

Update on supplies from Mainland

The Task Force on Supplies from the Mainland led by the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB) has been working closely with the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government to explore various means to stabilise the supply of goods from the Mainland to Hong Kong.

A spokesperson for the TLB said that the "Sea Express" water transportation service from the Mainland to Hong Kong has been fully launched and its capacity is rising to increase the supplies of fresh food, other daily necessities and manufacturing materials. The current supply of fresh food from the Mainland is stable.

The spokesperson said today (August 12) that Shenzhen operated 34 cargo vessel trips and transported around 4 020 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of cross-boundary supplies by water yesterday (August 11), equivalent to about 14 640 tonnes of goods, all of which were non-fresh food, according to information from the Mainland authorities.

Since the launch of services from the three ports in Shenzhen since February 18 to yesterday, a total of around 798 780 TEUs of cross-boundary supplies have been transported, equivalent to about 3 859 940 tonnes of goods, of which around 2 230 TEUs (about 18 920 tonnes) were fresh food and around 796 550 TEUs (about 3 841 020 tonnes) were non-fresh food.

Meanwhile, to avoid a spillover of the epidemic, the Transport Department (TD) arranges for dedicated staff to conduct rapid nucleic acid tests, using nasopharyngeal swabs for specimen collection, for cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers at various land boundary control points. Only drivers with a negative result are allowed to enter the Mainland. A total of 3 367 rapid nucleic acid tests were conducted yesterday, among which nine cases that tested preliminarily positive or indeterminate were found. The TD has passed the cases to the Department of Health for follow-up.

The TLB will closely monitor the situation and co-operate with the Mainland authorities to facilitate and implement various measures to ensure both smooth cross-boundary land transport and a stable goods supply to Hong Kong, while reducing the risk of epidemic transmission in both the Mainland and Hong Kong.

Record of discussion of meeting of

Exchange Fund Advisory Committee

Currency Board Sub-Committee held on

July 5

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

(Approved for Issue by the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee on July 26)

Report on Currency Board Operations (April 13 – June 23, 2022)

The Sub-Committee noted that the Hong Kong dollar (HKD) traded within a range of 7.8381 – 7.8500 against the US dollar (USD) during the review period. With the lacklustre performance of the local stock market and market concerns over the US monetary policy normalisation, the HKD softened further against the USD since late April. The weak-side Convertibility Undertaking (CU) was eventually triggered 14 times during the review period and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority bought HK\$104.28 billion under the weak-side CU. The Aggregate Balance and the Monetary Base fell correspondingly after the triggering of the weak-side CU. The HKD interbank interest rates generally increased during the review period due to expectation of further US rate hikes, but remained at low levels by historical standards. Overall, the HKD exchange and interbank markets continued to trade in a smooth and orderly manner.

The Sub-Committee noted that the Monetary Base decreased to HK\$2,046.93 billion at the end of the review period. In accordance with the Currency Board principles, all changes in the Monetary Base had been fully matched by changes in foreign reserves.

The Report on Currency Board Operations for the review period is at Annex.

Monitoring of Risks and Vulnerabilities

The Sub-Committee noted that global financial markets experienced sell-offs amid mounting global inflationary pressures and expectations of accelerated policy normalisation by major central banks. In the US, with inflation increasing to high levels and becoming more broad-based and persistent, there was a risk that the Federal Reserve's aggressive policy normalisation would adversely affect economic growth.

The Sub-Committee noted that, in Mainland China, the economy showed signs of bottoming out amid easing local infections, but factors such as the ongoing property market downturn could pose downward pressures on the economy. As for the Asian region, with the pace of monetary policy normalisation expected to be slower than that in the US and the narrowing

interest rate differentials vis-à-vis the USD, some economies might face potential fund outflows and interest rate snapbacks. Meanwhile, a slowdown in the Mainland economy could risk dragging growth in the region.

The Sub-Committee noted that in Hong Kong, economic activities generally picked up in Q2 amid the stabilised local infection situation and the disbursement of consumption vouchers. The unemployment rate also edged down in May, while the underlying inflation remained moderate given soft residential rentals. Alongside improved property market sentiment and more new launches, the housing market also turned more active in Q2 2022.

Credit Risk Assessment Using Deep Learning

â€‹The Sub-Committee noted a paper that illustrated how Deep Learning could be deployed to predict credit deterioration in the banking sector's corporate loan portfolio.

CHP investigates suspected food poisoning case related to wild mushrooms

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (August 12) investigating a suspected case of food poisoning related to the consumption of wild mushrooms, and urged the public not to pick and eat wild mushrooms.

The case involves a female aged 47 and a male aged 21, who developed abdominal pain, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting about an hour after consuming mushrooms at home yesterday (August 11). They sought medical attention at the Accident and Emergency Department of Kwong Wah Hospital today. They have been in stable condition, and were discharged.

Initial investigations revealed that the patients had consumed wild mushrooms picked from a hillside near Beacon Hill. The CHP's investigation is ongoing.

"Members of the public should not pick wild mushrooms for consumption as it is difficult to distinguish edible mushroom species from inedible ones," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Mushroom poisoning is generally acute. Common presentations include gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain appearing shortly after ingestion. Depending on the mushroom species, patients may also have other symptoms such as profuse sweating,

hallucinations, coma or other neurological symptoms, as well as liver failure. Death may result in severe cases," he added.

"If mushroom poisoning is suspected, the patient should seek immediate medical attention and bring along any available remnant for identification," the spokesman said.

Government to sell site in Sha Tin by public tender

The Lands Department (LandsD) announced today (August 12) that a site, Sha Tin Town Lot No. 643 at Hin Wo Lane, Sha Tin, New Territories, in the 2022-23 Land Sale Programme, will be disposed of by public tender. The tender invitation for the lot will commence on August 19 and close on September 16.

Sha Tin Town Lot No. 643 has a site area of about 1,383.3 square metres and is designated for non-industrial (excluding godown, hotel and petrol filling station) purposes. The minimum gross floor area is 4,979.9 sq m. The maximum gross floor area for private residential purposes that may be attained is 8,299.8 sq m. The maximum gross floor area for non-industrial (excluding private residential, godown, hotel and petrol filling station) purposes is computed according to the relevant special condition in the Conditions of Sale.

Land sale documents including the Form of Tender, the Tender Notice, the Conditions of Sale and the sale plan of the lot will be available for downloading from the LandsD website (www.landso.gov.hk) from August 19, while the sale plan will be available for inspection by the public from the same day until the close of the tender. The sale plan in hard copy form may also be purchased at the Survey and Mapping Office of the LandsD, 23/F, North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong, from August 19 until the close of the tender. The particulars of the tender will be gazetted on August 19.

Postal services to United Kingdom subject to delay

Hongkong Post announced today (August 12) that, as advised by the postal administration of the United Kingdom, due to local strikes (August 26 and 31

and September 8 and 9), all mail delivery services to the United Kingdom will be subject to delay.