

## HKETO UPDATE

### **Postponement of HKETO-HKTBC Lunar New Year receptions in Toronto and Vancouver**

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Toronto (HKETO) and the Hong Kong Tourism Board (Canada) (HKTBC), after careful consideration, have decided to take a responsible precaution to postpone the Lunar New Year business receptions in Toronto and Vancouver on February 3 and 13 respectively due to the latest novel coronavirus situation. Updated information will be provided in due course.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

### **HKETO supports Lunar New Year activities in Ontario**

Director of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Toronto) (HKETO), Ms Emily Mo, attended the Dragon Ball 2020 hosted by the Yee Hong Community Wellness Foundation at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on January 25.

Speaking at the event, Ms Mo said Hong Kong is developing hardware and software to reinforce the city's status as an international cultural hub. She highlighted the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District, which is one of the world's largest cultural infrastructure projects, and the Xiqu Centre located therein. The design of the Xiqu Centre was one of the last projects by the late Hong Kong-born Canadian architect Bing Thom.

HKETO sponsored a photo booth at the Dragon Ball where guests could take pictures against the Xiqu Centre backdrop with live Cantonese Opera performers.

Earlier in the week, Ms Mo also attended the Lunar New Year Receptions hosted by Toronto Mayor John Tory at the Toronto City Hall and the Mississauga Chinese Business Association in Mississauga respectively. Ms Mo took the opportunity to deliver New Year greetings to the participants and wished that Toronto and Hong Kong would continue to prosper in the Year of the Rat.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.hketotoronto.gov.hk/newsroom/hketo-supports-dragon-ball-2020-2021.html>

## HONG KONG NEWS

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, Mrs Carrie Lam, announced on January 28 a series of measures to prevent and minimise the spread of the novel coronavirus in Hong Kong, including the following:

- Mainland authorities will suspend the issue of new permits under the Individual Visits Scheme until further notice
- Cross-boundary rail services suspended for Express Rail Link and Inter-city through-trains (Hung Hom) from January 30
- Reduce flights from the Mainland by half from January 30
- Suspend cross-boundary ferry services from China Ferry Terminal and Tuen Mun from January 30 (limited services to/from Macao will continue)
- Suspend cross-boundary bus services on Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and via Sha Tau Kok from January 30
- Suspend passenger clearance services at West Kowloon XRL Station, Hung Hom station, China Ferry Terminal, Tuen Mun ferry terminal and the land crossings at Sha Tau Kok and Man Kam To from January 30

Further measures were also announced in relation to minimising the movement of people within Hong Kong who may have been exposed to the virus, help for Hong Kong people stranded in Hubei, and provision of quarantine facilities etc.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/28/P2020012800741.htm> (Chinese only)

Some other major measures are as follows:

### **Special work arrangement for Government departments**

- Civil servants to work from home if not involved in provision of emergency/essential services
- Private sector urged to make similar arrangements if possible
- Closures/revised working arrangement to be publicised by individual departments

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/28/P2020012800310.htm>

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### **Government appeals to employers to make special work arrangement to reduce the risk of the spread of the novel coronavirus in the community**

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/28/P2020012800400.htm>

### **The stock, futures and derivatives markets of Hong Kong will trade as normal on January 29**

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/28/P2020012800370.htm>

### **Transport Department public services suspended (driver's licences, international licences, driving tests, etc.)**

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/28/P2020012800457.htm>

### **Special arrangement for postal services - post office counter services, mail delivery, mail collection from posting boxes suspended until February 2**

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/28/P2020012800508.htm>

### **Updates on Novel Coronavirus Infection in Hong Kong**

An information page "Latest Situation of Novel Coronavirus Infection in Hong Kong" has been added to the official website of HKETO. Information in the page included the latest local situation, reported cases, preventive measures etc.

You are invited to browse the page by clicking the banner on top of HKETO website or the following link:

<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/>

### **CE announces activation of Emergency Response Level in relation to novel coronavirus infection**

In response to the latest development of the novel coronavirus infection, the Chief Executive of the HKSAR, Mrs Carrie Lam, on January 25 announced that the response level under the "Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance" (the Preparedness and Response Plan) would be raised to Emergency Response Level with immediate effect. She also rolled out a package of

measures to tackle the disease and appealed to every member of public in Hong Kong to work together to fight against the virus.

The strategies and measures announced by Mrs Lam covered six areas.

