

Statistics for COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme has been implemented for 23 days since February 26.

In the past 24 hours ending at 8pm today (March 20), the following figures were recorded:

(i) About 11 300 persons received their first dose of Sinovac vaccine, including about 9 200 persons vaccinated at eight Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) and about 1 800 persons at private doctors and clinics participating in the programme; and

(ii) About 15 000 persons received their first dose of BioNTech vaccine at 19 CVCs.

(iii) A total of about 26 300 persons received their first dose of vaccine.

The overall percentage of people who have received Sinovac vaccine at eight CVCs today is about 86 per cent, while the overall percentage of people who have received BioNTech vaccine at 19 CVCs today is about 95 per cent.

So far, a cumulative total of about 330 600 persons have received their first vaccination dose (Annex 1), with about 224 600 persons receiving Sinovac vaccine and about 106 000 persons receiving BioNTech vaccine.

As of 8pm today, about 5 400 persons had reserved their first and second doses of the Sinovac vaccine online in the past 24 hours, while about 12 000 persons had reserved their first and second doses of the BioNTech vaccine online.

In the past 24 hours ending at 0000 hours today, there were 12 cases of ambulance transfer to hospital. Among them, 10 persons were discharged, one person was admitted for observation and one person left the hospital without seeking any consultation (Annex 2).

Meanwhile, as background information, in the past 24 hours ending at 0000 hours today, there were 53 cases of stroke or acute myocardial infarction that required admission to Hospital Authority's Intensive Care Unit/Acute Stroke Unit/Cardiac Care Unit. This figure is the actual total number of new cases admitted to concerned wards due to stroke or acute myocardial infarction. This will only serve as a cross reference for the general public to comprehend the severely unwell cases after vaccination against the hospital admission situation of similar kinds of patients.

Speech by CE at Hong Kong Session of China Development Forum 2021 (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the Hong Kong Session of China Development Forum 2021 held online this evening (March 20):

Mr Lu Mai (Vice Chairman of China Development Research Foundation and Secretary General of China Development Forum), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. Thank you for accepting my invitation to participate in this Hong Kong Session at the China Development Forum 2021. The idea of having a dedicated session to exchange views about Hong Kong's development with business leaders of global companies came in March 2019 when I was invited, for the first time as Chief Executive of the HKSAR, to attend the China Development Forum 2019 to talk about the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). If not because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this Hong Kong Session would have taken place last year at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse. A Hong Kong Session will not be possible without the support of the Development Research Centre of the State Council and the China Development Research Foundation. I would in particular wish to express my personal gratitude to Mr Lu Mai, Secretary-General of the Foundation for his help and guidance.

When I raised the idea of a Hong Kong Session at the China Development Forum in the first half of 2019, Hong Kong, despite some moderation in economic growth because of the then China-US trade tension, was well and fine. The Greater Bay Area Outline Development Plan was just promulgated and cross-border infrastructure connectivity was boosted by the opening of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong high speed rail and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge in late 2018. Leveraging Hong Kong's traditional strengths in the financial, legal, logistics, trade and business sectors, and enhanced connectivity in the capital markets of Hong Kong and Mainland, businesses and professionals here could look forward to huge opportunities and good prospects.

Unfortunately, dark clouds descended upon our city in June 2019 when a series of public protests turned into rioting across the city. For 12 months, the streets of Hong Kong had been sieged by rioting mobs who vandalised shops, train stations and traffic lights, set fires to buildings, attacked police officers with bricks, petrol bombs and even genuine firearms, desecrated the national flag and national emblem and called for "Hong Kong Independence". Within the Legislative Council, anti-Government politicians

resorted to extensive filibustering and even physical obstruction to derail government business. Some went abroad to seek interference into Hong Kong's affairs by external forces and even begged for sanctions against the Country and Hong Kong by foreign governments. Our Country's sovereignty and security were clearly at risk and the HKSAR was thrown into dark abyss. The foundations for Hong Kong's stability were gravely shaken. There was simply no basis for the Chief Executive to promote Hong Kong to global businesses.

But this evening, under the theme of "The Development of Hong Kong in the Next Five Years", I speak with confidence that Hong Kong will thrive, and soar higher, in the next five years. My confidence in Hong Kong and her future development is grounded in two major Decisions made by the National People's Congress (NPC) – the enactment of The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the HKSAR (National Security Law) last June and the Decision to improve the HKSAR's electoral system to implement "patriots administering Hong Kong" approved at the fourth session of the 13th NPC last week. These two important Decisions by the highest organ of State power, that is the NPC, have put Hong Kong back on its right track, that is, fully and faithfully upholding "One Country, Two Systems", safeguarding national security and ensuring Hong Kong's stability and prosperity. As a matter of fact, in the nine months since implementation of the National Security Law last June, mob violence has disappeared and peace and stability have been restored in our city.

