

Update on latest MERS situation in Saudi Arabia

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (May 20) closely monitoring nine additional cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) by Saudi Arabia from April 9 to 30. The CHP again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit.

According to the WHO, of the nine additional cases, eight were male patients and one was a female patient, with ages from 34 to 83. Among them, two had exposure to camels and consumed camel milk, five had contact with previously confirmed patients. Seven had underlying illnesses and three have passed away.

According to the latest information, 2 428 cases have been reported to the WHO (with 839 deaths), including 2 209 in 10 Middle East countries comprising 2 037 in Saudi Arabia, 87 in the United Arab Emirates, 28 in Jordan, 24 in Oman, 19 in Qatar, six in Iran, four in Kuwait, two in Lebanon, and one each in Yemen and Bahrain.

"We will maintain close communication with the WHO and relevant health authorities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"As countries in the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, continue to report MERS cases from time to time, travellers should refrain from going to farms, barns or markets with camels and avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry. Most of the cases reported in the Middle East had history of exposure to camels, consumption of camel milk or contact with other MERS patients," the spokesman said.

"Scientific evidence showed that camels are reservoirs for MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). Camels infected with MERS-CoV may not show any signs of infection. Infected animals may shed MERS-CoV through nasal and eye discharge, faeces, and potentially in their milk and urine. The virus may also be found in the raw organs and meat of infected animals. Therefore, the best protection is to practise good hygiene and avoid direct contact with all of these," the spokesman added.

From time to time, suspected MERS cases reported to the CHP for investigation involve patients with history of contact with camels in the Middle East. The CHP strongly advises travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and

environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS page of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the WHO's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

Lifesaving services suspended at Cafeteria Old Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 20) that due to an insufficient number of lifeguards on duty, the lifesaving services at Cafeteria Old Beach in Tuen Mun District have been suspended until further notice.

First aid services will be maintained at the beach.

The 2019 Rural Representative Election voter registration campaign starts

The 2019 voter registration campaign for the Rural Representative Election (RRE) was launched today (May 20).

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) appeals to all eligible persons who have not registered as electors to sign up by July 16 so that their registration particulars can be included in the provisional register to be published in August this year.

There are three types of Rural Representatives, namely Indigenous Inhabitant Representatives (IIRs), Resident Representatives (ReRs) and Kaifong Representatives (KFRs).

An IIR, returned by indigenous inhabitants, their spouses or surviving spouses of an Indigenous/Composite Indigenous Village, is to reflect views on the affairs of the Village on behalf of the indigenous inhabitants of the Village and to deal with all affairs relating to the lawful traditional

rights and interests, and the traditional way of life of those indigenous inhabitants.

A ReR, returned by residents (both indigenous and non-indigenous inhabitants) of an Existing Village, is to reflect views on the affairs of the Village on behalf of the residents of the Village.

A KFR, returned by residents of a Market Town (Cheung Chau/Peng Chau), is to reflect views on the affairs of the Market Town on behalf of the residents of the Market Town.

"There are different eligibility requirements for registration as electors for these elections. Applicants should ascertain whether they fulfil the requirements," an HAD spokesman said.

"Indigenous inhabitants, their spouses or surviving spouses, aged 18 or above and holding recognised identity documents, are eligible to be registered as electors in the IIR Election of an Indigenous/Composite Indigenous Village.

"For registration as an elector in the ReR Election and the KFR Election, one must be a Hong Kong permanent resident aged 18 or above and have been a resident of the Existing Village or Market Town (Cheung Chau/Peng Chau) for the three years immediately before the date of application for registration, and whose address in the Village or Market Town is his or her principal residential address. Principal residential address means the address of the dwelling place at which the person resides and which constitutes the person's sole or main home.

"Indigenous inhabitants of an Indigenous/Composite Indigenous Village, their spouses or surviving spouses who have been residing in an Existing Village or a Market Town for the three years immediately before the date of application for registration and meet the eligibility requirements for electors in the relevant election can submit two separate applications for voter registration to register as electors for both IIR Election and ReR Election or KFR Election."

