

Companies Registry fully resumes online services

â€‹The Companies Registry announced today (April 20) that the e-Search service of the e-Services Portal had been fully resumed at 5pm today.

HKSAR Government strongly condemns unfounded and biased statement by G7 foreign ministers and European Union

â€‹The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR Government) today (April 20) strongly condemned the unfounded and biased statement by G7 foreign ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States of America (US), and the High Representative of the European Union (EU), which deliberately misled the public and smeared the Hong Kong National Security Law and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (the Ordinance), so as to set the record straight.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "It is the constitutional duty of the HKSAR to safeguard national security. 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. Many common law jurisdictions, including western countries such as the US, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as Singapore, have enacted multiple pieces of legislation to safeguard national security. Turning a blind eye to the fact and making exaggerated remarks, the G7 foreign ministers and the High Representative of the EU have demonstrated typical political hegemony and hypocrisy with double standards."

"As a matter of fact, during the public consultation of the Basic Law Article 23 legislation, 98.6 per cent of the submissions of opinions showed support and gave positive comments, reflecting a strong consensus in society for the legislation, and it is also the aspiration of the people."

"The offences endangering national security stipulated by the Ordinance target acts endangering national security with precision, and define the elements and penalties of the offences with clarity. The prosecution has the burden to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the defendant had the actus reus and mens rea of an offence before the defendant may be convicted by the court. The Ordinance will not affect normal business operations and normal worldwide exchanges of local institutions, organisations and individuals."

Law-abiding persons (including businessmen and enterprises in Hong Kong and travellers visiting Hong Kong) will not engage in acts and activities endangering our national security and will not unwittingly violate the law."

"The Ordinance 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. The G7 foreign ministers and the High Representative of the EU neglected the relevant provision and lashed out wantonly, fully exposing its malicious intentions."

"Following the successful enactment of the Ordinance, the shortcomings in the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the HKSAR to safeguard national security are addressed. We must once again emphasise that the Ordinance is a piece of legislation to defend against external forces that endanger our national security, acting like a sturdier door and a more effective door lock to defend our home. The HKSAR Government strongly urges these foreign governments with ulterior motives to stop smearing and interfering in Hong Kong affairs which are internal affairs of China. It is incumbent upon foreign governments to ensure that their remarks concerning the NSL and the Ordinance are fair and just, and stop making scaremongering remarks."

"The core essence of the Sino-British Joint Declaration is about China's resumption of the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong. It did not authorise the UK to interfere in Hong Kong's affairs after its return to the motherland. The UK has no sovereignty, jurisdiction or right of supervision over Hong Kong after its return to the motherland," the spokesman reiterated.

It is incontrovertible that safeguarding national security will provide a better business environment for businesses operating in Hong Kong. The HKSAR Government will continue to safeguard national security fearlessly, so that the HKSAR can focus its efforts on developing the economy, improving people's livelihood and maintaining the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong.

[Inaugural Hong Kong Reading Week opens today \(with photos\)](#)

The Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and the Hong Kong Publishing Federation (HKPF) today (April 20) jointly held the opening ceremony of Hong Kong Reading Week and the 2024 Hong Kong Reading+ at New Town Plaza in Sha Tin, raising the curtain on the array of reading promotion activities of Hong Kong Reading

Week, which is being held between today and April 28.

The opening ceremony was kick-started after the premier of the themed music video created by the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra for Hong Kong Reading for All Day on April 23.

Addressing the opening ceremony by video message, the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, said that April 23 has been designated as Hong Kong Reading for All Day starting this year. The HKPF, with the sponsorship of Create Hong Kong, launched a large-scale programme titled 2024 Hong Kong Reading+ to dovetail with the first Hong Kong Reading for All Day. The 2024 Hong Kong Reading+ is also one of the programmes of the first Hong Kong Reading Week and the second Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival. It will bring Hong Kong's reading culture to new heights. He added that with the support of the National 14th Five-Year Plan and the joint efforts of all sectors of society, Hong Kong is developing into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. The Government will continue to steadfastly bring together the strengths of the Government, the business sector and the community in organising more cultural activities of various types and tell good stories of Hong Kong culture.

Addressing the opening ceremony, the Acting Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Raistlin Lau, said that reading is an important channel to acquire knowledge, and knowledge is the motivator of mankind and social development. To further promote reading in Hong Kong, the Government will join hands with various stakeholders to organise a variety of reading activities during Hong Kong Reading Week at public libraries, leisure and cultural services venues under the management of the LCSD, schools and shopping malls, so that members of the public could immerse themselves in the joy of reading.

