

CHP investigates one additional confirmed case of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, May 26, the CHP was investigating one additional confirmed case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 837 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 836 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported case is an imported case.

A total of 24 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (May 12 to 25), including eight local cases (of which five are from unknown sources) and one possibly local case.

In addition, the CHP is investigating an overseas case. The case involves a 51-year-old male patient who was a companion of the overseas case as announced by the CHP on May 24. They went to Shenzhen on May 8. The CHP was notified on May 25 by the Guangdong health authority that the patient had been confirmed COVID-19 positive on May 23. He also tested positive for immunoglobulin G (IgG). The CHP is conducting epidemiological investigations and contact tracing.

Subsequent to the announcement by the CHP on the updated quarantine arrangements of local COVID-19 cases with the N501Y mutant strain, the CHP reminded that persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases and had been released from the quarantine centres will be subject to compulsory testing on days 3, 7, 12 and 19 following the announcement of the relevant confirmed cases by the DH. A Compulsory Testing Notice (CTN) was issued on May 7 (www.gld.gov.hk/egazette/pdf/202125124e/egn202125124278.pdf). They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day.

Specified persons in relation to the following specified premises are reminded to undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the CTN tomorrow (May 27):

– No. 49, Tai Tung Wo Liu Village, Sai Kung.

Members of the public can check the deadlines of compulsory testing for respective specified premises as stipulated in the aforementioned CTN on the Government's website (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf).

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).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the CTNs. The Regulation also requires all household members of close contacts of confirmed cases to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to CTNs published in the Gazette. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop and undergo testing as soon as possible.

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).

The CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

The spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases including mutant strains reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes. Moreover, vaccination may help keep people from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19, and, generally speaking, vaccines can also reduce the chance of transmission by those who have been vaccinated. People vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine can also generate herd immunity. Members of the public are urged to get vaccinated as soon as possible and book their vaccination appointments at the website (booking.covidvaccine.gov.hk/forms/index.jsp).

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps). After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the

Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
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LC: Speech by CS in presenting Government Minute in response to Report No. 75 of Public Accounts Committee

Following is the speech (translated from Chinese) by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, in presenting the Government Minute (GM) in response to Report No. 75 of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in the Legislative Council (LegCo) today (May 26):

President,

Laid on the table today is the GM responding to Report No. 75 of the PAC presented to the LegCo on February 24, 2021.

I welcome the Report of the PAC and am sincerely grateful for the time and efforts devoted by the Chairman of the PAC, the Hon Abraham Shek, and members of the PAC on it. The Government accepts the PAC's various recommendations and sets out in detail in the GM the specific responses of the relevant bureaux and departments. The Report of the PAC provides recommendations on areas in relation to the following seven chapters in Report No. 75 of the Director of Audit:

- (a) Acquisition and management of collection items in public museums;

- (b) Energy efficiency and conservation in government buildings;
- (c) Funding schemes for conservation of built heritage managed by the Development Bureau;
- (d) Hong Kong Tourism Board: Corporate governance and administrative issues;
- (e) Hong Kong Tourism Board: Efforts in promoting tourism;
- (f) Management of Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme by the Buildings Department; and
- (g) Provision of humanitarian assistance to non-refoulement claimants by the Social Welfare Department.

I would like to highlight the key measures taken and progress made by the relevant government departments and organisations in response to the recommendations.

Acquisition and management of collection items in public museums

On the acquisition and management of collection items in public museums, the Hong Kong Museum of History, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum and the Hong Kong Film Archive have put in place measures to improve the processing of accession of collection items, including streamlining the accessioning information and procedures, engaging additional manpower, and reporting accessioning progress on a monthly basis. These measures expedite the accession of collection items and enhance monitoring, with a view to completing relevant work within or ahead of schedule.

In response to the shortage of museum storage space, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) plans to build the Heritage Conservation and Resource Centre for conservation of museum collection items at a central location, and to organise exhibitions as well as public education and academic activities and more. The project received support of the District Council in February this year. The LCSD will submit the funding application for the main construction works to LegCo in due course.

Energy efficiency and conservation in government buildings

Regarding energy efficiency and conservation in government buildings, the Environment Bureau, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) and the Architectural Services Department have taken measures to follow up on the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the Audit Commission and the PAC. For instance, the EMSD has applied the experience gained in implementing the 2015-20 electricity saving target and the findings in the Audit Report when taking forward its work relating to green energy. The EMSD has also issued guidelines on normalisation of energy consumption and will keep track of the measures implemented by bureaux and departments to help them achieve the Green Energy Target. Relevant departments have stepped up the management of energy saving projects and rolled out other measures as recommended by the Audit Commission and the PAC, such as including more government buildings in the retro-commissioning plan.

