

Hong Kong e-News Bulletin

July 29, 2020



SPECIAL NOTICE

In response to the local government's appeal for concerted efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Toronto) (HKETO) has been closed temporarily until further notice. Users may continue to reach us via the following channels:

Toronto

Phone: (416) 924-5544 or

Email: info@hketotoronto.gov.hk

Vancouver

Phone: (604) 331-1300 or

Email: info_vancouver@hketotoronto.gov.hk

For urgent assistance outside office hours, Hong Kong residents in Canada may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit of the Immigration Department in Hong Kong at +852 1868. In the event that Hong Kong residents who need assistance are not able to call the hotline due to the service settings of their telecommunication services operators or other reasons, they may try adding "0000" after entering "1868". Hong Kong residents in Canada in need of consular assistance may contact the Chinese Embassy or Consulate Offices in your province (<http://ca.china-embassy.org/eng/zlqj/>).

RECENT ACTIVITY

"Change and Continuity" webinar co-hosted by Toronto ETO and HKCBA in Canada

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Toronto (HKETO) and the Hong Kong-Canada Business Association (HKCBA) in Canada co-hosted a webinar on July 24 on the latest financial developments and the new national security law in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). The webinar entitled "Change and Continuity" is presented by the Secretary for Financial Services and Treasury of the HKSAR Government, Mr Christopher Hui, and moderated by National Chair of the HKCBA, Mr Arthur Chan.

At the webinar, Mr Christopher Hui, first spoke on the latest financial situation in Hong Kong. He remarked that though COVID-19 has imposed pressure on economies and financial markets worldwide, Hong Kong's fundamental strengths remain intact. Its financial markets remain vibrant and orderly. The Hong Kong dollar exchange rate is stable and has stayed near the strong side of convertibility undertaking.

Hong Kong e-News Bulletin

July 29, 2020



Mr Hui pointed out that the HKSAR Government has earmarked HK\$6 billion under the Anti-epidemic Fund. To support fintech development, the Government has also launched the FAST Scheme, offering salary subsidy for fintech companies and start-ups, and other enterprises with fintech-related businesses.

Besides, Mr Hui addressed concern on the new national security law's implications on the city's long-term financial stability. He stressed that the implementation of the national security law will not have any impact on the normal functioning of the financial markets, nor the normal conduct of businesses.

Mr Hui encouraged Canadian enterprises to tap on Hong Kong's strengths and status as a global financial centre, an asset and wealth management centre and an offshore RMB business hub, as they expand and invest in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and beyond.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.hketotoronto.gov.hk/newsroom/change-and-continuity-webinar-co-hosted-by-toronto-eto-and-hkcba-in-canada.html>

HKETO Director supports Yee Hong's Caring Heroes online show

Director of the HKETO, Ms Emily Mo, joined the "Yee Hong Caring Heroes" online show hosted by the Yee Hong Community Wellness Foundation as a speaker on July 18.

In addressing the online show, Ms Mo complemented Yee Hong for its effective efforts in combatting the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic in Ontario. Ms Mo also pointed out that the HKSAR Government has deployed a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to contain the spread of COVID-19. Since the start of the pandemic, different companies and institutions in Hong Kong have made significant contributions to the global fight against COVID-19 through their world-class scientific researches and cutting edge technologies.

Before closing, Ms Mo invited viewers to learn more about how researches and innovations in Hong Kong are used to combat the disease through a short video "[Hong Kong: Helping the Global Fight against COVID-19](#)" produced by the HKSAR Government.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.hketotoronto.gov.hk/newsroom/hketo-director-supports-yee-hongs-caring-heroes-online-show.html>

HONG KONG NEWS

Suspension of agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters between Hong Kong and Canada, Australia and United Kingdom

In accordance with the instruction of the Central People's Government, the HKSAR Government issued notices to the Canadian consulate, the Australian consulate and the UK consulate respectively on July 28 to suspend the implementation of the Agreement between the HKSAR Government and the Government of Canada on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (MLA), the Agreement between the Government of Hong Kong and the Government of Australia Concerning MLA and the Agreement between the HKSAR Government and the Government of the United Kingdom (UK) Concerning MLA.

