

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 16, 2021
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q2111
Issue date : March 17, 2021
Maturity date : June 16, 2021
Amount applied : HK\$137,005 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$44,347 MN
Average yield accepted : 0.03 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 0.04 PCT
Pro rata ratio* : About 13 PCT
Average tender yield : 0.06 PCT

Tender date : March 16, 2021
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H2140
Issue date : March 17, 2021
Maturity date : September 15, 2021
Amount applied : HK\$58,635 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$11,000 MN
Average yield accepted : 0.06 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 0.06 PCT
Pro rata ratio* : About 53 PCT
Average tender yield : 0.08 PCT

Tender date : March 16, 2021
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Y2187
Issue date : March 17, 2021
Maturity date : March 16, 2022
Amount applied : HK\$21,110 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$1,300 MN
Average yield accepted : 0.08 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 0.08 PCT
Pro rata ratio* : About 28 PCT
Average tender yield : 0.10 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 22, 2021:

Tender date : March 23, 2021
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q2112
Issue date : March 24, 2021
Maturity date : June 23, 2021
Tenor : 91 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$44,227 MN

Tender date : March 23, 2021
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H2141
Issue date : March 24, 2021
Maturity date : September 23, 2021
Tenor : 183 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$11,000 MN

[Transport Department Vehicle Examination Complex to commence services in phases from April 1 \(with photos\)](#)

The Transport Department (TD) said today (March 16) that the newly completed multi-storey Transport Department Vehicle Examination Complex (TDVEC) will commence services in phases from April 1 to re-provision three existing government vehicle examination centres, namely New Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre, Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre and To Kwa Wan Vehicle Examination Centre. These three vehicle examination centres will cease operation after the re-provisioning.

Located at 18 Sai Tso Wan Road in Tsing Yi, the TDVEC is equipped with total 30 inspection lanes and other auxiliary facilities on three floors for conducting examinations of various types of vehicles, inspections for vehicle type approval of new vehicle models and pre-registration examinations of vehicles. The TDVEC will commence services in three phases as follows:

	Date	Floor of TDVEC to commence services	Reprovisioning of existing vehicle examination centres
First phase	April 1, 2021	G/F	New Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre
Second phase	Second quarter of 2021	1/F	Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre
Third phase		2/F	To Kwa Wan Vehicle Examination Centre

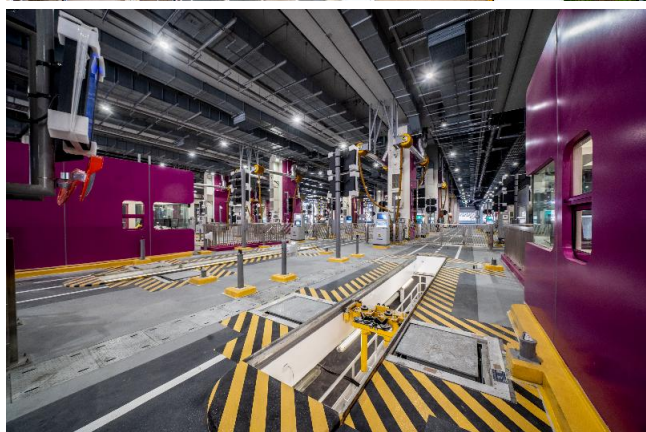
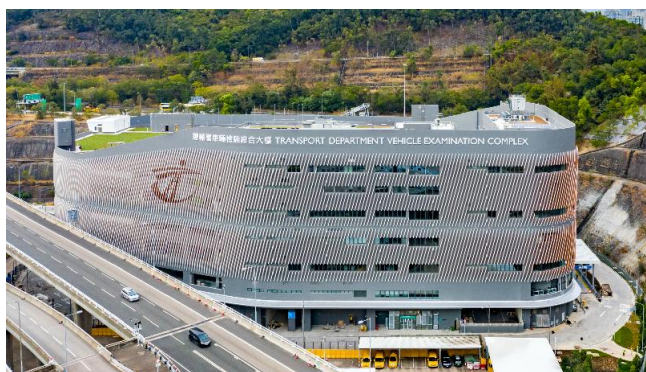
From April 1, services currently offered at the New Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre will be moved to the G/F of the TDVEC, including annual inspections of trailers and goods vehicles not exceeding 16 tonnes gross vehicle weight. The TD reminded that vehicle owners or their representatives should arrange their vehicles to attend vehicle examinations at the TDVEC in accordance with the appointment date, time slot and designated inspection lane as indicated in the original appointment letters. In addition, the vehicle owners or their representatives who provided their contact numbers during the appointment booking will be notified by phone or via SMS messages to attend the vehicle examination in the TDVEC.

To enable public light buses to travel to and from the TDVEC for vehicle examinations, the TD will open designated roads for travelling to and from Tsing Yi and in the area upon commissioning of the 1/F of the TDVEC. Public light buses can only travel via the designated roads, including Tsing Tsuen Road (via Tsing Yi North Bridge), Tsing Yi North Coastal Road, Cheung Tsing Highway, Tsing Yi Road West and Sai Tso Wan Road for access to the TDVEC.

The TD will announce the commissioning dates of the 1/F and 2/F of the TDVEC in due course. For details of the TDVEC, please visit the TD's webpage (www.td.gov.hk/en/public_services/vehicle_typeapp_examination/tdvec/index.html).

