

## Suspected MERS case reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 16) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Female
Age	28
Affected area involved	Jordan
High-risk exposure	Consumption of camel milk
Hospital	Queen Elizabeth Hospital
Condition	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Pending

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed relevant symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

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# Government adopts multi-tech approach to support home quarantine

A spokesman for the Innovation and Technology Bureau said today (March 16) that the Government is adopting a multi-tech approach in home quarantine support. With the electronic wristbands developed by the Logistics and Supply Chain MultiTech R&D Centre (LSCM) as a key solution, other technology solutions are also being introduced to complement the current monitoring system in dealing with the evolving epidemic.

Since February 8, over 50 000 people have been put under home quarantine. With the issuance of Red Outbound Travel Alert on a number of European and Asian countries and the United States, the number of people under home quarantine will continue to rise. The Anti-epidemic Fund has set aside \$50 million for home quarantine support with the aid of technology. So far, 5 000 reusable wristbands produced by the LSCM are readily available and another 60 000 disposable wristbands have been procured from the market. Among which, 5 000 disposable wristbands were delivered and tested. The remaining 55 000 wristbands will be delivered in batches.

The spokesman said that the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) has been in contact with different developers to source other technology solutions that can complement the current monitoring system and enhance the effectiveness of monitoring. The OGCI0 is now in collaboration with Compathnion Technology Limited which is a local startup in the Science Park. Developed by the startup and a local university, the mobile app paired with the electronic wristbands can help analyse the change in communication signals with artificial intelligence and big data to ascertain people under quarantine are staying at their dwelling places.

"The mobile app has been used together with the electronic wristbands since last Saturday (March 14) and proven effective. To enhance the effectiveness of monitoring, the solution application will be adopted for those to be put under compulsory quarantine. In case anyone under quarantine leaves the dwelling place, the Department of Health and the Police will be alerted to take follow-up action. This solution application fits well for compulsory home quarantine as the technology is most suitable for use in indoor environment and the wristband is waterproof. This is a perfect demonstration of applying local technological development for the benefit of local people," the spokesman added.

The decision of technologies to be used in monitoring was made on a risk-based approach. During the quarantine period, various measures are used to ensure the compliance of quarantine order, including the sharing of real-time location via communications software (WhatsApp or WeChat) by those under quarantine. The staff at the communication centres set up by the OGCI0 will check the location of people under quarantine from time to time and make surprise video calls to ensure that they are staying at their dwelling

places.

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## **Correctional Services Department combats illicit activities**

To curb illicit activities in penal institutions, the Correctional Services Department (CSD) has strengthened intelligence collection and adopted corresponding measures.

In response to the risk brought by novel coronavirus to correctional facilities in past months, a series of measures have recently been implemented in Tai Lam Correctional Institution to strengthen the supervision on the cleanliness of premises and the personal hygiene of persons in custody. As revealed by intelligence, some persons in custody had grievances over the relevant measures and planned to engage in collective activities with a view to acting against the institution management, who immediately kept the development under close monitoring.

At around 5pm on March 13 (Friday), a total of 24 male persons in custody lodged a collective complaint expressing grievances that the management raised requirement on the cleanliness of dormitories and personal hygiene, including hairstyle and clothing. Following assessment and detailed planning, the CSD deployed reinforcements and resources to Tai Lam Correctional Institution to conduct searches on target locations and persons. As at today, seven persons in custody suspected of inciting fellow persons in custody to engage in collective illicit activities have been removed from association and put under investigation during the operation. The CSD will continue to closely monitor the development.

In order to assist persons in custody to rehabilitate in a safe and orderly environment, the CSD spares no effort in combating illicit activities of all kinds in its institutions.

Tai Lam Correctional Institution is a minimum security prison for the detention of male adult persons in custody who have records of repeated imprisonment.

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## **FEHD terminates tenancy of market**

## stall in Southern District

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (March 16) that it has terminated the tenancy agreement of a market stall at Tin Wan Market in Southern District as the tenant breached the tenancy agreement by subletting the market stall. The market stall was resumed today.

An FEHD spokesman said, "The tenancy agreement concerned stipulates that a public market stall tenant shall carry on business as a sole proprietor at the stall and shall not assign, mortgage, charge, demise, sublet or part with the possession of the stall or transfer any of his rights or obligations under the agreement or enter into any agreement to do so. The FEHD may terminate the tenancy agreement for breach of this clause and enter into possession of the stall."

Detailed investigations and evidence collected by the FEHD proved that the tenant concerned had sublet the stall. Hence, the FEHD terminated the tenancy agreement according to the above-mentioned clause and the market stall concerned was resumed.

The spokesman reminded FEHD market stall tenants to strictly observe clauses of the tenancy agreement, including refraining from subletting market stalls, or the tenancy agreement will be terminated.

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## Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (March 16), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 81 patients (31 male and 50 female, including a newborn baby, other patients aged three to 88) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of COVID-19. Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

There are 160 patients under isolation currently. So far, 88 patients who had COVID-19 confirmed or probable infections have been discharged upon recovery.

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.