

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, April 14, 2021 is 101.8 (down 0.2 against yesterday's index).

Tender results of 3-year Government Bonds under Institutional Bond Issuance Programme

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), as representative of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSAR Government), announces today (April 14) that tender for a 3-year Government Bond (issue number 03GB2404) under the Institutional Bond Issuance Programme was held today.

A total of HK\$4.0 billion 3-year Government Bonds were allocated today. A total of HK\$12.241 billion tender applications were received. The bid-to-cover ratio, i.e. the ratio of bonds applied for to bonds issued, is 3.06. The average price accepted is 99.93, implying an annualised yield of 0.382 per cent.

HKSAR Government Institutional Bond Issuance Programme Government Bond tender results

Tender results of 3-year Government Bonds under the Institutional Bond Issuance Programme:

Tender Date	: April 14, 2021
Issue Number	: 03GB2404
Stock Code	: 4245 (HKGB 0.36 2404)
Issue and Settlement Date	: April 15, 2021
Tenor	: 3-year
Maturity Date	: April 15, 2024

Coupon Rate	: 0.36 per cent
Amount Applied	: HK\$12.241 billion
Amount Allotted	: HK\$4.0 billion
Bid-to-Cover Ratio*	: 3.06
Average Price Accepted (Yield)	: 99.93 (0.382 per cent)
Lowest Price Accepted (Yield)	: 99.85 (0.411 per cent)
Pro-rata Ratio	: About 92 per cent
Average Tender Price (Yield)	: 99.68 (0.467 per cent)

* Calculated as the amount of bonds applied for over the amount of bonds issued.

CHP investigates five additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, April 14, the CHP was investigating five additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 613 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 612 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, four are imported cases and one is epidemiologically linked with a local case.

A total of 146 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (March 31 to April 13), including 30 local cases of which nine are from unknown sources.

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 compulsory testing notice. 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 compulsory testing notices 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 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.

"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
 - When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.
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[Opening remarks by STH on transport at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting](#)

Following is the opening remarks (English translation) by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, on transport at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee today (April 14):

Honourable Chairperson,

Today, I would like to brief Members on our work on land, marine and air transport.

Railways system has been the backbone of Hong Kong's public transport. The remaining works of the Shatin to Central Link is in full swing, with the "Kai Tak to Hung Hom Section" expected to commission by the third quarter this year. As regards the "Hung Hom to Admiralty Section", the Highways Department (HyD) and the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) are actively

studying and implementing possible delay recovery measures, with a view to commissioning this section as soon as possible. On the other hand, the Government invited MTRCL to commence the detailed planning and design for the Tung Chung Line (TCL) Extension, Tuen Mun South (TMS) Extension and Northern Link last year. Amongst them, the environmental impact assessments for TCL Extension and TMS Extension have commenced. We will continue the planning of other new railway projects recommended under the Railway Development Strategy 2014 and announce the way forward of the projects in due course. In addition, the Government proposes to establish the Railways Department in the 2022-23 financial year to strengthen its supervision of railway planning and project delivery as well as regulation of railway safety.

In respect of major road infrastructures, the Tuen Mun – Chek Lap Kok Tunnel was commissioned on December 27 last year, reducing the journey time between TMS and the Hong Kong International Airport by about 20 minutes. The construction works of Route 6 are in full swing. Upon its commissioning in 2026, the journey time between Tseung Kwan O Town Centre and Yau Ma Tei Interchange is estimated to be substantially reduced from about 65 minutes now to about 12 minutes. Meanwhile, we are also pressing ahead with the construction of the Cross Bay Link, which is scheduled for completion next year.

In response to the progressive development in North-west New Territories, the overall transport layout of the area would be enhanced. We would continue with the funding application for the investigation stage of Route 11 (section between Yuen Long and North Lantau). Besides, we would commission the relevant studies for Tsing Yi – Lantau Link, Widening of Yuen Long Highway (section between Lam Tei and Tong Yan San Tsuen) and Tuen Mun Bypass in parallel through block allocation, with a target to commission the entire group of major roads progressively as early as possible. On the other hand, the Government has also been closely monitoring the traffic need in New Territories East with a view to implementing relevant road projects in a timely manner. We plan to gazette the scheme of the Trunk Road T4 project in the first half this year, so that the works can make an early start to help relieve the traffic in the Sha Tin district.

