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### **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) is closed temporarily. You may reach us via the following channels:

#### Toronto

Phone: (416) 924-5544 or

Email: [info@hketotoronto.gov.hk](mailto:info@hketotoronto.gov.hk)

#### Vancouver

Phone: (604) 331-1300 or

Email: [info\\_vancouver@hketotoronto.gov.hk](mailto:info_vancouver@hketotoronto.gov.hk)

Currently, except for Hong Kong residents, all travellers arriving Hong Kong by flights from overseas countries/territories will be denied entry. The same restriction also applies to non-Hong Kong residents travelling to Hong Kong from the Mainland of China, Macao and Taiwan who have been to any overseas countries/territories in the past 14 days. These temporary restrictions will remain in force until further notice. Please refer to the webpage <https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/inbound-travel.html> for details.

In addition, travellers from Canada are required to present test report, in English or Chinese, showing a negative COVID-19 nucleic acid test administered within 72 hours of the scheduled time of departure, before boarding the flight. They are required to present documentary proof in English to show that the laboratory or healthcare institution is recognized/ approved/ ISO15189 accredited. The same requirements apply to a Hong Kong resident who has stayed in Canada during the 21 days before boarding the flight to Hong Kong. Please refer to the webpage <https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/high-risk-places.html> for details.

The "COVID-19 Thematic Website" of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been added to the official website of HKETO. 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>

For the latest entry restrictions and quarantine requirements in Hong Kong, please refer to the webpage <https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/inbound-travel.html> for details.

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## **UPCOMING ACTIVITIES**

### **ACCE Access Young Entrepreneurs webinar**

The Association of Canadian Chinese Entrepreneurs will host on March 24 at 12 pm (EST) a webinar and a networking session for entrepreneurs that are interested in business expansion to Asia including Hong Kong. The webinar will help businesses stake their growth potential claim in the Asian market with practical lessons from entrepreneurs who have leverage support from diversified resources towards entering the region. The event is sponsored by HKETO and Invest Hong Kong.

Register here: <https://hopin.com/events/2021-access-acce-young-entrepreneurs-webinar>

### **“Paddles Up! The Canadian International Dragon Boat Festival Exhibit”**

Thanks to the original gift of six teak dragon boats by Hong Kong to Vancouver for Expo 86, dragon boat has spread across Canada from Vancouver into a popular celebration of culture and sport. “Paddles Up! The Canadian International Dragon Boat Festival Exhibit” in Vancouver explores the dragon boat festival’s history in Canada. Unique artifacts, including two full-sized dragon boats, are being exhibited at BC Sports Hall of Fame until October 2, 2021. The exhibition was produced in partnership between the [Canadian International Dragon Boat Festival Society](#) and the BC Sports Hall of Fame. HKETO is a sponsor of the exhibition.

Please refer to the following website for details and ticket reservation:  
<https://bcsportshall.com/exhibit/dragon-boat/>

## **HONG KONG NEWS**

### **FS unveils 2021-22 Budget**

The Financial Secretary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, Mr Paul Chan, in his 2021-22 Budget on February 24 unveiled wide-ranging measures to revive Hong Kong’s economy and help people overcome financial difficulties amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The Budget’s focus includes the introduction of a series of counter-cyclical measures costing over HK\$120 billion.

Mr Chan forecast economic growth of between 3.5% and 5.5% in real terms in 2021, and average annual growth of 3.3% from 2022 to 2025, while the underlying inflation rate is expected to average 2%.

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Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202102/24/P2021022400439.htm>

To help enterprises weather the current economic difficulties and prepare for a post-pandemic recovery, Mr Chan set out various initiatives to reinforce the competitiveness of the city's backbone industries, including financial services, innovation and technology and tourism. This will not only bring new impetus to the industries, but also enable them to have a more dynamic, diverse and interactive development.

Mr Chan announced that the HKSAR Government would issue electronic consumption vouchers with a total value of HK\$5,000 to eligible Hong Kong permanent residents and new arrivals aged 18 or above to help stimulate the economy and facilitate the speedy recovery of the consumption market.

