

# Companies Registry releases statistics for first half of 2024

A total of 66,734 local companies were newly registered during the first half of 2024, according to the statistics released by the Companies Registry today (July 19). As at the end of June this year, the total number of local companies registered under the Companies Ordinance reached 1,440,935, which is an all-time high figure.

In the first half of 2024, 501 non-Hong Kong companies have newly established a place of business in Hong Kong and were registered under the Companies Ordinance. The total number of registered non-Hong Kong companies reached 14,959 by the end of June 2024, which is also an all-time high figure.

To respond to evolving business needs, the new e-Services Portal of the revamped Integrated Companies Registry Information System was launched on December 27, 2023, to provide electronic services to members of the public through a single integrated platform. The Registry will continue to enhance the system to cater for legislative and procedural changes in future and the provision of quality electronic services.

The number of charges on properties of companies received for registration in the first half of 2024 was 5,721. The number of notifications of payments and releases received for registration in the same period was 8,808.

The number of documents delivered to the Registry for registration during the first six months of 2024 was 1,520,759.

A total of 2,564,604 searches of document image records were conducted using the Registry's electronic search services in the first half of 2024.

For limited partnership funds (LPFs), the number of new registration in the first half of 2024 was 113. The total number of LPFs by the end of June 2024 was 844.

For open-ended fund companies (OFCs), the number of new incorporation in the first half of 2024 was 129. The total number of OFCs by the end of June 2024 was 371.

As for the licensing of trust or company service providers, during the first half of 2024, 324 new licences were granted by the Registry. The total number of licensees was 6,974 as at the end of June.

For the licensing of money lenders, during the first half of 2024, 75 new licences were granted by the Licensing Court. The total number of licensed money lenders was 2,193 as at the end of June.

For details of the half-yearly statistics, please visit the "Statistics" section of the Registry's website ([www.cr.gov.hk](http://www.cr.gov.hk)).

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## **Temporary closure of Mei Lam Sports Centre**

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (July 19) that, due to power failure, Mei Lam Sports Centre in Sha Tin District has been temporarily closed for urgent maintenance works until further notice.

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## **Flag-raising ceremony cancelled**

Â Â Â Â Owing to the thunderstorm warning, the flag-raising ceremony to be conducted at Golden Bauhinia Square, Wan Chai at 8am today (July 19) will be cancelled.

Â Â Â Â If the thunderstorm warning is cancelled and weather conditions permit by then, the flag-raising ceremony may be resumed without further notice.

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## **HKSAR Government strongly condemns and opposes US politicians' slandering remarks and despicable threats against Basic Law Article 23 legislation and efforts of HKSAR in safeguarding national security**

today (July 18) strongly condemned and opposed the United States (US) Congress' Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the US and the Chinese Communist Party and the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China for their letter to the US Government which made untruthful, slandering and smearing remarks against the legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law and the efforts of the HKSAR in safeguarding national security. The committee and commission also demanded that the US Government shall impose so-called "sanctions" on SAR government officials, judges, prosecutors and police officers, and made slandering remarks and despicable threats against the relevant personnel.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "The so-called 'sanctions' mentioned in the letter smack of despicable political manipulation to intimidate the HKSAR officials safeguarding national security. These grossly interfere in Hong Kong affairs which are China's internal affairs, and violate the international law and the basic norms governing international relations. The HKSAR despises such so-called 'sanctions' and is not intimidated by such a despicable behaviour. The HKSAR will resolutely continue to discharge the duty of safeguarding national security."

"Enacting local legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law and refining laws relevant to safeguarding national security are the constitutional responsibilities of the HKSAR. In accordance with international law and international practice based on the Charter of the United Nations, safeguarding national security is an inherent right of all sovereign states. As a matter of fact, it is each and every sovereign state's inherent right to enact laws safeguarding national security, and it is also an international practice. The US has at least 21 pieces of laws safeguarding national security. It is therefore in no position to point its finger at the HKSAR for legitimately legislating to safeguard national security. US politicians once again targeted the HKSAR Government's work on safeguarding national security and made slandering, smearing, misleading and erroneous remarks against the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO), showing their despicable political manoeuvre and hypocrisy with double standards."

"The SNSO clearly specifies that the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Basic Law, as well as the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to Hong Kong, are to be protected in accordance with the law. US politicians neglected the relevant provision and lashed out wantonly, fully exposing their malicious intentions."

"As regards the conspiracy to commit subversion case mentioned in the letter, the reasons for verdict delivered by the court clearly confirmed that the criminal acts in the case aimed at undermining, destroying or overthrowing the existing political system and structure of the HKSAR established under the Basic Law and the 'one country, two systems' principle. Such criminal acts endangering national security had nothing to do with the so-called fight for democracy and human rights. In the 318-page judgment, the court has clearly set out the reasons and consideration underlying the conviction, and confirmed the occurrence of the offence of conspiracy to commit subversion. A total of 47 persons were charged in the case. Apart from

the two defendants, against whom the evidence was found insufficient for the court to be sure of their participation in the conspiracy offence, the remaining 45 defendants were convicted, showing the scale and the seriousness of the criminal scheme."

