

Settlement of railway tunnel of Tuen Ma Line Phase 1 at Kai Tak Area 1E

A Government spokesman said today (September 4) that the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) reported on September 2 that while the construction works of the private development project at Kai Tak Area 1E Site 2 were being carried out, the readings recorded in two settlement monitoring checkpoints installed inside the railway tunnel of the Tuen Ma Line Phase 1 had reached 20.1 millimetres, exceeding the pre-set trigger level for works suspension (i.e. 20mm). The relevant construction works of the development project were suspended on the same day. A site inspection conducted at midnight on September 4 reaffirmed the above readings.

The Buildings Department (BD) has deployed staff to inspect the affected railway tunnel and confirmed that it is structurally safe. The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) has reviewed the monitoring data submitted by the MTRCL in relation to safe operation of the railway and confirmed that the condition of the railway fulfils the operational safety requirements. The building works concerned have not affected the structural safety of railway facilities and safe operation of the railway.

The BD, the EMSD and the MTRCL will continue to closely monitor the situation to ensure the structural safety of railway facilities and safe operation of the railway.

While the relevant works have been suspended, the BD and the MTRCL will request the registered building professionals responsible for the development project to formulate mitigation measures and adopt a construction method that would alleviate the effects on the railway facilities.

Upon receipt of the corresponding amendment plans of the development project and application for resumption of the suspended construction works, the BD will vigorously scrutinise the application with a view to ensuring structural safety of railway facilities, including consulting the MTRCL and other relevant government departments. The EMSD will also confirm that the MTRCL has put in place stringent monitoring measures to ensure the safety of the railway operation. Moreover, if the registered building professionals propose that the pre-set trigger level(s) for works suspension be revised, the BD will consider the proposal having regard to the circumstances after consulting the MTRCL and other relevant government departments. When the application for resumption of suspended works has been agreed, the BD and the EMSD will make an announcement to the public about the decision.

Immigration Department service arrangements

The Immigration Department (ImmD) announced today (September 4) that except for passenger immigration clearance service, the ImmD will resume full public services next Monday (September 7).

To avoid gathering of crowds, the ImmD appeals to applicants to submit applications through its homepage or its mobile application, by post or by drop-in as far as possible. Members of the public who have previously made appointments may proceed to relevant offices/registries/Smart Identity Card Replacement Centres without the need of making another appointment. To shorten the waiting time, those without appointments should make one prior to their visit. In accordance with regulations implemented by the Government, persons entering the premises of the ImmD are required to wear masks.

For Territory-wide Identity Card Replacement Exercise, the ImmD is planning to revise the designated replacement schedule with details to be announced later.

According to the existing arrangements by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, except for the Hong Kong International Airport, Shenzhen Bay and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Points, passenger immigration clearance services in other immigration control points will remain suspended until further notice. Besides, the operating hours of the passenger clearance services at the Shenzhen Bay and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Points have been adjusted as follows with effect from April 3 and April 5 respectively until further notice. Details are as follows:

Shenzhen Bay Control Point:

- Operating hours of all passenger clearance services have been adjusted to 10am to 8pm daily while the operating hours for cargo clearance will remain unchanged (i.e. from 6.30am to midnight daily).

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Control Point:

- Operating hours of the Passenger Clearance Building (i.e. for passengers crossing the boundary by cross-boundary coaches and shuttle buses) have been adjusted to 10am to 8pm daily; and
- Operating hours of the clearance for private cars have been adjusted to 6am to 10pm daily while the operating hours for cargo clearance will remain in operation 24 hours daily.

Any changes to the above arrangements will be announced in due course. For detailed opening hours of individual offices, please refer to the ImmD's official website or mobile application. For other enquiries, please contact the ImmD by calling the enquiry hotline on 2824 6111 or by email

to enquiry@immd.gov.hk.

CHP investigates case of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (September 4) investigating a case of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus (HEV) and urged members of the public to be vigilant against hepatitis E infection and to strictly observe good personal, food and environmental hygiene.

