

Tseung Kwan O Desalination Plant to be commissioned tomorrow (with photo)

The first stage of the Tseung Kwan O Desalination Plant (TKODP) will be commissioned for supplying water tomorrow (December 22), providing a new and stable water source that is not susceptible to climate change.

A spokesman for the Water Supplies Department (WSD) said, "The TKODP is the first waterworks in Hong Kong to adopt an advanced reverse osmosis desalination technology. Upon entering into full operation, the TKODP will meet around 5 per cent of the overall fresh water demand in Hong Kong with a water production capacity at 135 000 cubic metres per day. The TKODP, together with the Pak Kong Water Treatment Works and the Tseung Kwan O Primary Fresh Water Service Reservoir, will supply drinking water to Sai Kung as well as parts of East Kowloon and Hong Kong Island."

Adopting the reverse osmosis desalination technology, pre-treated seawater will pass through membrane which allows fresh water to pass through but retains salts and impurities. Desalinated seawater will then undergo post-treatment procedures to produce drinking water fully meeting Hong Kong Drinking Water Standards on par with the quality of water supplied by other water treatment works in Hong Kong. There will be real-time monitoring of the whole treatment process.

The WSD has started the preliminary design for the second stage of the plant, and the adjacent site is also earmarked for future expansion, with a water production capacity that will meet around 10 per cent of the overall fresh water demand in Hong Kong.



Pin-tailed snipe and Eurasian teal carcasses test positive for H5 virus

Carcasses of a Pin-tailed snipe and an Eurasian teal found in the Hong Kong Wetland Park (Wetland Park) in Tin Shui Wai were suspected to be positive for the H5 avian influenza (AI) virus based on preliminary testing, a spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said today (December 21). Further confirmatory tests are being conducted.

The bird carcasses were collected earlier at the mudflat in the Wetland Park.

The spokesman said cleaning and disinfection has been stepped up at the location where the dead birds were found in the Wetland Park. Notices have also been put up to remind visitors to pay attention to personal hygiene. The Wetland Park will keep a close watch on the situation of birds inside the Park.

One chicken farm is within 3 kilometres of where the dead birds were collected. The AFCD immediately informed the chicken farm concerned and no abnormal mortality or symptoms of avian influenza among the chicken flocks have been found so far. The AFCD will remind poultry farmers to strengthen precautionary and biosecurity measures against AI. Pet bird shop owners and licence holders of bird exhibitions will also be reminded to implement proper precautions against AI.

The spokesman said that the department will closely monitor poultry farms and the wholesale market to ensure that proper precautions against AI have been taken. The department will continue its wild bird monitoring and surveillance.

"People should avoid personal contact with wild birds and live poultry and their droppings. They should clean their hands thoroughly after coming into contact with them. The public can call 1823 for AFCD's follow-up if they come across birds suspected to be sick or dead, including the carcasses of wild birds and poultry," the spokesman said.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) will continue to be vigilant over live poultry stalls. It will also remind stall operators to maintain good hygiene.

The Department of Health will keep up its health education to remind the public to maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene to prevent AI.

The AFCD, the FEHD, the Customs and Excise Department and the Police will strive to deter the illegal importation of poultry and birds into Hong Kong to minimise the risk of AI outbreaks caused by imported poultry and birds that have not gone through inspection and quarantine.

All relevant government departments will continue to be highly vigilant and strictly enforce preventive measures against AI. Health advice about preventing AI is available on the "Avian Influenza Health Advice" page at www.afcd.gov.hk.

Missing woman in Cheung Sha Wan located

A woman who went missing in Cheung Sha Wan has been located.

Zhang Yiqi, aged 32, went missing after she was last seen on Cheung Sha Wan Road on December 18 evening. Her family made a report to Police on the same day.

The woman was located on Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui today (December 24). She sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

EPD convictions in November

Forty-nine convictions were recorded in November 2023 for breaches of legislation enforced by the Environmental Protection Department.

Eleven of the convictions were under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance, 18 were under the Noise Control Ordinance, six were under the Public Cleansing and Prevention of Nuisances Regulation, six were under the Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance, five were under the Waste Disposal Ordinance, and three were under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance.

A person was fined \$16,000, which was the heaviest fine in November, for failing to take measures to control air pollutant emission.

Green Tech Fund approves eight

projects in third round of applications

The Secretariat of the Green Tech Fund (GTF) said today (December 21) that a total of eight projects have been approved in the third round of applications, involving a grant of around \$30 million. Together with the first and second rounds of applications, the GTF has so far approved 30 projects, involving a total grant of around \$130 million.

Eighty applications were received in the third round of applications from December 2022 to March 2023. The eight research and development (R&D) projects approved in this round cover research projects on promotion of new energy technology, energy saving and green building, turning waste into resources and green transport. They are:

- New energy technology: Development of an innovative proton exchange membrane electrolysis cell to improve the performance and cost efficiency in hydrogen production, promoting the application of hydrogen energy; development of a seawater desalination system integrating with electrolysis for hydrogen production and an innovative membrane technology to explore the feasibility of using desalinated seawater to produce hydrogen and recovering the heat generated during hydrogen production for seawater desalination; development of an intelligent energy supply station powered by ammonia to promote the development and application of low-carbon energy.
- Energy saving and green building: Development of exterior material for building with textile waste which promotes energy saving of buildings.
- Turning waste into resources: Utilisation of waste ashes to replace cement in deep mixing piles for land reclamation, which reduces the disposal of waste ashes and carbon emissions in land reclamation; development of an innovative fat, oil and grease (FOG) interception technology to reduce FOG from wastewater of catering services and turn the recovered FOG into energy; develop an ammonia pretreatment system for food waste, to enhance the efficiency in operation of O · Park, and promote the turning of food waste into energy.
- Green Transport: Development of aqueous rechargeable batteries, to solve the flammability problem of traditional electric vehicle batteries, and improve the safety and lifetime of batteries for electric vehicles.

The list of the eight approved R&D projects is given in the Annex.

Relevant details are also published on the GTF webpage (www.gtf.gov.hk/en/project_information/approved_projects.html). These projects will help promote R&D as well as application of green technologies in different areas, thereby expediting the low-carbon transformation in Hong Kong to strive towards the goal of carbon neutrality.

The GTF is open for the fourth round of applications from today to March 20, 2024. R&D projects that fall into four areas, namely net-zero electricity generation, energy saving and green buildings, green transport, and waste reduction, will be accorded priority. The GTF welcomes applications from local public research institutions, R&D centres and local private companies to develop low-carbon and green technologies that cater for the needs of Hong Kong's environment and market. The GTF Secretariat will hold a webinar on January 19, 2024, to introduce the application procedures and priority themes of the GTF. Details are available on the GTF website (www.gtf.gov.hk).