My confidence is further boosted by the support given by the Central Government to Hong Kong as embedded in the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development (the 14th Five Year Plan) approved by the NPC at its recent meeting. In this latest national blueprint, Hong Kong's competitive strengths as international financial, transportation and trade centres as well as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region, or what I call the "four traditional sectors", continue to be recognised for advancement, while new impetus has been awarded to what I call the "four emerging sectors", namely, an international innovation and technology hub, an international aviation hub, an East meets West centre for international cultural exchange and an intellectual property trading hub. Hong Kong businesses and people are set to benefit from unlimited development opportunities in each of these eight areas and we wish to share them with our business partners in the Mainland and overseas. After all, by our last count, there are over 9 000 overseas and Mainland companies with a presence in Hong Kong, about half of them are using Hong Kong as their regional headquarters or regional office.

Before we look into the future, just allow me, for a moment, to look back at the year 2020. Mask wearing, social distancing, COVID-19 testing have become our daily routine and most of the business sectors have been hard hit. Hong Kong's GDP in 2020 declined by 6.1 per cent. The good news is that vaccinations have begun in Hong Kong since last month. If the vaccines are as successful as we expect, there will be real momentum for recovery in the second half of this year. Let me illustrate with our prospects as an international financial centre and an innovation and technology hub.

The 14th Five-Year Plan reaffirms support for Hong Kong to enhance our status as an international financial centre and strengthen our role as a global offshore Renminbi business hub, an international asset management centre and a risk management centre. Accounting for some 21 per cent of our GDP, the financial sector has proven its resilience over two years of social, political and public health crises. Our city has been ranked as the world's number one IPO venue in seven of the past 12 years. In 2020 alone, HKEX recorded a 27 per cent year-on-year increase in funds raised through IPO, with a total of HK\$400 billion (US\$51.6 billion) from 154 listings. This was the highest amount in a single year since 2010, and among the listings, we had the second-largest listing of 2020 globally. Hong Kong also provides unrivalled connectivity with the Mainland's financial markets, offering direct two-way access through the Stock Connect and Bond Connect programmes, as well as the proposed GBA Wealth Management Connect. With the Central Government's support, and in recognition of Hong Kong now being the second-largest listing platform for biotechnology companies in the world, we have included pre-revenue or pre-profit biotechnology companies listed in Hong Kong as eligible stocks under the Stock Connect scheme since December 2020.

We are, as well, the world's largest offshore Renminbi business hub and the preferred place for international investors to park their funds. As of end 2019, the assets under management in Hong Kong increased by 20 per cent year-on-year to HK\$29 trillion (US\$3.7 trillion), which is about ten times of our GDP. We will further enhance Hong Kong's position as a premier centre for asset and wealth management through a four-step approach, including enhancing our fund structures; providing tax concessions for carried interest issued by private equity funds operating in Hong Kong; establishing a mechanism for foreign funds to re-domicile in Hong Kong; and providing financial incentives for setting up open-ended fund companies or real estate investment trusts.

Backed by an open and sophisticated insurance market, we are catapulting Hong Kong as an international risk management centre. We have completed a series of legislative work to provide for half-rate profits tax concessions to eligible insurance businesses including marine insurance and specialty insurance; facilitate the issuance of insurance-linked securities in Hong Kong; expand the scope of insurable risks of captive insurance companies; and enhance the group-wide supervision framework. All these measures will be implemented by the end of this month.

Turning to innovation and technology, for the first time, Hong Kong's strength in this area features in the National Plan. Over the past three years, we have been promoting innovation and technology development with the staunch support from the Central Government. We have invested over HK\$100 billion (US\$12.8 billion) so far and rolled out a series of measures to encourage research and development (R&D), nurture talents, improve infrastructure, etc. under a multi-pronged strategy steered personally by myself. These efforts are gradually bearing fruit. Our GDP on R&D significantly increased from HK\$16.7 billion (US\$2.1 billion) in 2014 to HK\$26.3 billion (US\$3.4 billion) in 2019. The number of local start-ups tripled from around 1 100 in 2014 to over 3 300 in 2020 with the manpower increased by over four times. Venture capital investment in Hong Kong

increased from HK\$1.2 billion (US\$154 million) in 2014 to HK\$10 billion (US\$1.28 billion) in 2019, showing an increase of seven times. In a span of six years, eight unicorns emerged in Hong Kong.

