

LegCo Panel on Development to conduct study visit to Shanghai

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

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Development will depart for Shanghai tomorrow (December 19) to conduct a three-day study visit.

The objectives of the visit are for Members to learn about the urban planning and management, new areas development, heritage conservation and revitalisation, and emergency response and disaster prevention work in Shanghai, as well as to observe through site visits the municipality's coastal and riverside development. During the visit, Members will exchange views with leaders and representatives of the Shanghai Municipal People's Government as well as representatives of Hong Kong organisations based in Shanghai.

The delegation will visit the following places and organisations from December 19 to 21:

- Shanghai Water Authority;
- Shanghai Municipal Commission of Housing and Urban-Rural Development;
- Lin-gang Special Area;
- Xuhui Riverside Development Area; and
- Zhang Yuan.

The delegation is led by the Chairman of the Panel on Development, Mr Tony Tse. Deputy delegation leader is the Deputy Chairman of the Panel, Mr Lau Kwok-fan. Other participating Panel members include Dr Lo Wai-kiok, Ms Doreen Kong, Mr Lee Chun-keung, Dr Chow Man-kong, Ms Lam So-wai, Mr Andrew Lam and Dr Wendy Hong; as well as non-Panel members Mr Paul Tse, Mr Chan Han-pan, Ms Elizabeth Quat, Dr Junius Ho, Ms Nixie Lam, Mr Yiu Pak-leung and Mr Chan Siu-hung.

At the invitation of the Panel, the Development Bureau's delegation led by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, will join the study visit.

Update on cluster of Candida auris cases in Queen Elizabeth Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on Candida auris carrier cases, the spokesperson for Queen Elizabeth Hospital gave the following update today (December 18):

Following a contact tracing investigation, one more male patient, aged 71 in the surgical ward, was identified as a carrier of Candida auris while not having signs of infection. The patient is still hospitalised due to his own underlying disease and is in critical condition. He is being treated in isolation.

The hospital will continue the contact tracing investigation of close contacts of the patient in accordance with the prevailing guidelines. A series of enhanced infection control measures have already been adopted to prevent the spread of Candida auris:

1. Thorough cleaning and disinfection of the ward concerned;
2. Enhanced admission screening for patients and environmental screening procedures; and
3. Application of stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene of staff and patients.

The hospital will continue to closely monitor the situation of the patient. The case has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Government announces ending emergency use regime for COVID-19 vaccines as planned and cessation arrangement of accepting Indemnity Fund applications by late December

Subsequent to the resumption of normalcy in Hong Kong after the COVID-19 epidemic, COVID-19 is now being managed as a type of upper respiratory tract illness. The Government announced today (December 18) that the Prevention and Control of Disease (Use of Vaccines) Regulation (Cap. 599K), which is the public health emergency regulation on the emergency use of COVID-19 vaccines and also the only remaining effective regulation among the various public health emergency regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599) enacted by the Government during the epidemic, will expire at midnight on December 23. The expiry implies the end of emergency use regime for COVID-19 vaccines.

The Government enacted Cap. 599K on December 23, 2020, to authorise the emergency use of COVID-19 vaccines developed and tested within a short period of time and with evidence proving their safety and efficacy; and to enable the on-going monitoring of data concerning the safety, quality and efficacy of vaccines during the emergency use so as to support the eventual transition of emergency approval to registration in accordance with the Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations (Cap. 138A). To date, sufficient scientific evidence and safety data are in place to indicate that the benefits of COVID-19 vaccines outweigh the risks. The vaccines not only protect individuals from COVID-19 infection but also reduce the seriousness of the condition of infected persons who have received vaccination. Currently, there are COVID-19 vaccines fulfilling safety, efficacy and quality requirements registered under the Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations (Cap. 138A). As such, COVID-19 vaccines will be arranged for use in Hong Kong under the regular regulatory system for pharmaceutical products, and the Advisory Panel on COVID-19 Vaccines set up in accordance with Cap. 599K, will be disbanded at the same time. The Government is earnestly thankful to the experts for their objective and expert advice which were conducive to bringing Hong Kong back to normalcy.