"The HKSAR law enforcement agencies have been taking law enforcement actions based on evidence and strictly in accordance with the law in respect of the acts of the persons or entities concerned, and have nothing to do with their political stance, background or occupation. The suggestion that certain individuals should be immune from legal consequences for their illegal acts, including those involving subversion, is no different from advocating a special pass to break the law, and this totally runs contrary to the spirit of the rule of law."

"As guaranteed by the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights, all defendants charged with a criminal offence shall have the right to a fair trial by the Judiciary exercising independent judicial power. The courts of the HKSAR shall exercise judicial power independently, free from any interference."

"The HKSAR Government will, as always, resolutely, fully and faithfully implement the National Security Law, the SNSO and other relevant laws safeguarding national security in the HKSAR, to effectively prevent, suppress and impose punishment for acts and activities endangering national security in accordance with the law. The HKSAR Government also strongly demands the US politicians to immediately stop interfering in Hong Kong matters which are purely China's internal affairs, and to stop smearing maliciously the laws safeguarding national security in the HKSAR as well as the law enforcement, prosecution and adjudication of the relevant cases."

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## **FEHD responds to media enquiries**

â€‹In response to media enquiries, a spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (July 18):

â€‹The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the FEHD collects food samples at retail level for safety testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. While designated samples provided by retail outlets will not be accepted for testing, food samples are taken by staff of the FEHD who purchase the products as customer without revealing their identity to the vendors. If a sample fails to meet the established safety standards, the CFS will take appropriate risk management actions, including issuing press releases to inform the public of the related risks. According to the Microbiological Guidelines for Food, if ready-to-eat food contains *Bacillus cereus* at a level of less than 1 000 per gram, it is considered satisfactory; a level of 1 000 to 100 000 is considered borderline but requires further action; a level of more than 100 000 is considered unsatisfactory.

â€‹The CFS collected a sample of the bottled preserved bean curd concerned for testing from a retail outlet in Sai Ying Pun at the end of June. The test result showed that the sample contained *Bacillus cereus* at a level of 130 000 per gram. According to the Microbiological Guidelines for Food, if ready-to-eat food contains *Bacillus cereus* at a level of more than 100 000 per gram, it is considered unsatisfactory. The CFS has therefore strengthened relevant surveillance immediately, and purchased in early July a sample of another batch of the same bottled preserved bean curd product from a retail outlet in Jordan for testing. The test result showed that the sample contained *Bacillus cereus* at a level of 10 000 per gram, which is considered borderline but not satisfactory and further action is required. According to the Microbiological Guidelines for Food, the CFS shall collect a follow-up sample of another batch of the product (not designated samples provided by the retail outlet). The CFS staff then purchased a sample of another batch of the bottled preserved bean curd product from the above-mentioned retail outlet in Jordan again in mid-July. The follow-up test result showed that the sample contained *Bacillus cereus* at a level of 1 300 000 per gram, which is considered unsatisfactory. The CFS has informed the retailer and manufacturer concerned, and has instructed them to stop sales and to initiate recalls of the affected product immediately, as well as to continue improving the food production process. The investigation is ongoing.

â€‹Furthermore, during an inspection of the food factory concerned by the CFS staff in the afternoon of July 4, it was found that some of the raw materials were improperly stored and the hygiene condition of the packaging area was not up to standard, which increase the risk of food contamination. The CFS staff immediately provided health education on food safety and hygiene to the person-in-charge and staff of the food factory, and requested them to review and improve the food production process, including proper storage of raw materials, and to carry out thorough cleaning and disinfection.

â€‹From 2021 to mid-July of 2024, the CFS collected under its routine Food Surveillance Programme more than 140 preserved bean curd samples that cover 26 brands, including 23 preserved bean curd samples produced by the manufacturer concerned, for testing. In addition to the two samples concerned, an excessive amount of *Bacillus cereus* was also found in a sample of another brand. The CFS has taken follow-up actions on the above-mentioned unsatisfactory samples in accordance with the established procedures, including informing the vendors concerned of the test results, instructing them to stop selling the affected products concerned and tracing the sources of the food items in question. The CFS has also announced the test results concerning the unsatisfactory samples and explained to the public the food safety risks involved.

â€‹*Bacillus cereus* is a spore-forming bacterium that grows best at 30 degrees Celsius to 37 degrees Celsius but stops growing at below 4 degrees Celsius. It is commonly found in the environment. Unhygienic conditions in food processing and storage may give rise to its growth. Consuming food contaminated with excessive *Bacillus cereus* or its heat-stable toxins may cause gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting and diarrhea. In general, the

presence of more than 100 000 cells of *Bacillus cereus* per gram of food can cause food poisoning.