

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.

Appointment of Chief Corporate Affairs Officer of Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority

The Financial Secretary, in exercise of the authority under the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Ordinance (Cap. 485) (MPFSO) delegated to him by the Chief Executive, has appointed Mr Wallace Lau Ka-ki as the Chief Corporate Affairs Officer and Executive Director of the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority (MPFA) for a period of three years from December 22, 2023, to December 21, 2026, both dates inclusive.

Announcing the appointment today (December 15), a spokesperson for the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau said, "Mr Lau is a seasoned public administrator with nearly 30 years of experience in public service. We are confident that Mr Lau will, with his career background and personal connections, make invaluable contributions to the reform of the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) System, and strive to improve the System's function of providing scheme members with retirement protection."

The MPFA is a statutory body established under the MPFSO in September 1998 for the regulation and supervision of the MPF System.

Proposed road works in To Kwa Wan gazetted

The Government gazetted today (December 15) the proposed road works at To Kwa Wan Road, Kai Ming Street, Yuk Shing Street, Hung Fook Street, Ngan Hon Street and Wing Kwong Street in To Kwa Wan, including the construction of a footbridge connecting Hung Fook Street and Ma Tau Wai Road/To Kwa Wan Road Garden, to facilitate the redevelopment project of the Urban Renewal Authority.

Details of the proposal are set out in the Annex. The plan and scheme of the works are available for public inspection at the following government offices during office hours:

Central and Western Home Affairs Enquiry Centre,
G/F, Harbour Building,
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Kowloon City Home Affairs Enquiry Centre,
LG/F, Kowloon City Government Offices,
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom, Kowloon

District Lands Office, Kowloon West,
4/F, South Tower,
West Kowloon Government Offices,
11 Hoi Ting Road, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon

The gazette notice, scheme, plan and location plan are available at www.tlb.gov.hk/eng/publications/transport/gazette/gazette.html.

Any person who wishes to object to the works or the use, or both, is required to address to the Secretary for Transport and Logistics an objection in writing, which can be submitted via the following means:

- By post or by hand to the Transport and Logistics Bureau's Drop-in Box No. 6 located at the entrance on 2/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong. The box is available for use between 8am and 7pm from Monday to Friday (except public holidays);
- By fax to 2868 4643; or
- By email to gazettetlb@tlb.gov.hk.

A notice of objection should describe the objector's interest and the manner in which he or she alleges that he or she will be affected by the works or the use. Objectors are requested to provide contact details to facilitate communication. A notice of objection should be delivered to the Secretary for Transport and Logistics not later than February 14, 2024.

[Speech by SJ at farewell sitting of Honourable Madam Justice Maria Yuen \(English only\)](#)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, at the farewell sitting of the Honourable Madam Justice Maria Yuen today (December 15):

Chief Judge of the High Court (Mr Jeremy Poon), Madam Justice Yuen (Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of the High Court, Madam Justice Maria Yuen), members of the Judiciary, Chairman of the Bar Association (Mr Victor Dawes, SC), President of the Law Society (Mr Chan Chak-ming), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

As one of those who had the privilege of appearing before her ladyship Madam Justice Yuen, it gives me great pleasure to have the chance to say a few words on this happy and memorable occasion.

Madam Justice Yuen has served as a Justice of Appeal since May 2002, for over 20 years. She joined the Judiciary back in 1997, the same year when China resumed sovereignty over Hong Kong. The fact that, since then, we have been able to maintain and develop Hong Kong's common law system pursuant to the principle of "one country, two systems" is largely attributed to the invaluable contribution of our judiciary. It is not only a judiciary which exercises the independent power of adjudication pursuant to the Basic Law. It is also a judiciary run by judges and judicial officers who, by virtue of their judicial abilities and integrity, have earned the respect and confidence of the people of Hong Kong and beyond. Madam Justice Yuen is a prime example.

Madam Justice Yuen's knowledge and experience in civil and commercial matters, for example, in the area of land law, the law of equity and company law, are unparalleled. But appearing before her could be a challenging exercise. She would, quite rightly, require the parties to focus on the real issues by asking sharp questions. Counsel who tried to dodge those questions would likely have a hard time. I still remember that, on some occasions during my private practice, I was reminded by my Lady not to "beat around the bush". Seriously, Madam Justice Yuen set a perfect example of how a court hearing can be conducted both fairly and efficiently.

In a speech delivered by her ladyship at the 196th Congregation of the Faculty of Law of the University of Hong Kong on January 4, 2017, she remarked that, as the work of judges in contemporary society, whether in Hong Kong or elsewhere, has become more complex, there is more the reason why judges need to give sufficiently reasoned judgments, written in a way as if they are explaining their decisions to an "intelligent next door neighbour"; in other words, someone with no pre-existing knowledge of the background, the issues or the law. At the same time, she urged people to read the judgments from beginning to end first, and reflect on them for a while, before passing judgment on the judges; instead of applying a simplistic "knee-jerk" reaction where praise or criticism is automatically activated by the result alone. This is a piece of extremely wise and important advice that anyone who truly cherishes the rule of law should bear in mind.