- (1) Enhancing mechanism and organisation structure to tackle disease
- (2) Strengthening immigration control
- (3) Minimising risks of virus infection and spreading in local community
- (4) Enhancing personal hygiene of the public
- (5) Improving anti-epidemic facilities and services
- (6) Allocating sufficient resources for the strategies and measures

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/26/P2020012600087.htm>

### **HKSAR Government imposes immigration restrictions on Hubei Province residents and persons visited Hubei Province in past 14 days**

The Chief Executive of the HKSAR, Mrs Carrie Lam, convened a meeting of the Steering Committee cum Command Centre in relation to the Novel Coronavirus on January 26. As the outbreak is mainly found and the situation is getting more severe in the Hubei Province, and experts have advised that asymptomatic patients would increase the difficulties in disease prevention and control, the Steering Committee cum Command Centre has decided to impose restrictions on all Hubei Province residents and people who visited the Hubei Province in the past 14 days from entering Hong Kong until further notice to reduce the chances of infected persons entering the city.

With effect from 0.00am on January 27, except for Hong Kong residents, residents from Hubei Province and persons who visited the Hubei Province in the past 14 days will not be permitted to enter Hong Kong until further notice. To facilitate the implementation of the above-mentioned measure, all the self-service clearance channels (i.e. e-Channels) at control points will only be open to Hong Kong residents. Non-Hong Kong residents have to use normal immigration counters for immigration clearance.

The Steering Committee cum Command Centre is monitoring the development of the disease and listening to advice of experts to study measures that can further reduce the chances of infected people entering Hong Kong.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/26/P2020012600751.htm>

### **Wuhan ETO continues to assist Hong Kong people in Wuhan**

In view of the latest developments of the outbreak of novel coronavirus infection, the Wuhan Economic and Trade Office of the HKSAR Government will continue to provide Hong Kong people in Wuhan with practicable assistance when necessary during the Chinese New Year holiday.

In addition, all five Mainland Offices of the HKSAR Government have set up dedicated hotlines to provide Hong Kong people in the Mainland of China with direct access for assistance when necessary.

Since the emergence of the cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, all Mainland Offices of HKSAR Government have been liaising closely with Hong Kong people in the Mainland of China and have uploaded relevant health information and latest updates on their websites and WeChat official accounts to keep them abreast of the latest situation. All Mainland Offices will try their best to render practicable assistance to Hong Kong people in the Mainland when necessary.

Click the following links for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/23/P2020012300680.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/24/P2020012400710.htm>

### **CE attends World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Switzerland**

The Chief Executive of the HKSAR, Mrs Carrie Lam, led a Hong Kong delegation to the World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos, Switzerland to remind global political, business and media leaders that Hong Kong's enduring strengths and advantages continue to serve it well.

On January 21, Mrs Lam met the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, and the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Mr Xavier Bettel, separately. Mrs Lam emphasised that the HKSAR Government has all along been adhering to three principles in handling the social unrest, namely upholding the "One Country, Two Systems" principle and the Basic Law, respecting and safeguarding the rule of law and protecting Hong Kong's institutional strengths.

Invited to attend the WEF session "Expanding Asia's Technology Leadership", Mrs Lam, one of the discussion leaders, pointed out that Asia is emerging as an important region for innovation and technology (I&T) with a number of top I&T enterprises and universities in the region. She said that five universities in Hong Kong are ranked in the global top 100, providing Hong Kong with a large pool of research talent and great potential in I&T development.

On January 22, Mrs Lam continued to attend the WEF Annual Meeting. She met the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Ms Kristalina Georgieva, the Chief Strategic Advisor to the UK Prime Minister, Sir Edward Lister, and a number of leaders from such sectors as finance, insurance and investment to update them on Hong Kong's latest social situation and measures taken by the HKSAR Government, as well as promote Hong Kong's advantages.

On January 23, Mrs Lam led the TeamHK, the largest and most high-level Hong Kong delegation to attend the WEF in more than 20 years, to participate in the Hong Kong Night, a flagship event co-organised by the HKSAR Government and various Hong Kong organisations and enterprises, to promote Hong Kong's strengths and advantages to high-powered guests from different parts of the world. The Founder and Executive Chairman of the WEF, Professor Klaus Schwab, also addressed the event. Other participants included about 200 global political, business and media leaders.

Mrs Lam, during a Q&A session, emphasised that the HKSAR Government will safeguard Hong Kong's fundamentals, including the rule of law, despite that the city has undergone a difficult period.

During the day, Mrs Lam also met with the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Mr Mark Rutte. Mrs Lam was pleased to note that the regulators of the two places signed a Memorandum of Understanding on mutual recognition of funds arrangement last year and she looked forward to enhancing co-operation in financial services and others areas such as design and arts and culture.

Click the following links for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/22/P2020012200150.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/23/P2020012300138.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/24/P2020012400132.htm>

### **Hong Kong and Mexico sign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement**

Hong Kong and Mexico signed an Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (IPPA) in Davos, Switzerland, on January 23 to strengthen mutual investment protection. The agreement is set to enhance the confidence of investors, expand investment flows and further strengthen the economic and trade ties between the two places.

