

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (February 7) released the latest grading of water quality for four gazetted beaches that are open all year round for swimming (see Note).

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

Grade 1 beaches are:

Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Deep Water Bay Beach

Golden Beach

Grade 2 beach is:

Silverstrand Beach

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, including 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 on February 1 that all beaches will continue to be temporarily closed until February 17 (Monday).

Update on dengue fever

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (February 7) 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 January 24 to February 6, the CHP confirmed two imported DF cases.

Both patients had been to Malaysia during the incubation period.

As of yesterday (February 6), a total of 13 cases of DF had been recorded in 2020, all of which were imported cases from countries comprising the Philippines (six), Malaysia (two), Thailand (two), Vietnam (two) and Cambodia (one).

According to the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, a total of 6 066 cases had been recorded in Guangdong in 2019, which nearly doubled that in 2018 (3 315 cases). In Taiwan, as of yesterday, 25 imported cases (none local) have 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.

â€œApart 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](#).

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, February 7, 2020 is 107(up 0.2 against yesterday's index).

SED on class resumption

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, at a media session after attending a radio programme today (February 7):

Reporter: Mr Yeung, what sort of factors would the Government be considering when it decides whether to allow schools to resume on March 2?

Secretary for Education: There are a number of factors that we have to consider, including the overall situation of coronavirus pneumonia. What is the latest development? And what is the overall situation? On that we have to listen to experts' advice on the overall situation. We would also consider the preparedness of schools, whether they are ready to start the schools and start the classes. And also in doing that, we will also consider the supply of some of the protective gear at schools. We all know that there seems to be a shortage of certain supplies, for example masks and things. So, when we decide whether classes could be resumed, that's of course one of the factors that we have to consider.

Reporter: Not all parents are happy with this class suspension. I know it's for the health of students. Some of them have called on the Government to pay

for the tuitions of the classes affected by this suspension. Will the Government be trying to help them in any way?

Secretary for Education: At present, even though classes are suspended, schools are still providing learning support to students at home, including various e-learning activities and resources, so that they could still have some learning activities at home. So in a certain way, I think schools are still operating, although in a limited scope. We think that, in terms of tuition fees, parents should pay according to the schedule that we have approved for individual schools. But of course we also understand that schools may face some difficulties. That is something we have overall to consider. And if parents do have financial difficulties in paying the tuition fees, there are always safety nets in the government system to help them on the tuition fees.

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

Hung Ka Po Cantonese Opera Troupe to perform in March

The Hung Ka Po Cantonese Opera Troupe will stage two works, namely "An Official's Promotion – a newly adapted Cantonese Opera" and "Chuncao Breaks into the Trial Court", in March. Details are as follows:

"An Official's Promotion – a newly adapted Cantonese Opera"

Adaptation: Loong Koon-tin, Chan Hung-chun and Lai Yiu-wai

2.15pm, March 8 (Sunday)

Auditorium, Yuen Long Theatre

Tickets: \$140, \$220 and \$340

7.30pm, March 9 (Monday)

Theatre, Ko Shan Theatre

Tickets: \$140, \$200, \$280 and \$380

Cast: Loong Koon-tin, Cheng Wing-mui, Chan Hung-chun, Lai Yiu-wai, Wang Kit-ching, Vong Seng-pan, Yat Dim-hung, Fu Shuwang and Leung Fei-tung

Adapted from the Ping opera and Fujian opera work "The Demotion", the story of "An Official's Promotion" sees Bian Yixiao get demoted by the newly appointed Inspector of Three Provinces, Cui Yunlong, due to Bian's marriage to a courtesan, Zhang Xiuyu. When Bian has a case to investigate, he disguises himself as a fortune teller and goes to a teahouse to gather clues. There he meets Cui, who is also undercover as a doctor. The two become friends, and Bian takes Cui home to stay. Later, Bian lets Cui take his place in presiding at court and Cui deliberately frees a prime suspect. Bian, angry at the misjudgement, sends Cui to jail. His wife also takes Cui to task for not exercising justice. At this point, Cui is finally convinced that Bian and

Zhang are a couple of upright principles and feels guilty for demoting Bian.

"Chuncao Breaks into the Trial Court"

Playwright: Law Ka-ying

7.30pm, March 10 (Tuesday)

Theatre, Ko Shan Theatre

Tickets: \$140, \$200, \$280 and \$380

Cast: Loong Koon-tin, Cheng Wing-mui, Chan Hung-chun, Lai Yiu-wai, Wang Kit-ching, Vong Seng-pan, Yat Dim-hung and Leung Fei-tung

The Prime Minister's daughter Li Banyue goes to Huashan on an incense-offering pilgrimage with her maid, Chuncao, and is harassed by the son of the Minister of Civil Service, Wu Du. Xue Meiting happens to pass by and comes to their rescue. Unfortunately, Xue kills Wu by accident and is taken into custody and sent to the court. Wu's mother tries to flog Xue to death in revenge. In a desperate attempt to save Xue, Chuncao barges into the court and lies that Xue is the Prime Minister's son-in-law. All officials send gifts and congratulations. Even the Emperor bestows a plaque to mark the happy occasion, and the Prime Minister eventually agrees to the marriage.

The performances by the Hung Ka Po Cantonese Opera Troupe are presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Tickets are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7325 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/chinese_opera/programs_948.html.

Two free performance-related talks (in Cantonese) will be held at 7.30pm on February 24 (Monday) at AC2, 4/F, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre (HKCC), and at 7.30pm on March 23 (Monday) at AC1, 4/F, Administration Building, HKCC. Speakers will include Loong Koon-tin, Cheng Wing-mui and Chan Hung-chun. Limited seats are available on a first-come, first-served basis.