Under the theme of "Self/LIBRARY", the first Hong Kong Reading Week is rolling out a series of online and offline activities suitable for people of all ages. The HKPF is organising the "2024 Hong Kong Reading+" carnival at New Town Plaza in Sha Tin from today to April 23. With the theme "n reasons for reading", a large-scale exhibition, talks by renowned writers and various cultural activities are arranged to promote territory-wide reading. Among the activities, the HKPL will introduce its electronic resources at the electronic reading experience zone to the public. Parent-child workshops that aimed at cultivating participants' diverse STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) skills through reading, games and making handicrafts will also be held. The Publicity Department of the CPC Shenzhen Municipal Committee has accepted the invitation to display selected parent-child books from Shenzhen at the designated Shenzhen zone in the carnival to promote Shenzhen and Hong Kong co-reading. Member of the Standing Committee and the Head of the Publicity Department of the CPC Shenzhen Municipal Committee, Ms Zhang Ling, led a Shenzhen delegation comprising government officials of the Publicity Department and the Shenzhen Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, Tourism and Sports, and representatives of publishing industry to attend today's opening ceremony in support of the first Hong Kong Reading for All Day.

From today until May 19, members of the public can collect four different stamps at selected libraries to form a picture on a piece of card. Members of the public can also take photos with Instagram filters tailor-made by the HKPL for memories.

The HKPL is collaborating with Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) to produce radio programme "One-minute Reading", in which government officials, Legislative Council Members, writers, athletes and celebrities were invited to share their reading tips and recommended books. Videos of the programme will be uploaded onto the thematic website of Hong Kong Reading Week (www.hkpl.gov.hk/hkrw).

In support of the establishment of the Chinese Culture Promotion Office earlier this month, the HKPL is putting the focus of reading on books related to Chinese history, stories of celebrities and venerable tradition to promote Chinese culture. The HKPL has launched the Creative Writing Event on "Chivalrous Heroes: My Favourite Characters in Martial Arts Novels" to tie in with the theme "Arts and Actions" of this year's Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival. Echoing the said theme, the HKPF also arranged two talks under the reading parade of the 2024 Hong Kong Reading+ to pay tribute to two masters in Hong Kong's pop culture, namely James Wong and Jin Yong. The talks will be held at PMQ on April 27 and at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum on May 5 respectively.

On April 23, the first Hong Kong Reading for All Day, the HKPL will organise various activities together with stakeholders. Apart from the main venue of the Hong Kong Central Library (HKCL), the LCSD will set up different reading locations in the department's venues and libraries for "Read Together for Half an Hour" activities. The Education Bureau will invite schools to participate in the joint secondary and primary school 30-minute reading activities to enhance the reading ambience at schools. The HKPF will also organise the "Read Together for Half an Hour" activities at the "Hong Kong Reading+" carnival.

On April 27, the HKCL will organise the Prize Presentation Ceremony of the 4.23 World Book Day Creative Competition and fun day at the Exhibition Gallery, where winning works created by students from Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao libraries under the theme "Reading Love (Love Reading)" will be on display. There will also be fascinating activities including a story theatre based on a traditional Chinese story, a Chinese acrobatic performance, booth activities and more.

Decorations with rich Chinese cultural elements will be introduced at selected libraries across Hong Kong on April 27 and 28. Thematic book display, game booths and workshops related to Chinese culture will be organised to add to the fun and motivation of the public to participate in reading activities.

For the latest information and details of more exciting events of Hong Kong Reading Week, please visit the thematic website (www.hkpl.gov.hk/hkrw).

The LCSD presented the first Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival last year to

great acclaim. This year, the second edition features "Arts & Action" as its theme, taking audiences on a journey through time to explore the charm of Hong Kong's pop culture. It encompasses both "Arts" (creative works) and "Action" (martial arts), an attempt to show the dynamic inheritance, diffusion, integration and breakthroughs within Hong Kong's pop culture.

The event lineup offers a diverse range of formats including thematic exhibitions, film screenings, stage performances and outreach activities, and its rich content spans across literature, various art forms and martial arts, clearly showcasing how Hong Kong's vibrant and diverse pop culture stands out from the rest. For more information, please visit www.pcf.gov.hk/en.



[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected cannabis buds worth about \\$23 million \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs seized about 100 kilograms of suspected cannabis buds with an estimated market value of about \$23 million at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound on April 5.

Through risk assessment, Hong Kong Customs on that day inspected a

seaborne consolidated consignment, declared as carrying auto parts, arriving in Hong Kong from the United States, at the Kwai Chung Customhouse Cargo Examination Compound. Upon inspection, Customs officers seized the batch of suspected cannabis buds from 18 vehicle wheels inside the consignment. Upon a follow-up investigation, Customs officers conducted controlled delivery operations and arrested a 36-year-old male consignee, who claimed to be a driver, in Kwai Chung on April 8.

The investigation is ongoing and the arrested man has been released on bail pending further investigation.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).



Red flags hoisted at some beaches

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 (April 20) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Shek O Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; Hung Shing Yeh Beach and Pui O Beach in Islands District. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at these beaches.