

Exchange Fund Bills tender results

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

Exchange Fund Bills tender results:

Tender date : March 23, 2021
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q2112
Issue date : March 24, 2021
Maturity date : June 23, 2021
Amount applied : HK\$108,150 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$44,227 MN
Average yield accepted : 0.03 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 0.03 PCT
Pro rata ratio* : About 81 PCT
Average tender yield : 0.05 PCT

Tender date : March 23, 2021
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H2141
Issue date : March 24, 2021
Maturity date : September 23, 2021
Amount applied : HK\$42,040 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$11,000 MN
Average yield accepted : 0.05 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 0.06 PCT
Pro rata ratio* : About 18 PCT
Average tender yield : 0.08 PCT

*"Pro rata ratio" refers to the average percentage of allotment with respect to each tender participant's tendered amount at the "highest yield accepted" level.

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held in the week beginning March 29, 2021:

Tender date : March 30, 2021
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q2113
Issue date : March 31, 2021
Maturity date : June 30, 2021

Tenor : 91 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$57,382 MN

Tender date : March 30, 2021
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H2142
Issue date : March 31, 2021
Maturity date : September 29, 2021
Tenor : 182 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$15,000 MN

CHP investigates 12 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, March 23, the CHP was investigating 12 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 410 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 409 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, eight are imported cases and one is a local case with unknown sources while the remaining three cases are epidemiologically linked with local cases.

The case with unknown sources involves an 88-year-old man (case number: 11407) who developed fever on March 17. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of United Christian Hospital on March 22 and tested positive. The patient is retired.

A total of 298 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (March 9 to 22), including 225 local cases of which 43 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 and undergo testing early if symptoms develop.

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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[Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo \(with video\)](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (March 23):

Reporter: Is the Government seeking to start vaccination for those under 30 years old? The second question is, how concerned are you that the 21-day quarantine in face of vaccinations will put Hong Kong behind other regional financial centres such as Singapore? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Thank you for the two questions concerning the Hong Kong SAR Government's work in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. First of all, as I have said on several occasions, Hong Kong is actually very fortunate as far as vaccination is concerned. When many places all over the world are scrambling for vaccines, we have a pretty assured supply of vaccines for the people of Hong Kong. At the moment we have authorised two vaccines for use, that is the Sinovac as well as the BioNTech, and we have advance purchase agreement with a third vaccine. We have over 2.3 million doses which are already in place in Hong Kong. In order to make full use of the available vaccines and to enable Hong Kong people to be vaccinated as soon as possible, you will notice that we have been adjusting the eligibility of people who could come forward for a vaccine. We started off like many places with what we called the "priority groups", that is the healthcare workers, the elderly and so on. Then we

expanded it to another set of priority groups like foreign domestic helpers and so on. At the third stage we open it up for anybody regardless of their profession, to anybody aged 30 and above. All these eligible groups now already account for 5.5 million of the Hong Kong population out of a total of 6.5 million because at the moment we are not applying the vaccine to those under 16 based on the experts' advice and also what we are seeing in other places. The only so-called "omission", if I may put it that way, is those under 30 who do not belong to the priority groups, say, about 1 million. I notice that the Secretary for the Civil Service, Patrick Nip, who has been put in charge of this vaccination programme, has already hinted that we will closely monitor the situation. If there are more vaccines available, if another batch from Sinovac is coming, or from BioNTech is coming, then the Government will be willing to open up to everybody. In fact, opening up to everybody aged 16 and above makes the whole thing much simpler. You just come in with your ID card, make a booking and then you'll be vaccinated. I can say that we will continuously look into this and try to open up when circumstances permit.

