

Flower Show's flower replanting scheme invites applications

Schools, environmental groups and non-governmental organisations are invited to apply for this year's "Give the Flowers a New Home!" Jockey Club Flower Replanting Scheme of the Hong Kong Flower Show by February 19. The application form can be downloaded from the flower show webpage at www.hkflowershow.hk/en/hkfs/2024/flower.html.

After each year's flower show, showground flowers suitable for replanting are sent to Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) parks for replanting. To encourage replanting in the community and raise environmental awareness among the public, the flower replanting scheme has been running since 2014.

For enquiries, please call 2601 8260.

Organised by the LCSD, this year's flower show will be held from March 15 to 24 at Victoria Park, featuring the colourful angelonia as the theme flower, with "Floral Joy Around Town" as the theme of the show. The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust is supporting the flower show for the 12th consecutive year and has been its major sponsor since 2014.

CSB to participate in Education & Careers Expo 2024 to encourage young people to join civil service

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) will participate in the Education & Careers Expo 2024 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai from January 25 (Thursday) for four consecutive days to publicise the work of the civil service and related information, including entry requirements, pay and fringe benefits as well as training opportunities. Persons with aspirations to join the civil service and serve the community are welcome to visit.

This year, the CSB will for the first time hold 19 sharing sessions under the Careers in the Government Talk Series in its booth (1D – A02 in Hall 1D), where serving civil servants from different bureaux and departments will introduce information of individual grades, job application and interview skills and career prospects, and share with visitors the stories from their day-to-day work. A question-and-answer session will be available

for every talk. Persons who are interested in learning more about the related grades or applying for the jobs are welcome to attend. Details of the sharing sessions are set out in the Annex.

The CSB will distribute stamp cards to visitors. After attempting sample Basic Law and National Security Law Test questions at the game kiosk in the CSB's booth or attending any of the above sharing sessions, visitors can get a stamp to redeem a souvenir. They can also collect stamps by completing tasks at the other 16 government departments' booths at the expo, and redeem a souvenir with designated numbers of stamps at the CSB's booth while stock lasts.

In addition, the Department of Justice, the Government Flying Service and the Civil Aviation Department will hold three thematic seminars on employment information of their departmental grades on January 26 (Friday) and January 28 (Sunday) at the Careers Forum in Hall 1D. Persons who are interested in knowing more about or applying for the posts can refer to the Annex for details.

The Education & Careers Expo 2024 will be held at Hall 1D&E of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre and will be open from 10am to 7pm from January 25 to 27, and from 10am to 6pm on January 28. Admission is free. For information on matters related to civil service recruitment, please visit the website of the CSB: www.csb.gov.hk/tc_chi/recruit/7.html.

For further details of the Education & Careers Expo 2024, please visit its designated website: www.hktdc.com/hkeducationexpo.

[Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo \(with video\)](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (January 23):

Reporter: Good morning, Mr Lee. From next Monday, the Mainland Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters (Reciprocal Enforcement) Ordinance goes into effect, meaning there can be reciprocal recognition and enforcement of civil rulings by courts in Hong Kong and on the Mainland. Nikkei reports that investors are concerned about the city's common law system and what will happen to their holdings. With the Hang Seng (Index) slumping to handover-era levels, can you reassure investors? Second, last week you told the media to tell a good Hong Kong story. Yet city authorities have repeatedly rejected media efforts to tell positive stories about the Government. Last year, Fire Services rejected our request to write a feature story about their vehicles;

the Police rejected a pitch about the canine unit; the Lands Department refused to let us meet a government cartographer; the government lab and flying services rejected story ideas; the Drainage Services Department won't let us tour a sewage plant. In fact, a dozen government departments rejected a dozen stories we tried to tell last year. Why is this and will you instruct your government departments to say yes to media requests?

Chief Executive: First of all, about the arrangement of implementing judgments of courts of the Mainland jurisdiction in Hong Kong, there is a legal process for it to happen. Any judgment from courts in the Mainland will, first of all, has to be registered with the court (in Hong Kong). Relevant parties who have opinions or any objection can also make their grounds known to court. The court will deal with such applications according to legal principles. That means for all these judgments that a particular party wants to have effect in Hong Kong, there will be a legal process for it to be completed and also cleared before it can happen. So the relevant party's rights, and also, his opinions and grounds for objection, will be heard by court according to legal principle to ensure that they operate within all the legal confines and there will be a fair process for all the opinions and reasons to be heard. So that is the rule of law and that is justice ensured in the whole process.

In regard to media requests for interviews of government departments, government departments every day receive a lot of requests from different media, and a lot of requests have been granted. And a lot of interviews have been done. As you can see in a lot of newspapers and TV interviews, as well as in other online forums. So for any media organisation to apply for this request, yes they have to first of all, indicate what they want to do, so as to ensure that the relevant departments, in according priorities to all these long queues of requests, can make right decision. Of course, I will encourage my departments to make as many interviews as possible, but equally, they have to do this at the same time of doing a lot of other functions and services for society. So the right balance has to be struck.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

DoJ responds to media enquiries

In response to media enquiries on the Arrangement on Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement of Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters by the Courts of the Mainland and of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, a spokesman for the Department of Justice (DoJ) replied today (January 23) as follows:

The Arrangement on Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement of Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters by the Courts of the Mainland and of the Hong

Kong Special Administrative Region, coming into operation on January 29, 2024, is one of the arrangements for mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters between Hong Kong and the Mainland. In response to the need for a clear and comprehensive mechanism on reciprocal enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters arising from the increasingly close interaction and co-operation between the two places in terms of trade and economic activities as well as social interactions, the DoJ and the Supreme People's Court concluded the Arrangement in 2019 to reduce the need for relitigation of the same disputes and to better balance the interests of creditors and debtors.

