

## LCSD continues to enhance booking procedures of SmartPLAY

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) said today (November 14) that the department has been closely monitoring the operation of the SmartPLAY system since its launch on November 9 and taking follow-up actions. After adjusting the system settings over the past few days, the system has been smoother and capacity multiplied to allow booking of facilities by thousands of users simultaneously. Before logging in, an online queuing system has been added, so that the users can queue in an orderly manner. At present, the system allows 20 000 users to line up simultaneously. This morning, 3 000 bookings have been completed within the first half hour. After that, users can enter the web page for booking without queuing.

The department will continue to closely monitor the operation of the system and will follow up as appropriate to ensure that users can book leisure venues more smoothly.

After the implementation of SmartPLAY, the hirer must fill in the patron numbers of four other users as team members when submitting applications for booking of turf soccer pitches no matter through balloting or on a first-come, first-served basis. To combat touting activities, the hirer and three of the users named in the application must be present to check in for using the booked session. The above search user function is to facilitate users to search for their team members, making the booking process more convenient.

The department noted the concern from users last night and immediately required the contractor to amend the system so as to enhance the procedures of booking turf soccer pitches through SmartPLAY. The function of adding users as team members by searching "User Account Numbers or Alias" has been removed from the Smart Self-service Stations and website of SmartPLAY (the relevant function on the mobile app will also be removed upon the approval of corresponding app stores), hence the full Chinese/English name of the users who are not on the friend list will no longer be displayed. The LCSD has also reported the incident to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data last night. Besides, the contractor has also started to modify the system so that when submitting the details of four other users for turf soccer pitches booking, the hirer can only select the users who had accepted the invitations to be included in the friend list. The team members will also receive notifications for successful bookings, ensuring the security of the users' information.

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# Government takes forward Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme

"The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address" put forward an initiative of Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme (Pilot Scheme) to extend the coverage of the Elderly Health Care Vouchers to suitable medical institutions in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) next year. The preliminary target is to cover about five additional medical institutions as trial service points for provision of primary healthcare services at GBA cities where Hong Kong elderly have closer ties with, as well as to include individual designated medical institutions providing dental services in places such as Shenzhen.

The Health Bureau and the Department of Health (DH) have already commenced to take forward the Pilot Scheme. Relevant Mainland authorities will also be invited to recommend medical institutions suitable for inclusion in the Pilot Scheme. The DH is at the same time conducting a market research by inviting Hong Kong medical institutions to provide for the Government's reference the information and operational details of medical institutions which are set up, being operated or supervised by them in the GBA.

The targets of the market research are Hong Kong medical institutions which are participants of the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme and familiar with its proper practices and claim procedures. At least one large-scale medical institution should be set up or being operated by the relevant Hong Kong medical institutions in the GBA to provide integrated medical and primary healthcare services or dental outpatient services for the elderly. Meanwhile, among the persons-in-charge, directors or senior management of that GBA medical institution, there should be at least one Hong Kong registered medical practitioner or registered dentist. This market research does not constitute any screening procedure nor agreement with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government.

The Pilot Scheme is anticipated to tie in with the HKSAR Government's policy objective of promoting primary healthcare, supporting the healthcare needs of the elderly and assisting the elderly in enhancing their awareness of disease prevention and self-management of health. In this connection, the Government will consider all relevant factors as the criteria for selecting medical institutions for the Pilot Scheme, including the location of the GBA medical institution, the availability of proven quality accreditation, relevant experiences in management and operation, its familiarity with the operation of Elderly Health Care Vouchers, as well as its ability to provide and handle a certain amount of outpatient healthcare services such as preventive, curative and rehabilitative services.

