

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (January 22), 45 COVID-19 confirmed patients were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. The list of discharged patients released yesterday has mistakenly included a patient (case number: 9667) who remained hospitalised. Upon verification, a total of 8 948 patients with confirmed or probable infection have been discharged so far.

At present, there are 676 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 224 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 718 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in 24 public hospitals and a community treatment facility, among which 34 patients are in critical condition, 30 are in serious condition and the remaining 654 patients are in stable condition. In addition, a 66-year-old female patient (case number: 8937) with chronic diseases confirmed with COVID-19 infection, succumbed in Princess Margaret Hospital at 12.42pm today. Including the above patient, 164 COVID-19 confirmed patients have passed away in public hospitals so far.

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	5739, 7700, 8511, 8740, 8786, 8836, 8905, 8931, 8978, 9064, 9086, 9099, 9101, 9133, 9157, 9163, 9164, 9173, 9192, 9200, 9205, 9216, 9226, 9227, 9249, 9250, 9262, 9273, 9287, 9291, 9309, 9313, 9342, 9349, 9366, 9410, 9414, 9421, 9425, 9464, 9481, 9489, 9536, 9573, 9642
Critical	1989, 3496, 5409, 5511, 5735, 5754, 6125, 6444, 6547, 6607, 6754, 6794, 6913, 7021, 7123, 7259, 7323, 8018, 8078, 8126, 8195, 8221, 8323, 8384, 8449, 8452, 8818, 8900, 9049, 9062, 9166, 9267, 9438, 9694
Serious	5990, 6232, 6386, 6543, 6824, 6850, 7076, 7305, 7468, 7653, 7964, 8443, 8819, 8820, 8832, 9030, 9040, 9045, 9055, 9066, 9115, 9135, 9185, 9240, 9247, 9284, 9404, 9542, 9662, 9766

[Hong Kong Customs smashes illicit refuelling station \(with photo\)](#)

â€‹Hong Kong Customs yesterday (January 21) smashed an illicit refuelling station in Yuen Long and seized about 3 400 litres of suspected illicit motor spirit with an estimated market value of about \$60,000 and a duty potential of about \$20,000.

During an anti-illicit fuel operation conducted in Yuen Long yesterday morning, Customs officers seized the batch of suspected illicit motor spirit and a batch of oil refilling apparatus inside a fenced area. A 39-year-old woman and a 47-year-old man suspected to be in connection with the case were arrested. A private car suspected to be involved has also been detained.

The two arrested persons were formally charged with illegal dealing with dutiable commodities.

Under the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance, anyone involved in dealing with, selling, buying or using illicit motor spirit commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$1 million and imprisonment for two years. Moreover, anyone convicted twice in connection with illicit oil offence would have their driving licence suspended for six months. Those convicted three or more times would have their driving licence suspended for more than six months.

Customs will continue to take enforcement action against illegal fuel activities.

Members of the public may report any suspected illegal fuel activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Latest arrangements for Rating and Valuation Department counter services

â€‹In light of the extension of special work arrangements for government employees, the Rating and Valuation Department announced today (January 22) that starting from Monday (January 25), the opening hours of its enquiry counters will be adjusted as follows to cater for the demand for counter services until further notice.

Opening hours of enquiry counters:
Mondays to Fridays, 9am to 1pm (public holidays excluded).

To reduce social contacts, the department appeals to the public to minimise visiting the enquiry counters in person unless they require services of the department urgently. Members of the public should use the department's 24-hour electronic services (www.rvd.gov.hk) to submit forms or obtain information as far as possible. They may also contact the department by email (enquiries@rvd.gov.hk), by fax (2152 0138) or by phone at 2152 0111/2152 2152. Owing to the special work arrangements, the waiting/response time may be longer than usual.

Business expectations for the first quarter of 2021

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (January 22) the results of the Quarterly Business Tendency Survey for the first quarter (Q1) of 2021.

Business Situation

For all surveyed sectors taken together, the proportion of respondents expecting their business situation to be worse (26%) in Q1 2021 over Q4 2020 is higher than that expecting it to be better (9%).

When compared with the results of the Q4 2020 survey round, the proportion of respondents expecting a better business situation in Q1 2021 as compared with the preceding quarter has decreased to 9%, against the corresponding proportion of 17% in Q4 2020.

