

Cluster of Candida auris cases in Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital (HKBH) made the following announcement today (October 26):

An 89-year-old male patient in the medical ward of HKBH was found to carry *Candida auris* on October 12 after screening. The patient concerned has been transferred to Kowloon Hospital for isolation and treatment. In accordance with prevailing guidelines, HKBH commenced a contact tracing investigation and found two more male patients (aged 70 and 91) in the same ward carrying *Candida auris* without signs of infection. They are being treated in isolation and are in stable condition.

The following enhanced infection control measures have already been adopted:

1. Thorough cleaning and disinfection of the wards concerned;
2. Enhanced patient and environmental screening procedures; and
3. Application of stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene of staff and patients.

The hospital has reported the cases to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection to follow up. The hospital will continue to closely monitor the situation.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, October 26, 2023 is 106.7 (up 0.2 against yesterday's index).

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 will conduct 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.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on October 25 to noon today (October 26), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 96 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 50 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 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 10 489 samples of food imported from Japan (including 6 921 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 3 108 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Government to temporarily exempt full-time non-local postgraduate students from restrictions on taking up part-time jobs

To enhance learning and enrichment opportunities for international students, the Government announced today (October 26) that, starting from November 1, full-time non-local postgraduate students would be temporarily exempted from the restrictions on taking up part-time jobs. The arrangement will be implemented on a trial basis for two years.

Currently, eligible students who have been approved to come to Hong Kong to study in full-time locally accredited local programmes at the postgraduate level will be individually issued a "No Objection Letter" (NOL) by the Immigration Department (ImmD), allowing them to take up part-time employment on campus for not more than 20 hours per week, curriculum-related internships during semesters or summer jobs. The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address announced a two-year suspension of the restrictions with effect from November.

A Government spokesman said, "The trial arrangement will allow more room for these students to look for jobs during their studies to enhance their experience and understanding of working in Hong Kong, and further increase their incentive to stay in Hong Kong for their development after graduation."

The ImmD will arrange briefing sessions for the relevant institutions within this week to introduce the arrangement, and subsequently issue to eligible students through their institutions new NOLs setting out the suspension. Eligible students are not required to submit applications separately. Students approved of visas/entry permits on or after November 1 will also be issued with the updated NOLs.

For enquiries, please call the ImmD's enquiry hotline 2824 6111, or send enquiries to the ImmD by fax at 2877 7711 or by email at enquiry@immd.gov.hk.

Government to expand TTPS list of

universities to broaden network for attracting talents

The Government announced today (October 26) that from November 1, the list of eligible universities under the Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS) would be expanded to add eight top institutions from the Mainland and overseas, making a total of 184 institutions, with a view to attracting more talents to Hong Kong for development.

A Government spokesman said, "The global competition for talents remains fierce. Hong Kong needs to recruit talents proactively to relieve the tight situation of the local labour market and supplement the local talent pool. To further expand the network for attracting more global talents, the Policy Address this year set out the expansion of the list of eligible universities of the TTPS to strengthen the efforts to compete for talents."

At present, the list of eligible universities under the TTPS covers the top 100 universities under the four designated world university rankings in the past five years, namely the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings, the U.S. News and World Report's Best Global Universities Rankings and the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Academic Ranking of World Universities.

From November 1, the list of eligible universities will also include eight additional top institutions from the Mainland and overseas, namely:

1. The top five universities/institutions providing specialised hotel programmes on the QS World University Rankings in the discipline of "hospitality and leisure management" in the past five years: EHL Hospitality Business School, Swiss Hotel Management School, Les Roches Global Hospitality Management Education, Glion Institute of Higher Education, and Hotelschool The Hague; and
2. The top 10 Mainland universities under the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Best Chinese Universities Ranking in the past five years yet to be included in the current list of eligible universities: Wuhan University, Xi'an Jiaotong University, and Harbin Institute of Technology.

The expanded list of eligible universities under the TTPS will be increased to cover 184 universities. The eligibility criteria, procedures and immigration arrangements of the TTPS remain unchanged.

The Hong Kong Talent Engage (HKTE) online platform (www.hkengage.gov.hk) and the TTPS webpage of the Immigration Department (www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/visas/TTPS.html) will be revised later. Interested applicants of the talent admission schemes may visit the [HKTE online platform](#) or the electronic application platform of the Immigration Department (www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/index.html#tab_b_1) and submit online applications directly.