

# Deals signed during Egyptian PM's Libya visit

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CAIRO: Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly, accompanied by a team of ministers, visited Tripoli on Tuesday to discuss economic and political cooperation with the Libyan Government of National Unity.

It followed instructions from Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, who is planning a visit to Libya.

During Madbouly's visit, several agreements were signed between the two governments, most notably on the establishment of power stations in Libya to strengthen its energy networks.

Libya is considered a natural extension of the Egyptian market, due to the geographical proximity and long history of trade exchange and cooperation between the two countries.

Egyptian companies are awaiting government decisions regarding participation in the reconstruction of Libya, which they hope will produce new opportunities in a renewed market.

According to local sources, Madbouly's visit is focussed on investments in the country, Egyptian labor issues and the reopening of diplomatic missions.

Last month, El-Sisi discussed with the head of the Libyan Presidential Council, Mohamed Al-Menfi, prospects for enhanced cooperation between the two countries.

El-Sisi stressed Egypt's full and absolute support for the new executive authority in Libya in all fields and for its success in holding general elections at the end of the year.

He said Egypt was fully prepared to provide its expertise to the Libyan government to help restore its national institutions, especially security and police forces, to achieve greater stability.

Since the beginning of the Libyan crisis, Egypt has promoted political settlement by hosting the warring factions in key meetings.



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Egypt continues to push for political solution in Libya  
Egypt sends medical aid to Libya

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## [Chinese medicine further engaged in anti-epidemic treatment](#)

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, visited the Community Treatment Facility (CTF) at AsiaWorld-Expo today (February 11) to learn more about the operation of the special Chinese medicine (CM) services provided by the Hospital Authority (HA) for COVID-19 patients staying in the CTF.

Accompanied by the Chairman of the HA, Mr Henry Fan, and the Chief Executive of the HA, Dr Tony Ko, Professor Chan visited the working area dedicated for CM services in the CTF, met the resident Chinese Medicine Practitioners (CMPs) and Western medicine (WM) team, and was briefed on the

arrangement and workflow of the service, etc. Furthermore, Professor Chan also spoke with patients receiving CM services through video calls, to gauge their views on the service.

"The Government has all along been committed to promoting in Hong Kong the development of CM which has been incorporated into the healthcare system of Hong Kong. With the facilitation and support of the Food and Health Bureau, the HA is providing CM services to patients in the CTF. Not only does it provide patients with another option of treatment, it also allows CM to give full play to its strength in our anti-epidemic control efforts. I would like to thank the participating CMPs and members of the Expert Panel for their support in launching the services," Professor Chan said.

Since January 26, the HA has provided the Special Chinese Medicine Programme for COVID-19 In-patients (In-patient Programme) at the CTF through the tripartite Chinese Medicine Clinic cum Training and Research Centres (CMCTRs). Fifty patients have joined so far, with more than 230 consultations conducted.

Patients' participation in the In-patient Programme is voluntary. Patients are clinically assessed by the WM and CM teams to confirm the suitability of receiving treatment under the In-patient Programme. The HA also set up an Expert Panel comprising CM experts in the area of clinical practice and drugs from the schools of Chinese medicine of three local universities, together with medicine, infectious diseases and toxicology experts from the HA, to formulate the clinical protocol for the In-patient Programme.

Having regard to the clinical operation mode and infection control measures of the CTF, resident CMPs provide consultation services in non-isolation areas via video calls. CMPs will prescribe CM medication according to the clinical protocols promulgated by the Expert Panel. After the first consultation, CMPs will arrange follow-up consultations and treatment according to clinical needs.

"Discharged patients may also join the Special Chinese Medicine Out-patient Programme for Discharged COVID-19 Patients (Out-patient Programme) to receive follow-up rehabilitation treatment. Over 850 discharged patients have joined the Out-patient Programme since its launch in April last year," Professor Chan added.

All eligible persons who have been discharged from public hospitals after COVID-19 treatment can enrol in the Out-patient Programme to receive 10 free sessions of CM general consultation services in the 11 participating CMCTRs. For details of the Out-patient Programme, please contact the CM Department of the HA (Tel: 2794 3068) or visit the HA CM KINetics (CMK) website at [cmk.ha.org.hk](http://cmk.ha.org.hk).

"Since the emergence of the epidemic, the Government has all along been maintaining close liaison with the CM sector to jointly work for the prevention and control of COVID-19. I am pleased that the CM sector is

committed to promoting CM anti-epidemic knowledge to the public, with a view to encouraging the latter to put into practice the CM concept of preventive medicine in their daily lives," Professor Chan said.

