

Update on postal services to Italy

â€‹Hongkong Post announced today (May 12) that, as advised by the postal administration of Italy, due to a cyber incident, in addition to the provinces of Florence, Lucca, Grosseto, Livorno, Pistoia and Prato that were previously impacted by flooding, all mail delivery services to the country are subject to delay.

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department is conducting comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor the situation and continue to implement the enhanced testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on May 9 to noon today (May 12), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 360 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category, in the past three days (including last Saturday and Sunday). No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" (www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 150 samples of local catch for radiological levels.

All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24, 2023, to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 135 273 samples of food imported from Japan (including 89 146 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 31 186 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, May 12, 2025 is 104.9 (down 0.3 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, May 10, 2025 is 105.2 (down 0.1 against last Friday's index).

Speech by SLW at plenary session of Seventh APEC Human Resources Development Ministerial Meeting (2) (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, at the plenary session themed "Responding to Future Jobs and Active Labour Market Policies" at the Seventh Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Human Resources Development Ministerial Meeting in Jeju, Korea, today (May 12):

Good afternoon, chair and distinguished fellow ministers.

It is a privilege to speak before this distinguished assembly on a topic of paramount importance to the continued success of every economy. That is

talent and manpower. In our fast-paced and ever-changing world, an economy's ability to adapt and succeed hinges on the dynamism and resilience of its workforce and how well it responds to the demands of future jobs.

Based on our forecast, Hong Kong, China would face an overall manpower shortage of 180 000 in 2028, with over one-third being skilled technical workers. Broader trends such as economic restructuring, technology advancement, business automation and digitalisation across industries would alter demand for job roles and skills in the market. According to a study by the IMF (International Monetary Fund), nearly 40 per cent of jobs globally are likely to be impacted by AI, in particular in high-skill sectors.

It is necessary for our workforce to continuously equip themselves with new and relevant skills to stay competitive in the evolving job market. This includes acquiring AI-related competencies, digital skills and other technical expertise that are increasingly in demand. At the same time, workers must also strengthen their adaptability, embrace lifelong learning and be open to change.

Hong Kong, China makes significant investment in education to provide our young people with diversified and quality education and promote whole-person development. The huge investment we make in education allows the young to choose their own articulation pathways and join different industries according to their interests and abilities.

To further elevate the status of vocational and professional education and training, we are pressing ahead with the establishment of universities of applied sciences (UAS), providing a pathway to success for young people who aspire to pursue a career in professional skilled sectors. The Hong Kong Metropolitan University and Saint Francis University were qualified as the first two UAS in Hong Kong, China.

We have also supported the Vocational Training Council to provide a comprehensive system of vocational education and training services. The council offers more than 1 000 in-service training short courses annually to upgrade skills and knowledge with over a hundred thousand of student enrolments every year. Furthermore, the Employees Retraining Board provides eligible trainees with market-driven and employment-oriented courses to assist them in joining or rejoining the labour market. The Board currently offers more than 700 training courses straddling 28 industry areas.

To address the challenges of the ageing population and shortage of manpower supply, Hong Kong, China has implemented various well-received talent attraction measures since end-2022. The statistics of admission applications prove that Hong Kong, China is the preferred destination for outside talent. As at end-March 2025, we received over 460 000 new applications and approved over 300 000 cases.

To build a quality talent pool for future development, we are reforming various aspects of our talent admission regime. We will shortly invite top and leading talent to come to Hong Kong, China for development so as to

better realise our role as an international hub for high calibre talent. We will also allow young non-degree talent with professional and technical qualifications and experience to come to Hong Kong, China to join trades facing manpower shortage.

Looking ahead, Hong Kong, China will closely monitor the employment market, continuously review manpower policies, strengthen training and employment support and encourage employers to provide a favourable work environment with a view to facilitating greater participation in the labour market and fostering sustainable economic development.

Thank you.



Import of poultry meat and products from Stutsman County of State of North Dakota in US suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (May 12) that in view of a notification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Stutsman County of the State of North Dakota in the United States (US), the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the area with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 12 290 tonnes of chilled and frozen poultry meat, and about 1.19 million poultry eggs from the US in the first three months of this year.

"The CFS has contacted the American authority over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the WOAH and the relevant authorities

on the avian influenza outbreak. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.