A Government spokesman said, "It is an international practice to safeguard national security through enactment of laws. Canada, Australia and the UK have respectively put in place relevant legislation and enforcement mechanisms for safeguarding their national security and sovereignty. However, they have unilaterally suspended the agreements on surrender of fugitive offenders with the HKSAR using the enactment of the National Security Law in Hong Kong as an excuse. It smacks of political manipulation and double standards. It is also a gross interference in China's internal affairs and a grave violation of international law and basic norms governing international relations. The HKSAR Government strongly objects to their moves."

Notwithstanding the suspension of the agreements, the HKSAR has established a comprehensive co-operation regime for the surrender of fugitives and mutual legal assistance. The HKSAR Government will, as always, uphold the principle of mutual assistance and reciprocity, and carry out law enforcement co-operation with other members of the international community in accordance with the law.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202007/28/P2020072800594.htm>

Government further tightens social distancing measures

The HKSAR Government announced on July 27 that it had gazetted amendments and directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Wearing of Mask) Regulation (Cap. 599I) to further tighten social distancing measures. The above amendments and directions took effect on July 29 to August 4, for a period of seven days.

The Food and Health Bureau of the HKSAR Government said that in view of the latest public health risk assessment, it is necessary to tighten social distancing measures, including requiring the cessation of dine-in services at catering businesses, incorporating more premises into the list of scheduled premises and requiring their closure, as well as requiring any person to wear mask at all times when entering or being present in any public place.

Besides, the number of persons allowed in group gatherings in public places will be tightened from four to two, with effect from July 29. Unless exempted, the prohibition on group gatherings at public places will continue during the seven-day period from July 29 to August 4.

The mask-wearing requirement to cover all outdoor public places is also specified. Starting from July 29, a person must wear a mask at all times when the person is boarding or onboard a public transport carrier, is entering or present in an MTR paid area, or is entering or present in a public place (indoor or outdoor).

You can click the following link for details about the latest social distancing measures.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202007/27/P2020072700650.htm>

Specifications under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation gazetted

The HKSAR Government announced on July 18 that it had gazetted the specifications under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to impose conditions based on public health grounds on travellers who has visited specified high risk places (i.e. Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and South Africa), within 14 days before arrival in Hong Kong, to provide the following documents:

(1) a letter or certificate in English or Chinese issued by a laboratory or healthcare institution bearing the name and identity card or passport number of the relevant traveller to show that: (a) the relevant traveller underwent a nucleic acid test for COVID-19 the sample for which was taken from the relevant traveller within 72 hours before the scheduled time of departure of the specified aircraft; (b) the test conducted on the sample is a nucleic acid test for COVID-19; and (c) the result of the test is that the relevant traveller was tested negative for COVID-19;

(2) the original of the report for the test issued by the laboratory or healthcare institution bearing the name and identity card or passport number of the relevant traveller;

Hong Kong e-News Bulletin

July 29, 2020



(3) a letter in English or Chinese issued by the relevant authority of the government of the place in which the laboratory or healthcare institution is located certifying that the laboratory or healthcare institution is recognised or approved by the government; and

(4) the relevant traveller has confirmation in English or Chinese of room reservation in a hotel in Hong Kong for not less than 14 days starting on the day of the arrival of the relevant traveller in Hong Kong.

The relevant specifications came into effect at 0.00am on July 25, and will remain effective until further notice.

Besides, travellers to Hong Kong should note that they will be mandated to wait for their test results at a designated location after their deep throat saliva samples are collected for conducting testing for COVID-19 at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre pursuant to the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599).

