

MD announcement

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

The Marine Department today (March 31) reminded masters, coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels navigating in Hong Kong waters to proceed at a safe speed and exercise extreme caution because restricted visibility of less than 2 nautical miles has been reported.

Appropriate sound signals shall be made when underway or at anchor. All vessels must comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collision at Sea.

Also, when radar is used without the benefit of adequate plotting facilities, the information obtained from the equipment is rather limited and should be construed accordingly.

Visibility reports are broadcast by the Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) on VHF channels 02, 12, 14, 63 and 67.

In the event of an accident, a report shall be made immediately to the VTC at Tel: 2233 7801.

The report "Population and Household Statistics Analysed by District Council District 2019" published

The Census and Statistics Department published today (March 31) the report "Population and Household Statistics Analysed by District Council District 2019".

The report contains statistics on a broad range of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the population in 2019 at the District Council district level. Population characteristics like age, sex and marital status, and household characteristics like household size, household income, type and tenure of accommodation are included.

The statistics in the report are mainly based on data collected in the General Household Survey during January to December 2019, which may be regarded as referring to the average situation of the entire year of 2019.

This survey covers the land-based non-institutional population of Hong Kong (which constitutes some 99% of the Hong Kong Resident Population). Some summary statistics published in the report are shown in Table 1 and Table 2 attached.

Users can download the report free of charge from the website of the Census and Statistics Department at (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp150.jsp?productCode=B1130301).

Enquiries about the contents of the report can be directed to the Household Statistics Analysis Section, Census and Statistics Department (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).

[Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo meeting \(with video\)](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (March 31):

Reporter: Mrs Lam, hospitals are now running out of isolation beds and there are even patients saying that they have to wait for days to get admitted to hospital. So what are you going to do about this? And secondly, given that there are now so few cases on the Mainland, is it still necessary for Hong Kong to require people coming from the Mainland to self-isolate? Do you have any plans to re-open some of the border checkpoints anytime soon?

Chief Executive: First of all, as I have admitted just now, it is not satisfactory for confirmed cases not to be admitted into hospital yet. This phenomenon appears because we have a large number of arrivals from overseas who have been put on home quarantine, which means that upon arrival, they have no symptoms, so they have been put on home quarantine. But in order to play safe, we require each of them to go through a saliva test. As and when the saliva test is confirmed positive, then this patient becomes a confirmed case, but he or she is still staying at home. There needs to be a process to arrange this confirmed positive patient to be admitted into hospital and the problem now lies in that capacity constraint in the hospital to admit patients in a more speedy manner. I have asked the Secretary for Food and Health to work very closely with the Hospital Authority to speed up the process as much as possible. I suspect the addition of the 400 second-tier isolation beds very soon in Hospital Authority will help to provide more capacity to handle the situation.

As far as the situation in the Mainland, you are absolutely right. The cases in the Mainland have dropped to a very, very low level and actually I suppose the great, great majority of these confirmed cases in the Mainland recently are imported cases. Logically, especially given our constraints in managing the home quarantine cases and so on, there may be some justifications for relaxing some of the control requirements, but my reply is 'no'. For the time being, we have no plans to loosen any of the controls being put on arrivals from the Mainland. One is the situation is very fluid. It may still change. Secondly, after all these control measures, closure of border control points, imposition of the 14-day quarantine, not only with the Mainland but also now with Macao, we are seeing a significant drop in the number of arrivals, whether they are Hong Kong residents or non-Hong Kong residents, coming in from the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge as well as the Shenzhen Bay Control Point, so there isn't a huge need for relaxing the border control points. And thirdly, the regulation applicable to Mainland arrivals, which is regulation Cap.599C, will expire. You remember all these regulations are time limited. This particular one will expire in early May. So even if we do nothing, by early May, this regulation will lose its effectiveness and then we will be able to resume some of the traffic flow without this 14-day quarantine requirement.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Free Trade Agreement and Investment Agreement between Hong Kong and ASEAN take effect for the Philippines

A Government spokesman said today (March 31) that the part relating to the Philippines under the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the Investment Agreement (IA) between Hong Kong and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will take effect on May 12.

