

# LegCo Public Accounts Committee to hold public hearing next Monday

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

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Public Accounts Committee (PAC) will hold a public hearing on "Maintenance and modernisation of lifts and escalators in public rental housing estates" (Chapter 3) of the Director of Audit's Report No. 81 next Monday (December 18) at 3pm in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex.

Five witnesses have been invited to appear before the above hearing to respond to points raised in the Report and answer questions asked by PAC members.

The programme for the public hearing is as follows:

Subject: Maintenance and modernisation of lifts and escalators in public rental housing estates  
(Chapter 3 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 81)  
Date: December 18 (Monday)  
Time: 3pm  
Venue: Conference Room 1

Witnesses:

Ms Winnie Ho  
Secretary for Housing/  
Chairman of the Hong Kong Housing Authority

Miss Rosanna Law  
Director of Housing

Mr Michael Hong  
Assistant Director (Estate Management) 3  
Housing Department

Mr Derek Lo  
Chief Manager/Management (Support Services 1)  
Housing Department

Ms Carmen Chan  
Senior Building Services Engineer/Building Services Management  
Housing Department

The PAC is chaired by Mr Shiu Ka-fai, and its Deputy Chairman is Mr Paul Tse. Other members are Ms Yung Hoi-yan, Mr Luk Chung-hung, Mr Edmund Wong, Mr Louis Loong and Ms Carmen Kan.

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## Speech by DSJ at opening ceremony of Inaugural Conference of Centre on Contemporary China and the World of HKU (English only) (with photo)

Following are the opening remarks by the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Mr Cheung Kwok-kwan, at the opening ceremony of the Inaugural Conference of the Centre on Contemporary China and the World (CCCW) of the University of Hong Kong today (December 15):

President Zhang (President and Vice-chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, Professor Zhang Xiang), Director Li (Director of the CCCW, Professor Li Cheng), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is with great pleasure that I join you all in this prestigious inaugural conference, celebrating the establishment of this remarkable research centre in the University of Hong Kong (HKU) and sharing on the theme of "A Renewed Hub and a New Horizon".

It is very true that the question of governance has drawn unprecedented attention on both domestic and global perspectives. Meanwhile, the Sino-US (United States) relationship, the most consequential bilateral relationship in the world, has become uncertain over the last few years. It is therefore, more than ever, that a leading global hub focused on studying the governance of China and the world is urgently needed.

As regards bilateral relations, there is no doubt that China and the United States are the two largest economies in the world, and represent one of the most important bilateral relations. The late Dr Henry Kissinger repeatedly stressed that the US-China relationship is essential to peace, development and prosperity of the two countries and the wider world.

Delightedly, the recent historic summit between President Xi and President Biden in San Francisco fostered a forward-looking San Francisco vision, which is of milestone significance. As President Xi told President Biden, "Planet Earth is big enough for the two countries to succeed", adding that the right thing to do is to choose mutual benefit over a zero-sum game. In response, President Biden also emphasised the need to avoid miscommunication and that competition does not veer into conflict.

Looking ahead, China and the United States can help each other succeed and prosper together, and the key of handling the Sino-US relations is to follow the fundamental principles of mutual respect, peaceful co-existence and win-win co-operation, said President Xi.

There are certainly other very important international relations such as Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. President Xi remarked that China and Europe are two major forces, markets, and civilisations on the world stage. They are the "two major forces advancing multi-polarity", "two major markets in support of globalization", and "two major civilizations championing diversity". China-EU (European Union) ties are also a foreign policy priority of China.

The EU leaders also reiterated that the EU totally disapproves of decoupling and severing supply chains from China, and hopes to strengthen exchanges and dialogue with China, and carry out more mutually beneficial cooperation.

As regards the Asia-Pacific region, in the recent meeting with the Australian Prime Minister in Beijing, President Xi remarked that China and Australia are both Asia-Pacific countries and important members of the G20, with no historical grievances or fundamental conflicts of interest, but every reason to be partners of mutual trust and mutual achievement. Both countries have embarked on the right path of improving relations.

The Australian Prime Minister responded that the two countries share extensive common interests, and dialogue and co-operation is the right choice to achieve win-win results.

