

[Visa-free access to Angola and Kyrgyzstan for HKSAR passport holders](#)

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has received notification from the Government of the Republic of Angola (Angola) that HKSAR passport holders may visit Angola visa-free for a stay of up to 30 days and a maximum stay of 90 days per year.

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan) has also confirmed that HKSAR passport holders may visit Kyrgyzstan visa-free for a stay of up to 30 days entering through Manas International Airport in Bishkek with a return air ticket and re-enter after 30 days from the date of departure from Kyrgyzstan.

An Immigration Department spokesman said, "Angola and Kyrgyzstan are along the Belt and Road. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, the relevant visa-free arrangements will bring greater travel convenience to holders of HKSAR passports and strengthen the tourism, cultural and economic ties between the places."

As of today, 171 countries and territories have granted visa-free access or visa-on-arrival entry to HKSAR passport holders. Please visit the following website for details: www.immd.gov.hk/eng/service/travel_document/visa_free_access.html, or scan the QR code in the attachment.

[Temporary closure of Aberdeen Public Library](#)

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (December 7) that the Aberdeen Public Library (including the Students' Study Room) will be temporarily closed on December 10 to facilitate voting for the 2023 District Council Ordinary Election at the polling station located in the Aberdeen Sports Centre.

A book drop service will be available at the Aberdeen Public Library on that day. Alternatively, readers may borrow or return library materials at other public libraries, or renew loan items by telephone on 2698 0002/2827 2833 or online at www.hkpl.gov.hk.

For enquiries, please contact library staff of the Aberdeen Public Library at 2921 1056.

Speech by SCED at Policy Dialogue Session of 13th BIP Asia Forum (English only)

Following are the opening remarks by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, at the Policy Dialogue Session – Powering Economic Growth through a Future-Ready IP Policy of the 13th Business of Intellectual Property Asia Forum today (December 7):

Director General Daren Tang (Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization), Deputy Commissioner Lu Pengqi (Deputy Commissioner of the China National Intellectual Property Administration), Professor Muhammed Zeki Durak (President of the Turkish Patent and Trademark Office), Mr Santisouk Phounesavath (Chairman, Association of Southeast Asian Nations Working Group on Intellectual Property Cooperation), Mr Rowel Barba (Chair, Intellectual Property Rights Experts Group, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I'm thrilled to be here at today's Policy Dialogue Session. We have a lineup of experienced leaders of international and regional intellectual property (IP) offices, who will shed light on the latest global and regional IP policies. But before we dive into their insights, allow me some time to pick up what the Deputy Financial Secretary has just mentioned about our ongoing efforts to further develop Hong Kong into a dynamic regional IP trading centre.

One of the areas that we are focusing on is patents. Since the introduction of Hong Kong's Original Grant Patent (OGP) system in 2019, we have poured resources into fortifying our patent regime by building up our substantive examination capacity progressively. As you would have already heard, we will be introducing legislative amendments in the first half of next year to introduce the "patent box" tax incentive, offering a competitive tax regime to those taxpayers who have successfully brought their R&D (research and development) outcomes to the marketplace and have their patented inventions commercialised.

We will also plan for the introduction of regulatory arrangements for local patent agent services. We recognise the crucial role played by patent agents in supporting inventors to file and prosecute patent applications and resolve disputes over issues on patents, thereby driving more IP trading activities involving patents with market potential and value. Their professionalism is instrumental in supporting the effective commercialisation of IP assets. The proposed regulatory arrangements will also help enhance service quality and nurturing professional talent, serving as a complementary component to support the development of the OGP system. We will work with

stakeholders to look into the pertinent issues involved and work out a way forward in the best interest of Hong Kong.

Innovation does not stop at patents alone. We are keenly aware of the lightning-fast advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and the need for enhanced copyright protection in this domain. We will conduct a consultation next year to gauge stakeholders' views on how we may enhance copyright protection for AI-generated work to support AI technology development in Hong Kong.

Our commitment also extends to elevating the experience and visibility of Hong Kong's trade shows and events, including the Hong Kong International Film and TV Market exhibition, the Hong Kong International Licensing Show, and the Hong Kong Book Fair. These events serve as vibrant hubs where IP owners, sellers, buyers and intermediaries gather, fostering connections and deal-making opportunities. By enhancing these platforms, we attract a wide array of industry players, boosting the visibility and allure of Hong Kong's IP trading scene. Moreover, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council has been enhancing its Asia IP Exchange portal, which provides a dynamic digital marketplace that complements the physical trade shows and events. The synergy between these physical and digital platforms will enhance accessibility and facilitates the seamless exchange of IP on a regional scale.

By connecting the dots and implementing these interconnected initiatives, we will continue to enrich the IP ecosystem, making it more comprehensive and solid in support of Hong Kong's growth and development as a regional IP trading centre.

Ladies and gentlemen, IP is the cornerstone of today's global economy. According to a recent study conducted by the Intellectual Property Department, on average over the period of 2019-2021, the IP-intensive industries in Hong Kong contributed to 32.7 per cent of our GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and 29.1 per cent of our total employment, highlighting the pivotal role IP plays in our economic development. I am eagerly awaiting the insights of our distinguished guests on how policymakers are harnessing the full potential of IP to empower startups, businesses, intermediaries, and society as a whole. It's an exciting time, and let's make the most of it.

Last but not least, to all the eligible voters of Hong Kong, the District Council election is just around the corner. Remember to cast your vote on Sunday. Pick your preferred candidate, and let's build a nice and harmonious community together. Thank you.