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## Speech by DCS at Hong Kong Management Association 2023 Annual Fellowship Dinner cum Hong Kong Sustainability Award Presentation Ceremony (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Cheuk Wing-hing, at the Hong Kong Management Association 2023 Annual Fellowship Dinner cum Hong Kong Sustainability Award Presentation Ceremony today (November 14):

YK (Chairman of the Hong Kong Management Association, Dr Pang Yiu-kai), SK (Deputy Chairman of the Hong Kong Management Association, Mr S K Cheong), Winfred (Deputy Chairman of the Hong Kong Management Association, Professor Winfred Engelbrecht-Bresges), Titania (Executive Director of the Hong Kong Management Association, Ms Titania Woo), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is great pleasure for me to attend the Hong Kong Management Association 2023 Annual Fellowship Dinner cum Hong Kong Sustainability Award Presentation Ceremony, and join such a large community of Hong Kong's senior executives, to exchange views on how to make Hong Kong more competitive, as well as to share the joy of the awardees.

The theme of the event, "Raising Hong Kong's Competitiveness for a New Era of Growth", couldn't have come at a more timely manner. While Hong Kong remains among the most competitive economies in the world, the landscape of the global market has changed a lot and the competition has never been keener, pushing us to continue to drive ourselves forward so that Hong Kong could stay ahead of other economies.

This year, Hong Kong came out of the pandemic with strength and vigour. Thanks to a strong rebound of tourism and private consumption, our GDP has this far recorded three consecutive quarters of positive growth. Our latest unemployment rate at 2.8 per cent means we are close to full employment. Yet, the pace of growth is still more moderate than expected. The difficult external environment, tight financial conditions including aggressive interest rate increase by major economies over the past year, have inevitably impacted on Hong Kong's trade, investment and consumption sentiment. To rise to these challenges, we must strengthen the resilience of our economy and foster sustainable growth in the long term.

We could not stress enough the importance of capitalising on Hong Kong's

unique advantage of enjoying the strong support of the motherland whilst being closely connected to the world under the "one country, two systems" principle. Three weeks ago, the Chief Executive delivered his second Policy Address and underscored the importance of actively aligning with the national development strategies, and promoting the development of the "eight centres" outlined in the 14th Five-Year Plan. We will not only reinforce the strengths of such traditional sectors as finance, trading, logistics, shipping and professional services, but will also explore new growth potential with an industry-oriented approach, developing such emerging strategic areas as innovation and technology, creative industries, pharmaceutical research and development, Chinese medicine and new energy transport. We have outlined in great detail in the Policy Address the measures to achieve the above targets.

In addition, our unrivalled access to the Mainland market indeed represents the best opportunities for businesses in Hong Kong. We have taken a multipronged approach to help enterprises fully leverage Hong Kong's competitiveness on this front. Firstly, we encourage enterprises to make good use of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, more commonly known as CEPA. Under CEPA, Hong Kong products meeting the CEPA rules of origin enjoy zero tariff preference on entering the Mainland market. Since CEPA was signed in 2003 and we are celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, the cumulative tariff savings for Hong Kong exports amounted to over RMB9.65 billion as at end-August. With the Mainland having opened up 96 per cent of its service sectors to Hong Kong's service industries, over 3 400 Hong Kong service suppliers had been certified under CEPA to develop business in the Mainland. CEPA has also enhanced Hong Kong's attractiveness for foreign investors to make use of Hong Kong as a base to expand into the Mainland. The number of external investors with regional headquarters, offices or local operations in Hong Kong has risen by two-thirds to almost 9 000. Building on this success, the Government is actively seeking to enrich the contents of CEPA by striving for further liberalisation, aiming especially at those sectors that Hong Kong enjoys competitive advantages, such as financial services, with a view to facilitating Hong Kong enterprises to tap into the Mainland market.

Last week, the Chief Executive led a Government delegation to participate in the China International Import Expo held in Shanghai, and supported a record high of more than 300 Hong Kong enterprises to showcase to Mainland customers quality Hong Kong products and services, covering food, innovation and technology, professional services, to name just a few. The Government will continue to help businesses navigate the dynamic landscape of the Mainland market, and explore the full potential therein.

