

People's Bank of China to issue Renminbi Bills through Central Moneymarkets Unit of Hong Kong Monetary Authority

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

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) will issue Renminbi Bills through the Central Moneymarkets Unit of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA). Please find attached the tender notice and the tender information memorandum of the Renminbi Bills to be issued by the PBOC. Please also find attached the tender-related information provided by the Issuing and Lodging Agent through the HKMA.

Government gazettes compulsory testing notice

The Government exercises the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and publishes in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, which requires any person who had been present at 41 specified places during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

In view of a number of cases testing positive, 41 specified places are included in the compulsory testing notice. The Government strongly reminds members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo testing on time as required. Mobile specimen collection stations have been set up by the Government in different districts to facilitate testing to be conducted in compliance with the compulsory testing notice. The above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well.

Persons who have tested positive in the past three months (including positive cases tested either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests (RATs) that have been self-declared to the DH) do not need to undergo compulsory testing. For those who are subject to compulsory testing (save for those who have declared their positive RAT results as mentioned above), they must undergo nucleic acid tests in accordance with relevant compulsory testing notices and cannot use

RATs to fulfil the requirement of such notices. In other words, a negative RAT result cannot be deemed as fulfilling the compulsory testing requirement. Furthermore, unless a person subject to compulsory testing has obtained a medical certificate proving that he or she is unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs because of health reasons, the person cannot provide a deep throat saliva sample to fulfil the compulsory testing requirement.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are available on the Centre for Health Protection (CHP)'s website via the following link: www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/ctn_20220516.pdf.

If any persons test positive under compulsory testing, such positive cases will be handled in the same manner as in those identified through other nucleic acid tests or self-declared through RATs. Their isolation arrangements (as well as the quarantine arrangements of their household members) are no different from other positive cases.

Persons subject to compulsory testing in accordance with a compulsory testing notice must go to any of the mobile specimen collection stations, community testing centres (CTCs) or recognised local medical testing institutions to undergo professional swab sampling in fulfilling the requirements for compulsory testing. Young children may continue to undergo the test using a stool specimen. For details on obtaining stool specimen bottles, please refer to the COVID-19 thematic website: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/Stool_bottle_collection_points.pdf.

If Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or above, the Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or the post-super typhoon "extreme conditions" announcement by the Government is in force at any time during the period for undergoing the compulsory testing, the period for undergoing the compulsory testing will be extended for one day.

The Comirnaty and CoronaVac vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from COVID-19. They can provide protection to those vaccinated to prevent serious complications and even death after infection. The Government appeals to persons who are not yet vaccinated to get vaccinated without delay. The Government is working towards the goal of boosting the vaccination rates of children, teenagers and the elderly so that they can be protected by the vaccines as early as possible. Furthermore, the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases under the CHP of the DH has updated the consensus interim recommendations, and persons aged 60 or above who have taken three doses of vaccine are recommended to receive an additional dose (i.e. fourth dose) of either Comirnaty vaccine or CoronaVac vaccine at least three months after their last dose. Members of the public who are eligible should get the fourth dose as early as possible for better protection.

CTCs provide testing services for the public. Booking and walk-in services are available. Members of the public only need to provide simple personal information on the 24-hour booking system

(www.communitytest.gov.hk/en). The system shows the booking status of the centres for the coming two weeks to facilitate the public's planning and selection of a suitable testing centre and a time slot for testing. The testing centres will accord priority to serve individuals with advance bookings. As of 6pm today (May 16), there was around 97 per cent availability for booking places for the coming two weeks. Members of the public may call the testing centres for enquiries on the availability of bookings or walk-in quotas before visiting the centres.

The Government will set up mobile specimen collection stations at Lei Muk Shue Estate in Tsuen Wan, Cheung Hong Estate, Cheung Ching Estate, Cheung Hang Estate in Tsing Yi and Lung Hin Court in Tai O tomorrow (May 17). Separately, ticketing machines have been installed in a number of service points for on-site ticket arrangement. Members of the public who have obtained a ticket can visit the CTC website (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en) to check the real-time queueing ticket status. Booking service is also provided for some large-scale mobile specimen collection stations, and members of the public may use the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en) to reserve a suitable time slot for testing.