Under the Agreement, the two governments undertake to provide investors of the other side with fair, equitable and non-discriminatory treatment of their investments, compensation in the event of expropriation of investments, and the right to free transfers abroad of investments and returns. The Agreement also provides for settlement of

investment disputes under internationally accepted rules. The Agreement will enter into force after the fulfilment of relevant internal requirements by both sides.

The IPPA with Mexico is the fourth such agreement that this term of Government has signed since taking office in July 2017. It is also the 22nd investment agreement that Hong Kong has signed with a foreign economy including Canada.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/24/P2020012300545.htm>

### **Free Trade Agreement and Investment Agreement between Hong Kong and Australia enter into force**

The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and Investment Agreement signed between Hong Kong and Australia entered into force on January 17, providing Hong Kong traders and investors with legal certainty and more favourable access to the Australian market, while creating more business opportunities and enhancing trade and investment flows between Hong Kong and Australia.

The FTA, the fourth FTA signed and taken effect within the current term of the Government, is a comprehensive and high-quality one covering trade in goods, trade in services, investment, government procurement, intellectual property, competition and other related areas.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/17/P2020011700365.htm>

### **Government launches new scheme to subsidise local SMEs to participate in TDC's exhibitions**

To further assist local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in exploring markets and business opportunities, the HKSAR Government will launch a one-off scheme on February 1, 2020 to subsidise local SMEs to participate in exhibitions organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (TDC). The scheme will last for 6 months till July 31, 2020. Local SMEs will be subsidised 50 per cent of its participation fee per participation in TDC's exhibitions during the period, subject to a cap of HK\$10,000. The scheme is expected to benefit over 5 000 local SMEs.

Meanwhile, to assist enterprises in enhancing their competitiveness and developing the Mainland and overseas markets, a total of HK\$3 billion has been injected into the Branding, Upgrading and Domestic Sales Fund (BUD Fund) and the SME Export Marketing Fund to substantially increase the cumulative funding ceilings per enterprise



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and the ratio of initial payments, as well as to expand the geographical coverage of the BUD Fund to cover all economies with which Hong Kong has signed FTAs starting from January 20.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/19/P2020011800455.htm>

### **Invest Hong Kong assists record number of overseas and Mainland companies setting up or expanding in Hong Kong**

Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) on January 21 announced that the department had assisted 487 overseas and Mainland companies to set up or expand in Hong Kong in 2019.

This number represents an all-time high and a year-on-year increase of 11.7 per cent, with the number of fintech companies and start-ups seeing the strongest growth. The total number of jobs thereby created (6 009) rose by 14.1 per cent over the previous year's figure.

The 487 companies came from 48 economies. Mainland China continued to lead with 120 companies, followed by the US (71), the UK (43), Japan (27) and France (25). There were 29 companies from Association of Southeast Asian Nations economies.

In terms of sectors, the portfolio covered a broad spectrum ranging from innovation and technology (106) followed by transport and industrial (65) to tourism and hospitality (60) and fintech (57). Start-ups in various sectors took up 14.4 per cent (70) of all companies assisted.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/21/P2020012000480.htm>

### **Launch of new patent system in Hong Kong**

The Patents Registry of the Intellectual Property Department of the HKSAR Government has started accepting and examining filings under the new patent system launched last month.

The new patent system essentially comprises an original grant patent (OGP) system which creates a direct route for seeking standard patent protection in Hong Kong with a maximum term of 20 years, as an alternative to the existing "re-registration" route. OGP applications are subject to substantive examination by the Registry for determining the patentability of the underlying inventions.



Another feature of the new patent system is enabling any short-term patent owner or third party having a legitimate interest in the validity of a patent to request the Registry to carry out substantive examination on the underlying invention. This new post-grant mechanism safeguards the integrity of the existing short-term patent system while maintaining its overall cost-effectiveness.

The use of certain misleading or confusing titles/descriptions relating to the qualification of patent practitioners is also prohibited in Hong Kong under the new patent system.

In tandem with the launch of the new patent system, a new electronic processing system also starts operation to underpin electronic patent searches and filings.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201912/19/P2019121900237.htm>

### **Greater travel convenience for HKSAR passport holders going to Kenya**

The HKSAR Government has received notification from the Embassy of the Republic of Kenya in the People's Republic of China that HKSAR passport holders may apply for an entry visa for a maximum stay of three months upon arriving in Kenya as a visitor. HKSAR passport holders may also apply for an online e-visa for travelling to Kenya.

