

Import of poultry meat and products from Seosan-si of Chungcheongnam-do Province in Korea suspended

â€‹The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (June 19) that in view of a notification from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of Korea about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5 avian influenza in Seosan-si of Chungcheongnam-do Province in Korea, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the area with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 60 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 5.33 million poultry eggs from Korea in the first three months of this year.

"The CFS has contacted the Korean authority over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the World Organisation for Animal Health and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreak. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department is conducting comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

From noon on June 18 to noon today (June 19), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 128 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan"

(www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 52 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24, 2023, to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 144 882 samples of food imported from Japan (including 95 189 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 33 092 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Excellent performance of Hong Kong's higher education system showcases effectiveness of government measures

An Education Bureau spokesman today (June 19) said that with the Government's dedication to promoting education hub development and the support of a series of policy measures, Hong Kong's higher education system has demonstrated extraordinary performance. According to the World University Rankings 2026 published by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), an international higher education organisation, University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities have continued to hold top spots, with five of them staying in the world's top 100, making Hong Kong the place with the highest concentration of top-ranked universities globally (56 per cent). The encouraging achievements not only recognise the unrelenting efforts and continuous pursuit of excellence of higher education institutions but also bear testimony to the Government's long-term commitment to investing in education and enhancing the competitiveness of higher education institutions.

According to the latest QS World University Rankings, the University of Hong Kong rose six places to 11th in the world, the Chinese University of Hong Kong climbed four spots to 32nd, and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology advanced three positions to 44th. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and City University of Hong Kong (CityU) also achieved outstanding results, ranking 54th and 63rd respectively.

Hong Kong has achieved remarkable performance in multiple key indicators. Hong Kong's institutions have performed far better than the international average in the International Faculty Ratio and International Student Ratio. The International Faculty Ratio of six universities ranks among the top 50 in the world. In addition, Hong Kong's institutions have performed exceptionally well in Citations per Faculty, with CityU ranking second worldwide.

In fact, Hong Kong's education system has yielded excellent results in various international rankings, fully reflecting the attractiveness of Hong Kong as an international talent hub. In the World Competitiveness Yearbook 2025 recently published by the International Institute for Management Development, Hong Kong ranked second globally in Education. In the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2025 published yesterday (June 18), which measures global universities' success in delivering the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a number of Hong Kong universities also performed outstandingly in different fields. Among them, Lingnan University ranked top globally for SDG 4: Quality Education for the first time, showcasing exemplary performance.

The spokesperson said, "These achievements fully affirm the effectiveness of the Government's unwavering support through the UGC for the institutions' continuous innovation and optimisation, giving full play to the strengths of Hong Kong's first-class universities, and a series of policies for attracting top global talent to tie in with the institutions' capacity expansion and quality enhancement. For overseas talent interested in studying or conducting research in Hong Kong's higher education institutions, we will do our utmost to provide assistance and convenience, including striving to further expand the non-local student quota based on actual needs. The Government will also continue to promote internationalisation and diversified development of the eight UGC-funded universities. These measures will not only strengthen Hong Kong's momentum of development but also make active contributions to national development."

He stressed that the Government attracts quality talent from around the world and nurtures local talent through various measures such as scholarship programmes to leverage Hong Kong's strengths to serve the country's needs. Starting from the 2024/25 academic year (AY), the non-local student quota for UGC-funded institutions has been doubled from 20 per cent to 40 per cent, raising non-local undergraduate enrolment from 19.9 per cent (2023/24 AY) to 23.2 per cent. The Government will further foster collaboration among the eight UGC-funded universities, including supporting the jointly established Heads of Universities Committee's Standing Committee on Internationalisation to continue to promote the "Study in Hong Kong" brand worldwide.

The spokesman added that the Government will continue to promote the strengthening of global exchanges and connections of research personnel and teams of local universities and support them to broaden research networks and co-operation areas with their overseas counterparts.

