

Appointments to Management Committee of Consumer Legal Action Fund announced

The Government announced today (December 4) the reappointment of Ms Theresa Lena Chow and the appointment of Ms Stephanie Hung Yu-jie as members to the Management Committee of the Consumer Legal Action Fund for a term of two years with effect from December 6, 2023.

A Government spokesman thanked the outgoing member, Mr Alex Fan Hoi-kit, for his contributions to the Management Committee during his tenure.

The Consumer Legal Action Fund was established in 1994 to facilitate consumer access to legal remedies by providing legal assistance to consumers in cases involving significant consumer interests.

The Consumer Council is the trustee of the Fund. The Management Committee assists the Consumer Council in managing the Fund and determining the eligibility of applications under the Fund.

The membership of the Management Committee with effect from December 6, 2023, is as follows:

Ms Astina Au Sze-ting
Ms Theresa Lena Chow
Ms Stephanie Hung Yu-jie
Mr Richard Khaw Wei-kiang, SC
Mr Eugene Liu
Mr Johnny Ma Ka-chun, SC
Mr Raymond Mak Ka-chun
Mr Alan Ng Man-sang
Dr Karen Shum Hau-yan
Ms Gilly Wong Fung-han (ex-officio member)
Mr Philip Wong Wing-cheong
Mr Selwyn Yu Sing-cheung, SC

Police National Security Department strongly condemns claim and act of

jumping bail

The National Security Department (NSD) of the Hong Kong Police Force said today (December 4) that Police have noted someone's recent claim of jumping Police bail in social media and strongly condemn the irresponsible action which is against and challenging the rule of law.

The woman concerned was arrested by NSD on August 10, 2020 for suspected "collusion with with external elements". She was later sentenced to imprisonment for other offences from late 2020 to mid-2021. The woman has been released on bail by NSD. Police also restricted her from leaving Hong Kong according to Schedule 2 of Article 43 of the National Security Law. While on bail, the woman reported back to Police punctually and cooperatively. She earlier disclosed to Police that she wished to study abroad and provided admission documents as a proof. Hence, NSD returned the travel documents to her and extended her bail until December.

Police urge the woman to immediately turn back before it is too late and not to choose a path of no return. Otherwise, she will bear the stigma of "fugitive" for the rest of her life.

Red flags hoisted at Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (December 4) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Speech by CE at 2023 Yidan Prize Awards Ceremony (English only)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at 2023 Yidan Prize Awards Ceremony today (December 3):

Dr Charles Chen (Founder of Yidan Prize), Yidan Prize laureates, Consuls-General, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is a great honour to be here this evening, among this esteemed audience of educators, researchers, and institutional and governmental leaders – from Hong Kong, the Mainland of China, throughout Asia and around the world.

We gather here to celebrate the remarkable achievements of this year's Yidan Prize laureates. We're also here to make the powerful case that education can transform our communities and economies. That education can help realise a more equitable and inclusive world. That education is "the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world", to quote Nelson Mandela.

Or, as Dr Charles Chen, Founder of the Yidan Prize, said, just a few minutes ago, we have come together tonight because we believe in the power of education to improve lives.

Now in its seventh year, the Yidan Prize, as well as its laureates, have played a pivotal role in improving the quality of education worldwide, expanding access to learning, and enabling inclusivity through trailblazing contributions.

Hong Kong is honoured to be the home of the Yidan Prize. In just a handful of years, it has become a world-renowned, internationally coveted award in the vast and varied field of education.

The Hong Kong SAR Government is committed to education at every level, and every distinguishing aspect, of our community. Each year, education accounts for one out of every five dollars the Government spends. We are proud to be home to five of the world's top 100 universities, and provide an international learning environment for students from around the world to excel.

In my second Policy Address, I announced our commitment to developing Hong Kong as an international hub for post-secondary education. We will double the quota of non-Hong Kong students studying in Government-funded post-secondary institutions in Hong Kong. We will offer more scholarships for outstanding students from Belt and Road countries. We will also expand the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme. We are determined to attract more outstanding talents to pursue studies and conduct research in Hong Kong.

At the same time, we promote vocational and professional education, a

parallel pathway catering to youth with interests, abilities and goals, distinct from traditional post-secondary education.

We have also stepped up support for students with diverse backgrounds and educational needs. And we look to distinguished educators to enhance the ability to teach, learn and make education more widely accessible.

In that regard, the innovative work, and passionate engagement, of this year's two Yidan Prize laureates, Professor Michelene Chi and Mr Shai Reshef, is inspiring.