Funding schemes for conservation of built heritage managed by the Development Bureau

On the funding schemes for conservation of built heritage, the Development Bureau (DEVB) has so far launched six batches of the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (Revitalisation Scheme), covering 22 government-owned historic buildings. Ten of these projects are in operation. These projects revitalise and reuse historic buildings for other purposes, such as a hostel, a café, training facilities and a Chinese medical clinic. Through these projects, not only are the historic buildings preserved and put to good use, but they are also given a new lease of life. Members of the public are welcome to visit and appreciate these historic buildings. By February 2021, over 7.2 million visitors had visited the revitalised buildings under Batches I to III of the Revitalisation Scheme.

The DEVB reviews various aspects of the Revitalisation Scheme from time to time and has introduced improvement measures. They include enhancement of the Guide to Application, simplifying the application procedures, refining the assessment process, and organising workshops/experience sharing sessions for interested organisations.

The DEVB will continue to explore measures to further enhance the Revitalisation Scheme, taking into account recommendations in the Audit Report, management experience from the implementation of the Scheme, the operating situation of the non-profit-making organisations, and other factors.

Hong Kong Tourism Board: Corporate governance and administrative issues and
Hong Kong Tourism Board: Efforts in promoting tourism

As for the governance and promotion work of the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), the Government attaches great importance to the corporate governance of the HKTB as a statutory body. Good corporate governance is crucial to the HKTB's efficient and effective operation, as well as the discharge of its pivotal role in supporting the recovery of Hong Kong's tourism industry after the epidemic subsides and driving the long-term development of the tourism sector in Hong Kong.

As the responsible bureau for tourism development, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau is proactively following up on the implementation of recommendations made by the Audit Commission on corporate governance and administrative issues, including appointing more young people to the Board of the HKTB, entering into a Memorandum of Administrative Arrangements with the HKTB and setting up a mechanism of handling unspent additional funding for the HKTB. In addition, the HKTB has started a review on its pay structure, and has formulated detailed guidelines concerning the meeting procedures and arrangements for its Board and committees, including handling of declaration of interest in meetings and submission of declaration of interest forms.

In respect of tourism promotion, the HKTB has implemented the Audit Commission's recommendations in relation to organisation of mega events and their performance evaluation, such as conducting a review on the existing indicators for assessing the performance of mega events. In addition, the HKTB has implemented the recommendations on marketing activities and the Quality Tourism Services (QTS) Scheme, including carrying out a full revamp

of the HKTB's website and tightening the control over the display of the QTS decals and the use of the QTS logo. After the epidemic, the HKTB will launch a new round of the Funding Support for Small-sized Meeting, Incentive and Convention Groups. To ensure optimal use of public resources, the Government will continue to follow up with the HKTB in implementing the Audit Commission's recommendations.

Management of Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme by the Buildings Department

President, on mandatory building inspection, the Buildings Department (BD) has taken proactive action to follow up on the comments made by the PAC and the Audit Commission on the management of the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme and will implement the recommendations as far as practicable.

The BD will regularly review the number of target buildings covered by the Scheme each year as well as the implementation and effectiveness of the Scheme. In doing so, it will take into account operation experience, the market situation, and feedback from stakeholders and members of the community. In parallel, the BD will continue to optimise its efficiency by streamlining the operational procedures, with a view to stepping up the pace of the implementation of the Scheme. The BD will also closely monitor the compliance situation of notices issued under the Scheme and step up prosecution against non-compliance. The DEVB will strengthen its policy steer and provide resources to support the BD to ensure successful implementation of the Scheme.

Timely and proper repair and maintenance of buildings is the primary responsibility of owners and is in the interest of owners and occupiers. Enforcement aside, the Government has been providing support to needy owners, such as through different assistance schemes and stepping up publicity efforts, to enhance public awareness on building maintenance.

Provision of humanitarian assistance to non-refoulement claimants by the Social Welfare Department

With regard to the provision of humanitarian assistance to non-refoulement claimants, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has commenced its work in this area in 2006. In keeping with the needs of the users, the services provided (in terms of service components, requirements and the mode of delivery) have been evolving. There are over 10 000 service users at present. The SWD will continue to exercise proper financial control and monitor the services provided closely to ensure the provision of efficient and cost-effective services by the service contractors, and prudent use of public funds.

As regards the Audit Commission's recommendations, the SWD has immediately requested the service contractor and food contractor to formulate and put in place a series of improvement measures for enhancing cost-effectiveness and service quality. In addition, the SWD has requested contractors to provide statistical reports in a timely manner for monitoring,

reminded them to step up assessment and follow-up action to prevent misuse or abuse of the humanitarian assistance, and enhanced the monitoring of the overall effectiveness of services provided.

President, I would like to thank the Chairman of the PAC, the Hon Abraham Shek, and members of the PAC again for their efforts and guidance. The bureaux, departments and organisations concerned will strictly adhere to the suggestions and responses in the GM and implement improvement measures as soon as possible.

