

Postal services to Malaysia subject to delay

Hongkong Post announced today (November 29) that, as advised by the postal administration of Malaysia, due to flooding, mail delivery services to Malaysia are subject to delay.

TAC discusses fare increase applications from franchised bus operators and briefed on latest progress of Universal Accessibility Programme

The following is issued on behalf of the Transport Advisory Committee:

The Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) discussed today (November 29) the fare increase applications from franchised bus operators, and was briefed on the latest progress of the Universal Accessibility (UA) Programme.

The TAC Chairman, Professor Stephen Cheung, said that in deliberating on the fare increase applications in respect of three bus franchises, the TAC had considered and balanced a basket of factors under the Fare Adjustment Arrangement for franchised buses. These factors include public acceptability and affordability, the service performance of the bus operators, the past and forecast financial performance of the operators, as well as a supportable fare increase rate computed for reference through a formula taking into account the changes in the Composite Consumer Price Index and the wage index.

Professor Cheung said, "In accordance with the established practice, the TAC will submit its advice to the Government for consideration by the Chief Executive in Council."

Members were also briefed by the Government on the latest progress of the UA Programme. The Government has been striving to create a barrier-free and accessible environment, and launched the UA Programme in August 2012 to proactively retrofit barrier-free access facilities at walkways. The scope of the UA Programme has subsequently been expanded with a view to covering more walkways. A special scheme was launched in 2019 to retrofit lifts at the public walkways of three types of housing estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority, namely estates under the Tenants Purchase Scheme, the Buy or Rent

Option Scheme and public rental housing estates with properties divested. As of the end of October 2024, 211 items were completed under the UA Programme, accounting for approximately 60 per cent of all items, while 166 items were under construction.

In order to expedite the implementation of various projects under the UA Programme, the Highways Department (HyD) endeavours to take forward various measures including the continued adoption of modular integrated construction to enhance the speed of construction and stringent monitoring of the performance of contractors. Meanwhile, the HyD has been actively exploring and implementing various enhanced measures to better respond to the needs of the public. Apart from continuously optimising the design of lifts for the convenience of wheelchair users, the HyD will also carry out beautification works for the external walls of the lifts, and adopt new materials and installations to enhance the cleanliness of lifts.

Professor Cheung said, "Members are pleased to see that the Government continues to retrofit barrier-free access facilities at walkways, and at the same time strives to enhance the efficiency on the implementation of projects and incorporate more elements which could bring convenience and benefits to citizens. Members also took note of the latest implementation progress of the items under various phases."

Town Planning Board decides to amend zoning of Global Innovation Centre site in Pok Fu Lam to "Undetermined"

The Town Planning Board (TPB) completed today (November 29) the deliberation on the representations in respect of the draft Pok Fu Lam Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) No. S/H10/22. After thorough discussion, the TPB decided to accept the Planning Department (PlanD)'s recommendation to partially meet some of the representations by amending the zoning of the 4.72-hectare site designated for the proposed Global Innovation Centre (the Centre) by the University of Hong Kong (HKU) in Pok Fu Lam (the Site) from "Other Specified Uses" annotated "Global Innovation Centre" ("OU(Global Innovation Centre)") to "Undetermined" ("U") in the interim, in order to allow the HKU to review and adjust its proposal in response to the views expressed by the representers and to consult relevant stakeholders including the local community before submitting its revised proposal for the Government's consideration.

During deliberation, the TPB thoroughly considered the 3 677 representations and the oral submissions made by about 80 representers and/or their representatives during the three-day hearing in early November, as well

as the views and responses of the PlanD and relevant government bureaux/departments (B/Ds) before arriving at its decision.

TPB members acknowledged that most representers supported the development of the Centre by the HKU to consolidate Hong Kong's leading position in deep technology research, while their objections/concerns were mainly related to site selection and hence land use compatibility, development intensity, impacts on traffic, visual, landscape, ecological, environmental, geotechnical, public health and safety aspects, as well as the lack of proper consultation. TPB members also noted that the HKU had committed in its press statement in early October and at the hearing to consulting relevant stakeholders in strategically reviewing and amending its development plan to address their opinions as much as practicable. The HKU would also explore the possibility of identifying alternative sites for the development of the Centre.

To address representers' concerns, TPB members made the following comments and suggestions for the HKU's consideration in reviewing its proposal and taking forward the project:

- consider alternative locations in Pok Fu Lam and other places such as the Northern Metropolis. If the HKU concludes after review that the Centre should be in Pok Fu Lam, the HKU should consider whether the present site or another area, including but not limited to the adjoining undeveloped "Residential (Group C) 6" site, is more suitable for achieving the HKU's objective while minimising impacts on neighbouring communities;
- critically review the necessity and floorspace requirements for various components of the Centre, including accommodation and conferencing facilities, and consider optimising the utilisation of the HKU's existing premises/facilities to meet such needs;
- enhance the design, including reducing density and bulk, lowering building height and increasing setback from neighbouring buildings;
- address traffic concerns and minimise environmental impacts and nuisance on the neighbouring community and residential developments during both construction and operation phases;
- minimise tree felling and disturbance to natural habitats, enhance tree compensation and provide more green space;
- incorporate additional planning and design merits and facilities that might benefit the local community; and
- strengthen efforts to engage and consult with stakeholders including the local community.