If their test results are negative, they will be allowed to go to the hotel for which they made the reservation to continue the 14-day compulsory quarantine until completion. If their results are positive, the travellers will be transferred to hospital for isolation and treatment.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202007/18/P2020071800038.htm>

In addition, the HKSAR Government on July 26 announced that crew change arrangement for passenger vessels and goods vessels without cargo operation in Hong Kong would be suspended with effect from July 29, 2020. The testing and quarantine arrangement for sea crew members of goods vessels coming to Hong Kong for cargo operation, air crew members travelling between Hong Kong and the Mainland, Macao, Taiwan or foreign places to perform duties, and other persons exempted from quarantine requirement arriving Hong Kong will also be tightened.

Please click the link below for details:

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202007/26/P2020072600440.htm>

The governments of Guangdong Province and HKSAR have also taken anti-epidemic measures under the co-operation mechanism on joint prevention and control of COVID-19. At present, Guangdong Province has strengthened the entry management measures for cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers entering Guangdong. Members of the public should also pay attention to the requirement to present a valid proof of a valid negative COVID-19 nucleic acid test result issued by one of the testing institutions recognised by the HKSAR Government. The negative test result would only be considered valid if it is within 72 hours from the date of collecting samples.

Hong Kong e-News Bulletin

July 29, 2020



Please click the links below for details:

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202007/27/P2020072700612.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202007/16/P2020071600879.htm>

Updates on COVID-19 infection in Hong Kong

The “COVID-19 Thematic Website” of the HKSAR Government has been added to the official website of HKETO. Information in the page includes the latest local situation, reported cases, health tips, travel advice etc.

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

<https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html>

HKSAR Government deplores and opposes UK Government’s interference in Hong Kong affairs

The Government of the HKSAR made a solemn statement on July 23 in response to the announcement by the Government of the United Kingdom (UK) on providing a pathway for the Chinese nationals in Hong Kong who are holders of the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) passport or eligible for it to reside and obtain citizenship in the UK.

China resumed the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong on July 1, 1997. Hong Kong is a special administrative region of China. When the Sino-British Joint Declaration was signed, the Chinese Government and the UK Government exchanged memoranda in which the UK clearly pledged not to confer the right of abode in the UK on holders of the BN(O) passport who are Chinese nationals in Hong Kong. Given the history, it is hypocritical for the UK to deliberately violate its pledge made in the British memorandum associated with the Sino-British Joint Declaration paying no regard to the Chinese firm opposition and repeated representations, and insist on using the BN(O) passport or status which some people in Hong Kong still hold for political maneuver on the pretext of changing the policy to provide a route for relevant persons to reside and obtain citizenship in the UK. The HKSAR Government deplores and opposes such move of the UK.

Since the establishment of the HKSAR, the Central People’s Government has been upholding and implementing the principle of “One Country, Two Systems”. The HKSAR enjoys a high degree of autonomy in accordance with the Basic Law of the HKSAR of the People’s Republic of China, and has maintained prosperity and stability. National security falls squarely under the purview of the Central Authorities. The enactment of the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the HKSAR (National Security Law) is constitutional, lawful, rational and reasonable. Matters of the

HKSAR remain our Country's internal affairs. No other state is allowed to interfere in such internal affairs under any pretext.

Taking account of the historical background and the existing circumstances of Hong Kong, the Central People's Government has all along permitted the Chinese nationals in Hong Kong who were born before June 30, 1997 to use the BN(O) passport as a travel document for the purpose of travelling to other states and regions. Since the UK violates its pledge in the first place, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announces on July 23, 2020 that China will consider not recognising the BN(O) passport as a valid travel document and reserve the right to take any further measure. The HKSAR Government is in support of this and will follow up accordingly.

The HKSAR Government spokesman solemnly pointed out that the high-profile measures taken by the UK Government on the pretext of the National Security Law are purely made out of political maneuver. The HKSAR Government urges the UK Government to stop interfering in the affairs of the HKSAR and return to the normal tracks.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202007/23/P2020072300735.htm>

HKSAR Government responds to European Commission report

The HKSAR Government made response on July 23 to the comments in the report on Hong Kong issued by the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the Report).

