

Hong Kong's latest foreign currency reserve assets figures released

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (March 6) that the official foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong amounted to US\$446.1 billion as at the end of February 2020 (end-January 2020: US\$445.7 billion) (Annex).

There were no unsettled foreign exchange contracts at end-February 2020 and end-January 2020.

The total foreign currency reserve assets of US\$446.1 billion represent over six times the currency in circulation or about 46 per cent of Hong Kong dollar M3.

At present, four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to disseminate monetary data in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. For the month of March 2020, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

March 6	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
March 13	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
March 31	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
March 31	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

Update on dengue fever

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 6) reported the latest number of dengue fever (DF) cases, and strongly urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

From February 21 to March 5, the CHP recorded one imported DF case. The patient had been to Indonesia during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (March 5), a total of 15 cases of DF had been recorded in 2020, all of which were imported cases from countries comprising the Philippines (six), Indonesia (two), Malaysia (two), Thailand (two), Vietnam (two) and Cambodia (one).

The CHP has been closely monitoring the latest DF situation in neighbouring and overseas areas. In Taiwan, as of yesterday, 39 imported cases (none local) had been recorded in 2020.

Detailed information on the latest DF situation in Hong Kong as well as neighbouring and overseas countries and areas has been uploaded to the CHP's website

(www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/df_imported_cases_and_overseas_figures_eng.pdf). Members of the public should stay vigilant and carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures.

“Apart from [general measures](#), travellers returning from areas affected by DF should apply insect repellent for 14 days upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor,” a spokesman for the CHP said.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor

activities.

DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

* For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public should call 1823 in case of mosquito problems and may visit the following pages for more information: the DF page of the [CHP](#) and the [Travel Health Service](#), the latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), and the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#).

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (March 6) released the latest grading of water quality for eight gazetted beaches (see Note).

Seven beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1) and one as Fair (Grade 2).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach

Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Deep Water Bay Beach

Golden Beach

Repulse Bay Beach

Silverstrand Beach

Stanley Main Beach

Grade 2 beach is:

Silver Mine Bay Beach

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor

(Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the EPD's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Note: To tie in with the response level under the "Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance" having been raised to the Emergency Response Level and to encourage people to avoid gathering, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced that all beaches will continue to be temporarily closed until further notice.

Preliminary reports on Virgin Atlantic Airways Boeing 787 serious incidents released

The Air Accident Investigation Authority (AAIA) today (March 6) released Serious Incident Investigation Preliminary Reports 2/2020 and 3/2020 on two serious incidents occurred last year involving two Virgin Atlantic Airways Boeing 787 jets that deviated from their courses while conducting Instrument Landing System approaches to Hong Kong International Airport.

The two incidents occurred on September 29 and October 18, 2019, and the registration marks of the aircrafts involved were G-VOWS and G-VBOW respectively.

A spokesperson for the AAIA said that the preliminary reports contain information relating to the serious incidents at the time of issue, and should be regarded as tentative.

"The AAIA investigation team is conducting detailed analysis of the data and information collected in order to determine the circumstances and causes of these occurrences in conjunction with identifying areas for further investigation or lines of inquiry to follow up," the spokesperson said.

The full Serious Incident Investigation Preliminary Reports 2/2020 and 3/2020 are available for download from the AAIA webpage (www.thb.gov.hk/aaia/eng/investigation_reports/index.htm).

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, March 6, 2020 is 106.2 (down 0.2 against yesterday's index).