To help businesses weather the current economic downturn, Mr Chan also announced a HK\$9.5 billion package of financial relief measures, including reducing profits tax up to a ceiling of HK\$10,000, waiving business registration fees for 2021-22 and reducing various government fees and charges.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202102/24/P2021022400448.htm>

In term of tax measures, Mr Chan proposed a one-off reduction of profits tax, salaries tax and tax under personal assessment for the year of assessment 2020/21 by 100%, subject to a ceiling of HK\$10,000 per case. This measure will cost the Government HK\$12.45 billion, benefiting about 2 million taxpayers.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202102/24/P2021022400518.htm>

In addition, Mr Chan announced new initiatives to help people overcome hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic, and boost the living environment by building a green and liveable city. To realise those goals, Mr Chan said the Government's "top priority is to contain the epidemic so that businesses and the public can be back to their daily routines".

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202102/24/P2021022400446.htm>

For full version of the Budget Speech, please visit: <https://www.budget.gov.hk/2021/eng/>

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The Chief Executive of the HKSAR, Mrs Carrie Lam, on February 24 issued a statement on the 2021-22 Budget. She supported the counter-cyclical measures announced in the Budget aiming at easing the financial burden on people and businesses while ensuring that essential public services as well as infrastructure development are maintained. She also remarked that the Budget has put forward effective measures to ensure prudence in public finance, which in turn will enhance confidence in Hong Kong's fiscal strength and is conducive to maintaining Hong Kong's monetary stability.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202102/24/P2021022400407.htm>

### **Government extends social distancing measures under Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance**

The HKSAR Government gazetted the directions and specifications 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 maintain the social distancing measures already in place, and strengthen infection control measures in catering business premises. The directions and specifications will take effect till March 17, 2021.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau of the HKSAR Government said that taking into account the latest public health risk assessment, there is no room for further relaxation of measures at this stage. The Government will therefore maintain most of the existing requirements and restrictions applicable to catering business premises and scheduled premises, as well as the requirements for group gatherings and mask wearing. In view of the recent cluster in eateries, the HKSAR Government requires catering business premises to dedicate staff for clearing used utensils and cleaning and disinfecting used tables and partitions, in order to reduce the relevant infection risk.

You can click the following link for details of the latest requirements and restrictions:

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202103/03/P2021030300045.htm>

In addition, the HKSAR Government announced on February 27 that in view of the continued severe global epidemic situation of COVID-19, it will maintain the measure under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to restrict persons who has stayed in the extremely high risk Group A specified places (i.e. Brazil, Ireland, South Africa and the United Kingdom) for more than two hours on the day of boarding or during the 21 days before that day from boarding flights for Hong Kong.

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For the very high-risk Group B specified places (including Canada) and the medium to high-risk Group C specified places, as required under the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) and the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E), all persons arriving at Hong Kong (either via the airport or land boundary control points) who have stayed in places outside China on the day of arrival in Hong Kong or during the 21 days before that day have to undergo compulsory quarantine for 21 days in designated quarantine hotels. For persons arriving at Hong Kong who have stayed in Group B specified places, they also have to present prior to boarding proof of a negative result of a nucleic acid test for COVID-19 conducted within 72 hours before the scheduled time of departure of the aircraft.

Details on the grouping of specified places and their respective boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements can be found at [www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/high-risk-places.html](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/high-risk-places.html).

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202102/27/P2021022700484.htm>

### **Latest arrangements of vaccination programme**

Under the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme officially launched on February 26, members of the public in the five priority groups can make online booking for receiving the Sinovac vaccine at the eight Community Vaccination Centres and the 18 general out-patient clinics of the Hospital Authority for the period until March 28.

The Department of Health also started distributing the first batch of the Sinovac vaccines to private doctors and clinics participating in the programme under the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme.

The Government has procured three vaccines from different technology platforms with a total of 22.5 million doses, which would be sufficient for vaccinating all of the people in Hong Kong.

For information about the vaccination, please visit the designated website at [www.covidvaccine.gov.hk](http://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk)

Click the following links for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202103/01/P2021030100794.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202102/26/P2021022600815.htm>

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In addition, the second shipment of about 758 000 doses of the Comirnaty vaccine, jointly developed by Fosun Pharma and BioNTech, arrived in Hong Kong on March 7. Together with the 585 000 doses delivered to Hong Kong in late February, a total of about 1 343 000 doses of the Comirnaty vaccine has arrived in Hong Kong.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202103/07/P2021030700296.htm>

Besides, taking into account the supply of vaccines and the progress of the vaccination programme, a Government spokesman on March 8 announced that the scope of the priority groups will be expanded in accordance with the proposed framework on priority of vaccinations by Joint Scientific Committees, to cover the following seven categories of people who have greater risk of exposure to the virus and risk of infection:

- (1) Staff of food and beverages premises, markets, supermarkets, convenience stores, couriers and takeaway delivery;
- (2) Staff of local public transport;
- (3) Registered construction workers;
- (4) Staff of property management;
- (5) Teachers and school staff;
- (6) Staff in the tourism industry; and
- (7) Staff of scheduled premises under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) (e.g. staff of fitness centres and beauty parlours).