As regards the planning of large scale transport infrastructure in the long-term, HyD and the Transport Department (TD) commenced the "Strategic Studies on Railways and Major Roads beyond 2030" in December last year to explore the layout of railway and major road infrastructure, and conduct preliminary engineering and technical assessments for their alignments and supporting facilities, so as to ensure that the planning of major transport infrastructure will complement or even reserve capacity to meet the overall long-term development needs of Hong Kong.

In terms of public transport, with a view to alleviating the fare burden of commuters, we have extended the temporary measure to relax the monthly threshold of the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme from \$400 to \$200 to December 31 this year. The monthly subsidy cap has also been temporarily increased from \$400 to \$500 from April 1 to December 31 this year. It is estimated that around 3.8 million people will benefit each month.

On the use of roads, the problem of traffic congestion in Hong Kong has persisted for years, and has shown a tendency of deterioration. Over the years, the Government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to alleviate traffic congestion, including enhancing traffic infrastructure, expanding and enhancing public transport system as well as managing road use. Relevant measures include the construction of additional roads, the provision of more parking spaces, the expansion of existing roads, the study on congestion charging and electronic road pricing, etc. Meanwhile, we observe that over the past ten years, the number of vehicles has been on a continuous rise. Within this period, the number of private cars (PCs), which account for over 70 per cent of the total vehicle fleet, has substantially increased by almost 40 per cent, affecting the effectiveness of our measures in alleviating congestion. Therefore, it was announced in the 2021-22 Budget that the first registration tax and vehicle licence fees for PCs would be increased by 15 per cent and 30 per cent respectively, in order to curb PC growth and alleviate traffic congestion. To implement the proposal, the Revenue (First Registration Tax and Licence Fees for Motor Vehicles) Bill 2021 (the Bill) has been introduced into the Legislative Council (LegCo). I would like to thank the Bills Committee for completing their scrutiny work within a short period of time. We plan to move the motion in early June at the latest to resume the Second Reading debate of the Bill to facilitate its passage as early as possible for the full implementation of the proposal.

To maximise the efficiency of limited road space, the Government will progressively take forward various "Smart Mobility" initiatives. For the implementation of Free-flow Tolling System at government tolled tunnels and the Tsing Sha Control Area (TSCA), the Government introduced the relevant bill into the LegCo on March 24 and is undertaking a range of preparatory work, with a view to rolling out the system gradually starting from end next year in order to enable motorists to pay tolls more efficiently using toll tags. Other smart mobility initiatives, including the installation of new generation on-street parking meters and the implementation of automated parking system pilot projects, have been taken forward continuously as planned.

In addition, the Government announced last year that around \$1 billion had been earmarked for the Smart Traffic Fund (the Fund). The Fund has started to accept applications from March 31 this year, and is well received by the community. The organisations and enterprises supported by the Fund will conduct research and application of innovation and technology to bring greater convenience to commuters, enhance the efficiency of road network or space and improve driving safety.

The Government has all along been promoting the opening-up of the operating data by public transport operators to facilitate commuting and trip planning of the public. As of late March this year, other than basic information for passengers, the real-time arrival information of some public transport modes has been disseminated through "HKeMobility" and the Public Sector Information Portal (data.gov.hk), including all franchised buses, tramways, selected MTR lines and about 70 green minibus (GMB) routes. TD plans to disseminate the real-time arrival information of all 600 or so GMB

routes within next year.

As for the maritime industry, to enhance the strengths of Hong Kong as the maritime centre, the Government amended the laws last year to offer tax concessions to the ship leasing and marine insurance businesses. In addition, the Government has commissioned a dedicated task force comprising industry members under the Hong Kong Maritime and Port Board to study and recommend the tax concession proposals with a view to attracting more shipping commercial principals (such as ship managers, ship brokers and ship agents, etc), thereby sustaining the effective development of the high value-added maritime services sector.

