

## CHP investigates three additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, November 11, the CHP was investigating three additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 378 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 377 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases which involved mutant strains. The patients comprise two males and one female, aged 33 to 62 years. Two of them arrived in Hong Kong from Group A specified places (high-risk) and one arrived from a Group B specified place (medium-risk). Two patients tested positive during quarantine and the remaining one tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at Hong Kong International Airport.

A total of 39 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (October 28 to November 10) and all of them are imported cases.

Regarding the two Hong Kong-based cargo flight crew cases (case 12376 and 12378) reported yesterday (November 10), the whole genome sequencing analysis done by the University of Hong Kong showed that both of them were Delta strain (B.1.617.2) with highly similar but not identical genetic sequences. They belong to the Delta strain sub-lineage AY.43, a strain which is common in Europe, especially Germany. Meanwhile, the CHP is following up on the epidemiological investigations and genetic sequencing of another case (12379) to rule out its linkage with the two aforementioned cases. The viral load of case 12379 was very low and the available genetic sequencing result showed that it was not related to case 12376 or 12378. Also, the genetic sequences of these three cases were not related to other previously confirmed cases in Hong Kong. The results suggest that cases 12376 and 12378 acquired the infection outside Hong Kong, while case 12379 previously acquired the infection outside Hong Kong and is classified as an imported re-positive case.

In addition, The CHP continues to follow up on all imported cases involving mutant strains by conducting whole genome sequencing to identify the lineage of the variant strains. According to the latest sequencing analysis conducted by the Centre's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch, it is confirmed that the virus strain of imported case 12374 matched the Delta strain sub-lineage AY.4.2. Case 12374 travelled to Hong Kong on November 1 via the same flight (BA027) as imported case 12357, whose virus strain also matched sub-lineage AY.4.2 as announced on November 5. Their seats were close to each other, with seat numbers 2B and 2E respectively. The CHP's epidemiological investigation is ongoing.

AY.4.2 is a newly designated sub-lineage of the Delta strain. According to the World Health Organization, an increase in AY.4.2 viruses has been

observed globally since July 2021 and over 26 000 AY.4.2 sequences from 42 countries had been uploaded to the online genome database GISAID by the end of October 2021. The majority (93 per cent) of these sequences were reported from the United Kingdom, where a gradual increase in the proportion of AY.4.2 has been observed. It was reported that AY.4.2 might be more transmissible than other Delta strains, especially among household members. So far, preliminary analysis in the United Kingdom does not find a significant reduction in vaccine effectiveness for AY.4.2 compared to other Delta strains.

The Government announced on October 26 that patients fulfilling the discharge criteria have to be immediately arranged by point-to-point transfer to designated isolation facilities to undergo the 14-day isolation and health monitoring through a close-loop management arrangement. From today onwards, Dorsett Kwun Tong hotel will replace the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre as the designated isolation facility. The DH is arranging a total of 37 discharged patients to Dorsett Kwun Tong to complete their remaining isolation today.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for local COVID-19 cases with mutant strains, the CHP reminded people that persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on days 3, 7, 12 and 19 following the announcement of the relevant confirmed cases by the DH. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day. Relevant deadlines of compulsory testing for respective specified premises are listed on the Government's website

at [www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN\\_Specified\\_premises\\_and\\_Dates\\_of\\_Testing.pdf](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf)

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Specified persons in relation to the following specified premises are also reminded to undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the compulsory testing notice tomorrow (November 12):

- Harbour Pinnacle, 8 Minden Avenue, Tsim Sha Tsui

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website"

([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)). The DH has also been closely monitoring the mutant strains of SARS CoV-2 and has uploaded the relevant information on Variants of Concern (VOCs) and Variants of Interest (VOIs), based on whole genome sequencing results, to the CHP's website ([www.chp.gov.hk/en/statistics/data/10/641/100135/6973.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/statistics/data/10/641/100135/6973.html)). The data will be updated regularly.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed, "The global situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and there is a continuous increase in the number of cases involving mutant strains that carry higher transmissibility, and there are also reports of breakthrough infections in some vaccinated individuals.

The CHP strongly urges members of the public to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong, in particular to specified places with high risk under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H)."

The spokesman reminded, "If travel is unavoidable, the CHP highly recommends the public to be fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines before their departure. They should avoid participating in non-essential mass gatherings or events held outside Hong Kong. They should continue to wear a surgical mask and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times. Parents are also urged to avoid taking unvaccinated children travelling."

The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website ([www.covidvaccine.gov.hk](http://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk)). Generally speaking, COVID-19 vaccination can prevent COVID-19 infection, and if infected, reduce the risk of severe disease and death from COVID-19.