The Indemnity Fund for Adverse Events Following Immunization with Coronavirus Disease-2019 Vaccines (AEFI Fund) was established in February 2021 to provide instant financial support to eligible individuals who have proof of suffering from unexpected serious adverse events (SAEs) associated with COVID-19 vaccines administered under the government vaccination programme. Following the cessation of the arrangement for emergency use of COVID-19 vaccines by midnight on December 23 and the normal use of COVID-19 vaccines in Hong Kong under the regular regulatory system for pharmaceutical products, the AEFI Fund arrangement will end at the same time. The AEFI Fund will cease accepting new applications involving COVID-19 vaccines administered on or after December 24. In other words, cases involving COVID-19 vaccines administered at or after midnight on December 23 will be ineligible to apply for the AEFI Fund. A spokesman of the Health Bureau emphasised that the AEFI Fund is an administrative arrangement. Ending such an arrangement will not affect the right of relevant individuals in seeking legal recourse for damages or losses against the vaccine manufacturer. Affected individuals can still undertake civil action for claims against any person responsible for their bodily injury.

For vaccines administered under the Government's COVID-19 Vaccination Programme on or before December 23, 2023, individuals holding proof of suffering from the SAEs certified by a Registered Medical Practitioner are still eligible to apply for the AEFI Fund within two years after receiving the last dose of COVID-19 vaccine under the government vaccination programme. For details and the documents required for submitting an application, citizens may refer to the website (www.axa.com.hk/en/aefi-fund) or call the hotline at 2894 4699. The hotline is manned from 9am to 5.30pm from Monday to Friday (except public holidays).

During the epidemic, the Government had enacted a number of other public health emergency regulations (viz. Cap. 599C to Cap. 599J and Cap. 599L) under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599). Those

regulations have expired and been invalidated in early to mid-2023 respectively.

Government promulgates Performance Monitoring Guidelines for Members of District Councils and District Council Standing Orders

The Government promulgated the Performance Monitoring Guidelines for Members of the District Councils and the District Council Standing Orders Model Text today (December 18) to further improve the accountability of members of the District Councils (DCs), increase the transparency of their work, and enhance the procedures of the DCs and their committees, so as to ensure executive-led governance.

The Guidelines set out the standard of performance required of DC members, including setting up offices, meeting members of the public, so that the DCs can best undertake their advisory and service functions. The Guidelines also set out a list of negative behaviours, including obstructing DC members in conducting meetings, insulting other DC members and public officials, preventing others from leaving or attending meetings, failing to declare interests. The Guidelines set out in detail the investigation procedures, appeals mechanism and relevant sanctions for DC members that have performed poorly or committed prohibited acts, to ensure every DC member upholds their duty faithfully and serves the people.

The Standing Orders regulate the procedures for the DCs and their committees. The Standing Orders were revised to reflect the latest amendments to the District Councils Ordinance, including stipulating that the DC chairmanship is taken up by District Officers, the DC Chairman is responsible for appointing committees, appointing Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of committees, Chairman of working groups, co-opted members. Moreover, the Standing Orders include that DC members must observe order at meetings, and especially must not act or behave in a way to disrupt meeting proceedings.

The Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, said, "DC members must proactively fulfil their duties and responsibilities, and connect to and serve the people, reflect their opinions and support the Government's implementation of policies and must not be lazy and sloppy in their work. I hope the incoming DC members will adhere to the Guidelines and Standing Orders in carrying out their work, work hard for the people, resolve people's problems and address their demands. The concrete deliverables will enable the people to feel the fresh air of the new term of DCs, thereby

increasing their sense of happiness and contentment."

The Guidelines and Standing Order have been uploaded to the DC Members' Reference Corner (www.had.gov.hk/en/public_services/district_administration/DC_Members_Reference_Corner.htm) of the Home Affairs Department's website. They will also be uploaded to the DC website once the incoming DCs take office.

Fraudulent websites, mobile applications and internet banking login screens related to ZA Bank Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by ZA Bank Limited relating to fraudulent websites, mobile applications (Apps) and internet banking login screens, which have been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the websites, Apps or login screens concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.