For the 21-day quarantine that Hong Kong has imposed on arrivals from outside China is, I would confess, very stringent. At the same time the fact is we continue to have positive cases confirmed beyond the 14th day while in quarantine. Maybe when they took a second test during quarantine on day 19, then there was a confirmed case. I think up to now there could be about 10 or so such confirmed cases, which get our public health officials quite worried – if these confirmed cases are allowed to go home after day 14, but then later on they are discovered to be a positive case. I certainly am fully and acutely aware of the pressure that this has put on a lot of people, not only just business travellers but a lot of people. To be isolated for 21 days is a huge load in terms of physical, psychological and other aspects. I would say that I would personally look into this matter and see whether we could find mitigating factors to reduce or to bring back the 21 days to the norm of 14 days which are adopted in many other places. At the same time we could assure the public health officials that there are safeguards in place to ensure that if people leave the quarantine centre or hotel earlier than 21 days, there are certain safeguards or medical surveillance in place to ensure that they will not bring infection into the community. I certainly realise that since the latter half of November, now almost four months, with all these very stringent measures, it does give us the relief in terms of the cases coming down very significantly, but we would need to also take into account the interests, the benefits and the needs of other people.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

[Members of public invited to Hospital](#)

Authority Board Meeting

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Members of the public are invited to attend the Hospital Authority (HA) Board Meeting to be held on March 25 (Thursday) at 3.30pm.

The HA Board Meeting has been open to members of the public since 1998 to demonstrate the continuous efforts of the Authority to enhance its transparency and public accountability. The HA Board holds meetings at regular intervals to discuss major health policy issues which have impacts on the public.

Through these open meetings, the community is able to understand more about the role and functions of the HA Board as well as the operation and services of the HA and its hospitals.

The HA Board will discuss the following agenda items in the coming meeting:

- Hospital Authority Annual Plan 2021-22;
- Progress Report on Strategic Priorities; and
- Cluster Presentation Programme – Kowloon Central Cluster – Eye Bank and Cornea Donation Service in Hong Kong.

The meeting agenda and papers will be made available to the public at the meeting. Members of the public are reminded that they can attend the Board Meeting only as observers and will not be participating in the meeting discussions.

In view of the epidemic situation, corresponding seating arrangements will be made at the venue to maintain a proper distance. Members of the public who are interested in attending the coming Board Meeting have to make advance booking by contacting the Secretariat of the HA Board at 2300 6797 during office hours. To facilitate booking arrangements, members of the public are advised to provide their name and contact telephone number. In view of the limited seating available in the public gallery of the meeting venue, seating will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis.

Measures stepped up to enhance work-above-ground safety in repair,

maintenance, alteration and addition works

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about the occurrence of a number of fatal accidents involving workers falling from height to death while carrying out work-above-ground activities adjacent to permanent railings of residential buildings. The LD is saddened by the death of workers in the accidents.

To curb unsafe work-above-ground activities and avoid the recurrence of similar accidents, the LD commenced a Special Enforcement Operation today (March 23) to step up enforcement at repair, maintenance, alteration and addition (RMAA) works sites located in residential buildings with work-above-ground activities being undertaken.

The LD's spokesman said, "It is unsafe to work on ladders as the ladders may topple or the workers may fall down during work. In light of this, during the operation, we will focus on work-above-ground activities with the use of ladders in connection with RMAA works, especially those carried out near permanent railings or parapets of residential buildings, and monitor whether duty holders have provided safe systems of work for the work activities concerned. We will take vigorous enforcement action pursuant to the law if any violation of the occupational safety and health (OSH) legislation is detected, including issuing suspension notices and improvement notices and taking out prosecution without prior warning."

The spokesman added, "To ensure the safety of work above ground, contractors and employers should conduct task-specific risk assessment, formulate safe work methods and adopt necessary safety measures and procedures, so as to prevent and eliminate all work-related hazards. In particular, where work cannot be safely done on the ground, contractors and employers shall take adequate steps, including ensuring the use of suitable working platforms with guard rails and toe boards or other safe means of support, and avoiding the use of ladders and substandard scaffolds."

The general duty provisions of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance require employers to provide safe working environments, safe plant and safe systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the above provisions are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for six months.

To raise the awareness of the industry towards hazards related to work above ground, the LD will issue an advisory letter to relevant stakeholders, including property management companies, trade associations, workers' unions and professional bodies of safety practitioners, to urge them to comply with the requirements of OSH legislation and adopt adequate safety measures while carrying out work-above-ground activities.

To safeguard the safety of workers engaged in work above ground, the LD

appeals to contractors and employers to provide plant and systems of work for the work activities concerned that are safe and without risks to health. Employees should co-operate with their employers, adopt all safety measures and use personal protective equipment provided properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of other workers.