For enquiries, please contact the relevant vehicle examination centres of the TD at the following numbers:

New Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre	2751 8862
Kowloon Bay Vehicle Examination Centre	2759 7036
To Kwa Wan Vehicle Examination Centre	2364 7211/2333 3112



Executive Council considers fare increase applications of five franchised bus operators

The Chief Executive in Council today (March 16) considered the fare increase applications of five franchised bus operators, and decided that:

(a) Citybus Limited (Franchise for Hong Kong Island and Cross-Harbour Bus Network) (CTB(F1)) and New World First Bus Services Limited (NWFB) should be approved to increase the fares of their routes for an overall weighted average rate of 12.0 per cent to be implemented in two phases (viz. 8.5 per cent to take effect on April 4, 2021, and a further 3.2 per cent to take effect on January 2, 2022);

(b) New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited (NLB) should be approved to increase the fares of its routes for an overall weighted average rate of 9.8 per cent to be implemented on April 4, 2021;

(c) The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited (KMB) should be approved to increase the fares of its routes for an overall weighted average rate of

8.5 per cent. Taking into account the mitigating effect from KMB's Franchised Bus Toll Exemption Fund (TEF) and the fare increases of the cross-harbour routes jointly operated by KMB and CTB(F1) or NWFB as per (a) above, the actual weighted average rate of fare increase of KMB's solely operated routes would be 5.8 per cent to be implemented on April 4, 2021; and

(d) The fare increase application of Long Win Bus Company Limited (LW) should be rejected.

Details of the fare increase applications of individual franchised bus operators are set out in the Annex.

In arriving at the actual fare increase rates of individual routes, the Government has looked into the service nature and existing fare levels of these routes and made adjustments as appropriate with a view to minimising the impact of fare increases on the public. Upon the implementation of new fares on April 4, 2021, about 90 per cent of passengers will pay no more than \$1 extra per trip, and upon the implementation of phase two fare increases of CTB(F1) and NWFB on January 2, 2022, about 90 per cent of their passengers will pay no more than \$1.50 extra per trip in aggregate.

A Government spokesman said, "The five franchised bus operators submitted the fare increase applications to the Government in 2018 and 2019. The processing of the relevant fare increase applications had then been put on hold, amid the uncertainties arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. In view of the impact of the pandemic on the franchised bus operators, the Government has introduced several rounds of relief measures under the Anti-epidemic Fund, including fuel and other one-off subsidies and the Employment Support Scheme, to help franchised bus operators cope with the operating pressure in the prevailing economic environment. With the gradual cessation of these relief measures by the end of 2020, individual franchised bus operators are facing severe financial difficulties because of the declining revenue and rising operating costs."

The spokesman added, "It is of great importance to maintain the financial viability of the franchised bus operators for providing safe and quality public bus services. Alongside the processing of the fare increase applications, the Government will continue to encourage and assist franchised bus operators to adopt a multi-pronged approach in the longer run in implementing revenue-raising and expenditure-cutting measures, including enhancing the bus service network through bus route rationalisation, further improving operational efficiency and increasing non-fare revenue, so as to improve their financial situation, improve service standards and enhance bus safety and the application of technology."

To alleviate commuters' fare burdens, the Government has earlier implemented a special measure to temporarily relax the monthly threshold under the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme (PTFSS) from \$400 to \$200 during the period from July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021. To further relieve the hardship felt by the public amid the public transport fare adjustments, the Government has decided to further extend the aforementioned special measure

for six months till December 31, 2021, and temporarily raise the monthly subsidy cap from \$400 to \$500 during the period from April 1 to December 31, 2021. In addition, beneficiaries enjoying a concessionary fare of \$2 per trip when taking public transport under the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities will not be affected by the fare increases.

Under the Fare Adjustment Arrangement for Franchised Buses (FAA), the Government has taken into account a basket of factors in assessing the bus fare adjustments, which include:

- (a) changes in operating costs and revenue since the last fare adjustment;
- (b) forecasts of future costs, revenue and returns;
- (c) the need to provide the operator with a reasonable rate of return;
- (d) public acceptability and affordability;
- (e) the quality and quantity of service provided; and
- (f) the outcome of the formula for a supportable fare adjustment rate. The formula is only for reference and the fare level will not be adjusted automatically according to the formula outcome.

In vetting the fare increase applications of the five franchised bus operators, the Executive Council has, based on the above-mentioned arrangement, considered the cases holistically and fully considered the views of the Panel on Transport of the Legislative Council and the Transport Advisory Committee.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 is 101.4 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

CHP investigates 18 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 16, the CHP was investigating 18 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 330 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 329 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, five are imported cases, two are local cases with unknown sources while the remaining 11 cases are epidemiologically linked with local cases.

The first case with unknown sources involves a 41-year-old woman (case number: 11319) who was asymptomatic. She underwent a testing on March 15 under a "restriction-testing declaration" in respect of specified "restricted area" on Old Peak Road. She was tested positive on the same day. She is a staff member of the US Consulate General in Hong Kong and she last went to work on March 12.

The second case with unknown sources involves a 38-year-old man (case number: 11323) who developed runny nose on March 10. His sample collected on March 14 was tested positive. He is an information technology engineer and last went to work on March 15.

A total of 292 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (March 2 to 15), including 228 local cases of which 57 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.

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.