[EMSD announces latest sampling results](#)

for legionella at fresh water cooling towers

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (December 7) announced that the department tested 101 water samples collected from cooling towers in 62 buildings in its routine inspections in November this year. Three samples were detected to have a total legionella count at or above the upper threshold, which is 1 000 colony-forming units per millilitre. The latest statistics are set out in Annex 1.

The cooling towers in which the three samples were collected are located at Wing Ming Building, 122 Ting On Street, Kwun Tong; 23-25 Mei King Street, Kowloon City and 2 Yee On Street, Kwun Tong. The EMSD has issued nuisance notice under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance to the owners of the cooling towers requiring appropriate disinfection work to be done. Among them, the owners of two cooling towers have already completed the disinfection work. The EMSD has instructed again the owner of the cooling tower of the remaining case at 2 Yee On Street, Kwun Tong, to complete the disinfection work within a prescribed period. Details of the cases can be found in Annex 2.

Apart from carrying out routine surveillance inspections, the EMSD assists the Centre for Health Protection in collecting water samples for testing for epidemiological investigation of Legionnaires' disease. In November, one sample was detected to have a total legionella count at or above the upper threshold. The owner of the cooling tower has completed disinfection work. Details of the cases can also be found in Annex 2.

The EMSD publishes the latest statistics of the above information on a half-monthly basis on its website (www.emsd.gov.hk/en/other_regulatory_services/cooling_towers/water_sampling/index.html).

The EMSD reminds the owners of fresh water cooling towers that they have the responsibility to design, operate and maintain cooling towers properly. They should arrange regular inspections, timely maintenance and periodic testing of the water quality in their cooling towers in accordance with the Code of Practice for Fresh Water Cooling Towers issued by the department to prevent the proliferation of legionella.

Speech by CE at 2023 Colloquium on

International Law (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the 2023 Colloquium on International Law today (December 7):

Acting Commissioner Li Yongsheng (Acting Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), Ms Teresa Cheng (Co-Chairman of the Asian Academy of International Law), Dr Anthony Neoh (Co-Chairman of the Asian Academy of International Law), Professor Huang Jin (President of the Chinese Society of International Law), Consuls-General, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to speak to you today at the opening of the annual Colloquium on International Law. And I'm delighted to do so in person this year after COVID.

Yes, it's good to welcome you all to Hong Kong, once again. Good to know that you're here from so many professions, interests and backgrounds. All of you associated, in one way or another, with international law and Hong Kong's abiding role in its enduring principles and continuing practice.

I would first like to extend my gratitude to the Asian Academy of International Law, and the Chinese Society of International Law, for organising this important annual event.

I find the theme of this year's colloquium – "Navigating the Current International Legal Order" most opportune. Well, we say legal order, but you would know, in reality, the world is beset with disorder.

We face multiple challenges today in a global landscape and economy rife with complex legal and geopolitical concerns.

But as President Xi Jinping said at the recent Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, "humankind is a community with a shared future". And he added that "co-operation is the sure way to success in launching major initiatives that benefit all".

As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative this year, I can assure you that the Hong Kong SAR Government is working to do just that: building an inclusive and interconnected community, one with a shared future, one that reaches out to the world.

Such co-operation contributes to a sound and effective international legal order. Hong Kong has the country's full support, under the National 14th Five-Year Plan, in advancing as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region.

That means we are committed to participating in, and contributing to, the rule of law – locally, as well as globally.

We are well-placed to do so, to serve as a "super connector" and "super value-adder" between Mainland China and the rest of the world. That, of course, is thanks to the unique principle of "one country, two systems".

Long a global financial, trading and logistics centre, Hong Kong is also consistently rated among the top, internationally, in the rule of law.

Hong Kong ranked 23rd out of 142 countries and jurisdictions in the Rule of Law Index, published by the World Justice Project this year. That places us firmly in the top quintile of the world in this area.

As the only common law jurisdiction in China, our legal system resembles that of major international financial centres around the globe. Hong Kong's judicial system is internationally renowned, open and exercises its powers independently. Hong Kong's legal sector boasts enviable expertise in international legal, dispute resolution and deal making services.

These and other deeply engrained qualities reflect the rule of law practised in Hong Kong. They demonstrate how Hong Kong can play a valuable role in the development and maintenance of an effective international legal order. And I look forward to expanding our international exchange and collaboration in jurisprudence and legal services.

Hong Kong, of course, has a long and noteworthy history of co-operation with international legal organisations. We have wide-ranging experience in drawing on the strengths of East and West legal traditions, on serving as a conduit between the Chinese legal system and other international legal systems.

In the latest World Competitiveness Yearbook, Hong Kong topped the world in its rankings in "business legislation".

As an international trade centre, Hong Kong is committed to creating a legal infrastructure that enables traders in deal making. That is why, last December, the UN Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods was fully implemented here in Hong Kong through local legislation.

Beyond encouraging deal making, the Convention reduces transaction costs. The Convention allows a uniform sales law to govern the bulk of international sales transactions done by Hong Kong's businesses. That enables them to trade with their overseas counterparts on a fair and level playing field, using a sales law familiar to both sides.

In my recent Policy Address, I announced the establishment of the Hong Kong International Legal Talents Training Academy. It will help us capitalise on Hong Kong's bilingual common law system and international status.

I believe it will also become a compelling asset in the development and maintenance of a sound international legal order.

Today's Colloquium on International Law is a prime example of the benefits we can gain through discussion, the exchange of ideas and the wealth of experience that fills this room.

On that note, I wish you all a rewarding Colloquium. I wish you, too, the best of business and health in the new year.

Thank you.