Many companies are eager to make inroads into the rapidly booming e-commerce sector. The Chief Executive also announced in the Policy Address that the Government will assist Hong Kong's small-and-medium enterprises in developing e-commerce businesses in the Mainland, through organising Hong Kong Shopping Festivals on e-commerce platforms to promote awareness of Hong Kong brands, providing more flexible funding support under a new E-commerce Easy initiative of the Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales Fund (or BUD Fund) for the implementation of e-commerce projects, and providing more

training and information on how to conduct e-commerce business in the Mainland. An interdepartmental E-commerce Development Task Force will also be set up to look further into the strategies and policies.

It is important to point out that Hong Kong's economic exchanges with the Mainland does not flow only in one direction. As a global city with international standing, Hong Kong is the prime platform for Mainland enterprises and capital to go global, and serves as a bridge connecting the Mainland and the rest of the world, playing the role not only as a "super-connector" but also a "super value-adder". How could we do that? Because we have maintained strong trading ties through Hong Kong's extensive global economic and trade networks, while reaching out to Belt and Road markets in ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa. Looking ahead, we will continue to strengthen the ties with our trading partners by concluding more bilateral free trade agreements and investment agreements, including continuing to strive for Hong Kong's early accession to Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, or RCEP in short, as well as stepping up our efforts to explore business opportunities with Mainland enterprises. These include organising more outbound missions with Hong Kong and Mainland enterprises, to promote business opportunities for our professional services together with Mainland partners. Visits to the Greater Bay Area will also be organised for overseas enterprises in Hong Kong. More offices for business and trade will be set up along the Belt and Road to strengthen our trade promotional efforts in these emerging markets.

In our efforts to expand our mission abroad, we will be relentlessly reaching out to strategic enterprises to get them to set up or expand their businesses in Hong Kong. The Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises established last year already attracted 30 strategic enterprises, which will invest a total of more than \$30 billion in Hong Kong, and create about 10 000 jobs, the majority of which are scientific research and management positions. Invest Hong Kong, the Government's foreign direct investment department, also assisted over 300 Mainland and overseas enterprises in establishing or expanding their operations in Hong Kong this year so far. These new enterprises and investments will inject impetus into our economy, and bring diversity to our markets.

Ladies and gentlemen, sustainability is of paramount importance to our society, as the Chief Executive has mentioned in his Policy Address concerning the development in various sectors, from agriculture and fisheries, logistics to green finance. On behalf of the Government, I would like to compliment the Hong Kong Management Association on promoting the concept of sustainable development in the business community. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the new fellows and charter members of the Association, and to the awardees on their splendid efforts in embodying sustainability in their business model.

Lastly, I would like to remind everyone here that the seventh District Council Election will be held on December 10. I urge you to vote on Election Day to elect patriotic, committed and capable District Councillors for the good governance and well-being of Hong Kong. Thank you and I wish you all an enjoyable evening.



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## [DH investigates case of digitoxigenin poisoning and reports recall and investigation progress of one batch of herbal medicine labelled as “Rhizoma Bletillae”](#)

The Department of Health (DH) today (November 14) said that it is investigating a case of digitoxigenin poisoning after consumption of herbal medicine labelled as "Rhizoma Bletillae", and reported the progress and relevant investigation results with regard to the voluntarily recall by a licensed Chinese herbal medicines wholesaler, Kam Hing Hong Limited (Kam Hing Hong) from the market one batch of herbal medicine labelled as "Rhizoma Bletillae" (batch number: 17082023) as [announced earlier](#).

The DH earlier received a notification of a suspected case of digitoxigenin poisoning from the Hospital Authority (HA) and commenced investigations immediately. The case involved a 56-year-old female patient, who developed dizziness, vomiting, diarrhea and bradycardia (abnormally low heart rate) after consuming a broth containing "Rhizoma Bletillae" prescribed by a Chinese Medicine Practitioner (CMP) on October 25. She attended the Princess Margaret Hospital for management on the next day (October 26) and was discharged on October 30. Laboratory testing by the HA revealed that digitoxigenin was detected in both patient's urine and the unused herbs.