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202103/08/P2021030800738.htm>

### **Statements in response to the deliberation by NPC of a draft Decision on “improving the electoral system of the HKSAR”**

In response to the deliberation by the National People’s Congress (NPC) of a draft Decision on “improving the electoral system of the HKSAR”, a spokesman for the HKSAR Government and the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam said on March 4 and 5 respectively that to ensure the steadfast and successful implementation of “one country, two systems”, Hong Kong must always adhere to the principle of “patriots governing Hong Kong”. This principle is fundamental to national sovereignty, security, development interests, as well as the long-term prosperity of Hong Kong.

The statements remarked that only through “patriots governing Hong Kong” can the Central Government’s overall jurisdiction over the HKSAR be effectively implemented,



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the constitutional order as set out by the Constitution and the Basic Law be effectively safeguarded and the long-term stability and safety of Hong Kong be achieved.

Matters concerning the political system of HKSAR are the prerogative of the Central Government. The Central Government has the authority and responsibility to improve the electoral system in Hong Kong. The HKSAR Government respects that the Central Government is taking the lead and will render its full co-operation.

Click the following links for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202103/04/P2021030400753.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202103/05/P2021030500393.htm>

### **Hong Kong is an irreplaceable legal hub**

A webinar jointly held by Invest Hong Kong and the Asian Academy of International Law (AAIL) on February 26 with an aim to explore Hong Kong's leading legal hub status in the region of Asia attracted more than 900 participants from around the globe.

Top-notch legal and dispute resolution practitioners at the "Why Hong Kong is Irreplaceable" webinar shared in-depth insights into Hong Kong's unique strengths as a legal hub for deal-making and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region and why it is a gateway to and from the Mainland for doing international business.

Mr Stephen Phillips, the Director-General of Investment Promotion said at his opening remarks that Hong Kong is a preferred choice for international investors from around the world and the Mainland. The rule of law and the common law legal system in the context of "one country, two systems" provides a solid and robust foundation for businesses to operate in Hong Kong. Hong Kong's comprehensive range of specialist legal services is highly valued by the international and Mainland investor community.

The Chairman of the AAIL, Dr Anthony Neoh, SC, and Mr Stephen Phillips, opened the event by giving welcoming remarks. The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Mr Eddie Yue, and the Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, also gave keynote speeches and concluding remarks at the event.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202103/01/P2021030100552.htm>

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## **International brands brought into Hong Kong**

Kyoto Ichinoden, a Japanese restaurant group with a history spanning more than 90 years, opened a new yakiniku restaurant, Yakiniku Jikon, in Hong Kong on February 26, as part of its ongoing expansion plan in the local dining industry following the success of its three brands in the city.

The new yakiniku restaurant is located at a prime shopping centre alongside Victoria Harbour in Tsim Sha Tsui, combining the kaiseki concept with modern Japanese yakiniku culture. It is a sister brand of the group's high-end Japanese omakase restaurant, Tominokoji Yamagishi, which was opened in 2019 in Hong Kong and received a Michelin recommendation earlier this year.

Yakiniku Jikon is a new Japanese yakiniku restaurant brand that offers high-quality of wagyu beef from Japan. It combines the concept of kaiseki with Japanese modern yakiniku culture.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202102/26/P2021022500432.htm>

In addition, Merlin Entertainments, the second largest attraction operator in the world, officially opened Hong Kong's first and largest indoor LEGO playground, LEGOLAND Discovery Centre, on March 6, offering an indoor LEGO playground for families and kids to enjoy a fun and educational experience.

Located at a cultural-retail shopping mall alongside Victoria Harbour in Tsim Sha Tsui, LEGOLAND Discovery Centre occupies 30 000 square feet and features a range of 10 exciting LEGO-themed play areas, including Kingdom Quest, MINILAND, LEGO Friends, Master Builder Classroom, DUPLO Farm, Magic Bikes, LEGO Races: Build & Test and 4D Cinema, as well as the Café and a LEGO retail shop.

