

Import of poultry meat and products from areas in Denmark suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (February 6) that in view of a notification from the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Aabenraa Municipality and Sorø Municipality in Denmark, 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 850 tonnes of frozen poultry meat from Denmark last year.

"The CFS has contacted the Danish authority over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the World Organisation for Animal Health and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreak. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service: Report No. 66: Report on Civil Service Pay Level Survey

The following is issued on behalf of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service:

The Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service (Standing Commission) submitted a report to the Chief Executive today (February 6). The report sets out its recommendation of not proceeding with Stage 2 of the 2019 Civil Service Pay Level Survey (PLS).

The PLS aims at ascertaining whether civil service pay is broadly comparable with private sector pay. Following the invitation from the Government in December 2019, the Standing Commission has been spearheading the groundwork for the PLS.

In light of the then unique social-economic circumstances, particularly the uncertainties arising from the onset and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Standing Commission adopted a "two-stage" approach for the 2019 PLS. Under this approach, through a professional consultant, the Standing Commission has completed all necessary groundwork for the exercise (known as Stage 1). Engaging the staff side along the way, the Standing Commission has fine tuned the survey methodology, identified appropriate civil service jobs for eventual comparison with the private sector, and confirmed the major attributes of identified civil service jobs after extensive discussions with representatives of the management and staff sides.

Under the "two-stage" approach, after completing Stage 1, the Standing Commission will recommend on whether and when to proceed with Stage 2 of the PLS, which will include the collection of pay-level related data from the private sector and the analysis of the survey findings and recommendations. Having completed Stage 1, the Standing Commission is now equipped with the necessary information to recommend on the appropriateness and timing of conducting Stage 2 and collecting pay data from the private sector. The adoption of such an approach was a balanced decision of the Standing Commission with due regard to the then special circumstances and the civil service pay policy.

In assessing whether to proceed with Stage 2 of the PLS, the Standing Commission has taken into consideration the overall labour market and all relevant conditions. The Standing Commission notes that the labour market has been experiencing unprecedented turbulence. The local labour force has been significantly and rapidly dwindling with changes in its age and career profiles alongside surging vacancies in the private sector. In the face of the tightness in the labour market, private sector employers have adopted various strategies to attract and retain talent as well as reduce labour, which would have an impact on the pay practices and levels in the private sector. The Government has also put in place an array of measures for trawling for talent in a bolder and more targeted manner, and the effect of these measures in alleviating manpower shortages will take some time to fully realise.

The Standing Commission also observes that the economy is still weighed down by challenging external circumstances, including weakened demand from advanced economies and rising geopolitical tensions. The recent downturn in equity and real estate markets also reflects a cautious economic outlook. All these factors will potentially bring an adverse impact on business expansion and remuneration decisions, which may in turn affect pay levels in the private sector.

"The Standing Commission considers it prudent not to proceed with Stage 2 of the PLS at least for the time being. We take the view that the PLS should be conducted at a time when the labour market has largely stabilised, and in such an environment that the survey results will in general be perceived by the majority of stakeholders as reasonably reliable, and thus can adequately serve the very purpose of conducting a PLS, which is to fully inform the Government of the relevant situation for its decision in adjusting

civil service pay," the Chairman of the Standing Commission, Dr Pang Yiu-kai, said.

"We are also of the view that the reconvening of another round of the PLS should be subject to review of the then prevailing circumstances, including the overall labour market conditions and other relevant factors. It is necessary to maintain a fair and equitable pay system for the civil service and the Government should revisit the conditions upon a reasonable period of time," Dr Pang said.

"We would like to express our appreciation to all parties that have contributed to the 2019 PLS, including the staff side as well as the grade/departmental management of all bureaux/departments," Dr Pang added.

The Standing Commission Report No. 66 is available for public access on the website of the Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service at www.jsscs.gov.hk.

The Standing Commission is appointed by the Chief Executive to advise on the structure, salaries and conditions of service of non-directorate civilian grades in the civil service. The Standing Commission is chaired by Dr Pang. Its members are Mr Chan Chun-ying; Ms Dilys Chau Suet-fung; Ms Vena Cheng Wei-yan; Ms Ivy Cheung Wing-han; Ms Irene Chow Man-ling; Mr Victor Lam Hoi-cheung; Ms Christina Maisenne Lee; Ms Ada Leung Ka-lai; Mr Laurence Li Lu-jen, SC; Dr Miranda Lou Lai-wah; Dr Billy Mak Sui-choi; Mr Joseph Luc Ngai; Mr Adrian Wong Koon-man and Mrs Betty Yuen So Siu-mai.