The progress we made has been recognised globally. According to the World Digital Competitiveness Yearbook 2020 announced earlier by the International Institute for Management Development in Lausanne, Switzerland, Hong Kong climbed from 11th place in 2018 to fifth place globally. As for the ranking related to technological infrastructure, the global ranking of Hong Kong rose from 18th place to seventh place.

The most significant innovation and technology project being taken forward is the development of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park, with which we are pressing ahead full steam with a funding of over HK\$30 billion (US\$3.8 billion) recently approved. This will be the largest-ever innovation and technology platform in Hong Kong. Adjacent to Shenzhen, the Park leverages the complementary advantages brought by Hong Kong's solid R&D strengths and Shenzhen's strong capability in advanced manufacturing. Furthermore, Hong Kong's two flagship innovation and technology organisations, Hong Kong Science Park and Cyberport, are taking forward their expansion plans. A purpose-built Data Technology Hub has just opened at the Tseung Kwan O Industrial Estate, and a world-class Advanced Manufacturing Centre and the Microelectronics Centre are also taking shape.

To support R&D, my Government has been financing projects that contribute to the upgrading in our manufacturing and services industries through the Innovation and Technology Fund. We are also setting up the first two InnoHK clusters in research consisting of collaborations between local universities and renowned Mainland and overseas institutions. Situated at the Hong Kong Science Park, they are focusing on healthcare technologies and artificial intelligence as well as robotics technologies. Recognising the importance of talents to science and technology, my Government will shortly launch the Global STEM Professorship Scheme to attract renowned scientists and their research teams to come and work in Hong Kong.

Innovation and technology is not only a sector by itself. It is driving development in other sectors as well. Just now I spoke about Hong Kong's financial services, which is a sector benefitting hugely from innovation and technology development. Hong Kong is now home to more than 600 fintech companies and start-ups. Eight virtual banks and four virtual insurers have been granted licences, offering a wide variety of financial services for business and people. A virtual asset trading platform has been authorised, and a Faster Payment System (FPS) has been launched to connect banks and e-wallets, enabling 24-hour instant transfer in Hong Kong dollars and Renminbi; in a little more than two years since its launching in 2018, FPS now has recorded 7.5 million registrations. The average daily Hong Kong dollars real-time transactions reached some 600 000 last month, worth HK\$6.2 billion (US\$795 million). Furthermore, to promote innovative financial services products, our new Fintech Proof-of-Concept Subsidy Scheme is now open for application. It provides incentives for financial institutions to partner with fintech companies on proof-of-concept projects.

Hong Kong's future lies in integration with the Mainland economy, while maintaining her uniqueness under "One Country, Two Systems". With its total population of over 72 million and a combined GDP of US\$1.7 trillion which is as big as that of Korea, the GBA will bring abundant development opportunities to different sectors of the community. We will strengthen our support for enterprises to tap into the Mainland domestic market and step up promotion of Hong Kong products and services. We will provide dedicated support for Hong Kong enterprises to expand their domestic sales and gain access to the large-scale e-commerce platforms in the Mainland.

Ladies and gentlemen, Hong Kong's role as a gateway of investment into the Mainland will be reinforced in China's "dual circulation" strategy, under which our nation is committed to wider, broader, and deeper economic opening, while at the same time more Chinese companies will go global. Hong Kong's professional services are renowned for their high standard and we will collaborate with Mainland enterprises in going global. Our investment promotion agency Invest Hong Kong will work closely with its counterparts in the GBA to showcase our collective strengths and enhance our role in furthering international circulation. As a highly market-oriented city and an international economy, Hong Kong will proactively become a participant in domestic circulation and a facilitator in international circulation amidst the "dual circulation" development strategy of our country.

With these exciting developments, I can assure you that Hong Kong will once again rise to the challenge and move ahead confidently towards a bright future. I am delighted that we have some of the world's top business leaders with us today to share their perspectives on how they see Hong Kong's future economic development. I look forward to benefiting from your insights and wisdom.

Thank you very much.



Government gazettes compulsory testing notice

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

Currently, in all districts in Hong Kong, if one or more new confirmed cases are found in the residential buildings (including buildings for both commercial and residential uses), or there are sewage samples tested positive which implied possible infection risks, the buildings will be included in the compulsory testing notice.

For testing targeting at workplaces, if one or more confirmed cases are found in a workplace, it will be included in the compulsory testing notice.

