

Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao hold 2024 high-level air traffic management meeting in Zhuhai

The Secretary of the Party Committee of the Air Traffic Management Bureau (ATMB) of the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), Mr Wen Xuezheng; the Director-General of Civil Aviation of Hong Kong, Mr Victor Liu; and the President of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Macao Special Administrative Region, Mr Pun Wa-kin, attended the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao 2024 high-level air traffic management meeting in Zhuhai today (June 4).

The senior management of the three parties reviewed the overall progress and work plan of the Airspace Management Technical Sub-group and the Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM) Technical Sub-group, including work progress and achievements of airspace optimisation matters, and the ATFM in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). They exchanged views on the feasibility study of the application of advanced navigation capabilities, and shared experiences on measures to consistently enhance the efficiency of the ATFM in the GBA.

With regard to airspace optimisation and air traffic management enhancement, the Tripartite Working Group (TWG) reached consensus on the planning needs of peripheral air routes upon deliberation of a host of optimisation measures, including the establishment of new air routes and the transfer of control points, joint construction of an airspace simulation model and assessments of airspace enhancement plans. The TWG also carried out a feasibility study on the application of advanced air navigation technologies to explore the feasibility of developing a more flexible air traffic management mode by utilising more precise navigation performances of modern aircraft, with an aim to maximise the utilisation of GBA airspace resources. The TWG will, on a continual basis, enhance and strengthen the trilateral co-ordination and operation mechanism in order to jointly build a safe, efficient and sustainable air transport system in the GBA. The Civil Aviation Department (CAD) also updated its counterparts on the latest progress of the Three-runway System (3RS) of Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA), including the design of flight procedures and air routes, and the latest air traffic control technologies to support the 3RS operations.

For the ATFM, the TWG primarily focused on the development of contingency arrangements to regulate air traffic flow in the GBA, with a view to reducing the airborne holding time and thereby minimising aircraft fuel burning and its consequential impact on the environment, as well as enhancing the sustainability of the aviation industry. The TWG also shared experiences in enhancing its operation and ATFM co-ordination under the situation of severe thunderstorms and extreme weather conditions in the GBA.

Mr Liu said that the TWG has made promising progress in various aspects.

It is implementing planned air traffic management enhancement initiatives in phases while those implemented measures have achieved fruitful results. With the support of the ATMB of the CAAC, the CAD will continue to take forward air traffic management optimisation measures and the 3RS developments in accordance with the directions of the National 14th Five-Year Plan and the Outline Development Plan for the GBA to further strengthen and enhance Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub, as well as to achieve the target runway capacity of 102 flights per hour using the 3RS of HKIA.

Offers of 2024-25 civil service pay adjustment

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) made pay offers to the staff side of the four civil service central consultative councils today (June 4), under which the pay for civil servants in the upper, middle and lower salary bands and the directorate will be increased at the same rate of 3 per cent for 2024-25, effective retrospectively from April 1, 2024.

"The Hong Kong economy came out of the pandemic with strength last year, with an overall upward pay trend in the market. Although it is estimated that there will be a fiscal deficit in 2024-25, the economy is projected to grow further this year with the Government's efforts in boosting sentiment, expanding economic capacity and enhancing competitiveness. After holistic consideration and balancing of all relevant factors, including changes in the economic situation, the increase in the cost of living in the past year, the Government's fiscal position and the principle of prudent financial management, the positive net Pay Trend Indicators in all salary bands and civil service morale, the Chief Executive-in-Council (CE-in-Council) made the offers to increase pay at the same rate of 3 per cent across the board," a CSB spokesman said.

"After the CE-in-Council considers the response from the staff side and makes a decision on the 2024-25 civil service pay adjustment, the Government will submit the pay adjustment proposal to the Legislative Council Finance Committee for consideration as soon as possible," the spokesman added.

Judicial appointment

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Judiciary today (June 4) announced the appointment of Mr Kwong Ka-tung as a District Judge. The appointment will take effect on June 5, 2024.

The appointment is made by the Chief Executive on the recommendation of the Judicial Officers Recommendation Commission.

Further judicial appointments will be announced in due course.

The biographical note of Mr Kwong is as follows:

Mr Kwong was born in Hong Kong in 1981. He obtained a Bachelor of Social Sciences Degree from the University of Hong Kong in 2004. He further acquired an LL.B. and a P.C.LL. both from the University of Hong Kong in 2005 and 2006 respectively, and an LL.M. from the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom in 2007. He was called to the Bar in Hong Kong in 2008 and has been in private practice from the same year. He was appointed as Temporary Deputy Registrar, High Court, and Deputy District Judge for periods in 2021, 2023 and 2024.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, June 4, 2024 is 106.0 (down 0.2 against yesterday's index).

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be

supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on June 3 to noon today (June 4), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 142 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan"

(www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 56 370 samples of food imported from Japan (including 36 438 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 14 138 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.