The Government has been providing the latest information and guidelines in relation to the epidemic development to the CMPs. To enhance the role of the CM sector in the anti-epidemic efforts, the Government has included the "Novel Coronavirus Epidemic Related Projects" in the Chinese Medicine Development Fund (the Fund) as a priority area, to support related training, research and promotion projects. The scope of the "CM Clinic Improvement Funding Scheme" under the Fund has also been expanded to subsidise CM clinics to upgrade their infection control facilities. The Government will continue to provide support to the CM sector in order to give full play to the strengths of CM.

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## **Construction site workers can make appointments for free COVID-19 testing service**

The Food and Health Bureau announced on January 13 that the Government will provide one-off free COVID-19 voluntary testing service to all construction site workers in Hong Kong from January 15 to January 31 via online booking. Booking for the relevant service can be made starting from today.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "There were a number of confirmed cases involving construction site workers recently. In order to reduce transmission risk of COVID-19 in the community, in addition to the compulsory testing notices issued for individual construction sites, the Government will offer one-off free COVID-19 testing service to all construction site workers in Hong Kong through community testing centres."

"We encourage construction site workers to actively participate in the free voluntary test to safeguard their health and that of their families and co-workers. The free testing service will be available until end-January. Construction site workers can choose a suitable time slot taking into account their own needs."

"If construction site workers have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo free testing provided by the Government as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the community testing centres."

Construction site workers should make advance booking for the free testing service via the community testing centre booking system

([www.communitytest.gov.hk](http://www.communitytest.gov.hk)). Those who did not make an appointment will need to pay for the testing service at \$240.

The community testing centres are open daily from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm. Deep cleaning and disinfection will be conducted when they close in the afternoon and at night. When arriving at the community testing centre at the designated time slot, construction site workers should present identity document used at the time of booking (such as Hong Kong identity card or passport), their construction worker registration card issued by the Construction Industry Council and the SMS booking confirmation for verification.

The free voluntary testing service will be offered starting from January 15 and last until January 31. During the period, each construction site worker can receive free testing service once only. Participants will be notified of a negative test result by SMS through their mobile phones. If there is any specimen tested with preliminarily positive COVID-19 result, it will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Department of Health (DH) for a confirmatory test. Confirmed cases will be followed up and announced by the Centre for Health Protection of the DH.

In addition to attending the community testing centres for testing, construction site worker can continue to utilise other free testing channels provided by the Government, including obtaining a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from post offices, MTR stations or designated general outpatient clinics of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to the designated specimen collection points. For details on other testing means than community testing centres, please refer to the following webpage: [www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html). The voluntary testing service at construction sites arranged by the Construction Industry Council and the Hong Kong Construction Association will continue in parallel.

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## **[HA Annual Report 2019/20 published \(with photo\)](#)**

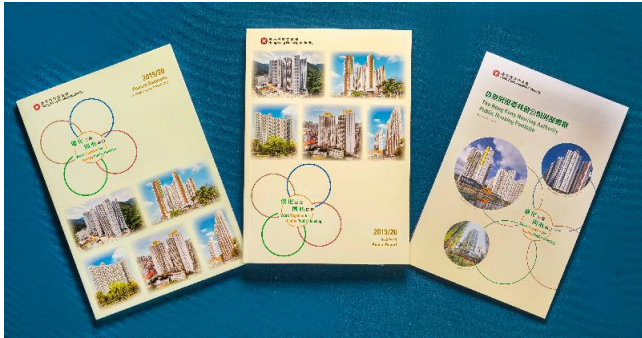
The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) for the year 2019/20 were published today (December 9) and made available on the Housing Authority/Housing Department (HA/HD) website.

The theme of this year's Report is "Work Together for Quality Public Housing". Providing quality public housing for people in Hong Kong in need of affordable homes has been the HA's primary focus. It cannot be achieved without HA staff and teams working together to adopt quality designs and

carry out effective initiatives. Amid the COVID-19 epidemic, the HA's determination to fight against the epidemic has contributed to safeguarding the health of the Hong Kong people.

A leaflet on the HA's public housing portfolio comes with the Annual Report, showing the geographic distribution and some useful figures of public rental housing estates and Home Ownership Scheme courts. Members of the public are welcome to browse the e-version of the Annual Report on the HA/HD website ([www.housingauthority.gov.hk/mini-site/haar1920/en/index.html](http://www.housingauthority.gov.hk/mini-site/haar1920/en/index.html)).



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## [Sudan deal plunges migrants in Israel into new uncertainty](#)

Author:

Sun, 2020-11-01 00:45

TEL AVIV: Usumain Baraka speaks impeccable Hebrew, considers Israelis among his best friends and can quote passages from the Old Testament. But as a Sudanese asylum seeker, Baraka has no legal status in Israel and lives a precarious life tethered to the whims of the Israeli government.