Indeed, the world is undergoing momentous transformations unseen in a century and the global landscape is going through major shifts. Whatever the positions, the stakeholders have come to a crossroads, which requires wisdom as to where to go from here.

At this critical juncture, Hong Kong can make its contribution and has subtle but genuine leverage to strengthen connections.

We are a cosmopolitan city and share many values, from the rule of law to the free flow of capital, goods and talent, freely convertible currencies, and an open and free market.

We are bestowed with the advantages of the common law system in Hong Kong; the judiciary in Hong Kong exercising its power independently; and the enjoyment of rights and freedoms in Hong Kong based on international standards and guaranteed by the Basic Law, including the freedom to engage in academic research.

We are a full and separate member of international organisations such as WTO (World Trade Organization) and APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation). We are part of an extensive network of multi-lateral and bilateral agreements with other jurisdictions and international organisations.

Above all, the wide and international network enables us to keep doing what we are good at, namely, bridging between the Mainland of China and the rest of the world, and making Hong Kong the optimal location as a global hub of studying the governance of China and the world.

Hong Kong can serve as a key lever in the next phase of Sino-US relations, and more broadly, East-West and South-North interactions. And the CCCW, which builds on a foundation at HKU, is strategically positioned to serve as an institutional home for interdisciplinary and international collaboration.

Let us embrace this opportunity with a shared vision of Hong Kong playing a pivotal role in revitalising and strengthening the bonds that span across the Pacific and beyond, enabling us to overcome challenges and seize new opportunities. Thank you very much.



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## [Appointments to Standing Committee on Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service](#)

The Government announced today (December 15) that the Chief Executive has appointed Mr Jason Pow Wing-nin, and reappointed Ms Daisy Ho Chiu-fung and Mr Stephen Hung Wan-shun as members of the Standing Committee on Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service (Judicial Committee) for two years with effect from January 1, 2024.

Mr Jat Sew Tong, existing member of the Judicial Committee, will retire on December 31 this year. "We would like to thank Mr Jat for his invaluable contributions to the Judicial Committee over the years," a spokesman said.

The Judicial Committee is tasked to advise and make recommendations to the Chief Executive on matters concerning the salary and conditions of service of judges and judicial officers.

The membership list of the Judicial Committee with effect from January 1, 2024, is as follows:

Chairman

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Dr Clement Chen Cheng-jen

#### Members

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Ms Daisy Ho Chiu-fung  
Mr Stephen Hung Wan-shun  
Ms Miranda Kwok Pui-fong  
Professor Paul Lam Kwan-sing  
Ms Cecilia Lee Sau-wai  
Mr Jason Pow Wing-nin

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## **AFCD seized large batch of endangered red-headed Amazon river turtles (with photo)**

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) seized a total of 492 endangered red-headed Amazon river turtles (*Podocnemis erythrocephala*) with an estimated market value of about \$3 million at Hong Kong International Airport on December 11.

"The AFCD inspected a consignment of live turtles from Peru at the airport, and found 492 endangered red-headed Amazon river turtles among the consignment of over 14 000 live turtles. An attempt to illegally import endangered turtles of unknown source by concealing them in the consignment of a large number of live turtles of other species is suspected," an AFCD spokesman said.

Red-headed Amazon river turtle is a species listed under the Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). According to the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance (Cap. 586), import of Appendix II species requires the production of valid CITES documents. As the batch of red-headed Amazon river turtles was not covered by any valid CITES document, the AFCD therefore seized the turtles for further investigation.

According to the Ordinance, any person illegally import scheduled species is liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years upon conviction. The seized specimens will also be forfeited.

The spokesman noted that the Government is committed to protecting endangered species. The AFCD will remain vigilant and continue to monitor and combat illegal activities involving endangered species.

The AFCD appeals to members of the public to call 2150 6978 or email

espint@afcd.gov.hk to report any suspected irregularities.



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## [Import of poultry meat and products from Holbæk Municipality in Denmark suspended](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (December 15) that in view of a notification from the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Holbæk Municipality in Denmark, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the area with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 630 tonnes of frozen poultry meat from Denmark in the first nine months of this year.

"The CFS has contacted the Danish authority over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the World Organisation for Animal Health and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreak. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.