

Lifesaving services suspended at Cafeteria New Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

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

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (September 20) that due to an insufficient number of lifeguards on duty, the lifesaving services at Cafeteria New Beach in Tuen Mun District are suspended.

First aid service will be maintained at the beach.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, September 20, 2022 is 104 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors for 2023/24 cohort announced

The Government announced today (September 20) that the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP) will subsidise a total of 3 265 places in 47 undergraduate programmes of eight post-secondary institutions for the cohort to be admitted in the 2023/24 academic year.

These 47 designated programmes fall under 10 disciplines that have been identified as having keen manpower demand, namely architecture and engineering, computer science, creative industries, financial technology, healthcare, insurance, logistics, sports and recreation, testing and certification, and tourism and hospitality. The programmes include the four applied degrees selected for the Pilot Project on the Development of Applied Degree Programmes.

The programmes and number of subsidised places under the SSSDP are

determined by the Education Bureau (EDB) in consultation with relevant policy bureaux and departments. Details of the participating institutions, the programmes and the number of subsidised places are listed in the Annex. The EDB will continue to work together with relevant policy bureaux and departments to explore covering more suitable programmes in the SSSDP.

In the 2023/24 academic year, the annual subsidy amount for laboratory-based programmes will be increased from \$77,040 in the 2022/23 academic year to \$78,280, while that for non-laboratory-based programmes will be increased from \$44,240 to \$44,950 according to the movement of the Composite Consumer Price Index.

The adjusted subsidy amounts are applicable to both new and continuing eligible students. The subsidy is tenable for the normal duration of the programmes concerned. Subsidised students will pay a tuition fee with the subsidy applied. Students in need may still apply for student financial assistance from the Student Finance Office of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency in respect of the actual amount of tuition fee payable.

Allocation of the subsidised first-year intake places will mainly go through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System to ensure that eligible students are selected on a merit basis.

The SSSDP was launched in the 2015/16 academic year to subsidise students to pursue designated full-time locally accredited self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines. The objectives are as follows:

- (1) To increase the supply of subsidised undergraduate places by leveraging the supply of the self-financing post-secondary education sector;
- (2) To nurture talent in support of specific industries with keen demand for human resources;
- (3) To encourage the self-financing post-secondary education sector to offer programmes in selected disciplines that meet Hong Kong's social and economic needs by providing targeted financial support; and
- (4) To support the healthy and sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector to complement the University Grants Committee-funded sector in broadening and diversifying study opportunities.

The scope of the SSSDP was expanded with effect from the 2019/20 academic year to benefit students enrolling in designated sub-degree programmes. The relevant details for the 2023/24 cohort, including the participating institutions, the sub-degree programmes, the number of subsidised places, the subsidy amounts and more, will be announced in due course.

Details of the SSSDP are available on the EDB website

(www.cspe.edu.hk/sssdp).

For information about the Pilot Project on the Development of Applied Degree Programmes, please refer to the EDB press release (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202106/28/P2021062800464.htm).

Hong Kong Customs conducts joint enforcement operations with FEHD regarding sale of hairy crabs (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) have been carrying out joint enforcement operations since last Thursday (September 15) to inspect hairy crab retail outlets in various districts, with the aim of protecting consumer rights and upholding food safety by ensuring hairy crabs on sale in the market comply with relevant stipulations and requirements under the laws.

During the inspections, Customs officers and officers of the Centre for Food Safety and the Environmental Hygiene Branch of the FEHD monitored the sale of hairy crabs and also checked supportive documents for the place of origin and health certificates of the hairy crabs to ensure that the hairy crabs sold at retail shops are fit for human consumption and are in compliance with the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO), the Food Safety Ordinance and the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance.

Up till present, officers of the two departments have inspected 172 hairy crab retail shops and no irregularity has been found so far. The relevant joint enforcement operations will continue.

Apart from carrying out inspections in the market, Customs officers also made use of a big-data analytics system to conduct analyses and verify whether online shops selling hairy crabs had complied with the TDO with a view to safeguarding the interests of consumers while making online purchases.