We note that some discussions suggest that after the Arrangement has taken effect, the courts of the two places will notify each other or exchange information on the details or enforcement of the cases. This is a fallacy. As an arrangement for mutual legal assistance between the Mainland and Hong Kong in civil and commercial matters, the Arrangement only concerns reciprocal recognition and enforcement of civil and commercial judgments of the two places. Whether to apply for enforcement of the relevant judgments in the other place is entirely a choice of the parties. The courts of the two places will not exchange information on the status of the cases or enforcement applications made by the parties. Applications for enforcement of judgments are to be initiated by the parties, which is consistent with the current practice for applications for enforcement of foreign judgments in Hong Kong in accordance with the relevant principles under common law and the applicable statutory provisions.

Furthermore, some people suggest that after the implementation of the Arrangement, "judgments of the Mainland courts would become automatically applicable in Hong Kong, and assets in Hong Kong could be confiscated by the Mainland directly." This is absolutely another fallacy. Mainland judgments will not automatically take effect in Hong Kong, and assets in Hong Kong will not be confiscated by the Mainland directly after the Arrangement has come into operation. The creditor under the Mainland judgment must first apply to the Mainland court for a copy of and a certificate for the relevant judgment, then submit together with other relevant documents to the Court of First Instance of the High Court to make a registration application in relation to the relevant Mainland judgment. More importantly, the registrant must notify the other party of the judgment, in order to allow that party to consider applying to the Hong Kong court to set aside the registration in accordance with the Mainland Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters (Reciprocal Enforcement) Ordinance. A further application can be made for execution of the relevant Mainland judgment through other legal proceedings on the basis of the Mainland court's judgment only if the registration has not been set aside.

As a matter of fact, the lawful rights of creditors and debtors are fully protected and fairly balanced under the Arrangement, which provides a legal mechanism with a higher degree of certainty and predictability for cross-boundary enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters between the two places, thereby enhancing the business environment. The establishment of a legal mechanism between Hong Kong and the Mainland for

reciprocal enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters fully demonstrates the effective implementation of the fundamental policy of "one country, two systems", and at the same time further consolidates Hong Kong's competitiveness as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services.

[10th Annual Transpacific Entrepreneurial Conference to delve into Hong Kong's role as super connector \(with photos\)](#)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Toronto) (Toronto ETO) and Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) supported the 10th Annual Transpacific Entrepreneurial Conference jointly hosted by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong-Canada Business Association (HKCBA) on January 22 (Toronto time). This annual rendezvous focussed on exploring innovative ideas, biotech start-ups and business opportunities, and strengthening commercial relationships between Canada, Hong Kong, and other Asian economies.

In delivering opening remarks at the hybrid conference to delve into Hong Kong's role as a commitment to the rule of law and judicial independence, is therefore vital to the continued success of the "super connector", the Director of the Toronto ETO, Ms Emily Mo, is delighted to share with participants that Hong Kong has been bouncing back over the past year as travel between Canada and Hong Kong resumed.

"Hong Kong's 2023 GDP growth is forecast to be 3.2 per cent," said Ms Mo. "Inflation was moderate at 2 per cent, unemployment rate at 2.9 per cent, and flight connection capacity recovered to about 80 per cent with an anticipated full recovery this year."

Ms Mo pointed out that more than 9 000 companies with mainland China or foreign head offices had chosen to set foot in Hong Kong, representing an increase in 2023. Regarding the strategic enterprises opening in Hong Kong, Ms Mo add that "they brought in not just strategic enterprises benefitting Hong Kong's business landscape, but also an initial investment of around HK\$30 billion and the creation of 10 000 jobs between December 2022 and October 2023."

She also noted that Hong Kong got a new record of numbers of start-ups and their staff employed in 2023. Over 4 200 start-ups were in Hong Kong, and a quarter of them are founded by non-locals. Among the non-local start-ups,

Canada has the seventh largest share.

"Looking forward, with the institutional advantages of Hong Kong under the 'one country, two systems', Hong Kong has been prepared and inspired to offer opportunities and to create new opportunities for the city and everyone who sees it as their destination for business, career or personal growth," said Ms Mo.

As the world's top international financial centre, and a global offshore wealth management centre ranked second worldwide after Switzerland, Hong Kong's place in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and various new policies and tax concessions make it an increasingly attractive hub for family offices.

"Over 40 Canadian delegates will join the Asian Financial Forum to be held in Hong Kong this week, including the Canadian venture capitalists looking for investment projects and companies seeking for capital and partners," Ms Mo remarked.

Ms Mo added that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is in an internationally leading position to promote green finance, ESG, web 3.0, and talent attraction, etc., facilitating all long-sighted business to grow. She reassured all participants that Hong Kong is moving fast to cope with the evolving world and is the best place to do business in Asia.

The 10th Annual Transpacific Entrepreneurial Conference included six panel discussions with over 30 speakers from leading companies in different sectors including wealth management, investment opportunities, innovation and technology, biotech, sustainability, renewable energy, health-tech and artificial intelligence. The Head of Business and Talent Attraction/Investment Promotion of InvestHK (Toronto Office), Mr Christopher Chen, shared insights at the second panel themed "Trade & Investment Expansion Strategies into Hong Kong and Asia".