Merlin Entertainments is a global leader in location-based, family entertainment. As Europe's number one and the world's second-largest visitor attraction operator, Merlin now operates over 130 attractions, 20 hotels and six holiday villages in 25 countries and across four continents.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202103/06/P2021030600205.htm>



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## **Extension of visa-free period for HKSAR passport holders to Uzbekistan**

The HKSAR Government has received notification from the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Uzbekistan) that the period of visa-free entry for HKSAR passport holders to Uzbekistan has been extended from up to seven days to 10 days with immediate effect. HKSAR passport holders may visit Uzbekistan visa-free for a stay of up to 10 days upon arrival with an air ticket to third countries or a return air ticket.

An Immigration Department spokesman said that Uzbekistan is along the Belt and Road. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, this visa-free arrangement will bring greater travel convenience to Hong Kong travellers after the epidemic and strengthen the tourism, cultural and economic ties between the two places.

As of today, 167 countries and territories have granted visa-free access or visa-on-arrival to HKSAR passport holders. Please visit the following website for details:

[www.immd.gov.hk/eng/service/travel\\_document/visa\\_free\\_access.html](http://www.immd.gov.hk/eng/service/travel_document/visa_free_access.html)

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202103/01/P2021030100326.htm>

## **Hong Kong is Asia's art centre and logistic hub**

The Economist, in partnership with the Information Services Department (ISD), created a briefing paper "[How Hong Kong Became a Hub for Asia's Biggest Art Deals](http://asiahubhk.economist.com/how-hong-kong-became-a-hub-for-asias-biggest-art-deals/)" to discuss how and why Hong Kong remains Asia's creative and commercial business of art. Please click the following link for details of the paper:

<http://asiahubhk.economist.com/how-hong-kong-became-a-hub-for-asias-biggest-art-deals/>

In addition, Bloomberg, in partnership with the ISD, has created a piece of branded content "[From the Skies to the Seas - Hong Kong to Boost Greater Bay Area Connectivity](https://sponsored.bloomberg.com/news/sponsors/features/brand-hong-kong/introducing-the-new-dawn/?adv=13788&prx_t=e34GAevVKAt_sQA)" to discuss what makes Hong Kong the pre-eminent logistics hub in Asia and a conduit for trade in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Please click the link below:

[https://sponsored.bloomberg.com/news/sponsors/features/brand-hong-kong/introducing-the-new-dawn/?adv=13788&prx\\_t=e34GAevVKAt\\_sQA](https://sponsored.bloomberg.com/news/sponsors/features/brand-hong-kong/introducing-the-new-dawn/?adv=13788&prx_t=e34GAevVKAt_sQA)

As part of the promotion for the second [Forbes Asia CEO Webinar](#) supported by Brand Hong Kong, a six-page advertorial has also been published in the February/March edition of Forbes Asia magazine. Please visit the link below:

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<https://www.dropbox.com/s/p51mfijzxl0o6eg/ISD%20Adv%206-PP%20Feb-Mar%202021%20v9A%20%28FINAL%29.pdf?dl=0>

A Hong Kong BrandVoice content hub is also available for online readers. Links to the content hub and individual stories are as follows:

- [Hong Kong BrandVoice](#)
- [A Dynamic Business Environment Where Fundraising Thrives](#)
- [Hong Kong's Fintech Industry Booms As Consumers Turn To Mobile Solutions](#)
- [Hong Kong's Cultural Events Show Resilience As Well As Innovation To Adapt](#)
- [Right Mix Of Government Support, Finance And Talent Make Hong Kong A Major Biotech Hub](#)

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This message was sent from the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Toronto, 174 St. George Street, Toronto, ON M5R 2M7.

For enquiries, please contact:

Miss Hilda Chow, Public Relations Officer, at

[hilda\\_chow@hketotoronto.gov.hk](mailto:hilda_chow@hketotoronto.gov.hk) or 416-924-5544.

For help setting up your business in Hong Kong, please contact:

Mr. Christopher Chen, Head of Investment Promotion at

[christopher\\_chen@hketotoronto.gov.hk](mailto:christopher_chen@hketotoronto.gov.hk) or visit [www.InvestHK.gov.hk](http://www.InvestHK.gov.hk)

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