Analysed by sector, respondents in all of the surveyed sectors expect

their business situation to be worse on balance in Q1 2021 as compared with Q4 2020. In particular, significantly more respondents in the accommodation and food services; transportation, storage and courier services; and construction sectors expect their business situation to be worse in Q1 2021 as compared with Q4 2020, relative to those expecting a better business situation.

It should be noted that the results of the survey should be interpreted with care. In this type of survey on expectations, the views collected in the survey are affected by the events in the community occurring around the time of enumeration, and it is difficult to establish precisely the extent to which respondents' perception of the future accords with the underlying trends. The enumeration period for this survey round was from December 2, 2020 to January 15, 2021.

Volume of Business/Output

Respondents in most of the surveyed sectors expect their volume of business/output to decrease on balance in Q1 2021 as compared with Q4 2020. In particular, significantly more respondents in the transportation, storage and courier services sector and the accommodation and food services sector expect their volume of business to decrease in Q1 2021 over Q4 2020. On the other hand, slightly more respondents in the manufacturing sector and the financing and insurance sector expect their volume of production/business to increase, as compared to those expecting it to decrease.

Employment

Respondents in all of the surveyed sectors expect their employment to decrease on balance or remain broadly unchanged in Q1 2021 as compared with Q4 2020. In particular, more respondents in the transportation, storage and courier services; retail; accommodation and food services; construction; import/export trade and wholesale; and real estate sectors expect their employment to decrease in Q1 2021 over Q4 2020.

Selling Price/Service Charge

Respondents in all of the surveyed sectors expect their selling prices/service charges to go down on balance or remain broadly unchanged in Q1 2021 as compared with Q4 2020. In particular, significantly more respondents in the construction sector expect their tender prices to go down in Q1 2021 over Q4 2020.

Commentary

A government spokesman said that overall business sentiment turned more pessimistic as the fourth wave of local epidemic, which started in the latter part of November 2020 caused disruptions to a range of domestic economic activities. Meanwhile, hiring sentiment weakened further in a number of sectors, indicating that the labour market will remain under immense pressure in the near term.

The spokesman added that since early 2020, the Government has rolled out relief measures of unprecedented scale to preserve vitality of the economy, relieve people's financial burdens and provide targeted support to hard-hit sectors. The Government will monitor the developments closely, and maintain a countercyclical fiscal policy with a view to mitigating the downward pressure on the economy.

Further Information

The survey gathers views on short-term business performance from the senior management of about 570 prominent establishments in various sectors in Hong Kong with a view to providing a quick reference, with minimum time lag, for predicting the short-term future economic performance of the local economy.

The survey covers 10 major sectors in Hong Kong, namely manufacturing; construction; import/export trade and wholesale; retail; accommodation and food services (mainly covering services rendered by hotels and restaurants); transportation, storage and courier services; information and communications; financing and insurance; real estate; and professional and business services sectors.

Views collected in the survey refer only to those of respondents on their own establishments rather than those on the respective sectors they are engaged in, and are limited to the expected direction of quarter-to-quarter change (e.g. "up", "same" or "down") but not the magnitude of change. In collecting views on the quarter-to-quarter changes, if the variable in question is subject to seasonal variations, respondents are asked to provide the expected changes after excluding the normal seasonal variations.

Survey results are generally presented as "net balance", i.e. the difference between the percentage of respondents choosing "up" and that choosing "down". The percentage distribution of respondents among various response categories (e.g. "up", "same" and "down") reflects how varied their business expectations are. The "net balance", with its appropriate sign, indicates the direction of expected change in the variable concerned. A positive sign indicates a likely upward trend while a negative sign indicates a likely downward trend. However, the magnitude of the "net balance" reflects only the prevalence of optimism or pessimism, but not the magnitude of expected change, since information relating to such magnitude is not collected in the survey.

Furthermore, owing to sample size constraint, care should be taken in interpreting survey results involving a small percentage (e.g. less than 10%) of respondents in individual sectors.

Chart 1 shows the views on expected changes in business situation for the period Q1 2020 to Q1 2021.

Table 1 shows the net balances of views on expectations in respect of

different variables for Q1 2021.

The survey results are published in greater detail in the "Report on Quarterly Business Tendency Survey, Q1 2021". Users can download the publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp300.jsp?productCode=B1110008).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Business Expectation Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel.: 3903 7263 or email: business-prospects@censtatd.gov.hk).

Fraudulent website related to Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (Asia) Limited

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (Asia) Limited on fraudulent website, which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on [the HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the website concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the website should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.