In the same speech, she described judicial independence as follows:

"It encompasses independence from all forms of outside influence, explicit or implicit, institutional or personal. It is ingrained into us that judges must act without fear or favour. To me, that is short-hand for saying that we must decide each case that comes before us, on the issues as argued in court, and on the law as we honestly understand it, in order to arrive in good faith at a conclusion that the law commands, irrespective of acclaim or criticism, from whichever sector of the community."

For anyone who has appeared before Madam Justice Yuen or read her judgment, he or she would certainly agree that this was exactly what Madam Justice Yuen had done in practice.

Madam Justice Yuen is extremely likeable and pleasant outside the court. But she is also a person who would stand firm on what she likes and dislikes. Based on some reliable intelligence, I have come to know that, on one occasion, some relatives threw a birthday party for Mr Geoffrey Ma with a Manchester United theme. Madam Justice Yuen refused to put on a Manchester United shirt which everyone else did, and she turned up in an Arsenal shirt instead!

Our legal profession, our judiciary and Hong Kong are extremely lucky to have the service of Madam Justice Yuen. On behalf of the Department of Justice and the Government of the HKSAR (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) as a whole, I wish to express our utmost gratitude to Madam Justice Yuen for her immense contribution to Hong Kong. And I wish her a very happy and healthy retirement!

[Application deadline for Squatter](#)

Occupants Voluntary Registration Scheme extended

The Lands Department (LandsD) announced today (December 15) the extension of the application deadline for the Squatter Occupants Voluntary Registration Scheme (the Scheme) to December 31, 2024.

A spokesperson for the LandsD said, "In view of the Government's continuous intensified effort to resume land for implementing various development projects, it decided to extend the Scheme to allow more time for occupants residing in squatter structures for non-domestic uses to register, so as to benefit from the rehousing and compensation arrangements in development clearances."

Under the Scheme launched on November 1, 2018, persons would be eligible to register if they are able to prove that they started residing in licenced non-domestic structures or in squatter structures recorded for non-domestic uses in the 1982 Squatter Control Survey (collectively referred to as "non-domestic squatter structures") on May 10, 2018, or before. Occupants of non-domestic squatter structures who have successfully registered may apply for rehousing and compensation if they are affected by the Government's development clearance exercises in future. For persons residing in licenced domestic structures or in squatter structures recorded for domestic uses in the 1982 Squatter Control Survey (collectively referred to as "domestic squatter structures"), they are not required to register under the Scheme in order to apply for rehousing and compensation during development clearances.

The spokesperson said, "As non-domestic squatter structures should not be used for domestic purposes, persons residing in such squatter structures were not eligible to apply for rehousing and compensation in the past. The Government announced on May 10, 2018, the enhancement of the rehousing and compensation arrangements for occupants of squatter structures, and introduced the Scheme to allow persons already residing in non-domestic squatter structures at that time to apply for registration, such that persons successfully registered may apply for rehousing and compensation when being affected by government development clearances in future. Not only does the Scheme secure the identity of registered households which may apply for rehousing and compensation, it also helps discourage others from moving to reside in non-domestic squatter structures as well as curb related speculative activities. As of September 30, 2023, over 900 households had already successfully been registered."

Upon the implementation of the Scheme and in order to minimise duplicated procedures, for occupants of non-domestic structures who have been covered by a Pre-clearance Survey (also known as freezing survey) conducted by the LandsD for the relevant development project, if they fulfil the above registration eligibility (i.e. already residing in the non-domestic squatter structure on or before May 10, 2018), they would be automatically deemed to

be successfully registered under the Scheme without having to submit registration applications separately. As of now, over 200 households of non-domestic squatter structures who were deemed successfully registered have been offered rehousing and compensation due to government development clearances.

The spokesperson said, "The Scheme aims to handle rehousing and compensation matters for households residing in non-domestic structures in a more humane way in order to provide them with appropriate assistance. The LandsD reiterates that the department would tolerate the use of non-domestic squatter structures for domestic uses for households successfully registered under the Scheme. Having said that, the structures concerned are still required to comply with other requirements governing the licenced or surveyed squatter structures under the relevant licences and/or the prevailing squatter control policy, including the prohibition against any extension or addition, as well as unauthorised alteration."

Guidance notes and application forms for the Scheme can be downloaded from the LandsD's website (www.landsd.gov.hk/en/land-mgt-enforce/squatter-control/one-off-squatter-occupants-voluntary-registration-scheme.html), and will be made available via District Lands Offices, Clearance Offices and Land Control Teams/Land Enforcement Teams of the LandsD, and at Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of the Home Affairs Department. For enquiries, please call 2231 3392 or email to vrs-cu@landsd.gov.hk.