On trade in goods under the FTA, the Philippines will progressively eliminate and reduce customs duties on goods originating from Hong Kong. The tariff commitments made by the Philippines cover different kinds of Hong Kong commodities, including jewellery, articles of apparel and clothing accessories, watches and clocks and toys. To enjoy the preferential tariff treatment for exporting Hong Kong goods to the Philippines under the FTA, Hong Kong traders need to comply with the relevant preferential rules of origin and fulfil the related requirements. Applications for certificates of origin should be made to the Trade and Industry Department (TID) or Government Approved Certification Organizations of Hong Kong. For details, please refer to the relevant trade circulars issued by the TID at www.tid.gov.hk/english/aboutus/tradecircular/coc/2020/coc2020.html.

On trade in services, Hong Kong service providers will enjoy better business opportunities and legal certainty in market access for a comprehensive range of services sectors in the Philippines under the FTA. These include services sectors in which Hong Kong has traditional strengths or has potential for development, including business services, telecommunications services, construction and related engineering services, financial services, tourism and travel related services and transport services.

Under the IA, the Philippines will provide Hong Kong enterprises investing in its area with fair and equitable treatment of their investments, physical protection and security of their investments as well as the assurance of the free transfer of their investments and returns. In case of expropriation or investment loss owing to war, armed conflict or similar event, the Philippines will also provide compensation to Hong Kong enterprises investing in its area according to the agreed standard as specified under the IA.

With the entry into force for the part relating to the Philippines, there will be a total of seven ASEAN member states (viz. Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) for which both the FTA and the IA have taken effect. The dates of entry into force for the remaining three ASEAN member states (viz. Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia and Indonesia) will be announced as soon as they are confirmed.

For the texts and the key features of the FTA and the IA, please refer to the website of the TID at www.tid.gov.hk/english/ita/fta/hkasean/index.html.

Report of Further Study on the Long Term Development of Child Development Fund Project Participants released

The Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) today (March 31) released the report of the Further Study on the Long Term Development of Child Development Fund (CDF) Project Participants. It revealed that projects launched by the CDF were effective in developing a positive learning and working attitude for grassroots children and youths in the long run as well as significantly improving their social skills, problem-solving abilities, resource management and future planning. Persistent savings habits were also developed, which had positive impacts on the alleviation of inter-generational poverty.

In January 2018, the LWB commissioned the Department of Applied Social

Sciences of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to conduct the above study to evaluate the effectiveness of the CDF projects. The study's findings showed that each of the three key components of the CDF projects, namely personal development plans, mentorship programmes and targeted savings, is highly complementary to each other and has a unique long-term impact on the participants. All components are essential to the projects. The CDF participants performed significantly better than non-participants in a number of areas:

- The CDF participants (80.8 per cent) were more likely to have a savings habit than the non-participants (56.3 per cent), such that most participants maintained the habit after project completion. Working participants saved \$2,836 per month on average, which was substantially more than that of the non-participants (\$1,623 per month on average);
- The CDF participants attained higher education levels than the non-participants. Of them, 83.8 per cent of working participants had attained a sub-degree course or above, which is more than that among working non-participants (67.6 per cent);
- More working CDF participants had obtained professional qualifications and skills. Of them, 26.6 per cent had obtained professional qualifications including registered nurse, social worker, surveyor and teacher, compared to only 9.1 per cent among working non-participants. Of working participants, 22.6 per cent had obtained other skills in areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), arts, sports, music and leadership, compared to 13.0 per cent among working non-participants;
- The CDF participants received higher levels of social support;
- The CDF participants had better mental health, with fewer emotional symptoms, conduct problems and peer problems;
- The working CDF participants (73.4 per cent) had more interest in their current job than the non-participants (38.8 per cent) and earned more. Of them, 45.9 per cent of participants earned \$15,000 or above per month, compared to only 25.4 per cent among the non-participants; and
- More families of working CDF participants (93.5 per cent) did not require any financial assistance under the Social Welfare Department, compared to 75.3 per cent among the non-participants. The study revealed that the CDF projects had positive impacts on the alleviation of inter-generational poverty.

Detailed findings of the study are set out in the [full report](#) which has been uploaded to the CDF's website (www.cdf.gov.hk).

Since its establishment in 2008, the CDF has been facilitating the longer-term development of disadvantaged children and youths with a view to alleviating inter-generational poverty. So far, the CDF has received funding of \$900 million. A total of 207 projects in 13 batches have been launched, benefiting more than 18 000 children and youths.