In particular, in case the HKU decides after review that the Centre should remain in Pok Fu Lam, TPB members considered that the HKU should fully address the impacts of the Centre on students with hearing impairments in Ebenezer. Traffic is another area requiring more efforts from the HKU – not only should the traffic impact of the Centre be properly assessed and improvement measures formulated, but the HKU should also consider advancing the impact study of construction traffic so that the results can be discussed

with the local community and refined as appropriate. Last but not least, TPB members emphasised the need for constructive engagement with stakeholders and looked forward to the HKU stepping up communication with them, as it has pledged on various occasions.

In view of the above, the TPB considered it inappropriate to revert the zoning of the Site to "Green Belt", maintain the "OU(Global Innovation Centre)" zoning, or propose other specific zoning before the HKU's submission of a revised proposal. Thus, it was prudent to rezone the Site to "U" in the interim, serving as a stopgap arrangement pending the HKU's completion of the review. Members also noted that there would be adequate planning controls under the "U" zoning, as anyone taking forward development in the "U" zone would require the TPB's approval.

The TPB will exhibit, under section 6C of the Town Planning Ordinance, the proposed amendment of rezoning the Site to "U" on December 13 for public inspection for three weeks, during which any person might make a further representation to the TPB on the proposed amendment. The TPB will consider the further representations, if any, in accordance with the Ordinance before submitting the draft OZP to the Chief Executive in Council for approval within the statutory time limit.

Upon the HKU's completion of the review and engagement with the community on the revised proposal, it will need to submit a revised proposal supported by technical assessments for consideration by relevant B/Ds. Should the revised proposal be accepted by the Government, the PlanD will propose appropriate zoning amendment(s). Subject to the TPB's agreement, the rezoning would then undergo another round of statutory planning procedures in accordance with the Ordinance, during which members of the public would have the opportunity to submit written representations and attend hearings to express their views to the TPB directly.

Lands Department releases tender amounts submitted for site in Sha Tin

The Lands Department announced today (November 29) that in respect of the tender for the site Sha Tin Town Lot No. 625 at the junction of Sha Tin Wai Road and Siu Lek Yuen Road, Siu Lek Yuen, Sha Tin, New Territories, which was awarded on October 29 to the successful tenderer, Keen Mighty Limited (parent company: Chinachem Group Holdings Limited), on a 50-year land grant at a premium of \$1,021,165,000, the tender amounts submitted by the unsuccessful tenderers in descending order are published on an anonymous basis as follows:

(1) \$822,000,000

- (2) \$820,800,000
- (3) \$617,000,000
- (4) \$456,290,000
- (5) \$450,000,000

The information disclosed in this press release is for information only.

[Update on dengue fever](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (November 29) reported the latest number of dengue fever (DF) cases, and urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From November 22 to yesterday (November 28), the CHP recorded five DF cases. Four of them were imported cases. The patients had travelled to Guangdong Province (one case each for Foshan, Jiangmen and Zhongshan) and the Philippines (one case) during their incubation periods. The remaining case was the local DF case [announced by the CHP](#) yesterday. The CHP, together with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, will hold a health talk at 6pm today at the Lung Hang Estate Community Centre, which is close to the home of the patient concerned. During the talk, the CHP will also conduct a free DF antibody test for people in the district with relevant symptoms.

As of yesterday, 155 cases of DF, including 150 imported and five local cases, had been recorded in 2024. In 2023, 62 imported cases of DF were recorded.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the global incidence of DF has markedly increased over the past two decades, posing a substantial public health challenge. In 2023, ongoing transmissions, combined with an unexpected spike in DF cases, had resulted in close to a historic high of over 6.5 million cases, and more than 7 300 dengue-related deaths reported in over 80 countries/territories. Since the beginning of 2024, the WHO has recorded over 13 million cases, reaching a record number of cases.

The latest surveillance data shows that there is an increase in DF cases noted in some places in Asia (such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore) compared to the same period last year.

According to the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, the number of DF cases recorded in Guangdong Province in the past three months remains at a high level. Most of the cases were locally acquired infection. Information from the Guangdong Provincial Center for Disease Control and Prevention further showed that in the past week from November 18 to 24, over 500 local DF cases were recorded, with the highest numbers of cases recorded in Foshan, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhanjiang and Zhuhai.

In addition, the number of DF cases in Macao has been increasing recently. Since the first local case of this year reported on October 23, nine local cases have been reported in Macao as of yesterday.

Detailed information on the latest DF situation in Hong Kong, as well as neighbouring and overseas countries and areas, has been uploaded to the CHP website

(www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/df_imported_cases_and_overseas_figures_eng.pdf).

The continued occurrence of DF cases outside Hong Kong, coupled with the frequent travel by residents to and from Guangdong, Hong Kong, Macao and other areas, has resulted in an increased risk of importing DF cases into Hong Kong, posing a risk of local transmission.

"Apart from general measures, travellers returning from areas affected by DF should apply insect repellent for 14 days upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to a doctor," a spokesman for the CHP said.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers, and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Reapply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases

are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public should call 1823 in case of mosquito problems and may visit the following pages for more information: the DF page of the [CHP](#) and the [Travel Health Service](#), the latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), and the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#).