

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on February 26 to noon today (February 27), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 223 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" (www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 32 841 samples of food imported from Japan (including 22 029 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 9 224 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Auction of personalised vehicle registration marks to be held on March 17

The Transport Department (TD) today (February 27) announced that auction of personalised vehicle registration marks (PVRMs) will be held on March 17 (Sunday) in Meeting Room S421, L4, Old Wing, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai.

"A total of 240 approved PVRMs will be put up for public auction. A list of the marks has been uploaded to the department's website, www.td.gov.hk/en/public_services/vehicle_registration_mark/index.html," a department spokesman said.

The reserve price of each of these marks is \$5,000. Applicants who have paid a deposit of \$5,000 should also participate in the bidding (including the first bid at the reserve price). Otherwise, the PVRM concerned may be sold to another bidder at the reserve price.

People who wish to participate in the bidding at the auction should take note of the following points:

- (1) Bidders are required to produce the following documents for completion of registration and payment procedures immediately after successful bidding:
 - (i) the identity document of the successful bidder;
 - (ii) the identity document of the purchaser (if the purchaser and the successful bidder are different persons);
 - (iii) a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation (if the purchaser is a body corporate); and
 - (iv) a crossed cheque made payable to "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" or "The Government of the HKSAR". For an auctioned mark paid for by cheque, the first three working days after the date of auction will be required for cheque clearance confirmation before processing of the application for mark assignment can be completed. Successful bidders may also pay through the Easy Pay System (EPS), but are reminded to note the maximum transfer amount in the same day of the payment card. Payment by post-dated cheque, cash, credit card or other methods will not be accepted.
- (2) Purchasers must make payment of the purchase price through EPS or by crossed cheque and complete the Memorandum of Sale of PVRM immediately after the bidding. Subsequent alteration of the particulars in the Memorandum will not be permitted.
- (3) A PVRM can only be assigned to a motor vehicle which is registered in the

name of the purchaser. The Certificate of Incorporation must be produced immediately by the purchaser if a vehicle registration mark purchased is to be registered under the name of a body corporate.

(4) The display of a PVRM on a motor vehicle should be in compliance with the requirements stipulated in Schedule 4 of the Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) Regulations.

(5) Any change to the arrangement of letters, numerals and blank spaces of a PVRM, i.e. single and two rows as auctioned, will not be allowed.

(6) The purchaser shall, within 12 months after the date of auction, apply to the Commissioner for Transport for the PVRM to be assigned to a motor vehicle registered in the name of the purchaser. If the purchaser fails to assign the PVRM within 12 months, allocation of the PVRM will be cancelled and arranged for re-allocation in accordance with the statutory provision without prior notice to the purchaser.

"Upon completion of the Memorandum of Sale of PVRM, the purchaser will be issued a receipt and a Certificate of Allocation of Personalised Registration Mark. The Certificate of Allocation will serve to prove the holdership of the PVRM. Potential buyers of vehicles bearing a PVRM should check the Certificate of Allocation with the sellers and pay attention to the details therein. For transfer of vehicle ownership, this certificate together with other required documents should be sent to the TD for processing," the spokesman added.

For other auction details, please refer to the Guidance Notes – Auction of PVRM, which is available at the department's licensing offices or can be downloaded from its website, www.td.gov.hk/en/public_services/vehicle_registration_mark/pvrms_auction/index.html.

Auction of traditional vehicle registration marks to be held on March 16

The Transport Department (TD) today (February 27) announced that the auction of traditional vehicle registration marks will be held on March 16 (Saturday) in Meeting Room S421, L4, Old Wing, Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wan Chai.

"A total of 350 vehicle registration marks will be put up for public auction. The list of marks has been uploaded to the department's website,

www.td.gov.hk/en/public_services/vehicle_registration_mark/index.html," a department spokesman said.

Applicants who have paid a deposit of \$1,000 to reserve a mark for auction should also participate in the bidding (including the first bid at the reserve price of \$1,000). Otherwise, the mark concerned may be sold to another bidder at the reserve price.