Customs attaches great importance to the protection of consumer rights and will take appropriate enforcement action once activities in violation of the TDO are detected in the market. The department also reminds traders not to apply a false trade description to goods or services, or to supply or offer to supply goods or services to which a false trade description is applied. Those who violate the TDO are liable on conviction to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

The FEHD reminds traders that according to the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, all food available for sale in Hong Kong, whether imported or locally produced, should be fit for human consumption. Also, any person who operates an unlicensed food business or sells restricted foods without permission is liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. Under the Food Safety Ordinance, any person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with the record-keeping requirement relating to movement of food commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000 and imprisonment for three months upon conviction.

Customs and the FEHD remind traders not to import or put on sale hairy crabs of an unknown origin. Consumers should make purchases at reputable shops with the Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit or relevant written permission granted by the FEHD.

Members of the public may make a report to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) if they suspect that hairy crabs bought are of a falsely claimed place of origin.

In addition, if members of the public suspect that there are operators selling hairy crabs without the relevant permits/permissions or the hairy crabs are not accompanied with health certificates, they may file a report to the FEHD by calling the hotline at 2868 0000 or through email (enquiries@fehd.gov.hk).



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

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (September 20):

Reporter: (Professor) Yuen Kwok-yung said COVID-19 has become endemic, and COVID rules should be relaxed to return to normal. What do you think about this and is the Government considering to scrap hotel quarantine? And Hong Kong may record its second worst deficits at more than \$100 billion. Is this alarming and what will the Government do to maintain Hong Kong's fiscal stability? And also international events like Hong Kong Marathon is called off and dragon boat race is moved to Thailand due to COVID rules, so what will the Government do to allow room for these sports events to go ahead? Thank you.

Chief Executive: The Government's position is very clear, as I've explained earlier, is that while we will do our best to control the epidemic, we aim to have the maximum connection with the international world and also to reduce the inconvenience to people who arrive at Hong Kong. That is a very clear goal. And I am maintaining that goal in one direction, and I am trying all our best to ensure that we don't roll back any measures that we're doing. The direction is clear and we are ensuring that we don't roll back. That's number one.

The second thing is, we want to ensure that as we progress to allow more activities, we do it in an orderly way, so that when people go through the process, they feel comfortable with the process. We will reduce the inconvenience as much as we can because every step will involve deployment of resources to ensure we put into the right amount of people and the right amount of support so as to ensure that things don't get disordered. We will be actively monitoring the situation so that we will do this as quickly as possible. I'm conscious of the fact that while we need to control the spread of the COVID, we also need to ensure that there will be maximum activities in society and economic activities for society to carry on. I'm also conscious of the need to maintain Hong Kong's competitiveness by ensuring that we have a good connectivity. So you can see we are doing everything in that direction, and we will be announcing the measures once we've made decision about what we're going to do.

Regarding the big events that everyone of us has been very interested in such as the marathon (Hong Kong Marathon) and also the dragon boat event, of course, we will be doing all our best so that we will be having all these events to happen in Hong Kong because this is what everybody wants to see, and it will create a lot of economic gains for Hong Kong as well. We will be trying our best to talk to the organisers of all these activities. Our position is very clear. We are very supportive, and we want both sides to work towards the goal of making it happen. So we will have to openly and directly talk to each other, so as to try (to find) a good solution for Hong Kong, because it is in the organisers' interest and Hong Kong Government's interest and the community's interest for these things to happen. So I want that common will to be developed for the good of Hong Kong. And the Government will work towards the goal, regardless of what the challenges can be.

As regards the economic situation, we know that the threats to the

economy do exist and there are a lot of reasons for it, including the interest rate hike and also the supply chain being disrupted in a lot of areas and because of COVID as well. So what we have been doing is ensuring that the right injection is being made into stimulating the economy. The next phase of the consumption voucher will soon be rolled out in October. That, we hope, will add to the consumption element in society so as to generate some economic activities, and also some relief measures have been introduced by the Government to help SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises), etc.

But there are also some positive figures such as the employment rate has dropped, if you look at the figures. So we should continue to have confidence in Hong Kong, because Hong Kong, despite COVID, our strengths remain, such as our good infrastructure, our low taxation system, and also the resilience of society. We have a very strong workforce and we have a lot of competitive advantages such as being the third (largest) financial centre and the common law system which ensures that a lot of the systems and things that we do are very compatible with international rules and norms. We should be confident of ourselves while we work together.

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