Thank you, President.

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President, I would like to thank the Chairman of the PAC, the Hon Abraham Shek, and members of the PAC again for their efforts and guidance. The bureaux, departments and organisations concerned will strictly adhere to

the suggestions and responses in the GM and implement improvement measures as soon as possible.

Thank you, President.

LCQ22: Impacts of abolition of manual toll payment on tunnel staff

Following is a question by the Hon Luk Chung-hung and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (May 26):

Question:

The Government plans to adopt, starting from the end of next year, a free-flow tolling system at the various government tolled tunnels and the Tsing Sha Control Area (tunnels), under which the manual toll payment will be replaced by remote toll payment. Some trade unions' representatives have pointed out that by then, the various tunnels' toll collectors and supporting staff (affected staff) may lose their jobs; as such, the Government and the operators responsible for the management, operation and maintenance of the tunnels (the operators) should make appropriate arrangements for the affected staff as soon as possible, so as to protect their rights and interests. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the total number of staff affected, as well as their highest, lowest and average service years, with a tabulated breakdown of the number of such staff by name of tunnel and grade of staff;

(2) as the Government has indicated that it will require the operators to provide re-training and job transfer arrangements for the affected staff, of the details and progress of such work; whether the Government will (i) provide subsidies on re-training expenses and (ii) offer ex-gratia compensation payments to the affected staff on accounts of their livelihood having been affected by the Government's policy; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether the Government will specify in the tunnel management contracts to be signed in the future that the operators are required to set aside funds for providing ex-gratia compensation payments to those affected staff who are unable to have successful job transfer; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Luk Chung-hung is as follows:

The Government plans to gradually implement a free-flow tolling system (FFTS) at government tolled tunnels and the Tsing Sha Control Area (TSCA) from late 2022 onwards. Following the implementation of FFTS, toll collectors will no longer be required to collect tolls at government tolled tunnels and the control area. In this connection, the Transport Department (TD) will continue to review in detail the operating arrangements with the contractors responsible for the management, operation and maintenance of the tunnels and the TSCA (hereinafter referred to as the Contractors) in order to work out the manpower requirements after the implementation of FFTS.

The number of affected staff of various government tunnels and the TSCA will be subject to change depending on staff redeployment (e.g. internal transfer) and the operating condition in the coming two to three years (i.e. before the full implementation of FFTS). On this premise, the preliminary estimation is that about 260 toll collectors will be affected, the breakdown of which by tunnel and control area is as follows:

Tunnel/Control area	Number of toll collectors (preliminary estimate)
TSCA	28
Aberdeen Tunnel	32
Cross-Harbour Tunnel	52
Eastern Harbour Crossing	36
Lion Rock Tunnel	48
Shing Mun Tunnels	30
Tate's Cairn Tunnel	36
Total	262

The manpower arrangements in various tunnels and the TSCA may change before the implementation of FFTS; and hence the information of the toll collectors concerned (including their length of service) cannot be provided at this stage.

Apart from toll collectors, some posts such as assistant operations controllers, operations supervisors, administrative and supporting staff as well as technicians will no longer be required to perform tolling-related tasks as part of their duties with the implementation of FFTS. The TD will continue to maintain close liaison with the Contractors to review the manpower arrangements for the posts concerned upon the implementation of FFTS.

The TD has all along been encouraging the Contractors to assist their toll collectors and other affected staff in taking up other suitable

positions, for instance by continuing to provide subsidies/training (e.g. driving test fees/training) to toll collectors for facilitating their transfer to become traffic officers employed by the Contractors. With a view to enabling more staff to stay in employment, if a toll collector has met the TD's requirements by completing a 24-day training programme and fulfilling other entry qualifications of traffic officer, the TD, having considered the operation and staff establishment of the various government tunnels and the TSCA, will consider suitably exempting him/her from the entry requirement, as specified in the Contractors' management contracts, of having one year of working experience relevant to the post of traffic officer.

Taking into account the experience in implementing the toll waiver of the Lantau Link, the TD also encourages the Contractors to, apart from redeploying suitable staff to other posts in the respective tunnels/control area, arrange their staff to work in other businesses of the Contractors or their parent companies (e.g. as fee collectors at car parks). The Contractors will provide support and training to the staff, and encourage as well as make arrangements for them to seek job transfers.

In addition, the new service provider of FFTS will also require experienced personnel to assist in operating the tolling system and handling relevant tasks. The Government will actively consider to include, in the tender for toll service provider, requirements for the tenderers to submit proposals on the recruitment of existing tunnel staff and related manpower arrangement.

As for the existing Contractors, the TD will continue to monitor their related work. In case the employment contract of an employee needs to be terminated, the TD will ensure that the Contractor concerned will pay all the termination payments, e.g. outstanding wages, annual leave and severance payments, to the employee in accordance with the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57) and the management contract.