Fatal traffic accident in Airport

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Airport in the small hours today (February 6) in which a 34-year-old foreign man died.

At 3.02am, Police received a report from a staff member of the airport that the man was lying on a taxiway. He was suspected to have been knocked down by a vehicle.

Police officers sped to the scene. Sustaining serious multiple body injuries, the man was certified dead at scene.

After initial investigation, it is believed that the man was a passenger of a special purpose vehicle (SPV) driven by a 60-year-old man, and was suspected to have fallen out of the SPV and have been hit by the aircraft while towing it.

The SPV driver was arrested for dangerous driving causing death and is being detained for further enquiries.

Investigations by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, New Territories South are underway.

Anyone who may have witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3661 1346.

Special announcement on fire in Mai Po

Attention TV and radio duty announcers:

Please broadcast the following special announcement as soon as possible, and repeat it at suitable intervals:

A fire broke out in an open ground storage site on Ka Lung Road, Mai Po at 12.28pm today (February 6). The Fire Services Department is conducting a firefighting operation.

Members of the public who are being affected by the smoke and an unusual odour carried by the wind are advised to close their doors and windows and stay calm.

Subject of Citizenship and Social Development Symposium and opening ceremony for roving exhibition on student learning outcomes of Mainland study tours launched today (with photos)

The Education Bureau (EDB) launched the subject of Citizenship and Social Development (CS) Symposium and opening ceremony for the roving exhibition on student learning outcomes of Mainland study tours today (February 6) to share the curriculum development of CS, learning and teaching experiences, as well as student learning outcomes of the Mainland study tours.

The guests attending the event were the Director-General of the

International Department of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Wang Jian; the Director of the Office for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Affairs of the Education Department of Guangdong Province, Mr Li Jinjun; the Division Director of the Education, Science and Technology Department of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (LOCPG), Dr He Jinhui; the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin; the Permanent Secretary for Education, Ms Michelle Li; members of the Legislative Council, and around 300 teachers and students who had participated in the CS Mainland study tours.

In the welcoming remarks, Dr Choi said that the EDB has all along actively promoted the development of CS through various tasks, including curriculum planning, developing learning and teaching resources, and organising teacher training programmes. With the concerted efforts of the EDB and the school sector, the CS curriculum has been implemented in an orderly manner.

Dr Choi said that the Mainland study tour is an integral part of the CS curriculum. Through experiential learning, students can learn about national affairs comprehensively, appreciate Chinese culture and understand the latest developments and achievements of the country, so as to build their cultural confidence and national identity. Positive feedback was received from the participating teachers and students. They agreed that the study tours had enabled them to learn about the country from different perspectives and cultivate a sense of national identity.

Dr Choi expressed her gratitude to the Office of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Affairs of the Ministry of Education, the Education, Science and Technology Department of the LOCPG, the Department of Education of Guangdong Province and the education departments of related provinces and cities for their guidance and support. In addition to the routes in Guangdong Province, newly arranged routes cover provinces and cities including Shanghai, Chongqing, Fujian, Shaanxi, Guizhou, etc in this school year. Over 50 000 students and 5 500 teachers are expected to participate in the study tours.

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At the symposium, the Chairman of the Panel on Education of Legislative Council, Professor Priscilla Leung, and the Chairman of the Curriculum Development Council – Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority Committee on Citizenship and Social Development, Professor Lau Chi-pang, shared their views on the role and development of CS respectively. The Director-General of the International Department of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Mr Wang Jian, also delivered a thematic talk on the current international landscape and China's foreign relations.

To let the public learn more about students' learning progress and outcomes of the study tours, a roving exhibition on student learning outcomes of CS Mainland Study Tours will be held from February to July in venues

including the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, City Gallery, the Tuen Mun Town Hall and the Tsuen Wan Town Hall. Details are set out on the designated webpage for CS Mainland study tours (cs.edb.edcity.hk/tc/mst_sharing.php) (Chinese only).

