

CHP investigates eight additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (May 21), the CHP was investigating eight additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 1 064 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 063 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases announced today involve four males and four females aged between 11 and 73. All of them had travel history during the incubation period. The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex.

The CHP urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of infection through contact with infected persons, who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask if having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

The CHP will report the cases to the World Health Organization, the National Health Commission, the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, relevant health authorities and the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has set up hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 4pm today, a total of 119 172 calls had been received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on the COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
- If having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

Flag-lowering ceremony cancelled

Owing to the thunderstorm warning, the flag-lowering ceremony to be conducted at Golden Bauhinia Square, Wan Chai at 6pm today (May 21) will be cancelled.

Concrete batching plant in Yau Tong convicted again of breaching licence condition

A concrete batching plant belonging to China Concrete Company Limited on Tung Yuen Street in Yau Tong was convicted and fined \$12,000 at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today (May 21) for contravening the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (APCO) as a result of not operating in accordance with a licence condition again.

Officers of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) conducted a blitz inspection of the concrete batching plant in September last year and found that there was a large amount of wastewater with sediment outside the plant, adversely affecting the surrounding environment. After a detailed investigation and the collection of evidence at the scene, the officers confirmed that the wastewater was discharged from the vehicle cleaning facility inside the concrete batching plant, breaching the relevant condition of a specified process licence. The EPD then initiated a prosecution against China Concrete Company Limited.

According to the conditions of licences issued under the APCO, concrete batching plants must step up their efforts to clean concrete mixers to prevent dust from spreading. In addition, they must ensure that there is no wastewater with sediment generated from vehicle cleaning facilities discharged from their plants. A spokesperson for the EPD reminded the concrete manufacturing sector that they must strictly adhere to the conditions of their licences, and properly manage as well as adopt their concrete manufacturing procedures. They must also adopt the best practicable mitigation measures to avoid polluting the environment and adversely affecting nearby residents.

First-time offenders breaching the conditions of licences issued under the APCO may be liable to a maximum fine of \$100,000. A maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed on a second or a subsequent conviction.

More than 100 zisha items on display in "Tea Ware from Yixing: Gems of

Zisha in The K.S. Lo Collection of the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware” exhibition (with photos)

The Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware will present a new exhibition, "Tea Ware from Yixing: Gems of Zisha in The K.S. Lo Collection of the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware", from tomorrow (May 22). Featuring more than 100 items of zisha ware, the exhibition showcases works by renowned teapot makers of the Ming and Qing dynasties and the 20th century, as well as demonstrates the diverse aspects of the art of zisha pottery.

Dr Lo Kwee-seong began to collect tea ware in the 1950s. He generously donated his collection to the former Urban Council of Hong Kong in 1981, prompting the founding of the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware.

Zisha ware flourished in the Ming and Qing dynasties. After the late Ming dynasty, more members of the literati participated directly in the production of zisha teapots, creating a specialism that comprised shaping, poems and lyrics, calligraphy, painting, seal engraving and sculpture in a single form factor. Through the display of various types of zisha ware from different periods, ranging from zisha tea ware, writing instruments and snuff bottles to pottery pillows and small ornaments, the exhibition demonstrates the individuality and contemporary appeal of zisha pottery, as well as the creativity of the contemporary Yixing potters.

Highlight exhibits include a pear-shaped export teapot from the Qing dynasty, as well as a globular teapot with a rounded shoulder, a teapot with a dragon handle and three legs and a mango-shaped coloured clay teapot from the 20th century.

To ensure visitors of all ages can enjoy a wonderful experience of zisha art and the literati way of life, a demonstration video of how to make a zisha teapot by Hong Kong ceramic artist Wong May-lee and an education corner featuring the setting of a study of a member of the literati have been set up inside galleries.

The exhibition will be held at the 1/F Galleries of the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware and will run until July 31 next year. For details of the exhibition, please visit the website at www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/Museum/Arts/en_US/web/ma/mt-thematic-exhibition.html, or call 2869 0690 for enquiries.

In view of the latest situation of COVID-19, the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware will be partially open. Special arrangements and precautionary measures will be implemented to help ensure public safety. Visits will be arranged in sessions to limit visitor flow. For details, please visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/Museum/Arts/en_US/web/ma/opening-hours.html.

The Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware is located at 10 Cotton Tree Drive, Central, Hong Kong (inside Hong Kong Park).



