

# Government lifts Outbound Travel Alert issued due to COVID-19 on overseas countries/territories

The Government announced today (April 29) that the Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) issued for COVID-19 on overseas countries/territories will be lifted on May 1.

The Government issued the Red OTA on all overseas countries/territories on March 17, 2020, in view of the global epidemic situation at the time, and strongly urged members of the public to avoid any non-essential travel outside Hong Kong. The Red OTA has remained in effect. The Government noted that the epidemic situations in places around the world have mainly been caused by the Omicron variant, that the epidemic situations in overseas countries/territories with frequent traffic with Hong Kong have generally been on a downward trend, and that Hong Kong residents who needed to return to Hong Kong must be fully vaccinated. The risk of travelling overseas has lowered relatively. As such, the Government considers that the OTA issued due to the epidemic on all overseas countries/territories can be lifted at this juncture.

As the World Health Organization continues to declare that COVID-19 is a pandemic, and the global epidemic situation still remains, from the public health perspective, the Department of Health (DH) advises members of the public to continue to avoid non-essential travel outside Hong Kong. If travel is unavoidable, the public should pay close attention to the latest situation of COVID-19 at the destination and the travel health advice issued by DH ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/travel-advice.html](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/travel-advice.html)) to protect their own health.

The Government will continue to control the overall volume of inbound traffic and reduce importation risk with stringent measures guarding against the importation of cases and the number of designated quarantine hotels (DQHs). The Government will maintain the relevant boarding, quarantine and testing requirements. Overseas inbound passengers are still subject to stringent inbound control measures including compulsory quarantine in DQHs under closed-loop management arrangements.

If assistance is needed, residents outside Hong Kong may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) at (852) 1868 or contact the Chinese Embassy in the respective countries/territories ([cs.mfa.gov.cn/zggmccg/ljmdd/](http://cs.mfa.gov.cn/zggmccg/ljmdd/), Chinese only). During travel and after returning to Hong Kong, residents should consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, and take the initiative to inform the doctor of any recent travel history.

In addition, residents are encouraged to use the online Registration of Outbound Travel Information service

([www.gov.hk/en/residents/immigration/outsidehk/roti.htm](http://www.gov.hk/en/residents/immigration/outsidehk/roti.htm)) to register their contact details and itinerary when outside Hong Kong. The information provided allows the AHU of ImmD to disseminate practical information to them through appropriate means, including SMS on mobile phones, on a timely basis when necessary.

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## **Effective Exchange Rate Index**

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, April 29, 2022 is 98.8 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

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## **Elderly IT Stars Recognition Scheme commends 13 elderly persons**

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) organised the Elderly IT Stars Recognition Scheme to commend the elderly for proactively using digital technologies to bring positive impacts to themselves, their peers and the community. The awards presentation ceremony of the Recognition Scheme was broadcast online today (April 29), in which the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit, has congratulated the 13 "Elderly IT Stars".

Mr Sit expressed the hope that the Recognition Scheme can help members of the public gain a better understanding of the needs and abilities of the elderly in using digital technologies, and facilitate a wider adoption of digital technologies among the elderly for integration into their lives. He also expressed gratitude to the non-profit making organisations (NPOs) and the Elder Academies (EAs) for supporting the Recognition Scheme and organising information and communications technology (ICT) outreach activities and training courses with interesting technology elements to enhance the interest and ability of the elderly in harnessing digital technologies, which contributes substantially to promoting digital inclusion and fostering a caring community.

The Government Chief Information Officer, Mr Victor Lam, visited the 13 elderly awardees and presented the awards to them individually earlier on. He also presented certificates of appreciation to representatives of the NPOs and EAs which nominated the awardees. Members of the public are welcome to watch the video of the recorded ceremony, which is available on the OGCIO's website ([www.ogcio.gov.hk/en/about\\_us/video\\_gallery/](http://www.ogcio.gov.hk/en/about_us/video_gallery/)).

The Recognition Scheme, organised by the OGCI0, aims at recognising elderly persons who have made use of digital technologies to demonstrate their commitment to improving their quality of lives, making a positive influence on their friends and the community, and promoting a sense of worthiness among elders. Among the awardees, some used digital technologies to stay connected with their families under the epidemic, and some even became digital volunteers to contribute further to the community. All the awardees were participants of either the ICT Outreach Programme for the Elderly (2018-2020) or the Enriched ICT Training Programme for the Elderly (2019-2021) organised by the OGCI0. During the two-year service period, the Outreach Programme organised about 30 000 outreaching activities for over 7 500 elderly persons, while the Training Programme delivered more than 100 free advanced digital training courses to about 3 300 elderly persons. The OGICO will continue to organise the Outreach Programme and the Training Programme in collaboration with NPOs and EAs to encourage more elderly persons to experience and learn digital technologies.

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## [CFS announces food safety report for March](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (April 29) released the findings of its food safety report for last month. The results of about 4 100 food samples tested were satisfactory except for 15 samples that were announced earlier. The overall satisfactory rate was about 99.6 per cent.

A CFS spokesman said about 500 food samples were collected for microbiological tests, and about 3 600 samples were taken for chemical and radiation level tests.

The microbiological tests covered pathogens and hygiene indicators; the chemical tests included testing for pesticides, preservatives, metallic contaminants, colouring matters, veterinary drug residues and others; and the radiation level tests included testing for radioactive caesium and iodine in samples collected from imported food from different regions.

The samples comprised about 2 000 samples of vegetables and fruit and their products; about 300 samples of cereals, grains and their products; about 400 samples of meat and poultry and their products; about 700 samples of milk, milk products and frozen confections; about 300 samples of aquatic and related products; and about 400 samples of other food commodities (including beverages, bakery products and snacks).

The 15 unsatisfactory samples comprised five frozen confection samples detected to contain coliform bacteria exceeding the legal limit, two frozen

confection samples with a total bacterial count exceeding the legal limit, two papaya samples, a grape sample, a radish sample and a Chinese white cabbage sample detected to have pesticide residues exceeding the legal limit, a dried Chinese white cabbage sample detected to contain excessive chromium, a fresh beef sample found to contain sulphur dioxide and a prepackaged purple yam noodle sample detected to have an antioxidant level exceeding the legal limit.

The CFS has taken follow-up action on the unsatisfactory samples including informing the vendors concerned of the test results, instructing them to stop selling the affected food items and tracing the sources of the food items in question.

The spokesman reminded the food trade to ensure that food for sale is fit for human consumption and meets legal requirements. Consumers should patronise reliable shops when buying food and maintain a balanced diet to minimise food risks.

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## **EPD convictions in March**

Twenty-seven convictions were recorded in March 2022 for breaches of legislation enforced by the Environmental Protection Department.

One of the convictions was under the Noise Control Ordinance, 23 were under the Public Cleansing and Prevention of Nuisances Regulation, two were under the Waste Disposal Ordinance and one was under the Water Pollution Control Ordinance.

A company was fined \$7,000, which was the heaviest fine in March, for discharging waste/polluting matter into a water control zone.