

Ombudsman safeguards public administration for continuous community betterment (with photo)

The following is issued on behalf of the Office of The Ombudsman:

The Ombudsman, Mr Jack Chan, presented the 2023/24 Annual Report of the Office of The Ombudsman to the public today (July 3). The Office fully met all 11 of its targets on service standards in handling enquiries, complaints, reassessments and complaint reviews and exceeded 10 of those targets in the reporting year.

With the lifting of the mask-wearing requirement in March 2023, the year 2023/24 was the first full year since the COVID-19 pandemic where life in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region returned to normal. The Office received 4 351 cases of complaints. Pandemic-related complaints plummeted from 766 to 33 year on year. The Office also received 8 599 enquiries.

During the year, the Office completed 4 397 cases, including some carried over from the preceding year. Among these cases, 2 053 were pursued and concluded, while the rest of the complaints (2 344) were closed after assessment due to insufficient grounds to pursue or being outside the statutory purview of the Office.

In the year, the Office conducted 95 full investigations, of which 52 (54.7 per cent) were substantiated, partially substantiated, or unsubstantiated but with other inadequacies found, and the rest were unsubstantiated. Among the 1 771 inquiry cases concluded, inadequacies were found in 335 (18.9 per cent) cases. During the year, the Office conducted and completed 10 direct investigation operations.

During the year, the Office made a total of 186 recommendations upon completion of full investigations and direct investigation operations. Of these, a total of 169 (90.9 per cent) were fully accepted by the government departments and public organisations for implementation, while 17 (9.1 per cent) remained under consideration as of June 30, 2024, with no rejection expected.

In the year, the Office resolved 187 complaints by mediation. The average time taken was 13.5 days, with many cases only taking a few days. Over 92 per cent of the respondent complainants and participating government departments and public organisations were satisfied with the mediation service provided by the Office, and over 94 per cent were satisfied with the performance of the mediators. The Ombudsman will allocate more resources to mediation work and has instructed his officers to press ahead at full steam with the use of mediation to resolve complaints in the coming year. By using mediation to alleviate public grievances and address contradictions in

society, he aspires to foster harmony and social cohesion, improve people's livelihood and contribute to the development of Hong Kong.

During the year, there were 79 complaints cases related to access to information (ATI). Among the 72 ATI cases concluded, inadequacies were found in only 23 cases (32 per cent).

As this year marks the 35th anniversary of the Office of The Ombudsman, Mr Chan said, "I will lead the Office to serve the public with vigour and dedication. We shall set targets, strive for results, and perform our gatekeeping role conscientiously for the continuous betterment of the community."

The full text of the Annual Report can be viewed or downloaded from the Office of The Ombudsman website at www.ombudsman.hk.



[Red flag hoisted at Pui O 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 (July 3) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Pui O Beach in Islands District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at the beach.

First batch of visa applications approved under the New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme – Immigration Department and Invest Hong Kong partner up to boost business friendliness (with photos)

â€œIn June, the Immigration Department approved the first batch of visa applications under the New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme (CIES), with Formal Approval granted in less than three months. The Immigration Department and Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) work closely together on the New CIES and are actively exploring other collaboration opportunities to boost business travel convenience in Hong Kong.

Here are the key numbers of the New CIES since its launch on March 1 to June 30.

Number of enquiries	Over 3 700
Number of applications	339
Number of Approval-in-Principle (Granting of 180-day visitor visas for making investment)	88
Number of approved visa (Investment of HK\$30 million already made)	3
Expected investment amount to be brought into Hong Kong	Over HK\$10 billion

The Director of Immigration, Mr Benson Kwok, said, "The Government has introduced various policies to attract talent and capital to Hong Kong, including the New CIES. We have approved the first batch of entry applications and are actively processing other applications. I believe the New CIES will bring new vitality and opportunities to Hong Kong. The Immigration Department will continue to collaborate closely with InvestHK to create an even more business-friendly environment in Hong Kong."

The Director-General of InvestHK, Ms Alpha Lau, said, "The New CIES brings a vast pool of talents to Hong Kong, attracting successful businessmen and innovative entrepreneurs, and with current application numbers an expected investment of over HK\$10 billion (if more than 300 applications are all approved) to enhance the developmental strengths of Hong Kong's asset and wealth management industry. InvestHK and the Immigration Department have been working closely together on the New CIES and will continue to deepen co-operation to further strengthen Hong Kong's appeal as a business hub."

In addition, the country has announced that non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents will soon be eligible for a card-type document to enhance convenience of clearance at control points of the Mainland. Under this new measure, cardholders will be able to travel to the Mainland multiple times within five-year validity period, without the need to apply for a separate visa. They will also be able to enjoy self-service clearance at control points of the Mainland, significantly enhancing clearance efficiency. This serves to foster stronger economic ties between Hong Kong and the Mainland.



[Very Hot Weather Warning issued](#)

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

The Hong Kong Observatory has issued the Very Hot Weather Warning.

To prevent heat stroke, avoid prolonged activities outdoors.

If engaged in outdoor work or activities, wear a wide-brimmed hat and light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes. Stay in shaded areas as much as possible.

Drink plenty of water, and avoid beverages containing caffeine or alcohol.

If you feel sick, consult a doctor right away.

[CHP reminds public on precautions](#)

against heat stroke during very hot weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (July 3) reminded members of the public, particularly those undertaking outdoor activities, to take heed of necessary measures against heat stroke and sunburn in very hot weather.

"The public should carry and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration while engaging in outdoor activities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Those engaged in strenuous outdoor activities should avoid beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee and tea, as well as alcohol, as they speed up water loss through the urinary system," the spokesman explained.

"Infants and children, the elderly, pregnant women, those with chronic illnesses such as heart disease or high blood pressure, outdoor/manual workers, and individuals who are overweight are more vulnerable to heat stroke. They should pay special attention," the spokesman added.

The public should adopt the following precautions:

- Wear loose and light-coloured clothing to reduce heat absorption and facilitate sweat evaporation and heat dissipation;
- Avoid vigorous exercise and prolonged activities like hiking or trekking as heat, sweating and exhaustion can place additional demands on the physique;
- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or the late afternoon, if possible;
- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation;
- Do not stay inside a parked vehicle; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day if feasible. If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the workplace where practicable. Start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Move to a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

â€‹The public should also note the latest and the forecast Ultraviolet (UV) Index released by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). When the UV Index is high (6 or above):

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Wear long-sleeved and loose-fitting clothes;
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or use an umbrella;
- Seek a shaded area or put on UV-blocking sunglasses;

- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen lotion with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 15, preferably higher. Reapply every two hours if you stay out in the sun, and after swimming, sweating or towelling off; and
- While using DEET-containing insect repellents for personal protection against mosquito-borne diseases, apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent.

â€œIf symptoms develop, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, shortness of breath or confusion, rest and seek help immediately, and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

â€œThe public may obtain more information from the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather report and forecast](#), [UV Index](#) and weather information for [hiking and mountaineering](#); and [press releases](#) of the Labour Department on precautions against heat stroke for outdoor workers and their employers when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force.