â€‹The CHP called on members of the public to pay attention to their health condition, seek medical advice early and undergo COVID-19 nucleic acid testing as soon as possible if respiratory symptoms develop. They should also maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times to protect themselves against infection and prevent the spread of the disease in the community. For more related health advice, please refer to the website [www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/health-advice.html](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/health-advice.html).

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## Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices by renovation company

â€‹Hong Kong Customs today (November 11) arrested two men for suspected unfair trade practices of making misleading omissions and applying false trade descriptions in the course of selling renovation services, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TD0).

Customs earlier received information alleging that a male agent of a renovation company failed to disclose his agency role and agency fee to a customer in the sale of renovation service and misled the customer to procure a renovation service by hiding the commercial intent.

Also, a salesman of the renovation company was suspected of failing to provide material information to the customer in the course of selling the renovation service and omitting that there was an additional charge for a renovation item stated in the contract. He was also suspected of applying a false claim to another renovation item that it would be completed according to the design designated by the customer. However, significant deviations

from the designated design were found upon the completion of the renovation item.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested two men aged 38 and 39. An investigation is ongoing.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TD0 and consumers to procure services at reputable shops.

Under the TD0, any trader who engages in a commercial practice that omits or hides material information or provides material information in a manner that is unclear, unintelligible, ambiguous or untimely, or fails to identify its commercial intent, and as a result causes, or is likely to cause, an average consumer to make a transactional decision, or applies a false trade description to a service supplied to a consumer commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violation of the TD0 to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).

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## **RGC honours outstanding research academics in Hong Kong**

The following is issued on behalf of the University Grants Committee:

The Research Grants Council (RGC) today (November 11) held an award presentation ceremony to honour academics from the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded universities for their distinguished research achievements and significant contribution to the higher education sector.

Among the awardees, 70 of them were the second cohort of the RGC Senior Research Fellow Scheme, the RGC Research Fellow Scheme and the RGC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme (PDFS), all three of which were introduced in 2019 with recurrent funding support of \$190 million per annum committed by the Government. Today's ceremony also celebrated the achievements of 16 outstanding researchers who received awards under the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) Prestigious Fellowship Scheme and the Early Career Scheme. A full list of awardees is at the Annex.

Officiating at the ceremony, the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, said, "I would count on our awardees to conduct relevant research in meeting the community's needs, and to inspire our next generations to join the research community. As academic research and scientific discoveries go beyond boundaries, I am confident that we together will succeed in turning

Hong Kong into a global research hub with more scientific breakthroughs and new knowledge for the betterment of mankind.

"Supporting quality and impactful research in our higher education sector has been, and remains to be, one of our top priorities for the higher education sector. Further to injecting \$20 billion into the Research Endowment Fund in September 2019, the Chief Executive has announced in her 2021 Policy Address the new initiatives which have continued to demonstrate the Government's tireless efforts and commitment to supporting research development in Hong Kong, which include the relaxation of the over-enrolment ceiling of UGC-funded research postgraduate students from 70 per cent to 100 per cent, as well as the extension of the operation period of the \$3 billion Research Matching Grant Scheme to continue encouraging the industrial and commercial sectors to provide support for research activities in our universities," Mr Yeung added.

The Chairman of the RGC, Professor Wong Yuk-shan, congratulated the awardees and thanked the UGC-funded universities for their support. Professor Wong said, "I am delighted to see the enthusiastic nominations from our UGC-funded universities, with 10 awardees conferred the prestigious title 'RGC Senior Research Fellow' and another 10 honoured as 'RGC Research Fellow' in this year's exercise. We have also selected a total of 50 PDFS awardees from a highly competitive field in the same exercise. For our HSS fellows, the research support in the form of extended time off and supporting funds will enable them to focus on their research work and writing. I am also sure that the Early Career Award will encourage all awardees to continue their excellent work in the years ahead."

Professor Wong also expressed his gratitude to the panel members and international experts for taking part in the assessment of the outstanding nominees amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recipients of the awards were selected through a rigorous process by RGC selection panels. Their award citations are displayed on the RGC website ([www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/about/events/](http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/about/events/)).

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## [Speech by S for IT at Memorandum of Understanding Signing Ceremony between CityU and HKSTPC \(English only\) \(with photo\)](#)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit, at the Memorandum of Understanding Signing Ceremony between

City University of Hong Kong (CityU) and Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC) today (November 11):

Chairman Huang (Chairman of the Council of CityU, Mr Lester Huang), Professor Kuo (President of CityU, Professor Way Kuo), Sunny (Chairman of the Board of Directors of the HKSTPC, Dr Sunny Chai), Albert (Chief Executive Officer of the HKSTPC, Mr Albert Wong), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, our young entrepreneurs,

Good morning. I am delighted to witness the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CityU and Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation today.

