

Red flag hoisted at Hung Shing Yeh 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 6) that due to big waves, red flag has been hoisted at Hung Shing Yeh Beach in Islands District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices at foreign domestic helper agency

Hong Kong Customs today (July 5) arrested a male director cum salesperson of a domestic helper agency suspected of having applied a false trade description to the employment services supplied, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information alleging that staff members of a domestic helper agency had made a false claim to a customer on the matters relating to the application for employment of the domestic helper in the provision of employment agency service.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested a 28-year-old man.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested man has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to procure services at reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any trader who applies a false trade description to a service supplied to a consumer commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TDO to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

Speech by CE at US Independence Day reception (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the United States of America Independence Day reception today (July 5):

Consul General (Consul General of the United States to Hong Kong and Macau, Mr Kurt Tong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I am delighted to join you all here at the United States of America Independence Day reception. A special welcome to Congressman (Rodney) Frelinghuysen of New Jersey with whom I had a very good discussion earlier this afternoon.

We are all here to celebrate the 242nd birthday of the US. We are here as well to champion the longstanding ties that connect Hong Kong and the US, as this year marks the 175th anniversary of US' diplomatic presence in Hong Kong.

My thanks to the Consul General for making clear just how valued our diplomatic ties have been, and how important they continue to be for both sides. The numbers certainly underline that. Last year, our bilateral merchandise trade came in at nearly US\$70 billion, up 2.5 per cent over 2016 totals. The US was our second-largest export market in 2017, behind only Mainland China. Hong Kong, meanwhile, was the US' ninth-largest export market.

Let me add that the US enjoyed a merchandise trade surplus with Hong Kong of US\$32.8 billion. That, ladies and gentlemen, was the highest trade surplus the US enjoyed with any single economy. And you will be interested to know that I actually mentioned this figure to President Donald Trump when we met at APEC meetings last November in Vietnam. Though I cannot be sure, apparently he was pleased. Among the commodities, we are particularly keen on meat and other agricultural products. In 2016, Hong Kong was the fifth-largest market for US beef and veal exports – and your sixth-largest market for agricultural products in general.

We are definitely not complaining about our trade deficit with America. Hong Kong always believes in free trade and we have become one of the world's largest trading economies because of free trade. In fact, the Washington-based Heritage Foundation has named Hong Kong the world's freest economy for the past 24 years in a row.

Hong Kong was also named the world's second-most competitive economy

this year by the Swiss-based International Institute for Management Development, having occupied the first position for the two preceding years. I should add that this year, the first place went to the US. But no grudge. And the World Bank has recognised Hong Kong as the World's fifth-easiest place to do business. The free flow of capital, information and people has earned us our international reputation, and will surely frame our future success, alongside our unique advantage under "One Country, Two Systems", our status as an international financial centre and the gateway to the Mainland of China, our enduring embrace of the rule of law, our world-class logistics and communications infrastructure, our level playing field for business and our low and competitive tax regime.

The American business certainly believes in Hong Kong. The Consul General just mentioned that more than 1 400 US companies operate in Hong Kong, and I understand that over half of them have actually chosen to set up their regional headquarters or regional offices here. They are certainly well taken care of here by the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong (AmCham). I am particularly grateful to AmCham's annual Washington Doorknock event, which is helpful in making the case for Hong Kong.

Beyond business, we have a long-standing and cordial relationship at government level through strong and valuable enforcement co-operation on various fronts, including counter-terrorism, money-laundering, drug-trafficking and strategic trade controls, etc. Our co-operation is broad, effective, and mutually beneficial. I am also grateful to the 100 000 US citizens living in Hong Kong for bringing the much loved US culture, creativity and dynamism to our city.

Ladies and gentlemen, despite our close ties, from time to time Hong Kong and America do have different views on matters. I would say that this is most natural in today's sophisticated and constantly changing world. However I do think and believe you would all agree that we have much more in common than our differences, and there is much room in various areas for us to strengthen our mutually beneficial relationship. We look forward to working with all of you here to maximise our common ground, and build even stronger ties between the two economies in the years to come.

On that note, please join me now in a toast to the United States of America on its 242nd birthday. Cheers.



FS visits Tuen Mun District (with photos)

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, visited Tuen Mun District this afternoon (July 5), where he met with members of the Tuen Mun District Council (TMDC) and also called at a secondary school and a youth service centre.

Accompanied by the District Officer (Tuen Mun), Ms Aubrey Fung, Mr Chan first visited the Church of Christ in China Tam Lee Lai Fun Memorial Secondary School and chatted with teachers and students. The School has been actively promoting STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education to develop students' potential. The students briefed Mr Chan on their innovative work and award-winning designs.

Mr Chan said that the Government is committed to fostering the development of innovation and technology (I&T) industry as well as creative industries, so as to diversify the economy and provide more opportunities for young people. He said that in this year's Budget more than \$50 billion has been allocated to support the development of the I&T sector, and to nurture more creative talent for Hong Kong.

Later, Mr Chan visited the Free Methodist Church Tuen Mun Children and Youth Integrated Services Centre. The centre provides comprehensive

activities for youths to facilitate their all-round development. It also provides a platform for them to showcase their talent in arts and culture. Mr Chan added that in this year's Budget, additional resources have been allocated to promote the development of culture and arts. For example, \$20 billion has been set aside for the expansion and renovation of large performance venues, with a view to upgrading Hong Kong's cultural hardware.

Mr Chan also met with members of the TMDC to learn more about the latest developments in the district and exchange views on matters of mutual interest.

Consumers urged not to consume prepackaged ginger powder contaminated with aflatoxins

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 5) urged the public not to consume a batch of prepackaged ginger powder manufactured in India as it was found contaminated with aflatoxins. The trade should also stop using or selling the affected product immediately if they possess it.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Organic Ginger Powder
Brand: SpiceBox
Place of origin: India
Distributor: SpiceBox Organics Limited
Net weight: 50 grams per pack
Best-before date: March 30, 2019

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS collected the above-mentioned sample from a shop in the Mid-levels for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The results showed that it contained aflatoxins at a level of 20 micrograms (µg) per kilogram."

Under the Harmful Substances in Food Regulation (Cap 132 AF), the maximum permitted concentration for aflatoxins in food (except for peanuts or peanut products) is 15µg/kg.

The spokesman said, "The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity and the vendor has removed from shelves and stopped sale of the affected product according to the CFS' instructions. Should there be sufficient evidence, prosecution will be instituted. The Centre is also tracing the source and distribution of the affected product."

The World Health Organization (WHO)'s International Agency for Research on Cancer classified naturally occurring aflatoxins as carcinogenic to humans, and the Joint Food and Agriculture Organization/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives advised that intake of aflatoxins should be reduced to levels as low as reasonably possible although no health-based guidance value has been set. Aflatoxins can lead to liver cancer after long-term ingestion, and the risk for hepatitis B carriers is relatively high.

The spokesman urged members of the public who had bought the affected batch of the product to stop consuming it. To avoid excessive intake of mycotoxins, people should maintain a balanced and varied diet to minimise the risk from a small range of food items, and to avoid consuming food that looks mouldy or damaged.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. Investigation is ongoing.