Including Kenya, 168 countries and territories have granted visa-free access or visa-on-arrival to HKSAR passport holders.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/22/P2020012200525.htm>

### **Hong Kong Customs detects largest cannabis trafficking case at Hong Kong International Airport in past decade**

Hong Kong Customs seized about 70 kilograms of suspected cannabis buds with an estimated market value of about HK\$12 million at Hong Kong International Airport on January 17. This is the largest cannabis trafficking case detected by Customs at Hong Kong International Airport in the past decade.

Customs officers inspected an air consignment arriving in Hong Kong from Canada on that day. The batch of suspected cannabis buds was found concealed inside 32 speakers and wrapped with tinfoil and vacuum bags, in an attempt to evade law enforcement officers' detection. A 50-year-old man was arrested.

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Hong Kong Customs strives to combat dangerous drugs trafficking and takes rigorous enforcement action in accordance with Hong Kong's laws. The recreational use of cannabis has been legalised in individual overseas jurisdictions where products containing cannabis or controlled cannabinoids (such as tetrahydro-cannabinol, or THC) in the form of food, drinks and topical products for applying to skin, hair or nails, as well as cannabis extracts, may be available for sale. Customs reminds the public that cannabis and THC are controlled dangerous drugs in Hong Kong. It is a criminal offence to bring such products into Hong Kong.

Under Cap. 134, trafficking in dangerous drugs, or illicitly importing to and exporting from Hong Kong, procuring, supplying, manufacturing or dealing in or with dangerous drugs, constitutes a criminal offence. The maximum penalty is life imprisonment and a fine of HK\$5 million. Illicitly possessing or smoking, inhaling, ingesting or injecting dangerous drugs is subject to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for seven years and a fine of HK\$1 million.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/23/P2020012300414.htm>

### **Working Holiday Scheme with the Government of Italy**

The HKSAR Government has recently established Working Holiday Scheme (WHS) with the Government of Italy with effect in 2020.

Since 2001, the HKSAR Government has established bilateral WHS arrangements with partner economies including Canada. The Scheme not only facilitates cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and the participating countries, but also helps enhance bilateral cooperation and promotes tourism and development. During their stay, participants can engage in short-term employment, or even enrol in short-term course(s) (except Ireland). Through these first-hand living and working experiences, the youths will be able to acquire a better understanding of the cultural and social developments of Hong Kong.

For details, please visit the dedicated website for WHS ([www.whs.gov.hk](http://www.whs.gov.hk)) and the link to the WHS promotion leaflet below.

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/j8hewmqc3rh6jq/WHS%20leaflet\\_2020.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/j8hewmqc3rh6jq/WHS%20leaflet_2020.pdf?dl=0)

### **Updates on Hong Kong**

The information page "Hong Kong Update" under the Brand Hong Kong website provides topical info for overseas audiences to learn the updates in Hong Kong,

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including information on known processions, Government responses to the protest actions and clarifications. It also provides social media links about Hong Kong.

You are invited to browse the page by clicking the link:

<https://www.brandhk.gov.hk/html/en/WhatSON/HKUpdate2019.html>

In addition, the Information Services Department (ISD) has produced a series of episodes to update the public about the situation in Hong Kong.

Click the following links for details.

<https://youtu.be/j4ahMPb2OsA> (睇真 D • 知多 D : 第十六則資訊 Chinese only)

<https://youtu.be/nGoS-LUKdL8> (睇真 D • 知多 D : 第十七則資訊 Chinese only)

<https://youtu.be/8wjQaFsFwt4> (睇真 D • 知多 D : 第十八則資訊 Chinese only)

### **International media partnership of the Information Services Department**

A series of articles with branded contents were published at different international media platforms to promote Hong Kong. Please click the links of the articles for details.

#### **Bloomberg**

[From Toys to Ticker Tape to Tech](#)

#### **The Economist**

[Working for a digital future](#)

[Hong Kong: Asia's Green Finance Hub](#)

The full paper can be downloaded from this link.

<https://hkglobalconnections.economist.com/wp-content/uploads/GreenFinance.pdf>

#### **Wall Street Journal**

[What Attracts Global Talent to Hong Kong \(video\)](#)

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HKETO Toronto Facebook Page [www.facebook.com/TorontoHKETO](http://www.facebook.com/TorontoHKETO)

HKETO Toronto Twitter Page <https://twitter.com/TorontoHKETO>

Brand Hong Kong Facebook page [www.facebook.com/brandhk.isd](http://www.facebook.com/brandhk.isd) or

Brand Hong Kong Instagram page [www.instagram.com/brandhongkong/](http://www.instagram.com/brandhongkong/)

Brand Hong Kong Twitter page [https://twitter.com/Brand\\_HK](https://twitter.com/Brand_HK)

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