People who wish to participate in the bidding at the auction should take note of the following important points:

- (1) Successful bidders are required to produce the following documents for completion of registration and payment procedures immediately after the successful bidding:
 - (i) the identity document of the successful bidder;
 - (ii) the identity document of the purchaser if it is different from the successful bidder;
 - (iii) a copy of the Certificate of Incorporation if the purchaser is a body corporate; and
 - (iv) a crossed cheque made payable to "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" or "The Government of the HKSAR". (For an auctioned mark paid for by cheque, the first three working days after the date of auction will be required for cheque clearance confirmation before processing of the application for mark assignment can be completed.)Successful bidders can also pay through the Easy Pay System (EPS). Payment by post-dated cheques, cash or other methods will not be accepted.
- (2) Purchasers must make payment of the purchase price through EPS or by crossed cheque and complete the Memorandum of Sale of Registration Mark immediately after the bidding. Subsequent alteration of the particulars in the memorandum will not be permitted.
- (3) A vehicle registration mark can only be assigned to a motor vehicle which is registered in the name of the purchaser. The Certificate of Incorporation must be produced immediately by the purchaser if a vehicle registration mark purchased is to be registered under the name of a body corporate.
- (4) Special registration marks are non-transferable. Where the ownership of a motor vehicle with a special registration mark is transferred, the allocation of the special registration mark shall be cancelled.
- (5) The purchaser shall, within 12 months after the date of auction, apply to the Commissioner for Transport for the registration mark to be assigned to a motor vehicle registered in the name of the purchaser. If the purchaser fails to assign the registration mark within 12 months, allocation of the mark will be cancelled and arranged for re-allocation in accordance with the statutory provision without prior notice to the purchaser.

For other auction details, please refer to the Guidance Notes – Auction of Traditional Vehicle Registration Marks, which can be downloaded from the department's website, www.td.gov.hk/en/public_services/vehicle_registration_mark/tvrm_auction/index

[Opening keynote address by SITI at Economist Impact – Technology for Change Asia \(English only\) \(with photo\)](#)

Following is the opening keynote address by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, at the Economist Impact – Technology for Change Asia today (February 27):

Tom (Deputy Editor of The Economist, Mr Tom Standage), Dr Pang (Chairman of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Dr Pang Yiu-kai), distinguished speakers and guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I am delighted to join you all today at the fourth annual Technology for Change Asia, organised by Economist Impact. For those speakers and guests coming from abroad, a very warm welcome to Hong Kong. I also thank Economist Impact for its commitment to staging this event in Hong Kong. This represents a big vote of confidence in Hong Kong's future as a tech hub for the region.

Tech for Change Asia is the place to be for aspiring talent to acquire the most updated information and ideas from tech giants and connect with business leaders. And we have a strong line-up of tech pioneers to share their valuable insights over the next two days here in Asia's world city.

Known for its unique blend of Eastern and Western cultures, and its agility and adaptability in the business and economic spheres, Hong Kong is well established as a leading international financial centre. Now, as we enter a new era of technological revolution and industrial transformation, with artificial intelligence (AI) in particular charting the way, Hong Kong is striving to become an international innovation and technology (I&T) hub. Allow me to highlight a few key initiatives for achieving this vision.

Back in December 2022, the Hong Kong SAR (Special Administrative Region) Government promulgated the Hong Kong I&T Development Blueprint. This Blueprint is important because it sets a clear course for our I&T development over the next five to 10 years. With a strong emphasis on top-level design and forward-looking strategic planning, the Blueprint underscores four broad development directions and eight major strategies. These directions and strategies focus on enhancing our I&T ecosystem, promoting a digital economy and smart city development, as well as consolidating our role as a bridge to connect Mainland China, the Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the world.

The Blueprint demonstrates our unwavering determination for Hong Kong to become an international I&T hub, as set out under our country's 14th Five-year Plan. It also serves as a guiding light for industry stakeholders to keep abreast of government strategies.

Starting from this year, for example, we will be launching more than 100 digital government initiatives. These will include providing an electronic payment option for all government services, and facilitating the wider adoption of e-payment options by businesses to support the development of digital economy.

We will also set up the Digital Policy Office within this year. Its task will be to formulate policies on digital government, data governance and information technology (IT). Specifically, the new office will consolidate IT-related resources within the Government, and promote the further opening up of data to offer more digital services to enhance the way we live and work.

From a broader perspective, a digital economy is a key enabler of high-quality development for Hong Kong. To this end, the Digital Economy Development Committee was formed in June 2022 to offer expert views and advice to the Government in order to accelerate the progress of the digital economy development in Hong Kong.

Turning to our role as a bridge connecting Mainland China, the Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the digital world. Here we have distinct advantages, thanks to the "one country, two systems" policy, strong support of our motherland and the fast-developing Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA).