Technological innovation drives economic growth and advancement of humankind. Universities offer a fertile ground of yielding innovators with new ideas. Thomas Edison, a great inventor, once said, "The value of an idea lies in the using of it." The world needs dreamers and innovators with entrepreneurship to make things happen. Recognising this, the Hong Kong SAR Government launched in 2014 the Technology Start-up Support Scheme for Universities, commonly known as TSSSU, to support teams in the local universities in starting tech businesses and commercialising their R&D results. Since its inception, TSSSU has provided funding support of about \$260 million to over 330 start-ups. We also set up \$2 billion worth of Innovation and Technology Venture Fund to drive and attract more private venture capital funds to co-invest in our local I&T start-ups so as to energise the local start-up investment environment.

Hong Kong's start-up ecosystem is flourishing. Compared to 2014, the number of start-ups tripled to around 3 800, with the number of employees increased fivefold to around 14 000 in 2021. At the same time, we witness the emergence of more and more home-grown unicorns, including Orbbec and Prenetics founded by CityU alumni. I am very glad to see the progress of CityU's HK Tech 300 programme in injecting additional resources and momentum to nurture more tech start-ups.

The I&T development hinges on the concerted effort of all relevant stakeholders including the Government, business community, academia and research institutes. The coupling of CityU's innovation and Science Park's R&D base and additional resources under the MoU today will certainly give an extra boost to our start-ups to venture both locally and in the Greater Bay Area.

May I extend my warmest congratulations to CityU and Science Park on your meaningful collaboration, and I wish all our start-ups every success in their entrepreneurial journeys. Thank you very much.



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## **EDB announces details on requirement for newly appointed teachers in public sector schools to pass Basic Law Test**

The Education Bureau (EDB) issued a circular to all public sector primary and secondary schools (including special schools) in Hong Kong today (November 11), announcing details of a requirement for newly appointed teachers in public sector schools to pass the Basic Law Test (BLT) starting from the 2022/23 school year.

A spokesman for the EDB said, "The Basic Law is closely related to our lives and is also a key element of the school curriculum which should be strengthened. Teachers should have a correct understanding of the Basic Law in order to enlighten students and help them correctly understand the constitutional status of Hong Kong and develop positive attitudes towards the Basic Law and 'one country, two systems'.

"In this regard, while the EDB and teacher training institutions have been strengthening training on the Basic Law, the Chief Executive's 2021 Policy Address has stated specifically that starting from the 2022/23 school year, newly appointed teachers in public sector schools are required to pass the BLT."

The spokesman said that by then, newly appointed regular teachers (including newly joined teachers, teachers changing schools, and teachers changing from teaching posts remunerated with a cash grant to those remunerated with a Salaries Grant) and monthly paid temporary teachers in all public sector schools are required to pass the BLT in order to be considered for appointment. The requirement applies to all ranks of the teacher grade (including principals).

To tie in with the above requirement, the EDB will conduct two rounds of the BLT in January and February 2022 respectively for teachers on a pilot



basis. The relevant test results are only applicable to the newly appointed teachers in the 2022/23 school year. For the content and format of the BLT, the EDB will draw reference to the arrangements of the BLT conducted by the Civil Service Bureau (CSB). Candidates have to answer 15 multiple-choice questions within 20 minutes. Those who get at least eight out of 15 questions correct (i.e. attaining a score at or above 53 out of the full mark of 100) will be deemed to have a "pass" result. Teachers who have sat for a BLT conducted by the CSB and attained the abovementioned passing score will be deemed to have met the relevant requirement.

The first round of the BLT is scheduled for January 8, 2022. Persons interested in taking the first round of the test may apply from November 15 through the online application system on the EDB webpage ([www.edb.gov.hk/en/basiclawtest](http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/basiclawtest)). Applications must be made before 5pm on November 26 (Friday) (Hong Kong time). As places for the test are limited, applicants will be arranged to sit for the test on a first-come, first-served basis. The date of the second round of the BLT will be announced in due course.

The spokesman said that the EDB will draw on the experience gained from the pilot test and explore the mode to be adopted in future (such as considering commissioning an assessment service provider to conduct the BLT on a self-financing basis) with a view to providing more convenient and efficient test services. Moreover, if the CSB updates the BLT and/or relevant test for civil service recruitment, the EDB will draw reference to the experience and views of the CSB upon the launch of the updated test, and draw up the arrangements for teachers in and after the 2023/24 school year.

He added that at the current stage, the BLT requirement is temporarily not applicable to daily rated supply teachers, teachers employed under the Native-speaking English Teacher Scheme and teachers who are remunerated with cash grants. The EDB will consider progressively extending the relevant requirement to other schools (such as schools joining the Direct Subsidy Scheme, kindergartens joining the kindergarten education scheme, etc) and other teachers.

For more details about the BLT requirement and the BLT organised by the EDB, please refer to the EDB Circular No. 18/2021 and the EDB webpage ([www.edb.gov.hk/en/basiclawtest](http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/basiclawtest)).