The case involves an 89-year-old woman with underlying illnesses who had presented with anorexia, abdominal pain and jaundice. She was referred by a private doctor to the Accident and Emergency Department of Kwong Wah Hospital on August 17 and was admitted on the same day. She was found to have deranged liver function during hospitalisation.

The patient is now in stable condition. Her blood sample tested positive for rat HEV upon laboratory testing.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations revealed that the patient resided in Ngau Chi Wan. She did not have contact with rodents or rats, and had no travel history during the incubation period.

"Based on the available epidemiological information, the source and the route of infection could not be determined. The CHP's investigation is ongoing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"The CHP has already informed the Pest Control Advisory Section of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department about the case to carry out rodent control measures and a survey as appropriate," the spokesman added.

The exact mode of transmission of rat HEV to humans is unknown at the moment. Possible routes of transmission include ingestion of food or water contaminated by rodents or their excreta, exposure to environments or objects contaminated by rodents or their excreta and direct contact with rodents or their excreta. The usual HEV causing human infection is transmitted mainly through the faecal-oral route.

To prevent hepatitis E infection, members of the public should maintain good personal, food and environmental hygiene. For example, they should wash hands thoroughly before eating, store food properly or in the refrigerator, not leave food at room temperature for a long time, and use 1:99 diluted household bleach for general household cleaning and disinfection as household detergent may not be able to kill HEV. High-risk individuals, such as elderly

persons with a major underlying illness (especially those who have undergone organ transplantation), pregnant women, patients with chronic liver disease and patients with Glucose-6-Phosphate Dehydrogenase Deficiency (also known as G6PD Deficiency), who are infected with HEV may develop a serious illness, so they should exercise extra caution.

The Five Keys to Food Safety should be adopted when handling food, i.e. Choose (choose safe raw materials), Clean (keep hands and utensils clean), Separate (separate raw and cooked food), Cook (cook thoroughly) and Safe Temperature (keep food at a safe temperature), to prevent food-borne diseases.

- Drink only boiled water from the mains or bottled drinks from reliable sources.
- Avoid drinks with ice of unknown origin.
- Purchase fresh food from hygienic and reliable sources. Do not patronise illegal hawkers.
- Clean and wash food thoroughly. Cook food, especially seafood (e.g. shellfish), pork and pig offal, thoroughly before consumption. Avoid raw food or undercooked food.
- Slice raw meat and offal into thin strips to allow thorough cooking, especially during hotpot or congee cooking.
- For sliced pig liver, depending on the thickness and quantity, boil at 100 degrees Celsius or stir-fry in hot skillet/wok for at least three to five minutes.
- Heating to an internal temperature of 90 degrees Celsius for 90 seconds is required for cooking of molluscan shellfish. If possible, remove the shells before cooking as they impede heat penetration. Otherwise, boil at 100 degrees Celsius until their shells open; boil for a further three to five minutes afterwards. Discard any shellfish that do not open during cooking.
- For meat and offal, make sure that juices are clear, not red, and blood is not visible when you cut the cooked meat and offal.
- When having hotpot, use separate chopsticks and utensils for handling raw and cooked foods to prevent cross-contamination.

In general, rodents (such as rats) can transmit multiple diseases to humans directly and indirectly. The public are advised to adopt the following measures:

- Eliminate sources of food and nesting places for rodents in the living environment. Store food in covered containers and handle pet food properly to avoid it becoming food for rodents;
- Store all refuse and food remnants in dustbins with well-fitted covers. Dustbins must be emptied at least once a day;
- Keep premises, especially refuse rooms and stairways, clean. Avoid accumulation of articles;
- Inspect all flower beds and pavements for rodent infestation regularly; and

- Avoid the high-risk activities below to reduce rodent contact:
 - Avoid rodent contact and places dirtied with rodent excreta;
 - Avoid handling rodents with bare hands;
 - Wash hands with liquid soap and water immediately after handling animals, and disinfect contaminated areas; and
 - If a wound appears, clean the broken skin immediately and cover it properly with waterproof adhesive dressings.
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Man sentenced for breaching compulsory quarantine order

A 31-year-old man was sentenced to immediate imprisonment for two weeks by the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts today (September 4) for violating the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap 599C) (the Regulation).