Consumer Price Indices for April 2020

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (May 21) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures for April 2020. According to the Composite CPI, overall consumer prices rose by 1.9% in April 2020 over the same month a year earlier, smaller than the corresponding increase (2.3%) in March 2020. The smaller year-on-year rate of change in the Composite CPI in April was partly attributable to the higher base of comparison caused by the lowering of rates concession ceiling starting from April 2019, from \$2,500 per quarter for each rateable tenement in earlier periods to \$1,500. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the year-on-year rate of increase in the Composite CPI (i.e. the underlying inflation rate) in April 2020 was 2.3%, smaller than that in March 2020 (2.6%), mainly due to

the smaller increases in private housing rentals and the decreases in the fuel cost variation charge for town gas.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the average monthly rate of change in the Composite CPI for the three-month period ending April 2020 was 0.6%, and that for the three-month period ending March 2020 was 0.0%. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the corresponding rates of change were -0.1% and 0.1%.

Analysed by sub-index, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.3%, 1.9% and 1.5% respectively in April 2020, as compared to 2.5%, 2.3% and 2.1% respectively in March 2020. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 3.0%, 2.3% and 1.7% respectively in April 2020, as compared to 3.1%, 2.5% and 2.1% respectively in March 2020.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, for the three-month period ending April 2020, the average monthly rates of change in the seasonally adjusted CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 1.8%, 0.1% and -0.1% respectively. The corresponding rates of change for the three-month period ending March 2020 were -0.1%, 0.0% and 0.0% respectively. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the average monthly rates of change in the seasonally adjusted CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) for the three-month period ending April 2020 were -0.1%, 0.0% and -0.1% respectively, and the corresponding rates of change for the three-month period ending March 2020 were 0.2%, 0.1% and 0.1% respectively.

Amongst the various components of the Composite CPI, year-on-year increases in prices were recorded in April 2020 for food (excluding meals bought away from home) (14.0%), miscellaneous goods (2.9%), housing (1.8%), meals bought away from home (1.6%), miscellaneous services (0.9%), alcoholic drinks and tobacco (0.7%) as well as transport (0.1%).

On the other hand, year-on-year decreases in the components of the Composite CPI were recorded in April 2020 for electricity, gas and water (-18.8%); clothing and footwear (-4.4%) as well as durable goods (-3.1%).

Taking the first four months of 2020 together, the Composite CPI rose by 1.9% over a year earlier. The respective increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 1.4%, 2.3% and 2.1% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 2.8%, 3.4%, 2.6% and 2.2% respectively.

For the three months ending April 2020, the Composite CPI rose by 2.1% over a year earlier, while the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) rose by 2.5%, 2.1% and 1.8% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 2.5%, 3.1%, 2.3% and 1.9% respectively.

For the 12 months ending April 2020, the Composite CPI was on average 2.7% higher than that in the preceding 12-month period. The respective

increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.8%, 2.7% and 2.6% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 3.0%, 3.6%, 2.8% and 2.5% respectively.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that the underlying consumer price inflation rate went down to 2.3% in April, as price pressures on most major CPI components receded, offsetting the slight increase in food inflation.

Looking ahead, inflationary pressure is likely to ease further in the near term. Domestic cost pressures should continue to abate amid the severe economic recession. External price pressures are expected to subside further in view of the plunging global demand and the recent strengthening of the Hong Kong dollar along with the US dollar. The Government will continue to monitor the inflation situation closely, particularly the impact on the lower-income people.

Further information

The CPIs and year-on-year rates of change at section level for April 2020 are shown in Table 1. The time series on the year-on-year rates of change in the CPIs before and after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures are shown in Table 2. For discerning the latest trend in consumer prices, it is also useful to look at the changes in the seasonally adjusted CPIs. The corresponding time series on the average monthly rates of change during the latest three months for the seasonally adjusted CPIs are shown in Table 3. The rates of change in the original and the seasonally adjusted Composite CPI and the underlying inflation rate are presented graphically in Chart 1.

More detailed CPI data (including year-on-year comparison, month-to-month comparison, seasonally adjusted data series and the CPIs by the Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP)) are available in the monthly reports. Users can download the April 2020 issue of the "Monthly Report on the Consumer Price Index"

(www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=B1060001), the time series of CPIs at detailed level

(www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=D5600001), the time series of CPIs at COICOP division level

(www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=D5600002) and the time series of CPIs after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures

(www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=D5600003) free of charge at the website of the C&SD.

For enquiries about the CPIs, please contact the Consumer Price Index Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7374 or email: cpi@censtatd.gov.hk).