As for the logistics industry, the Government continues to actively promote the development of modern logistics, consolidate and enhance Hong Kong's position as a regional logistics hub. Besides, to encourage the logistics industry to enhance efficiency and productivity through technology application, the Government launched the Pilot Subsidy Scheme for Third-party Logistics Service Providers (the Pilot Scheme) amounting to \$300 million in October last year. The Pilot Scheme is implemented on a 1:1 matching basis, providing subsidy amounting to \$1 million in total to each qualified third-party logistics service provider. As at now, we have approved a total of about \$21 million to 29 logistics service providers.

As far as aviation is concerned, the recently announced National 14th Five-Year Plan has reaffirmed the support to enhancing Hong Kong's role as international aviation hub. As such, the Government will continue to support Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) in proactively taking forward projects that will transform the Hong Kong International Airport into an Airport City, including the Airport City Link project and such proposals as constructing automated car parks and the Hong Kong International Aviation Academy campus and student dormitories on the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities Island of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. The Government will also support AAHK in continuing to develop intermodal passenger and cargo transshipment services, expanding high-value air cargo logistics, as well as injecting equity in the Zhuhai Airport on the basis of market principles for achieving greater synergy between the two airports, with a view to consolidating Hong Kong International Airport's status as an international aviation hub. In addition, AAHK continues to actively implement the Three-Runway System project. As at end March, the reclamation works are over 90 per cent completed, and the works in relation to the runway pavement and relevant facilities are progressing in full swing. AAHK maintains its target to commission the Third Runway in next year and the Three-Runway System in 2024.

Honourable Chairperson, My colleagues and I would be pleased to answer questions from Members. Thank you.

Opening remarks by STH on housing at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following is the opening remarks (English translation) by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, on housing at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee this morning (April 14):

Chairman,

The current-term Government is determined to resolve the housing problem. The Government strives to increase housing supply, enrich the housing ladder and, when new supply is not yet available, explore ways to optimise existing resources to support families waiting for public rental housing (PRH) and are inadequately housed.

Identifying land actively to increase housing supply is the fundamental solution to Hong Kong's housing problem. The Government has all along been working together and spared no effort in this respect. According to the Long Term Housing Strategy Annual Progress Report 2020, the Government has identified land for the provision of 316 000 public housing units to meet the demand for about 301 000 public housing units in the coming 10 years (i.e. 2021-22 to 2030-31). Such land supply mainly comes from reclamation in Tung Chung, the agricultural land and brownfield sites in New Development Areas including Kwu Tung North/Fanling North and Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen, a number of sites which have been rezoned for public housing development, part of the Fanling Golf Course site, and a number of brownfield clusters with housing development potential, the review of which has already been completed.

According to the forecast as at December 2020, the estimated total public housing production in the five-year period from 2020-21 onwards is about 101 400 units, comprising over 70 000 PRH and Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme (GSH) units, and over 30 000 other subsidised sale flats. For private housing, it is estimated that the annual average completion of private residential units in the five years from 2021 is over 18 000 units, representing an increase of about 5 per cent over the average of the past five years.

To achieve the above public housing production, government departments are pressing ahead and enhancing internal co-ordination, with a view to completing the necessary procedures for timely land production, for example, site formation, infrastructure construction, land resumption, etc. The Government will also work with the implementation agents, including the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) and the Hong Kong Housing Society, to expedite the development process and optimise the development potential of each and every site where practicable.

In addition, with the support and facilitation of the Government, the

Hong Kong Settlers Housing Corporation Limited and the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) reached agreement on the co-operation framework in taking forward the redevelopment of Tai Hang Sai Estate in March this year. The collaboration project will improve the living conditions of current residents and the environment of the community. It will also provide over 3 300 units, doubling the existing 1 600 units, thereby benefiting more low to middle-income families.

Apart from increasing land supply by the Government, HA is committed to increasing public housing supply. For example, the HA has announced the clearance of Shek Lei Interim Housing, which will be cleared by the end of 2022. Subject to the Town Planning Board's approval to relax planning restrictions, it is estimated that about 1 600 units can be provided upon redevelopment in 2028.