Other than persons subject to compulsory testing, all members of the public may conduct free testing at CTCs or mobile specimen collection stations (if the service scope is applicable). The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations are stated in the Annex.

Outdoor mobile specimen collection stations will be closed if the Strong Wind Signal No. 3 or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal has been issued, while all mobile specimen collection stations together with all CTCs will be closed when Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above or the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is in force.

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

(a) For tests which require using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs

1. To visit any of the mobile specimen collection stations (see the list and target groups (if applicable)

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) for testing;

2. To attend any of the CTCs (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en);

3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results (see the list

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories_RTPCR.pdf), and the relevant sample must be taken through combined nasal and throat swabs; or

4. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the stool sample collected as per relevant guidelines.

(b) For persons holding a medical certificate issued by a registered medical

practitioner proving that they are unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs because of health reasons

1. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from post offices, vending machines set up at MTR stations or designated general out-patient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to one of the designated specimen collection points (see the distribution points and times, and the specimen collection points and times, at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);
2. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or
3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau cautioned that testing received at the Accident and Emergency Departments of the Hospital Authority, or testing provided by private laboratories which cannot issue SMS notifications in respect of test results, does not comply with the requirements of the aforementioned compulsory testing notice.

"If persons subject to compulsory testing have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo testing as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or the CTCs."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notifications containing the result of the test and the relevant medical certificate (if applicable) for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to relevant premises, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and the maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months. The fixed penalty for discharging the liability is \$10,000. The person may also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Any person in breach of the compulsory testing order would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

The spokesman said, "The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health conditions, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."

CFS follows up on packaging sample of imported frozen shrimp tested positive for COVID-19 virus in Macao

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department said today (May 16) that the CFS is proactively following up on a packaging sample of imported frozen shrimp from Indonesia being tested positive for COVID-19 virus in Macao. The CFS's initial investigations showed that the affected batches of product had been imported to Hong Kong. For prudence's sake, the spokesman urged the public not to consume the affected batches of product concerned and to observe personal, food and environmental hygiene. The trade should also stop using or selling the affected batches of product immediately if in possession.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Wild Caught Frozen White Shrimp

Brand: Java Sea

Place of origin: Indonesia

Importer: PARKnSHOP (HK) Limited

Net weight: 300g

Best-before dates: February 1, 2024; March 1, 2024 and April 1, 2024

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS noted a recent announcement from the Department of Food Safety of Macao that an inner packaging sample of imported frozen shrimp from Indonesia was tested positive for COVID-19 virus. The CFS immediately contacted the Macao Authority and local importers for follow-up. Initial investigations found that PARKnSHOP (HK) Limited had imported the affected batches of product.

For the sake of prudence, the importer concerned has voluntarily removed from shelves, stopped sale of the affected batches of product, and has initiated a recall. Members of the public may call the importer's hotline at 2606 8658 during office hours for enquiries about the recall.

The CFS has inspected the importer's warehouse in Sheung Shui, marked and sealed the affected batches of frozen shrimp and will arrange their disposal. In addition, the CFS will continue to follow up on the incident, and will step up sampling of similar products for testing.

To prevent the import of the COVID-19 virus through imported frozen foods, the CFS has stepped up precautionary testing measures since mid-2020, including enhanced testing of various types of frozen foods and their packaging imported from different countries/regions, which involves taking samples at the Airport Food Inspection Offices and cold stores of importers. Up to now, over 32 000 samples of foods and their packaging were collected

for testing of the virus, only the pomfret fish and packaging samples announced last August, the cuttlefish slice and packaging samples announced last November, the packaging samples of beef and pork skin announced this February, and the packaging samples of ox offal and chicken leg announced this April were found to be positive. The CFS will continue the sampling of imported frozen foods and their packaging for testing.

