

## [Update on cluster of Influenza A cases at Kwai Chung Hospital](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of patients infected with Influenza A in a female psychiatric ward, the spokesperson for Kwai Chung Hospital made the following update today (April 5):

Two more patients (aged 55 and 72) in the ward have presented with respiratory symptoms. Appropriate viral tests were arranged for the patients, and their test results were positive for Influenza A. The patients concerned are being treated in isolation and are in stable condition.

Admission and visiting arrangements to the ward concerned have been suspended. Infection control measures have already been stepped up according to established guidelines. The hospital will continue to closely monitor the conditions of the patients in the ward concerned.

The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

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## [Company director sentenced to suspended imprisonment for contravening Employment Ordinance](#)

A director of United City Group Limited and FOM Supplies Limited was prosecuted by the Labour Department (LD) for violation of requirements under the Employment Ordinance (EO). The director had pleaded guilty earlier at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts and was sentenced today (April 5) to six weeks' imprisonment suspended for two years.

The two companies failed to pay six employees, willfully and without reasonable excuse, wages totalling about \$225,000 within seven days after the expiry of the wage periods and termination of their employment contracts, in accordance with the requirement of the EO, as well as the awarded sums totalling about \$161,000 within 14 days after the date set by the Labour Tribunal (LT). The director concerned was prosecuted and convicted for his consent, connivance or neglect in the above offences.

"The judgment will disseminate a strong message to all employers, directors and responsible officers of companies that they have to pay wages

to employees within a statutory time limit stipulated in the E0, as well as the sums awarded by the LT or the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board," a spokesman for the LD said.

"The LD will not tolerate these offences and will spare no effort in enforcing the law and safeguarding employees' statutory rights," the spokesman added.

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## [CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (April 5) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection and reminded the community to heighten vigilance against influenza. The CHP appealed to members of the public to receive seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) in a timely manner to better protect themselves during the influenza season.

The case involves a 5-month-old girl with good past health. She developed a fever and cough with sputum since March 24, and sought medical attention at Hong Kong Baptist Hospital on March 25. She was taken to the Accident and Emergency Department of Kwong Wah Hospital on March 30 due to worsening of symptoms and was admitted the same day. She was transferred to the paediatric intensive care unit of the hospital for treatment on March 31. Her respiratory specimen was positive for influenza A (H1) virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with severe pneumonia. She is now in serious condition.

Initial enquiries by the CHP revealed that the patient had no travel history during the incubation period. Her four home contacts had symptoms of upper respiratory tract infection last week and had recovered. The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. SIV is one of the most effective means to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications, as well as reducing influenza-related hospitalisation and death. SIV is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications. Persons at higher risk of getting influenza and its complications, including the elderly and children, should receive SIV early. As it takes about two weeks to develop antibodies, members of the public are advised to receive SIV early for protection against seasonal influenza. Please see details of the vaccination schemes on the [CHP's website](#)."

A person who gets influenza and COVID-19 at the same time may be more seriously ill and would have a higher risk of death. It is important to

receive both SIV and COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible, in particular for children and elderly persons residing in the community or residential care homes. The public should also maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against influenza and other respiratory illnesses, and note the following:

- Surgical masks can prevent transmission of respiratory viruses from ill persons. It is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;
- For high-risk persons (e.g. persons with underlying medical conditions or persons who are immunocompromised), wear a surgical mask when visiting public places. The public should also wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Avoid touching one's eyes, mouth and nose;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub;
- Cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending classes at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, perform physical activity regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

The public may visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [COVID-19 & Flu Express](#) for more information.

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## [Effectiveness of second phase of enforcement operation against animal smuggling “Pet Guardian” by Hong Kong Customs \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs mounted an operation against smuggling of animals codenamed "Pet Guardian" with the Mainland Customs since November 2023. As of today (April 5), Hong Kong Customs has detected two suspected cases of illegally importing animals in the second phase of the operation commenced in

late March this year. A total of seven suspected illegally imported animals with a total of estimated market value of about \$210,000 were seized.

On March 24, Hong Kong Customs at Sha Tau Kok spotted a man carrying two handbags suspected of containing animals, who entered Hong Kong on a bike from the Mainland side of Chung Ying Street. Customs officers then took action and found four suspected illegally imported animals, including three kittens and one puppy, inside the man's bags. The 60-year-old man was subsequently arrested.

In the second case, Hong Kong Customs officers, acting on intelligence analysis, intercepted a 61-year-old woman who rode a bike to enter Hong Kong from Chung Ying Street of the Mainland side on March 26. Three suspected illegally imported kittens were found in the woman's handbag and she was immediately arrested.

