

Chinese Overseas Friendship House (HK) Limited and its management fined for contravening Employment Ordinance

Chinese Overseas Friendship House (HK) Limited and its three management staff were prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for failing to pay wages on time and defaulting on the sums awarded by the Labour Tribunal (LT) with respect to several employees, contrary to the Employment Ordinance (EO). The case was heard at Eastern Magistrates' Courts on December 6, 2021, and concluded today (January 10). The company and the above persons pleaded guilty. They were fined a total of \$192,500 and ordered to pay the employees an outstanding sum of about \$76,000 jointly and severally.

The company failed to pay five employees' wages totalling about \$250,000 within seven days after the expiry of the wage periods or the date of termination of employment, and seven employees the awarded sums totalling about \$330,000 within 14 days after the date set by the LT award, as required by the EO. The management staff concerned were convicted for their consent, connivance or neglect in the above offences committed by the company.

"The ruling helps disseminate a strong message to all employers, directors, managers and responsible officers of companies that they have to pay wages to employees within the statutory time limit stipulated in the EO and to pay the awarded sums according to the LT or Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board," a spokesman for the LD said.

"The LD will not tolerate these offences and will spare no effort in enforcing the law and safeguarding employees' statutory rights," the spokesman added.

LegCo launches a brand-new design website to facilitate faster and easier browsing experience

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) today (January 10) launches a brand-new design website (www.legco.gov.hk) to facilitate the public to keep abreast of the latest development of LegCo business and Members.

The new LegCo website reorganizes its information and provides the

public with a number of at-a-glance menus pertaining to various key information in relation to LegCo. The Secretariat also improves the workflow of uploading information to further streamline the content uploading process. Members of the public can therefore get hold of the first-hand information in an even more timely manner.

The Secretariat expresses gratitude to various stakeholders, including Members and their staff, media representatives and the public, who have provided valuable feedback during the design of the new website. The Secretariat will continue to improve the functions of the website to enable the public to gauge the pulse of LegCo more readily.

Import of poultry meat and products from areas in Poland, France, UK and Korea suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 10) that in view of notifications from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of Korea about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Wieruszowski District of Łódzkie Region in Poland, Vendée Department in France, Eden District of Cumbria County in the United Kingdom (UK) and Jeongeup-si of Jeollabuk-do Province in Korea, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the above-mentioned areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 4 070 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 24.82 million poultry eggs from Poland; about 40 tonnes of chilled poultry meat, about 3 920 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 240 000 poultry eggs from France; about 10 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 280 000 poultry eggs from Korea; and about 70 tonnes of chilled poultry meat, about 2 970 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 250 000 poultry eggs from the UK in the first nine months of last year.

"The CFS has contacted the Polish, French, British and Korean authorities over the issues and will closely monitor information issued by the OIE and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

Government continues to increase COVID-19 vaccination uptake through various channels

The Government will continue to increase COVID-19 vaccination uptake through various channels to cater for the public's demand for vaccination and to expedite the pace of vaccination.

Starting from January 21, the number of designated general out-patient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority (HA) providing the Sinovac vaccination service will be increased from two to 24. Moreover, the two additional Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) (located at the Education Bureau Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre and Kowloon Bay Sports Centre) will come into service on the same day to provide the BioNTech vaccination service. Reservations can be made starting from 9am on January 18.

"While we are increasing the number of vaccination booths or manpower at CVCs and Hospital COVID-19 Vaccination Stations to fully utilise the vaccination capacity of the venues, we are also preparing for the setting up of two more CVCs by the end of this month so as to further enhance the vaccination uptake. Details will be announced soon," a Government spokesman said today (January 10).

Meanwhile, the distribution of same-day tickets at CVCs (except those located at private hospitals) will be limited to eligible persons aged 60 or above starting from tomorrow (January 11). The new arrangement aims to provide convenience to enable more elderly persons to get vaccinated on the day of distribution, in particular for those who do not understand how to make an online booking.

Eligible persons aged 60 or above can present their Hong Kong identity card (HKID card) to get a same-day ticket at CVCs. They can also authorise their family members to get a ticket on their behalf, provided that the authorised person can present a copy of the authoriser's HKID card. The same-day tickets are distributed daily from 7.45am on a first-come, first-served basis.

Under the new arrangement, accompanying persons will not be arranged to receive vaccination together and separate vaccination appointments are required. The arrangement does not affect the arrangement for persons who have recovered from previous COVID-19 infection and received the first dose of a vaccine six months ago to receive their second dose at CVCs.

The locations of the CVCs as well as the GOPCs of the HA providing the Sinovac vaccination service are listed in Annexes I and II.

Members of the public can also receive COVID-19 vaccination through the following channels:

* Thirteen Hospital COVID-19 Vaccination Stations are located in Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital, Yan Chai Hospital, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, Tseung Kwan O Hospital, Caritas Medical Centre, Prince of Wales Hospital, Queen Mary Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Tuen Mun Hospital, Pok Oi Hospital, North District Hospital, Princess Margaret Hospital and Ruttonjee Hospital, providing the BioNTech vaccination service. Prior booking is not required. For details, please visit: www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/HA_HCVS_Location_ENG.pdf.

* Three Elderly Health Centres (EHCs) under the Department of Health, namely Lam Tin EHC, Sai Ying Pun EHC and Tseung Kwan O EHC, provide walk-in vaccination with the Sinovac vaccine for all persons aged 65 or above. Prior booking is not required. For details, please visit: www.elderly.gov.hk/eindex.html.

* Over 1 000 private doctors or clinics provide the Sinovac vaccination service. For details, please visit: www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/VSS.

* The private healthcare institutions enrolled in the BioNTech Vaccination Pilot Scheme provide the BioNTech vaccination service to the public at 26 venues. Members of the public can contact these institutions and clinics directly for a vaccination appointment, and booking through the designated website of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme is not required. For enquiry hotlines and vaccination venues, please visit: www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/PrivatePilotScheme_BNT_en.pdf.

* The service schedule of the two Mobile Vaccination Stations has been uploaded to the website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/List_Mobile_Vaccination_Station_ENG.pdf) and will be updated from time to time.

The designated website for the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/programme) provides the latest information including details on vaccination venues, reservation and enquiry hotlines. Before making an appointment, members of the public should take note of a minimum interval of 14 days between COVID-19 vaccination and any other vaccination (including seasonal influenza vaccination).

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, January 10, 2022 is 95.4 (same as last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, January 8, 2022 was 95.4 (same as last Friday's index).