

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (May 29), no COVID-19 confirmed patient was discharged from hospital in the past 24 hours. So far, a total of 1 035 confirmed and suspected patients have been discharged.

At present, there are 659 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 219 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 28 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in seven hospitals, among which one patient is in critical condition (case number: 595), and the remaining 27 patients are in stable condition.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

SCED speaks on RTHK and Hong Kong Policy Act Report released by US State Department

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, on Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) and the Hong Kong Policy Act Report released by the US State Department at a media session after attending a meeting of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Reporter: Have you narrowed down the list of the members of the (RTHK) task force? Can you further address concerns that this would affect the editorial independence of RTHK? My second question is about the ongoing concerns raised by the international community on the national security law. Is it the Government's attitude to just shrug off all concerns and tell everyone that nothing will be affected in Hong Kong, instead of actually addressing and conveying those messages and their concerns to Beijing?

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: On your first question about RTHK, we have not yet come up with the list (the line-up). We will issue it in the fullness of time.

As regards the US policy towards Hong Kong, I think we have stated time

and again that the special trading status that Hong Kong enjoys is part and parcel of the "one country, two systems", because this provision has been given to Hong Kong by the Basic Law, Articles 116 and 151. It is not a gift (given) unilaterally by any trading partner. In fact, it is also recognised multilaterally, throughout the world, through our multilateral trading relations as well as our membership under the World Trade Organization. We take exception to the US policy recently announced by their Secretary of State towards Hong Kong, because it gives no regards to Hong Kong's constant upholding of "one country, two systems". We have explained very clearly why the national security law is needed, i.e. largely to plug the loophole in our constitutional arrangement. We accept that we have not been able to fulfil our constitutional obligation to enact this part of the law under Article 23 of the Basic Law. Therefore, particularly in the light of things that happened in the last two years, the social unrest and the problems that we encountered, the Central Government has taken this exceptional step to introduce (the national security law) to plug this loophole. We see there is a need to do so.

As regards the US' position, I think, in my personal view, it is hypocritical to say on the one hand that you stand by or support the people of Hong Kong, but (on the other hand) what the US Government is trying to do would intend to harm Hong Kong's interests. It is also self-kidding to say that this would only harm one side of the equation. Actually, trading relations is a two-way street. So our reaction and our forecast is that it would hurt the bilateral relations between Hong Kong and the US. Look at the trade figures, we have seen a major decline between the US and China, and also between Hong Kong and the US, as a result of the trade tension between the two (the US and China). We have been suffering from the collateral damage of the US-China trade tension, and I believe this would also harm further the US' interest in Hong Kong, which we have all along considered it as a mutual benefit.

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

CFS urges public not to consume a kind of bottled apple juice drink contaminated with patulin

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (May 29) announced that a sample of a bottled apple juice drink imported from Australia was found to be contaminated with a mycotoxin, patulin, at a level exceeding the action level adopted by the CFS. A follow-up is in progress.

"The CFS collected the above-mentioned sample at a supermarket in To Kwa Wan for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained patulin at a level of 110 parts per billion (ppb), exceeding the action level of 50 ppb adopted by the CFS. The level is the same as the standard of the Codex Alimentarius Commission on patulin in apple juice," a CFS spokesman said.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Cold Pressed Granny Smith Apple
Brand: Presha Fruit
Country of origin: Australia
Distributor: A.S. Watson Group (HK) Ltd.
Volume: 350ml per bottle
Best-before date: August 7, 2020

The CFS has informed the importer, PARKnSHOP (HK) Limited, and the distributor concerned of the irregularity. The importer and distributor concerned have stopped sale and removed from shelves the affected batch of the product, and initiated a recall according to the CFS' instructions. Members of the public may call the distributor's hotline at 2606 8658 during office hours for enquiries about the recall.

"Patulin mostly occurs in rotten apple and its products. Animal studies have shown that ingesting high doses of patulin can induce liver, spleen and kidney damage, as well as toxicity to the immune system. For humans, nausea, gastrointestinal disturbances and vomiting have been reported," the spokesman said.

According to Section 54 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), all food for sale in Hong Kong, locally produced or imported, should be fit for human consumption. An offender is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the case and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health. An investigation is ongoing.

Government invites MTRCL to proceed with detailed planning and design of Tuen Mun South Extension project

The Chief Executive in Council has given approval for the Government to invite the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to proceed with the detailed planning and design of the Tuen Mun South (TMS) Extension project.

A spokesman for the Transport and Housing Bureau said today (May 29) that the TMS Extension is one of the seven recommended railway schemes in the Railway Development Strategy 2014 (RDS-2014). It will extend the West Rail Line from Tuen Mun Station southwards by about 2.4 kilometres. In addition to a new TMS Station to be provided near Tuen Mun Ferry Pier as envisaged in RDS-2014, there will also be an intermediate station in Tuen Mun Area 16 (A16) to unlock the development potential of the area.

The TMS Extension largely runs along the Tuen Mun River and will improve railway access to the community south of the current Tuen Mun town centre (near Wu King Estate, Siu Hei Court and Yuet Wu Villa) and connectivity to Tuen Mun Ferry Pier. The area near Tuen Mun Ferry Pier is one of the major residential areas in the district, which has approximately 60 000 residents within the 500-metre catchment of the proposed TMS Station, while there are about 49 000 residents living within the 500-metre catchment area around the proposed A16 Station.

The spokesman said, "The TMS Extension with the A16 Station will offer an alternative commuting choice to the residents in the vicinity and divert more commuters to rail-based transport, which may help relieve the congestion of the existing roads. Furthermore, the provision of the proposed A16 Station is essential for unleashing the potential for residential development at the A16 site and helps increase the housing supply."

"It is estimated that the TMS Extension will save the public a cumulative total of about 300 million hours of commuting time over 50 years of operation. The economic benefits, including the said time saving, of the TMS Extension are estimated to be about \$28 billion in 2015 prices," the spokesman added.

The construction of the A16 Station and the related residential development will necessitate the reprovisioning of the Tuen Mun Swimming Pool as well as the Tuen Mun Community Green Station. For the Tuen Mun Swimming Pool, a potential site for off-site reprovisioning has been identified within the existing Tuen Mun Golf Centre, subject to a technical feasibility study. A suitable location will also be identified for reprovisioning the Tuen Mun Community Green Station.

The Government has invited the MTRCL to proceed with the detailed planning and design of the TMS Extension project, and will further negotiate with the MTRCL on the funding arrangement of the project.

It is expected that construction of the TMS Extension project may commence in 2023 for completion in 2030.

HKMC Annual Report 2019

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

The Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation Limited (HKMC) today (May 29) published its Annual Report for 2019. The Report reviews the business performance, corporate governance, and initiatives on corporate social responsibility of the HKMC in 2019.

The Report is now available on the HKMC website (www.hkmc.com.hk).