Professor Chi, this year's laureate of the Yidan Prize for Education Research, has built a luminous career on the scientific pursuit of how students learn. In the process, she has created a widely applicable, and accessible, framework for active learning.

Her Interactive, Constructive, Active and Passive framework, or the ICAP framework, provides a robust structure for promoting critical and creative thinking at all levels of education, empowering educators to create more effective educational experiences for students.

Mr Reshef, this year's laureate of the Yidan Prize for Education Development, is Founder and President of the University of the People. Through his pioneering university, Mr Reshef is making higher education accessible to all, regardless of the students' personal, financial, geographical or political beliefs and realities.

To date, his tuition-free, accredited online university has opened the doors of opportunity to some 137,000 students from more than 200 countries, including 16,500 refugees. A round of applause!

To Professor Michelene Chi and Mr Shai Reshef, this year's worthy laureates, I extend my congratulations and my hope that, with the help of the Yidan Prize, you will continue to build on your groundbreaking contributions to global education.

My gratitude goes out, too, to the Yidan Prize Foundation and all those who have steadfastly supported the Yidan Prize in its dedicated mission.

Enjoy this very special and memorable evening, and the outstanding company all around you.

Thank you.

[Results of Reef Check 2023 announced](#)

(with photos)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) announced today (December 3) that the results of the Hong Kong Reef Check this year showed that local corals are generally in a healthy condition and that the species diversity remains on the high side.

The Hong Kong Reef Check 2023, a five-month programme started this June, covered a wide range of locations including a number of sites of ecological importance as well as the best coral sites known in the eastern part of Hong Kong waters, extending from Tung Ping Chau in the north to the Ninepin Group in the south. Among the 33 survey sites, nine were within marine parks, including Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park, Yan Chau Tong Marine Park and Tung Ping Chau Marine Park.

A variation in coral coverage, ranging from 12.8 per cent to 74.3 per cent, was recorded among the survey sites. Ten sites recorded over 50 per cent of coral coverage, including five sites within marine parks. Among all sites, A Ma Wan of Tung Ping Chau recorded the highest coral coverage of 74.3 per cent.

An AFCD spokesman said, "Coral bleaching was observed this summer at six survey sites, including Kai Kung Tau of Kat O, Au Yue Tsui of Yau Chau Tong, Wu Pai of Crescent Island, Coral Beach of Hoi Ha Wan and Siu Long Ke. The impact was minor and localised. It could be caused by the elevated water temperature in this summer."

Voluntary dive teams of the Reef Check also assessed the condition of corals at 10 sites using the Coral Watch tool. By measuring the colour intensity of the coral using a specially designed Coral Health Monitoring Chart, the health condition of corals can be determined. The deeper the colour, the healthier the corals. The average health index of the sites was 4.28, which was slightly better than last year's figure (4.06). The average health index is well above the general average value (3), indicating that the corals are generally in a healthy condition.

The survey method and data collection of the Hong Kong Reef Check's follow international standards. Reef Check divers recorded coral coverage and health status as well as other indicator species (including 20 species of fish and invertebrates). All the 20 assigned indicator species were recorded in the survey sites, with butterfly fish, groupers, wrasses, snappers, sea cucumbers, sea urchins and cowries found in abundance. A majority of the survey sites were found to have a high species diversity. Most of the groupers, wrasses, sweetlips and snappers were found in survey sites at Town Island in eastern waters and at Port Island, Wong Chuk Kok Hoi and Crescent Island West in north-eastern waters.

No signs of destructive fishing practices were observed at any sites. Abandoned nets were found at eight sites but their impact was minor. The AFCD

will arrange for a contractor to remove them.

The Hong Kong Reef Check is part of a global programme to promote the sustainable management of coral reefs. The Hong Kong Reef Check aims to raise public awareness of the ecological importance of corals and the need for coral conservation, and to provide updated information on local corals for conservation and management. The Hong Kong Reef Check Foundation held the first Reef Check in 1997. The AFCD has collaborated with the Foundation in conducting the survey since 2000, with growing attention and support from the public. This year, 103 dive teams involving over 1150 volunteer divers took part in the exercise, representing about 30-fold the number in 1997. The AFCD awarded souvenirs and certificates during the Closing Ceremony held today to the Reef Check teams and participating scientists to recognise their contribution.

Coral reefs are highly productive systems, which support a high diversity of marine life. The AFCD has been dedicated to implement a series of measures and programmes for conservation of coral in Hong Kong. Key measures include designation of marine parks and marine reserves, organisation of a range of education and publicity activities to enhance public understanding of the importance of coral communities, a yearly Reef Check to monitor the status of coral communities of Hong Kong, and studies and mitigation measures to restore degraded coral communities, etc.