The spokesman stressed that if registered electors of the ReR Election and the KFR Election no longer reside in the Village/Market Town for which they are registered, or their residential addresses in the Village/Market Town are no longer their principal residential addresses, they are no longer eligible to remain registered as electors. The persons concerned will commit an offence if they vote at an election.

Registered electors of the ReR Election or the KFR Election who have any changes in principal particulars (including name or principal residential address) should submit the form of "Application for Change of Registered Particulars" by June 16. For request of change of principal residential address, address proof must be submitted together with the application.

Registered electors of the IIR Election who have any changes in principal particulars (i.e. name) should submit the form of "Application for

Change of Registered Particulars" by June 16. For change of other particulars (including principal residential address, correspondence address or the Indigenous Village/Composite Indigenous Village to be registered), application should be submitted by July 16.

The forms "Application for New Voter Registration" and "Application for Change of Registered Particulars" can be obtained from the HAD, Home Affairs Enquiry Centres and government offices outside Hong Kong, or downloaded from the RRE website (www.had.gov.hk/rre).

Completed and signed forms should be forwarded in person or by post to the HAD or any Home Affairs Enquiry Centre, by fax (fax number: 2591 6392) or email (rre@had.gov.hk) on or before the respective deadlines specified above, Hong Kong time.

The HAD will publicise the voter registration campaign through the RRE website, posters, banners and newspaper advertisements, etc, to encourage eligible persons to register as electors and remind registered electors to update their registration particulars by the deadlines.

For enquiries, please call the HAD hotline at 2152 1521.

[Heritage Fiesta 2019 to be launched in June](#)

The Heritage Fiesta 2019 will be held from June 1 to July 31, featuring 24 declared monuments and graded historic buildings that were previously, or are still, used as quarters. The public can visit these historic buildings during specific opening hours.

"The event is a great opportunity for the public to appreciate these historic buildings at close proximity to understand their histories and architectural styles. Among the 24 historic buildings, some are still being used as staff or student quarters, while some have been revitalised into platforms promoting nature and ecology, nurturing arts and creativity, as well as providing social services," a spokesman for the Commissioner for Heritage's Office of the Development Bureau said today (May 20).

Free guided tours will be offered at participating historic buildings during the event period on a first-come, first-served basis. Visitors can also collect special stamps at these historic buildings during the specific opening hours.

During the event period, the Heritage Fiesta 2019 pamphlet will be available for free at the participating historic buildings, the Hong Kong Museum of History, the Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre, the Hong Kong

Science Museum and the Hong Kong Space Museum in Tsim Sha Tsui, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum in Sha Tin, the Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre in Yuen Long, the Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum in Mid-Levels, the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware in Central, temples under the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals and visitor centres of the Hong Kong Tourism Board in Tsim Sha Tsui and at the Peak, as well as Hong Kong International Airport at Chek Lap Kok.

For further information about the Heritage Fiesta 2019, please visit the heritage conservation website (www.heritage.gov.hk/en/whatsnew/events_58.htm) or call 3509 7338.

Caring and Sharing Scheme application acknowledgements issued

A Government spokesman said today (May 20) that the Working Family Allowance Office (WFAO) had received about 3.44 million applications under the Caring and Sharing Scheme by the application deadline (April 30) and issued acknowledgements to all applicants. Applicants who have yet to receive acknowledgement should make enquiries with the WFAO on or before June 30 by calling the hotline at 3897 1088 or emailing careandshare@wfsfaa.gov.hk. Should the WFAO confirm that their applications have not been received, they will be allowed to re-submit.

In respect of the applications received, the WFAO is now vetting the applications against the eligibility criteria (including conducting data matching with relevant government departments) and disbursing payments to successful applicants via autopay or cash cheques.