

## CHP announces two new confirmed melioidosis infection cases over past week

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (August 30) said that two new confirmed melioidosis infection cases had been recorded in the past week (August 23 to 29).

The first case involves a 93-year-old female with underlying illness who lives in Sham Shui Po. She developed a cough since July 26 and was admitted to Caritas Medical Centre on August 15 for cough with sputum. She is in stable condition. Her clinical sample was confirmed positive for *Burkholderia pseudomallei* upon testing.

The second case involves another 93-year-old female with underlying illness who lives in Sham Shui Po. She developed a fever and shortness of breath since August 21 and was admitted to Caritas Medical Centre on the same day. She is in stable condition. Her clinical sample was confirmed positive for *Burkholderia pseudomallei* upon testing.

The CHP is investigating the infection source of the cases. Epidemiological investigations are ongoing. So far, 12 melioidosis infection cases have been recorded in Hong Kong this year. In 2023, 17 melioidosis infection cases were recorded.

A spokesman for the CHP reiterated that person-to-person transmission and animal-to-human transmission are rare, but melioidosis bacteria can survive in the local environment. Melioidosis is an endemic disease in Hong Kong and melioidosis cases have been recorded in Hong Kong each year. According to literature, infection cases are more common after typhoons or storms. The melioidosis bacterium *Burkholderia pseudomallei* in soil and muddy water may become exposed to the ground after typhoons or storms, and the bacteria could spread more easily with strong winds or storms. As such, the number of melioidosis cases may increase.

The CHP reminded members of the public that melioidosis can be spread by contaminated soil and water during and after typhoons and storms. Where practicable, people should stay indoors during typhoons and storms, avoid travelling to areas with potential flooding, and do not wade in or have contact with muddy water and soil. In addition, high-risk individuals should avoid paths near stormwater drains where aerosols may be generated from contaminated water.

Members of the public should also take the following preventive measures against infection:

- Avoid contact with contaminated soil;
- Wear appropriate protective clothing or footwear when participating in

activities with possible contact with soil or water, e.g. using gloves and wearing boots. High-risk individuals may also consider wearing a surgical mask;

- Wash or shower after exposure to contaminated water or soil;
- Always clean any wounds as soon as possible and cover any cuts or grazes with waterproof dressings;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water after handling soil or gardening;
- Observe food hygiene and avoid drinking raw water; and
- Travellers can contract the disease through outdoor water sports. The risk of infection can be minimised by avoiding exposure to water sources (such as rivers, ponds or lakes) that might be contaminated.

The CHP appealed to members of the public to seek medical advice if they develop symptoms, in particular people with diabetes or other immunocompromised conditions, in order to receive appropriate medical diagnosis and treatment. For more information on melioidosis, please visit the website of the CHP at [www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/24/101110.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/24/101110.html).

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## **Beware of counterfeit mobile apps purporting to be made by Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development Office**

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development Office of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau today (August 30) again appealed to members of the public for heightened vigilance against counterfeit mobile apps purporting to be made by the Office.

The spokesman for the Office said that some mobile apps which carry the Office's name and logo are again circulating online for public downloading recently. The Office solemnly clarified that it has no connection with those mobile apps. Members of the public should stay vigilant and are strongly advised not to visit or download them. The Office has not provided mobile apps on any online platform about the joint development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

The Office has reported the incident to the Police for follow-up.

For enquiries about the online information of the Office, please call 2810 2059 or email to [enquiry@bayarea.gov.hk](mailto:enquiry@bayarea.gov.hk).

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## International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) released today (August 30) the analytical data on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's foreign currency reserves and foreign currency liquidity as at the end of July 2024 (Annex). These data are published monthly in the Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS).

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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 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 August 2024, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

August 7 (Issued)	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
August 14 (Issued)	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
August 30	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
August 30	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

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## Residential mortgage survey results for July 2024

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority announced the results of the residential mortgage survey for July 2024.

The number of mortgage applications in July increased month-on-month by 0.7 per cent to 6 740.

Mortgage loans approved in July increased by 1.5 per cent compared with June to HK\$24.8 billion. Among these, mortgage loans financing primary market transactions increased by 0.7 per cent to HK\$8.6 billion and those financing secondary market transactions decreased by 1 per cent to HK\$13.7 billion. Mortgage loans for refinancing increased by 21.5 per cent to HK\$2.5 billion.

Mortgage loans drawn down during July decreased by 32.3 per cent compared with June to HK\$16.4 billion.

The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to HIBOR decreased from 90.4 per cent in June to 89.8 per cent in July. The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to best lending rates increased from 4.3 per cent in June to 4.6 per cent in July.

The outstanding value of mortgage loans increased month-on-month by 0.1 per cent to HK\$1,868 billion at end-July.

The mortgage delinquency ratio remained unchanged at 0.1 per cent and the rescheduled loan ratio remained unchanged at nearly 0 per cent.

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## Monetary statistics for July 2024

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

According to statistics published today (August 30) by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, total deposits with authorized institutions increased by 0.6 per cent in July 2024. Among the total, Hong Kong dollar deposits and foreign currency deposits increased by 0.2 per cent and 0.9 per cent respectively in July. In the year to end-July, total deposits and Hong Kong dollar deposits grew by 3.8 per cent and 1.3 per cent respectively. Renminbi deposits in Hong Kong decreased by 0.4 per cent in July to RMB1,057.5 billion at the end of July. The total remittance of renminbi for cross-border trade settlement amounted to RMB 1,281.5 billion in July, compared with RMB1,260.8 billion in June. It should be noted that changes in deposits are affected by a wide range of factors, such as interest rate movements and fund-raising activities. It is therefore more appropriate to observe the longer-term trends, and not to over-generalise fluctuations in a single month.

Total loans and advances decreased by 1.0 per cent in July, and decreased by 2.9 per cent in the year to end-July. Among the total, loans for use in Hong Kong (including trade finance) decreased by 1.4 per cent while loans for use outside Hong Kong increased by 0.3 per cent in July. The Hong

Kong dollar loan-to-deposit ratio decreased to 80.0 per cent at the end of July from 81.3 per cent at the end of June, as Hong Kong dollar deposits increased while Hong Kong dollar loans decreased.

Hong Kong dollar M2 and M3 both increased by 0.3 per cent in July and both increased by 2.0 per cent when compared to a year ago. The seasonally-adjusted Hong Kong dollar M1 increased by 2.8 per cent in July while decreased by 3.0 per cent compared to a year ago, reflecting in part investment-related activities. Total M2 and total M3 both increased by 0.7 per cent in July. Compared to a year earlier, total M2 and total M3 both increased by 7.1 per cent.

As monthly monetary statistics are subject to volatilities due to a wide range of transient factors, such as seasonal and IPO-related funding demand as well as business and investment-related activities, caution is required when interpreting the statistics.