Investigations of the two cases are ongoing and the seven animals have been handed over to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for follow-up action.

Being a government department specifically responsible for tackling smuggling, Customs has all along been combating various smuggling activities at the forefront. Customs will keep up its enforcement action and continue to fiercely combat all types of smuggling activities through proactive risk management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies, along with mounting targeted anti-smuggling operations at suitable times to land a solid blow against relevant activities.

Customs reminds the public that importing animals into Hong Kong without a valid permit is an offence.

Under the Rabies Regulation, any person found guilty of illegally importing animals, carcasses or animal products is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for one year.





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## [Business of Innovation and Technology Week to be held in April](#)

The Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau (ITIB) will organise the Business of Innovation and Technology Week (BIT Week) in April, which includes the government-funded innovation and technology (I&T) signature events, the Digital Economy Summit and the InnoEX, as well as the much celebrated inaugural Hong Kong World Youth Science Conference.

The Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, said, "We look forward to an array of I&T mega events in April in Hong Kong. The BIT Week brings together local talent and those outside Hong Kong covering some 20 regions and over 3 000 exhibitors to showcase to the world Hong Kong's unique edge and strong I&T capabilities through a series of seminars, exhibitions, business networking, talent matching and industry events. It is a key policy of the country to develop 'new quality productive forces' driven by technological innovation. The series of events under the BIT Week aims to promote the upstream, midstream and downstream development of the local I&T ecosystem chain, accelerating the formation of 'new quality productive forces' and scaling new heights for our I&T sector, thereby propelling Hong Kong's advancement into an international I&T centre."

Organised by the ITIB and Cyberport, the Digital Economy Summit (DES) will be held on April 12 and 13 with the theme "Smarter Technovation for All: Forging a Sustainable Future". The two-day Summit will feature over 100 renowned speakers from Hong Kong, the Mainland and a number of overseas countries including the United States and Germany, as well as those from the Middle East and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The

Summit will cover eight thematic forums on topics such as artificial intelligence (AI), business innovation, smart industrialisation and supply chain, smart mobility, new energy, smart finance, Web3.0, smart living and inclusion.

The second InnoEX co-organised by the ITIB and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) that immediately follows the DES will be held from April 13 to 16. Themed "Innovations for A Smarter World", the exhibition will bring together exhibitors from more than 10 regions and different technology sectors, including organisations from Hong Kong, 16 Mainland provinces and cities, and countries such as France, Canada, India, Singapore and the United Kingdom. By showcasing cutting-edge technology solutions and promoting dialogue at various seminars and exchanges, the exhibition seeks to promote cross-sectoral and cross-territory I&T development and collaboration. The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer will also set up the "Smart Hong Kong Pavilion" to showcase over 100 I&T solutions closely related to people's day-to-day life, and winning entries from local innovators and students, to demonstrate the latest progress in promoting I&T and smart city development by the Government and various sectors in Hong Kong. An ASEAN Roundtable will also be organised during the exhibition whereby government representatives from ASEAN countries will share experiences related to smart city development and ways to achieve sustainable development through multi-sectoral collaboration.

In addition, the Hong Kong Alumni Association of Beijing Universities will organise the inaugural Hong Kong World Youth Science Conference and the Xiangjiang Nobel Forum 2024 on April 13 and 14 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, with the full support of the ITIB. The event will gather top-notch I&T talent and renowned scientists including laureates of the Nobel Prize and Turing Award to tap into global wisdom on critical issues in the areas of Big Data, AI, quantum computing, biology and new materials, thereby enhancing Hong Kong's status in the international scientific arena. The organiser will also arrange a memoranda of understanding signing ceremony at the event signifying the intention of I&T enterprises from the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei and Xiongan area to land in Hong Kong, as well as the launching ceremony of the Hong Kong Joint Development Fund for Innovation and Technology to promote quality development of Hong Kong via investment in I&T enterprises.

Other major industry events during the BIT Week include HKTDC's Hong Kong Electronics Fair (Spring Edition) and Smart Lighting Expo, Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation's Elevator Pitching Competition, and the Hong Kong Web3 Festival co-hosted by Wanxiang Blockchain Labs and HashKey Group and organised by W3ME, all contributing to the prosperous development of Hong Kong's I&T ecosystem and greater synergies.

Details of the BIT Week events can be found at [bitweek.hktdc.com/en](https://bitweek.hktdc.com/en).