The man was earlier issued a compulsory quarantine order stating that he must conduct quarantine at a residential address stated by himself on the quarantine order for 14 days. The man was later found to have given a false residential address for use as the place of quarantine to an authorised officer at the Hong Kong International Airport on July 10. Before the expiry of the quarantine order, he had also taken off his wristband without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer and was stopped by staff of the Immigration Department at Shenzhen Bay Control Point on July 11. He was charged with two counts of contravening section 8(4), 8(5) and section 9 of the Regulation and was sentenced by the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for two weeks for each of the two charges, which are to run concurrently.

Pursuant to the Regulation, starting from February 8, save for exempted persons, all persons who have stayed in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan in the 14 days preceding arrival in Hong Kong, regardless of their nationality or travel documents, will be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Moreover, pursuant to the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap 599E), starting from March 19, all persons arriving from countries or territories outside China would also be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Breaching a quarantine order is a criminal offence and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said the sentence sends a clear message to the community that breaching a compulsory quarantine order is a criminal offence that the Government will not tolerate, and solemnly reminded the public to comply with the Regulation. As of today, a total of 41 persons have been convicted by the courts for breaching compulsory quarantine orders and have received sentences including immediate imprisonment for up to three

months or a fine of \$15,000. The spokesman reiterated that resolute actions will be taken against anyone who has breached the relevant regulations.

FS visits community testing centre at Hong Kong Science Park

To cut the transmission chains of COVID-19 in the community and curtail the epidemic situation, the Government launched the Universal Community Testing Programme (UCTP) on September 1 to provide a free testing service for the public at over 140 community testing centres. The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, accompanied by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit, visited the community testing centre at the Hong Kong Science Park today (September 4) to inspect the operation of the centre and to give encouragement to the staff members.

Mr Chan was briefed on the operations and watched the workflow from registration to specimen collection at the community testing centre at the Hong Kong Science Park. He praised the healthcare staff and civil servants for performing their duties to fight the virus together. He said he was very pleased that the Hong Kong Science Park community has responded enthusiastically to the UCTP and that the community testing centre at the Hong Kong Science Park has been fully booked in the past few days with a constant stream of people arriving to take the tests at the centre.

Mr Chan said, "The UCTP, by identifying asymptomatic infected persons in the community and providing them with suitable medical treatment, can protect their health and avoid the spread of the disease to their families and friends. After reviewing the operational experience and demand from citizens in the past few days, the Government today announced that the Programme has been extended for four days to September 11. I would like to make an appeal to people who have yet to register to actively participate in the Programme and sign up for the tests. If it is possible to break the hidden chains of infection in the community, people's travelling, social, shopping and consumption activities can resume in a stable and long-term pattern. It could provide the most solid support to business sectors and the overall economy."

Mr Chan, accompanied by the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP), Dr Sunny Chai, and the Chief Executive Officer of the HKSTP, Mr Albert Wong, also took the opportunity to tour the InnoCell, which is currently under construction, after inspecting the community testing centre. The InnoCell will provide short- to medium-term accommodation for the companies in the Hong Kong Science Park, and it is in the first batch of projects being developed in Hong Kong using the Modular Integrated Construction (MiC) method. The final MiC module was installed in May this year and the installation of building

services is in progress. The InnoCell is expected to be completed at the end of this year, which is about five months earlier than when it would have been finished if conventional construction techniques were used. It is expected to commence operation early next year.

Mr Chan then moved to the co-working labs and spaces for biomedical technology to understand how the Incu-Bio Programme of the HKSTP supports its members. He also met with three biomedical technology partner companies of the Park.

The Permanent Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Ms Annie Choi, and the Commissioner for Innovation and Technology, Ms Rebecca Pun, also joined the visit.