On enriching the housing ladder, the HA has launched the Sale of Home Ownership Scheme Flats 2020, with applications closed in October 2020, to provide around 7 000 flats with selling prices set at 60 per cent of the market prices. The first batch of around 2 100 flats in Diamond Hill under the Sale of Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme Flats 2020/21 (GSH 2020/21) are expected to be put up for sale in May this year. The HA will also accelerate the sale of unsold flats in Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) estates in order to meet the home ownership aspirations of PRH tenants. Around 800 TPS flats will be put up for sale together with GSH flats under GSH 2020/21.

As for the Starter Homes for Hong Kong Residents (SH) pilot projects, following the URA's launch of the first SH pilot project, i.e. eResidence, in late 2018, the Government successfully sold by tender a private residential site at Anderson Road in May 2020 for implementation of the second SH pilot project. The Government will randomly select no less than 1 000 SH units from the residential units built by the developer. Separately, the URA has decided to assign the redevelopment project adjacent to the eResidence as another SH project, which is expected to provide about 260 units for pre-sale in 2024.

When the relevant housing supply is not yet available, the Government will continue to implement a series of measures to support those families waiting for PRH and are living in inadequate housing.

The current-term Government is strongly committed to facilitating the development of transitional housing with a view to providing transitional housing for people with pressing housing needs through better use of vacant land and premises. The Government's target is to provide a total of 15 000 transitional housing units within three years from 2020-21 to 2022-23. As at February this year, we have identified land for the provision of about 14 000 transitional housing units by 2022-23. Of these, over 1 100 units have been completed, projects involving about 2 400 units are under construction and expected to be completed in 2021 and 2022, projects involving about 9 800 units have been activated and projects involving about 550 units are under in-depth study.

In March of last year, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council

(LegCo) approved a provision of \$5 billion to set up the Funding Scheme to Support Transitional Housing Projects by Non-government Organisations (NGOs) (the Funding Scheme). A total of 10 transitional housing projects have been approved under the Funding Scheme since its inception in June last year, involving a funding amount of about \$2.6 billion. We are grateful for the Panel on Housing's support in January this year on the injection of an additional \$3.3 billion into the Funding Scheme. The relevant funding proposal has been included in the 2021-22 Budget.

Furthermore, the Commission on Poverty also approved a grant of \$95 million from the Community Care Fund for implementing a pilot scheme on using suitable rooms in hotels and guesthouses with relatively low occupancy rates as transitional housing through NGOs. It is estimated that some 800 transitional housing units can be provided. Apart from providing temporary relief to the industry, the pilot scheme can also help increase the supply of transitional housing within a short period of time to assist low-income families to meet their housing needs. The Task Force on Transitional Housing has organised online briefing sessions to provide details of the pilot scheme to interested participants from the hotel and guesthouse industry. The pilot scheme was open for applications on April 1.

The Chief Executive announced in January last year that the Government would provide cash allowance on a trial basis to eligible General Applicant (GA) households who are not living in public housing, not receiving the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance and have been waiting for PRH for more than three years, until these households are offered the first PRH allocation. In this connection, the Government will soon launch the three-year Cash Allowance Trial Scheme (the Scheme) to provide relief to grassroots families who have waited for PRH for a prolonged period of time. Having secured the support of the Panel on Housing for the proposed Scheme, the Housing Department is now making active preparations with the target of receiving applications in the middle of this year and disbursing cash allowance from July onwards. It is estimated that around 90 000 GA households may be eligible upon the launch of the Scheme. The total approved commitment for the non-recurrent expenditure for the disbursement of cash allowance under the Scheme is about \$8,130 million and the operational expenses are estimated to be about \$65 million in 2021-22. The above funding proposal has been included in the 2021-22 Budget.

As for the tenancy control on subdivided units (SDUs), we set up the Task Force for the Study on Tenancy Control of Subdivided Units (the Task Force) in April last year to advise the Government on whether tenancy control on SDUs should be implemented in Hong Kong and the possible options. The Task Force has completed the study and submitted the report to the Government at the end of March this year. We are now actively considering the recommendations in the report and the views of the general public. Our target is to introduce the bill into LegCo for scrutiny as early as possible within the current legislative session.

Chairman, my team and I are pleased to answer policy-related questions from Members. Thank you.