

“iAM Smart” to temporarily suspend service during system upgrade

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) announced today (January 30) that in order to facilitate the introduction of more new functions, the "iAM Smart" will be temporarily suspended from 11pm on February 2 (Friday) to perform a system upgrade. "iAM Smart" services are expected to resume by 7am on February 3 (Saturday).

If necessary, users are advised to make advance arrangements for their online services or use other means provided by the website or mobile application of the relevant government departments or organisations to access the required services during the system upgrade.

All ExCo Non-official Members firmly support Government's legislative proposals on Article 23 of Basic Law

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

The Non-official Members of the Executive Council (ExCo Non-official Members) today (January 30) issued the following statement:

All ExCo Non-official Members firmly support the legislative proposals on Article 23 of the Basic Law as promulgated by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government.

ExCo Non-official Members pointed out that it is the constitutional duty of the HKSAR to enact legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law (Basic Law Article 23 legislation), and this is the general consensus in society as well. In this regard, the HKSAR must complete the legislative work on Article 23 of the Basic Law as soon as possible. While Basic Law Article 23 legislation must fully implement the requirements set out in the Decision of the National People's Congress (NPC) on Establishing and Improving the Legal System and Enforcement Mechanisms for the HKSAR to Safeguard National Security adopted by the NPC on May 28, 2020, and the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the HKSAR (HKNSL) at the same time, it should also achieve convergence, compatibility and complementarity with the HKNSL, forming an improved and effective legal regime for safeguarding national security.

The HKSAR Government issued a detailed consultation paper today to enable members of the public to understand the legislative proposals clearly and provide comments during the consultation period. ExCo Non-official Members agreed that the consultation period is appropriate and stressed that we must seize the opportunity to legislate as soon as possible in order to effectively respond to and prevent risks and threats that endanger national security. As such, we can go all out to boost the economy and strive for development and work together to ensure Hong Kong's long-term prosperity, stability and the well-being of citizens.

ExCo Non-official Members fully support the HKSAR Government in taking forward Basic Law Article 23 legislation so as to safeguard national security for the steadfast and successful implementation of "one country, two systems".

Hong Kong Customs seizes about 600 kilograms of suspected smuggled live lobsters (with photos)

â€‹Hong Kong Customs yesterday (January 29) detected a suspected smuggling case involving a cross-boundary goods vehicle at the Man Kam To Control Point and seized about 600 kilograms of suspected smuggled live lobsters with an estimated market value of about \$400,000.

Based on risk assessment, Customs yesterday intercepted an outbound goods vehicle declared to be empty at the Man Kam To Control Point. Upon inspection, Customs officers found the batch of suspected smuggled live lobsters inside 26 styrofoam boxes among several stacks of styrofoam boxes inside the cargo compartment of the vehicle.

After investigation, Customs arrested a 53-year-old male driver suspected to be connected with the case. He has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs will continue to combat cross-boundary smuggling activities with firm enforcement action based on risk assessment and intelligence analysis.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).



Public consultation on Basic Law Article 23 legislation commences

The Security Bureau today (January 30) commenced the public consultation on the Basic Law Article 23 legislation and invites public views in this regard. The consultation period will end on February 28, 2024.

"The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has a constitutional duty, as well as a genuine practical need, to legislate for Article 23 of the Basic Law. The HKSAR has gone through the painful experience of having our national security seriously threatened, especially the intolerable Hong Kong version of the 'colour revolution' in 2019. The HKSAR Government must complete the legislative exercise as early as possible to plug the national security loopholes. Other than the need to legislate for prohibiting acts and activities endangering national security, the HKSAR is also duty-bound to fully implement its constitutional duty and obligations under the 'Decision of the National People's Congress on Establishing and Improving the Legal System and Enforcement Mechanisms for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to Safeguard National Security' and the Hong Kong National Security Law, with a view to improving the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for safeguarding national security in the HKSAR," a spokesman for the Security Bureau said.

It is proposed in the consultation paper that a new Safeguarding National Security Ordinance be enacted to comprehensively address the national security risks at present and those that may emerge in the future in the HKSAR. There are nine chapters in the consultation paper, covering:

(i) the constitutional duty of the HKSAR in safeguarding national security, the national security risks faced and the necessity of the legislation, as well as the relevant legislative principles, considerations and methodology for studies (Chapters 1 and 2);

(ii) recommendations concerning offences put forward (Chapters 3 to 7), which

cover five major types of acts and activities endangering national security. Moreover, some new offences are proposed to effectively prevent, suppress and impose punishment for various types of acts and activities endangering national security, which include:

- (1) treason and related acts (Chapter 3);
- (2) insurrection, incitement to mutiny and disaffection, and acts with seditious intention (Chapter 4);
- (3) theft of state secrets and espionage (Chapter 5);
- (4) sabotage endangering national security and related activities (Chapter 6); and
- (5) external interference and organisations engaging in activities endangering national security (Chapter 7);

(iii) proposal to provide proportionate extra-territorial effect for some of the above-mentioned offences (Chapter 8);
and

(iv) other matters relating to improving the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for safeguarding national security, including the shortcomings and inadequacies revealed by the experience in handling cases concerning national security, and invite public views in this regard (Chapter 9).

"Safeguarding national security is fundamentally consistent with the protection of human rights and freedoms. Enacting legislation for safeguarding national security on Article 23 of the Basic Law is ultimately for better safeguarding the fundamental rights and freedoms of HKSAR residents and other persons in the HKSAR and ensuring the property and investments in the HKSAR are protected by law. The relevant provisions of the Basic Law, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights have been fully and prudently taken into consideration by the HKSAR Government when devising the proposals in the consultation paper," the spokesman emphasised.

"National security risks exist every day. We must grasp the opportunity and enact legislation as soon as possible to cope with constantly arising national security risks and threats, after which the HKSAR can focus its efforts on creating a vibrant economy for a caring community and strive for development," the spokesman reiterated.

Members of the public may send comments by email to BL_23@sb.gov.hk, fax to 2868 5074, or mail to the Security Bureau, 10/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong, on or before February 28, 2024. An electronic copy of the consultation paper and the pamphlet concerned have been uploaded to the thematic website of the Security Bureau (www.sb.gov.hk/eng/bl23/consultation.html). Members of the public in need of printed versions may also obtain copies from district offices.

Labour Department to hold occupational health public talks

The Labour Department (LD) will hold a public talk entitled "Occupational Stress" on February 7 (Wednesday) at 6.30pm at the Lecture Theatre of the Hong Kong Central Library, 66 Causeway Road, Causeway Bay. The talk will introduce the symptoms and health impacts of occupational stress as well as some stress-coping strategies.

The LD will hold another talk, entitled "Work and Cardiovascular and Cerebrovascular Diseases" on February 16 (Friday) at 3.30pm at the Lecture Hall of the Hong Kong Space Museum, 10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui. The talk will introduce healthy lifestyles and tips on protecting the heart and brain in the workplace to enhance employers' and employees' awareness of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases.

Both talks will be given in Cantonese by the LD's occupational health nurse. Admission is free but pre-registration is required. Interested participants can register online (www.oshsreg.gov.hk). For enquiries, please call 2852 4040.