The COVID-19 virus is predominantly transmitted through droplets and cannot multiply in food or food packaging. According to current scientific knowledge, the World Health Organization and food safety assessment authorities in overseas countries consider that it is unlikely that the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted to humans via food consumption. Nevertheless, members of the public should always observe personal, food and environmental hygiene. The CFS reminds the public to pay attention to the following:

- * Always keep hands clean, particularly before touching the mouth, nose or eyes;
- * Rub hands with liquid soap for at least 20 seconds when washing before and after handling chilled and frozen food and its packaging, if any; after going to the toilet; and before eating;
- * Handle raw and cooked food separately, and pay special attention when handling raw meat and offal, to avoid cross-contamination of food; and
- * Cook food thoroughly and avoid consuming raw or undercooked animal products.

Abnormality found in some computer systems in the Information Services Department

In response to media enquiries about the malfunctioning of computer systems in the Information Services Department (ISD), an ISD spokesman said today (May 16) that part of the department's email system and outbound systems were found to be abnormal this morning. For prudence's sake, a report was made immediately to the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) and the Police for follow-up and investigation.

During the period, media and public services provided by the department, including the Government News and Media Information System and publications and photo sale services, were largely maintained. The press releases webpage was temporarily affected and after urgent repair, the service resumed at about noon. The department is striving for full recovery of the email system and updating work of the news.gov.hk.

The spokesman emphasised that no personal data or confidential information was contained in the affected systems. The department will work closely with the OGCI0 to ensure no recurrence of similar incidents.

HAD distributes complimentary COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff in Sai Kung, Yau Tsim Mong, Kowloon City and Wong Tai Sin Districts

In light of positive test results for the COVID-19 virus from sewage samples collected in Sai Kung, Yau Tsim Mong, Kowloon City and Wong Tai Sin Districts, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) said today (May 16) that the Sai Kung District Office (SKDO), Yau Tsim Mong District Office (YTMDO), Kowloon City District Office (KCDO) and Wong Tai Sin District Office (WTSDO) have distributed a total of about 218 000 COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in the Districts.

The SKDO distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Choi Ming Court, Metro Town and Mount Verdant for voluntary testing through the property management companies.

The YTMDO distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in A Lei Wah Building, 11A, 15 and 20-20A Ashley Road, 6 Ichang Street, Ma's Building, 30-31 Haiphong Road, Ashley Mansion, Hankow Apartments, 31, 51-57E (odd numbers) Hankow Road, Hon Kwong Mansion, Hanyee Building and Bo Fung Building for voluntary testing through the owners' corporations and the property management companies.

The KCDO also distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Dunbar Place, Princess Court, Balwin Court, Perth Apartments, Perth Garden, Grace Mansion, King Tak Terrace, Bonavista Building, Arran Court, Merrington Mansion, Mandarin Court, Bel-Air House, 1-3 (odd numbers) Perth Street, Venus Court and The Astrid for voluntary testing through the property management companies and the owners' corporations.

In addition, the WTSD0 distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Billionnaire Royale, Le Billionnaire, Chuk Yuen United Village and Tung Tau (II) Estate for voluntary testing through the property management companies and the Village Representatives.

The HAD made the above arrangements in the hope of identifying infected persons early.

Members of the public may refer to the demonstration video produced by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) under the Department of Health (DH) via www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzFAUzTtmKk to learn how to use the rapid antigen test (RAT) kit.

Persons testing positive through an RAT should take a photo of the test result and declare the result within 24 hours via the Declaration System for Individuals Tested Positive for COVID-19 Using Rapid Antigen Test (www.chp.gov.hk/ratp). If members of the public encounter difficulties in using the online platform, they can call the automated system at 183 6119 to register their identification document and telephone number. The CHP under the DH will contact the relevant person later to complete the report procedure. There is no need to declare negative test results.

The Government appeals for the co-operation of members of the public to safeguard the health of themselves and their families by undergoing testing on a voluntary basis and fighting the virus together. The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases that tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons to reduce the transmission risks of COVID-19.