The Government attaches great importance to the quality of teaching and learning at universities and invests substantial resources to step up support for the high-quality development of Hong Kong education. For the 2025–2028 triennium, approximately 78 per cent of the Block Grant will be allocated to support teaching and learning. Compared with the 2022-2025 triennium, the Teaching Development and Language Enhancement Grant provided by the UGC will increase by \$100 million to approximately \$920 million. The key themes of the Grant – including the integration of generative artificial intelligence and innovative technologies in education, the sharing of exemplary practices in teaching and learning, and the enhancement of students' well-being and personal development – are aligned with current trends in education and societal needs. The most recent round of quality audits conducted by the Quality Assurance Council under the UGC also reaffirms the high quality of educational experiences offered by UGC-funded universities.

To dovetail with the National 14th Five-Year Plan, the Government will leverage the vast opportunities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, supporting cutting-edge research conducted by the eight UGC-funded universities through the Research Grants Council (RGC) under the UGC. Over 20 research funds and scholarship programmes operate under the RGC, with more than 1 500 new projects receiving funding annually. These measures will help foster a robust research environment and further consolidate Hong Kong's position as an international post-secondary education hub.

Chain volume measures of Gross Domestic Product by economic activity for the first quarter of 2025

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (June 19) the preliminary figures of chain volume measures of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by economic activity for the first quarter of 2025.

GDP figures by economic activity show the value of production in respect of individual economic activities. The value of production is measured by value added or net output, which is calculated by deducting intermediate input consumed in the process of production from the gross value of output. Volume measures of GDP by economic activity, expressed in terms of chain volume measures net of the effect of price changes, enable analysis of the

output growth profiles of individual economic sectors in real terms.

According to the preliminary figures, overall GDP increased by 3.1% in real terms in the first quarter of 2025 over a year earlier, compared with the 2.5% increase in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Analysed by constituent services sector and on a year-on-year comparison, value added in respect of all the services activities taken together increased by 2.6% in real terms in the first quarter of 2025 over a year earlier, compared with the growth of 1.7% in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Value added in the import and export, wholesale and retail trades sector increased by 4.2% in real terms in the first quarter of 2025 over a year earlier, as against the decrease of 0.2% in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Value added in the accommodation and food services sector decreased by 1.8% in real terms in the first quarter of 2025 from a year earlier, as against the growth of 2.6% in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Value added in the transportation, storage, postal and courier services sector increased by 2.9% in real terms in the first quarter of 2025 over a year earlier, compared with the increase of 6.8% in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Value added in the information and communications sector increased by 1.3% in real terms in the first quarter of 2025 over a year earlier, compared with the rise of 1.5% in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Value added in the financing and insurance sector increased by 4.4% in real terms in the first quarter of 2025 over a year earlier, compared with the increase of 1.9% in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Value added in the real estate, professional and business services sector registered a decrease of 0.3% in real terms in the first quarter of 2025 from a year earlier, as against the rise of 1.7% in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Value added in the public administration, social and personal services sector rose by 1.7% in real terms in the first quarter of 2025 over a year earlier, compared with the increase of 3.0% the fourth quarter of 2024.

As for sectors other than the services sectors, value added in the local manufacturing sector increased by 0.7% in real terms in the first quarter of 2025 over a year earlier, compared with the increase of 1.0% in the fourth quarter 2024.

Value added in the electricity, gas and water supply, and waste management sector decreased by 1.4% in real terms in the first quarter of 2025 from a year earlier, as against the increase of 3.0% in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Value added in the construction sector decreased by 1.9% in real terms in the first quarter of 2025 from a year earlier, after the decrease of 4.7% in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Further information

The year-on-year percentage changes of GDP by economic activity in real terms from the first quarter of 2024 to the first quarter of 2025 are shown in Table 1. More detailed statistics are given in the report "Gross Domestic Product by Economic Activity". Users can browse and download this publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1030004&scode=250). For enquiries about statistics on GDP by economic activity, please call the National Income Branch (2) of the C&SD at 3903 7005.

Figures of chain volume measures of GDP by economic activity for the first quarter of 2025 are only preliminary at this stage. When more data become available, the preliminary figures will be revised accordingly and can be found at the C&SD website (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode250.html).

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, June 19, 2025 is 103.3 (up 0.2 against yesterday's index).