Now, after Israel and Sudan agreed to normalize ties, Baraka is among 6,000 Sudanese in Israel once again fearing for their fate.

Israel already has indicated it will seek to settle the migrant issue in upcoming talks with Sudan, whipping up trepidation in the community that Israel might forcibly return them to Sudan, a place they say they fled because of conflict or persecution.

"If I return tomorrow or the day after when there is the official peace they are talking about, something awaits me there, and that's danger," said Baraka, 25, who fled Janjaweed militia attacks on his village in Darfur at the age of nine.

Israel and Sudan announced earlier this month they would normalize ties, making Sudan the third Arab country to do so in as many months.

The announcement brought satisfaction to Israelis. But after years of failed Israeli attempts to remove the migrants, it has renewed fears among the Sudanese who have long had an insecure existence in their adopted home.

African migrants, mainly from Sudan and Eritrea, began arriving in Israel in 2005 through its porous border with Egypt after Egyptian forces violently



quashed a refugee demonstration and word spread of safety and job opportunities in Israel. Tens of thousands crossed the desert border in often dangerous journeys.

Israel initially turned a blind eye to their influx and many took up menial jobs in hotels and restaurants. But as their numbers swelled, there was a backlash, with growing calls to expel the new arrivals.

Israel considers the vast majority of the migrants to be job seekers and says it has no legal obligation to keep them. The Africans say they are asylum seekers who fled for their lives and face renewed danger if they return. Many come from Darfur and other conflict-ridden regions.

Sudan's former leader, Omar Bashir, has been charged with genocide for a campaign of mass killings that took place in Darfur under his watch. The area still experiences tribal clashes and rebel violence.

Under international law, Israel cannot forcibly send migrants back to a country where their life or liberty may be at risk. Critics accuse the government instead of trying to coerce them into leaving.

Over the years, Israel has detained thousands of migrants in remote desert prisons, left thousands of asylum requests open and offered cash payments to those who agreed to move to third African countries.

It also has built a barrier along the border with Egypt that stopped the influx and reached a deal with the UN to resettle thousands of migrants in Western countries while allowing thousands of others to remain in Israel – though the deal was quickly scrapped under pressure from anti-migrant activists and hard-line legislators.

The migrants' presence has long divided the country. Their supporters say Israel, a country founded upon the ashes of the Holocaust and built up by Jewish refugees, should welcome those seeking refuge. Opponents claim the migrants have brought crime to the low-income south Tel Aviv neighborhoods where they have settled. Some Israeli politicians have labeled them infiltrators, with one calling them "a cancer" threatening the country's Jewish character.

"I believe they are economic migrants and they act as if they own the place," said Sheffi Paz, a prominent anti-migrant activist.

Publicly, Israeli leaders have been guarded about their plans. On Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israeli and Sudanese delegations would soon meet to "discuss cooperation in many fields, including in the field of migration." A spokeswoman for Israel's Interior Ministry declined to comment.

A top Sudanese military official with direct knowledge of the early contacts with Israel said the matter of returning the migrants has not yet been discussed. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter in public.

Israel deported about 1,000 migrants back to South Sudan in 2012 after an Israeli court determined they were no longer at risk in their home country, which had just gained independence. But activists say some died there from disease and others fled renewed conflict.

Israel has acknowledged in recent court proceedings that the situation in Sudan remains volatile, and advocacy groups that work with the migrants say that deporting them will come up against stiff legal challenges.

"If Israel will dare to deport Sudanese with open asylum claims it will be a grave violation of the most fundamental principle of the refugee convention,"

said Sigal Rozen, public policy director at the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants.

She said Israeli leaders may nonetheless be raising the issue to prompt some Sudanese to leave voluntarily.

Migrants have already been hard-hit by the coronavirus pandemic, their jobs in restaurants and hotels threatened by repeated lockdowns. Without proper status in Israel, they are not entitled to claim unemployment insurance. Rozen said some sympathetic employers have kept on migrant workers just to give them a lifeline.

In the south Tel Aviv neighborhood where many migrants live, a pedestrian street typically lively with shops and restaurants was dreary on a recent day. Grey shutters sealed the entrances to many businesses and some mask-wearing migrants lingered on stoops.

Baraka fled Darfur after his father was killed in front of him. He settled in a displacement camp along the border with Chad before departing on a precarious journey north, through Libya and Egypt, to be smuggled through the desert into Israel, where he has lived for more than a decade.

He submitted an asylum request to Israel in 2013 and it remains open. While he welcomes any deal that stabilizes relations between Sudan and Israel, he doesn't believe that opens the door for his return.

"I do believe in what they're talking about now, normalization between Sudan and Israel," Baraka said. "I support it, but we need to know who it's being done with, when to do it and how to do it."



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returned after normalization