Within the GBA, we are working closely with the Guangdong Provincial Government to develop the Digital Bay Area. This will create new impetus for prosperity and deeper integration of the GBA. For example, last year we launched the Cross-boundary Public Services initiative. This initiative enables residents and enterprises in Hong Kong and Mainland cities of the GBA to access respective public services online anytime. Previously, to do this they would have had to travel across the boundary in person. Just last week, we set up the very first Hong Kong Cross-boundary Public Services self-service kiosk in Guangzhou.

Also, last December, we, together with the Cyberspace Administration of China, announced a facilitation measure and its pilot arrangement relating to a GBA Standard Contract (Standard Contract for the Cross-boundary Flow of Personal Information Within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Mainland, Hong Kong)). This facilitates and streamlines the arrangements on cross-boundary flow of personal information from Mainland cities in the GBA to Hong Kong. For those familiar with cross-boundary data issues, you would appreciate that the facilitation measure represents a policy breakthrough to significantly lower the compliance costs and procedures for cross-boundary business transactions.

As highlighted by the agenda of Tech for Change Asia, the future is all

about AI. The trend of AI technology including generative AI has brought gigantic opportunities as well as challenges worldwide. No doubt, AI technology can enhance work productivity and enterprise efficiency with limitless potential for application. But AI also triggers concerns and debate over information security, privacy protection, ethics and intellectual property rights, to name just a few.

With AI and data science being among the key strategic industries under the I&T Blueprint, the Hong Kong SAR Government adopts an all-round strategy to develop the AI ecosystem, ranging from policies, guidelines and regulations to talent training, research support, and more. Our holistic strategy is dynamic and must be agile to keep pace with fast-moving AI developments.

As announced in "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address", our I&T flagship, Cyberport, is preparing to set up an AI Supercomputing Centre in phases from this year onwards. This strategic digital infrastructure will support the strong local demand for high-performance computing power, enhance Hong Kong's R&D (research and development) capabilities, and promote industrial development. The new venture will likely bring great benefits to AI and technological advancement in Hong Kong.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have provided a few updates on Hong Kong's I&T development. And there is more to come. No doubt, our Financial Secretary, when he presents his 2024-25 Budget tomorrow, will give more details on relevant areas such as building a resilient digital economy, a smarter city, and a welcoming environment for I&T development.

In the meantime, I am sure that we are all looking forward to hearing the ideas and visions of the heavyweight speakers at this conference. Once again, congratulations to Economist Impact on bringing this amazing event to Hong Kong. I wish each and every one of you a very enjoyable and rewarding Technology for Change Asia and a wonderful experience in Hong Kong. Thank you.



Country Parks Hiking and Planting Day

2024 (with photos)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) announced today (February 27) that the AFCD and Friends of the Country Parks will hold the Country Parks Hiking and Planting Day on three Sundays in March and April. Members of the public are welcome to take part in the activity.

The Country Parks Hiking and Planting Day will be held at the following locations according to the schedule below:

March 10	Pat Sin Leng Nature Trail, Pat Sin Leng Country Park
March 17	Wong Nai Tun Irrigation Reservoir, Tai Lam Country Park
April 14	Luk Chau Shan, Ma On Shan Country Park

Members of the public should enrol at the registration point on site from 9am to 10.30am on the event day. Pre-registration is not required. The AFCD will provide seedlings and planting tools. Due to limited planting sites, all seedlings are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. If all seedlings are given out, participants are welcome to join the hiking activity.

An AFCD spokesman said, "The event aims to promote messages related to caring for nature and tree preservation via public engagement activities. AFCD staff and volunteers will share information on the seedlings, and promote hiking etiquette to enhance participants' awareness of nature conservation."

The spokesman reminded members of the public to choose a suitable planting location and hiking route according to their physical strength and hiking experience. After tree planting, participants may continue hiking along the recommended route or take the same route back. The AFCD encourages members of the public to go hiking with their friends or family members, and help conserve the countryside by practising proper hiking etiquette, for example by bringing along reusable water bottles and towels, and "Take Your Litter Home".

Seedlings for the tree planting activities were raised in the Tai Tong Nursery of the AFCD in Yuen Long. The department has been planting local species in country parks to enhance the biodiversity and ecological value of country parks in recent years. About 230 000 tree seedlings were planted in country parks last year by AFCD staff and various organisations.

Details of the activities and latest information are available on the Nature in Touch website (www.natureintouch.gov.hk) or Hong Kong Country Parks Facebook page (www.facebook.com/hongkongcountryparks). For enquiries about the Country Parks Hiking and Planting Day, please call 1823 or email nature@afcd.gov.hk.

