

S for IT speaks on COVID-19 Vaccination Programme booking system and "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit, at a media session after attending a radio programme today (March 2):

Reporter: So, as people can start booking BioNTech jabs tomorrow, what is the Government doing to prevent the vaccination booking website from being overwhelmed? And the second question is about the "LeaveHomeSafe" app; would there be any improvements made to the app? And also, how feasible is it to apply this app on MTR and do you have the plan to cover all transportations for this app?

Secretary for Innovation and Technology: For the vaccination booking system, we understand very well that people would like to have the vaccination as soon as possible. But the problem here is that the supply of vaccination at the beginning is still limited, so please be patient. For tomorrow, we have already enhanced our system to increase the handling capacity, but I would expect there would still be some possibility that there will be some waiting time. For example, yesterday people had to wait for some time, at the very beginning, one to two hours, so please be patient. We do have sufficient vaccinations to be provided to all people in Hong Kong. For the time being, please be patient and we are going to offer every citizen in Hong Kong the vaccination.

For the "LeaveHomeSafe" app, we are going to have some improvements, in particular, some people telling us that it is a bit time-consuming in scanning the QR codes. So, we are going to have some improvements. We are exploring with the University of Hong Kong and other universities like the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, to provide some sort of system so that we can have automatic scanning, and we need not stop and scan the QR codes. When you pass by the QR codes with the new device provided, they can then automatically log some sort of information to your phones to record your travelling history. As regards the coverage of the transportation system, we are going to promote it. It depends very much on the Centre for Health Protection to see whether it is necessary to have that coverage. We are going to provide all sorts of technical support to our colleagues. Thank you.

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

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 2, 2021
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q2109
Issue date : March 3, 2021
Maturity date : June 2, 2021
Amount applied : HK\$135,930 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$51,332 MN
Average yield accepted : 0.04 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 0.04 PCT
Pro rata ratio* : About 87 PCT
Average tender yield : 0.05 PCT

Tender date : March 2, 2021
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H2138
Issue date : March 3, 2021
Maturity date : September 1, 2021
Amount applied : HK\$44,365 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$12,000 MN
Average yield accepted : 0.04 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 0.05 PCT
Pro rata ratio* : About 12 PCT
Average tender yield : 0.06 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 8, 2021:

Tender date : March 9, 2021
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q2110
Issue date : March 10, 2021

Maturity date : June 9, 2021
Tenor : 91 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$47,479 MN

Tender date : March 9, 2021
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H2139
Issue date : March 10, 2021
Maturity date : September 8, 2021
Tenor : 182 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$14,000 MN

[Eligibility for Research Talent Hub extended](#)

The Innovation and Technology Commission today (March 2) announced that in order to enlarge the pool of innovation and technology (I&T) talent in Hong Kong and allow more flexibility for employers to engage talents to conduct research and development (R&D) work, the eligibility for the Research Talent Hub would be extended with immediate effect to holders of a bachelor's or master's degree in a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)-related discipline awarded by a well-recognised non-local institution. "Well-recognised non-local institution" refers to one of the top 100 institutions for STEM-related subjects in the latest Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings, the Academic Ranking of World Universities and the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

In the past, the Research Talent Hub provided funding support for eligible companies or organisations to engage up to four graduates with a doctoral degree in a STEM-related discipline from a local university or a well-recognised non-local institution, or with a bachelor's or master's degree in a STEM-related discipline awarded by a local university to conduct R&D work. With the extension of the eligibility, employers may also engage non-local graduates with a bachelor's or master's degree. All participants must be Hong Kong permanent residents or persons permitted to work in Hong Kong.

The Research Talent Hub aims to encourage university graduates to pursue careers in the I&T field and nurture more I&T talents. The scheme provides maximum monthly allowances of \$18,000, \$21,000 or \$32,000 for research talents with a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree respectively. The maximum engagement period for each research talent is 36 months. All technology companies conducting R&D activities in Hong Kong, and organisations undertaking R&D projects funded by the Innovation and

Technology Fund (ITF), are eligible to apply.

Details of the scheme are available on the ITF website (www.itf.gov.hk/en/funding-programmes/nurturing-talent/research-talent-hub/index.html). For enquiries, please contact the ITF Secretariat (Tel: 3655 5678; email: enquiry@itf.gov.hk).

Appointment of self-recommended youth members to Advisory Committee on Mental Health

The Government announced today (March 2) the appointment of two members to the Advisory Committee on Mental Health through the Member Self-recommendation Scheme for Youth for a two-year term from March 1, 2021, to February 28, 2023.

The two newly appointed members are Miss Angel Chan Hoi-yi and Mr Ikey Cheung Ho-yuen.

The Committee, established in December 2017, advises the Government on mental health policies, including the establishment of more integral and comprehensive approaches to tackle multi-faceted mental health issues in Hong Kong. With two youth members joining, the Committee will continue to assist the Government in developing policies, strategies and measures to enhance mental health services in Hong Kong. It will also follow up on and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Mental Health Review Report.

Government completes enforcement action on compulsory testing notice at building in Jordan

The Yau Tsim Mong District Office together with Yau Ma Tei Police District, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health and the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS) conducted an enforcement operation today (March 2) at a building in Jordan, which was included in a compulsory testing notice earlier. The operation started at around 7am and ended at around 9am today.

Starting from around 7am today, residents of Honour House, 375-381 Nathan Road were requested to provide the SMS notification received through a mobile phone or related certification containing the results of COVID-19 tests, to show that they had taken such tests as required pursuant to the compulsory testing notice of the building within the specified period issued by the Government earlier on. The Government arranged for staff to verify the testing certifications of the residents at the entrances/exits of the building, and conducted checks in the building to verify whether residents had undergone testing in compliance with the requirement.

During the operation, test records of around 140 residents were checked. Among them, around 20 persons were found to have violated the compulsory testing notice. The Government has issued compulsory testing orders and/or fixed penalties of \$5,000 to them, requiring them to undergo testing within a specified period. Non-compliance with a compulsory testing order is an offence, and offenders are liable to a fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The Government reiterates that the aim of issuing a compulsory testing notice is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community as soon as possible to protect overall public health and safety. Persons subject to testing under a compulsory testing notice 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.

The Government wishes to thank the many residents who had complied with the compulsory testing notice for their co-operation to fight against the virus together. The Government will continue to enforce the law strictly. All persons subject to compulsory testing should comply with the compulsory testing notice. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notice may be liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Non-compliance with the order is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The Yau Tsim Mong District Office is grateful for the support and co-operation of the Police, the CHP and the AMS to enable the enforcement action to be carried out smoothly. The Government understands that the enforcement process may cause some inconvenience to the residents, but hopes that the residents can understand.