According to source tracking and intelligence, the DH conducted an investigation at Kam Hing Hong and seized the concerned herbal medicine. After comparing with the morphological features of Rhizoma Bletillae as stipulated in the Pharmacopoeia of the People's Republic of China (2020 Edition), the herbal medicine was identified not being Rhizoma Bletillae. The DH received a test result today from the Government Laboratory confirming

that the samples of the alleged *Rhizoma Bletillae* were found to contain digitoxigenin. According to the Chinese medicine literature, *Rhizoma Bletillae* should not account for the presence of the digitoxigenin detected.

"Consumption of herbal medicines containing digitoxigenin could cause poisoning symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dizziness, bradycardia and arrhythmia. Hypotension, convulsion, coma or even death may result in severe cases," the spokesman for the DH explained.

Kam Hing Hong started to recall the herbal medicine concerned on November 3 and the DH has been closely monitoring the recall progress. The DH noted that Kam Hing Hong have recalled from market most of the relevant herbal medicine. Further investigation by the DH revealed that the relevant herbal medicine has also been distributed to the following retailers:

- Kam Hing Hong Limited (Address: G/F, 175 Queen's Road West, Sheung Wan)
- Kam Lung Chinese Medicine Co. (Address: Room 204, Ha Lung Building, 25-29 Ko Shing Street, Sheung Wan)

*Rhizoma Bletillae*, the tuber of *Bletilla striata* (Thunb.) Reichb. f., is used to act as an astringent, stop bleeding, disperse swelling and promote tissue regeneration. Members of the public who have Chinese herbs containing the alleged *Rhizoma Bletillae* purchased from the above retailers on or after August 17 are advised to stop using them. If they feel unwell, they are advised to consult healthcare professionals as soon as possible. Chinese medicine practitioners, or Chinese medicine personnel who have the affected Chinese herbal medicine in hand should refrain from selling or using them and submit the affected Chinese herbal medicine to the DH's Chinese Medicine Regulatory Office at 16/F, AIA Kowloon Tower, Landmark East, 100 How Ming Street, Kwun Tong, during office hours for disposal, or return them to the supplier.

The DH will set up a hotline (2961 8949) which operates from 9am to 5pm from Monday to Friday (except public holidays) starting tomorrow (November 15) for public enquiries related to using the affected batch of herb.

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## [LegCo Panel on Home Affairs, Culture and Sports visits Hong Kong Sports Institute \(with photos\)](#)

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

The Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs, Culture and Sports

(Panel) visited the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI) today (November 14) to understand the latest development of the HKSI and exchange views with athletes.

During the visit, Members received a briefing by the Chairman of the HKSI, Mr Tang King-shing, and the Chief Executive of the HKSI, Dr Trisha Leahy, on the construction progress of the new facilities building of the HKSI. Members understood that the three-storey high new facilities building, with a net operating floor area of about 8 935 square meter, is expected to be completed in mid-2024. It will provide facilities on strength and conditioning, sports science and sports medicine, including a multi-purpose column-free training hall, scientific conditioning centre, sports medicine centre, sport psychology centre, sport biomechanics centre, sport nutrition and monitoring centre, sports residence area, etc., to further upgrade the facilities of the HKSI and take forward elite sports development in Hong Kong.

Accompanied by the representatives of the HKSI, Members then visited the existing major facilities of the HKSI, including the swimming complex, sports complex, track and field, etc., and took the opportunity to talk to the athletes to learn of their training at the HKSI. Members also noted that the Government recently delivered the Policy Address, mentioning the allocation of additional resources to enhance the sports medicine centre of the HKSI.

Members who participated in the visit were the Panel Chairman, Mr Vincent Cheng, the Deputy Chairman of the Panel, Ms Joephy Chan, and Panel members Mr Andrew Lam, Mr Yiu Pak-leung, Mr Chan Yung and Mr Kenneth Fok; as well as non-Panel members Mr Kwok Wai-keung, Mr Chan Siu-hung and Mr Yim Kong.