The HKSAR Government could not agree with remarks in the Report about the implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" in Hong Kong. The concerns about the erosion of HKSAR's high degree of autonomy and the legitimate rights and freedoms enjoyed by the people of Hong Kong are totally unfounded.

The Government spokesman stressed that to uphold and implement the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" meets the interests of the Hong Kong people, responds to the needs of maintaining Hong Kong's prosperity and stability and serves the fundamental interests of the nation. But this has to be premised on a correct understanding of the relationship between "One Country" and "Two Systems". First and foremost is to firmly uphold China's sovereignty, security and development interests.

The spokesman noted that the National Security Law will not affect the high degree of autonomy, judicial independence and the rule of law in Hong Kong. The legitimate rights and interests of Hong Kong citizens will not be affected. The legislation only targets an

extremely small minority of persons committing the four types of crimes that seriously endanger national security under the National Security Law, and protects the lives and property, basic rights and freedoms of the vast majority of citizens.

The HKSAR Government calls on the EU member states to adopt a pragmatic and rational attitude, and bear in mind the mutually beneficial relations between the two sides.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202007/23/P2020072300037.htm>

SCED participates in APEC Virtual Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development of the HKSAR Government, Mr Edward Yau, participated in the first-ever Virtual Ministers Responsible for Trade (VMRT) Meeting of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) 2020 on July 25.

Speaking at the meeting, which was dedicated to discussing APEC's response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr Yau called on all APEC economies to act in unity and in a manner consistent with the World Trade Organization (WTO) rights and obligations, and to refrain from raising unjustified trade barriers.

Mr Yau urged all economies, during this crucial time, to keep their boundaries open to ensure the smooth functioning of the supply chain and refrain from erecting trade barriers or resorting to irrationality in trade policies. Hong Kong, as a founding member of the WTO and a separate customs territory, remains committed to maintaining a free market policy and supporting progressive trade liberalisation.

Mr Yau also told participating ministers about Hong Kong's "suppress and lift" strategy in combating the epidemic, which allows the city to make timely and flexible adjustments to control measures in view of the overall epidemic situation, and added that three rounds of relief measures have been progressively implemented to help businesses to stay afloat and keep workers in employment.

The VMRT meeting concluded with the issuance of a VMRT Statement, in which ministers reaffirmed their commitment to effectively mitigate the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and promptly steer the region towards a path of resilient, sustainable and inclusive economic recovery.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202007/25/P2020072500375.htm>

Hong Kong e-News Bulletin

July 29, 2020



Recruitment exercise for post of Assistant Clerical Officer

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) of the HKSAR Government launched a biennial recruitment exercise for the post of Assistant Clerical Officer (ACO) on July 24 to recruit about 2 000 ACOs on civil service terms in two years' time.

ACOs will be assigned to perform general administrative support and clerical duties or frontline services in different government bureaux or departments.

Candidates must pass a skills test before being invited to attend the selection interview. The skills test comprises a Chinese and English word processing speed test and a test on the application of common business software. Candidates who are invited to attend the interview will be assessed on their Basic Law knowledge through a written test. The Basic Law test result will constitute an appropriate weighting in a candidate's overall assessment.

Details of the entry requirements for the post have been uploaded to the CSB website (www.csb.gov.hk/english/recruit/7.html). Applicants can submit applications on-line through the CSB website. The closing date for applications is August 6.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202007/24/P2020072300603.htm>

Euronews Report on Hong Kong's homegrown tech to fight COVID-19

Euronews TV, in partnership with the Hong Kong Information Services Department, broadcast a TV segment entitling "How Hong Kong used homegrown tech to fight COVID-19". The segment and a gist in English and French are available in the following links:

English

<https://www.euronews.com/2020/07/14/how-hong-kong-used-homegrown-tech-to-fight-covid-19>

French

<https://fr.euronews.com/2020/07/14/hong-kong-technologie-contre-pandemie>

Hong Kong e-News Bulletin

July 29, 2020



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