

CHP announces no new local confirmed cases of COVID-19 today

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (May 12), no new local confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) had been recorded, and that the number of cases in Hong Kong remained at 1 048 so far (comprising 1 047 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The CHP again urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives to minimise the risk of infection. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contacting 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 when 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 has set up hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 3pm today, a total of 110 796 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 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 doorknobs, 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
 - When 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.
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Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo meeting (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (May 12):

Reporter: What do you think is the problem with the Liberal Studies curriculum right now and are you planning to substantially revamp or scrap it completely? And also, there's a media report saying that the Government is planning to resume the Second Reading of the National Anthem Bill on May 27, could you confirm that? And does that mean the Government has already liaised with the Chairwoman of this House Committee Starry Lee to ensure the Committee will pass the Bill to the main Council by that day?

Chief Executive: I really have nothing more to add on the future arrangement for the subject of Liberal Studies. This is only one of the areas that the Government has identified that warrant a review at the beginning of our term.

We started off by creating eight task forces to look at various aspects of Hong Kong's education system, and one of it is to look at the curriculum. And within this area, I suppose the most talked-about subject is Liberal Studies because this subject, unlike English, Chinese or Mathematics, was introduced 10 years ago and there have been a lot of discussions on whether it should have a curriculum, whether there should be textbooks and how it should be taught in schools and so on. I am awaiting the task force to submit a report to the Government and then we'll decide the way forward. In deciding the way forward, we will have to look at whether the Liberal Studies subject is meeting the original objectives of creating this subject about 10 years ago.

As far as the Second Reading of the bills that have completed scrutiny by the Legislative Council, I can confirm here – in fact you will know it very soon – that the Chief Secretary for Administration and the relevant Principal Officials have already written to the House Committee Chairwoman, the Honourable Starry Lee, to consult her – this is required under the Rules of Procedure – on the resumption of Second Reading of these bills in the Legislative Council. There are a total of 10 bills, I think. Two of the bills have been delayed for a very long time and they are the National Anthem Bill and the Patents (Amendment) Bill (should be Trade Marks (Amendment) Bill). We do expect these two bills to be given priority in the resumption of Second Reading by the Legislative Council. The remaining eight bills could also take their turn to go back to the Legislative Council for resumption of Second Reading debate and hopefully passage by the Legislative Council.

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

[Exchange Fund Bills tender results](#)

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

Exchange Fund Bills tender results:

Tender date	: May 12, 2020
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q2020
Issue date	: May 13, 2020
Maturity date	: August 12, 2020
Amount applied	: HK\$97,501 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$40,773 MN
Average yield accepted	: 0.29 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 0.30 PCT
Pro rata ratio	: About 63 PCT

Average tender yield	: 0.33 PCT

Tender date	: May 12, 2020
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: H2049
Issue date	: May 13, 2020
Maturity date	: November 11, 2020
Amount applied	: HK\$36,900 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$15,000 MN
Average yield accepted	: 0.32 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 0.35 PCT
Pro rata ratio	: About 93 PCT
Average tender yield	: 0.37 PCT

Tender date	: May 12, 2020
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Y2089
Issue date	: May 13, 2020
Maturity date	: May 12, 2021
Amount applied	: HK\$21,560 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$3,000 MN
Average yield accepted	: 0.32 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 0.35 PCT
Pro rata ratio	: About 75 PCT
Average tender yield	: 0.41 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held in the week beginning May 18:

Tender date	: May 19, 2020
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q2021
Issue date	: May 20, 2020
Maturity date	: August 19, 2020
Tenor	: 91 Days
Amount on offer	: HK\$52,139 MN

Tender date	: May 19, 2020
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: H2050
Issue date	: May 20, 2020

Maturity date	: November 18, 2020
Tenor	: 182 Days
Amount on offer	: HK\$17,000 MN

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 is 108.7 (up 0.2 against yesterday's index).

Prepackaged fruit juice sample in breach of food labelling regulation

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (May 12) that a sample of prepackaged fruit juice was found to contain sulphur dioxide, a preservative which is allowed to be used in fruit juice, but the functional class and name of such additive were not declared on the food label. Members of the public should not consume the affected batch of the product. The trade should also stop using or selling the affected batch of the product immediately if they possess it.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: 100% PRESSED PEACH & GRAPE JUICE
Brand: DON SIMON
Place of origin: Spain
Distributor: Top Label International Limited
Volume: 1 litre per pack
Best-before date: September 17, 2020

"The CFS collected the abovementioned sample from a supermarket in North Point for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained sulphur dioxide. Although the sulphur dioxide level is below the maximum permitted level under the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap 132BD), the functional class and name of such additive were not declared on the food label of the sample," a CFS spokesman said.

"The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity and instructed it to stop sale and remove from shelves the affected batch of the product. The distributor concerned has initiated a recall according to CFS'

instructions. Members of the public may call the distributor's hotline at 2627 3627 during office hours for enquiries about the recall. The CFS is also tracing the source of the affected product," the spokesman added.

Sulphur dioxide is a preservative of low toxicity used in a variety of foods including fruit juice, dried vegetables, dried fruits, pickled vegetables and salted fish products. However, susceptible individuals who are allergic to this preservative may experience breathing difficulties, headaches and nausea after consumption.

The spokesman reminded the food trade that the use of preservatives in food must comply with the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap 132BD). Furthermore, the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap 132W) require that for all prepackaged food for sale in Hong Kong containing sulphite in a concentration of 10 parts per million or more, the functional class of the sulphite and its name shall be specified in the list of ingredients. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. An investigation is ongoing.