and knowledge on infrastructure investments and financing;
- promoting market and product development; and
- facilitating infrastructure investment and financing flows.

For more information about the IFFO, please visit www.iffo.org.hk.

ND works together with local Muslim community on promoting anti-drug

messages (with photos)

The Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau is committed to promoting a drug-free Hong Kong. People of different faiths and ethnic backgrounds are welcome to join the fight against drugs.

During a visit to the Kowloon Masjid and Islamic Centre today (August 22), the Commissioner for Narcotics, Mr Kesson Lee, and member of the Action Committee Against Narcotics Dr Rizwan Ullah, exchanged views on anti-drug education and promotion with the Chief Imam of Hong Kong, Mufti Muhammad Arshad. Mr Lee briefed the Chief Imam on the drug situation in Hong Kong and the anti-drug work of the Government, such as initiatives to enhance community awareness of drug abuse, drug harm (especially that of cannabis) and drug trafficking, as well as encouraging drug abusers to seek early help. To further disseminate anti-drug messages to members of the Muslim community, posters in different languages about the harm of different types of drugs were distributed and put up in the Centre.

Mr Lee expressed gratitude to Dr Ullah and the Chief Imam for their unwavering support of various anti-drug efforts. Mr Lee said, "The Government will continue to spare no effort to battle drugs. Taking into account the specific cultural characteristics including language, customs and religion of people from different backgrounds, we will arrange suitable preventive education and publicity for ethnic minorities with a view to raising their knowledge of drug harm, the gravity of drug offences, and availability of drug treatment and rehabilitation services in Hong Kong." He added, "The Government looks forward to working with the Kowloon Masjid and Islamic Centre in spreading anti-drug messages to its worshippers and beyond. The support expressed by the Chief Imam today is encouraging and his advice is valuable."

Dr Ullah said, "The community as a whole needs to work hand in hand in order to win the fight against drugs. I appreciate the Government's efforts to foster collaboration among different sectors and ethnicities, and will continue to help unite different stakeholders in society to support the anti-drug cause."

Selected publicity materials produced by the ND are available in six languages commonly used by ethnic minorities in Hong Kong on its website (www.nd.gov.hk/en/ethnic_minority.html) and interested parties may obtain them to display for free.



[Transcript of remarks by SEE at media session \(with video\)](#)

The Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, met with the media on the discharge plan of the Fukushima nuclear power station of Japan at the Central Government Offices this afternoon (August 22). Following is the transcript of remarks by Mr Tse:

Reporter: Mr Tse, how long will the ban last? And under what condition will the Government remove the ban? And what will the Government do to help the affected restaurants?

Secretary for Environment and Ecology: In order to help the restaurants, I think the best thing to do is to assure the people of Hong Kong that all food allowed to be imported to Hong Kong is safe. That's why we have a plan to prohibit the food from the Japanese prefectures which we believe have some risks. And we will also check all the food imported from Japan to ensure that their radioactive level meets all the standards. Therefore, I believe that with all those measures in place, we can assure the people of Hong Kong that all food sold in the Hong Kong market is safe, including those allowed from Japan. I think that is the best way to maintain the business of Japanese restaurants in Hong Kong.

As to the question about how long the prohibition will last, it actually depends on the data and information we can collect, as well as those provided by the Japanese Government after the discharge. It includes, of course, the radioactive levels and also the monitoring of the management system of the Japanese Government on how to ensure the system will operate smoothly and effectively. I think that is the most important point. At this point of time, we do not have a timetable of how long the prohibition will last.

Reporter: How will the Government help the Japanese restaurants in the city, which are currently struggling along with the whole catering industry in recovery if the seafood ban hurts the businesses? You have mentioned last

month that the authority has no special subsidy for them at this stage. And what measures will the Government take in reviewing the whole disposal situation? And in what circumstances will the authority reconsider importing seafood from Japan? Thank you.

Secretary for Environment and Ecology: Regarding the restaurants and the food import business of Hong Kong, we have been communicating with them for several months already, to keep them informed of the development so that they can get prepared for, say for example, the different sources of their food supply. And as I have mentioned, the best way to help the restaurants is to ensure all the food sold in Hong Kong is safe, so that people in Hong Kong will have confidence in sponsoring those restaurants in Hong Kong. That is the way we are doing. And of course, we will keep communicating with the restaurant trade to see whether we can help them in other ways, enhance our communication, etc. I believe the best way is to ensure food safety and also to retain the confidence of people in Hong Kong in Japanese food. I think that is the best way to help the trade.

Reporter: What measures will the Government take to monitor the wastewater disposal situation?

Secretary for Environment and Ecology: The Japanese Government is doing that, I believe. That is why we have asked them for more information on how they are going to monitor it. In Hong Kong, we will monitor the radioactive level in our own waters, as well as the local fishery products, to assure all the people in Hong Kong that the Hong Kong waters as well as our fishery products remain safe. We will do that daily and we will also publish information daily to let everybody know.

Reporter: The Japanese Consulate has expressed some unhappiness regarding the import restrictions back in July. So now the ban is going to come into place, how will Hong Kong navigate the bilateral situation?

Secretary for Environment and Ecology: As I have said, we remain our objection to the discharge plan. That's why I am here. And also I will trigger our measures planned to protect the food safety of Hong Kong, as well as the Hong Kong people's health. As for the future, we will continue to communicate and liaise with the Japanese Government to monitor the discharge plan and its effectiveness, etc. We will also review the adequacy of our food control plan from time to time.