Five premises fulfilling the above criteria were included in the compulsory testing notice today (March 20). In addition, since the sewage samples of Chai Fu House and Sin Fu House of Tin Fu Court, 15 Tin Sau Road, Tin Shui Wai have been tested positive, the buildings were covered in the compulsory testing notice on March 19.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are as follows:

Any person who had been present at any specified premises listed in Annex 1 for more than two hours at any time during the period from March 7 to March 20, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing by March 23, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between March 18 and March 20, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau reminds the public that in accordance with the compulsory testing notice issued earlier, all household members of close contacts are required to undergo compulsory testing. Any person who had lived with a person who is placed under quarantine pursuant to section 22 of the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) (person under quarantine) in the same residential unit on the date of commencement of quarantine or during the 14 days before that day, and who becomes aware of the quarantine of the person under quarantine when the relevant quarantine has not yet been completed, have to undergo testing within two days of he/she becoming aware of the person under quarantine has been placed under quarantine and report to the Government the result of the test by phone (at 6275 6901), fax (at 2530 5872) or email (ct@csb.gov.hk) within three days of undergoing the test.

The Government will set up mobile specimen collection station at Open Roman Square of Wah Sum Estate in Fanling tomorrow (March 21) for local residents and workers subject to compulsory testing. The service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at Southorn Playground in Wan Chai and Ping Tin Estate in Lam Tin will be extended to March 22 (Monday). The service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at Edinburgh Place in Central, Li Sing Street Playground in Sai Ying Pun, Kennedy Town Playground, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex and Maple Street Playground in Sham Shui Po will be extended to March 28 (Sunday), and they will be open to all members of the public for testing.

The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations in various districts providing free COVID-19 nucleic acid testing services for the general public are stated in Annex 2. Apart from mobile specimen collection stations, persons subject to compulsory testing can also choose to attend any of the community testing centres in all districts to receive testing free of charge.

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

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 community testing centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/);
3. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from any of the 121 post offices, vending machines set up at 20 MTR stations or 47 designated general outpatient 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);
4. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority;
5. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the Department of Health (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); or
6. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the Centre for Health Protection (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the sample collected as per relevant guidelines.

The spokesman cautioned that testing received at accident and emergency departments of the Hospital Authority or during hospital stays, 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 community testing centres."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notification containing result of the test for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Furthermore, persons subject to testing under the compulsory testing notices should, as far as reasonably practicable, take appropriate personal disease prevention measures including wearing a mask and maintaining hand hygiene, and, unless for the purpose of undergoing the specified test, stay at their place of residence and avoid going out until the test result is ascertained as far as possible.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm. If persons subject to compulsory testing plan to conduct testing at any of the community testing centres, they can check the centre's appointment status in advance. The hotlines of the community testing centres are available at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/info/.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to the 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 may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). Collection and use of any personal data for conducting COVID-19 tests must meet the requirements under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486). Government departments or testing service providers which handle the relevant information may provide the data to DH or other relevant departments for anti-epidemic purpose as necessary. The workflow does not involve the provision of any personal data to organisations or persons outside Hong Kong.

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 contacted confirmed cases), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."

Hospital Authority's reply on media enquiries about patients' admission background information

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

In response to media enquiries, the spokesperson for the Hospital Authority (HA) made the following reply:

To facilitate public understanding of the situation, the Government will announce the number of patients feeling unwell and being transferred to hospitals after receiving vaccinations from the Community Vaccination Centres through press release.

Starting from yesterday, the Government has included in the press release the statistics on new cases of stroke or acute myocardial infarction in the past 24 hours that required admission to public hospitals' Intensive Care Unit, Acute Stroke Unit and Cardiac Care Unit. This figure is the actual total number of new cases admitted to concerned wards due to stroke or acute myocardial infarction. This will only serve as a cross reference for the general public to comprehend the severely unwell cases after vaccination against the hospital admission situation of similar kinds of patients.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (March 20), 26 COVID-19 confirmed patients were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 10 863 patients with confirmed or probable infection have been discharged.

At present, there are 648 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 184 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 267 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in 19 public hospitals and the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, among which 10 patients are in critical condition, 10 are in serious condition and the remaining 247 patients are in stable condition.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for

Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

Details of the above-mentioned patients are as follows:

Patient condition	Case numbers
Discharged	9694, 11080, 11085, 11087, 11088, 11094, 11099, 11129, 11130, 11157, 11188, 11202, 11252, 11262, 11313, 11319, 11320, 11321, 11330, 11331, 11336, 11343, 11346, 11347, 11350, 11364
Critical	1989, 3496, 6607, 6794, 8018, 8078, 9612, 9907, 10358, 10942
Serious	6386, 7468, 8221, 9055, 9135, 10367, 10585, 10984, 11040, 11055