

Interest rate of second interest payment for Silver Bond Series due 2026

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority, as representative of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, announced today (August 5) the relevant per annum interest rate for the second interest payment of Silver Bond Series due 2026 (Issue Number 03GB2608R) (the Bonds) issued under the Retail Bond Issuance Programme of the Government Bond Programme.

According to the Issue Circular dated July 14, 2023, for the Bonds, the second interest payment of the Bonds is scheduled to be made on August 19, 2024, and the relevant interest rate is scheduled to be determined and announced on August 5, 2024, as the higher of the prevailing Floating Rate and Fixed Rate.

On August 5, 2024, the Floating Rate and Fixed Rate are as follows:

Floating Rate: +1.60 per cent (Annex)

Fixed Rate: +5.00 per cent

Based on the Floating Rate and Fixed Rate set out above, the relevant interest rate for the second interest payment is determined and announced as 5.00 per cent per annum.

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these

products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on August 2 to noon today (August 5), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 364 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category, in the past three days (including last Saturday and Sunday). No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" (www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 150 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 73 512 samples of food imported from Japan (including 47 288 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 17 246 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, August 5, 2024 is 104.9 (same as last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, August 3, 2024 was 104.9 (down 0.5 against last Friday's index).

Three additional Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area service points in Shenzhen to launch on August 14 (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (August 5) signed service agreements with five medical institutions under the Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme (Pilot Scheme). All medical institutions participating in the Pilot Scheme have completed the signing of service agreements by now. Meanwhile, the DH announced that three of the integrated services/dental services institutions located in Shenzhen will launch the Elderly Health Care Voucher (EHCV) Scheme on August 14. By then, the number of service points in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) where eligible elderly persons can use the EHCVs will be significantly increased to seven, marking a major step forward in medical co-operation in the GBA.

"The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address" put forward the Pilot Scheme initiative to extend the coverage of the EHCVs to suitable medical institutions in the GBA in 2024. The Pilot Scheme covers a total of seven medical institutions, among which the First Affiliated Hospital, Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou (FAH-SYSU) and Zhongshan Chen Xinghai Hospital of Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine (ZSCXH) located in Zhongshan launched the service on June 28 and July 18 respectively, allowing eligible Hong Kong elderly persons to use the EHCVs for outpatient healthcare services at the service points. Witnessed by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, today signed the service agreements with representatives of the five remaining medical institutions for the full implementation of the Pilot Scheme this year. The five medical institutions are:

Integrated services hospitals (all with dental services)

- * Nansha Division of the First Affiliated Hospital, Sun Yat-sen University in Nansha (FAH-NS)
- * Dongguan Tungwah Hospital in Dongguan (Tungwah Hospital)
- * Shenzhen New Frontier United Family Hospital in Shenzhen (NFUFH)

Dental services hospital/clinic

- * Shenzhen C.K.J Stomatological Hospital in Luohu District of Shenzhen (C.K.J. Hospital)
- * Dental Bauhinia Specialty Service Center (Shenzhen)/Dental Bauhinia General Care Center (Shenzhen) in Futian District of Shenzhen (Dental Bauhinia)

Following the signing of agreements and successful implementation of the projects, EHCVs will be allowed to be used at NFUFH, C.K.J Hospital and Dental Bauhinia in Shenzhen starting from August 14. Together with the two service points operated by the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen (HKU-SZ) Hospital at its hospital and the Huawei Li Zhi Yuan Community Health Service Center (CHC), as well as the FAH-SYSU and ZSCXH under the Pilot Scheme, eligible Hong Kong elderly persons can use the EHCVs for outpatient healthcare services at seven GBA service points. This offers more convenience and flexibility for eligible Hong Kong elderly persons residing in Mainland cities in the GBA by providing more service points for them to better use their EHCVs on primary healthcare services for improving their health.

A DH spokesman said, "The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government thanks the Health Commission of Guangdong Province and the Shenzhen Municipal Health Commission for their valuable comments and assistance in taking forward the Pilot Scheme. C.K.J Hospital and Dental Bauhinia are both professional dental service institutions located near the Lo Wu and Futian Control Points respectively. This first participation of professional dental service institutions under the Pilot Scheme marks a major breakthrough in the implementation of the EHCV Scheme on the Mainland, allowing more choices for eligible Hong Kong elderly persons to receive dental services in Shenzhen with their EHCVs, with a view to addressing the pressing demand of Hong Kong elderly persons in seeking dental services. Following the launch of the three new service points including NFUFH, together with the current HKU-SZ Hospital and Huawei Li Zhi Yuan CHC that also provide dental services, a total of five service points providing dental services will be available in Shenzhen alone, with two being professional dental service institutions."

EHCVs are applicable for outpatient healthcare services provided by nine designated departments at NFUFH, including Family Medicine, Health Management, Dental, Ophthalmology, Surgery, Orthopaedics, Internal Medicine, Gynaecology and ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat), as well as the outpatient dental care services provided by C.K.J Hospital and Dental Bauhinia. More details and the relevant treatment flow are set out in the Annex.

Moreover, the arrangements for shared use of EHCVs between spouses and the EHCV Pilot Reward Scheme under the EHCV Scheme are equally applicable to the abovementioned three medical institutions in Shenzhen. Elderly persons receiving designated primary healthcare outpatient services for health checks, and preventive and follow-up/monitoring of long-term conditions provided by the nine designated departments at the NFUFH, or those receiving designated dental outpatient services provided by C.K.J Hospital and Dental Bauhinia, such as dental check-ups, scaling, extraction or filling, can accumulate EHCV spending and be allotted rewards.

The fees for the healthcare services provided by the three medical institutions in Shenzhen are denominated in Renminbi. They will make EHCV claims for elderly persons, and the EHCV amount deducted in Hong Kong dollars will be calculated according to a monthly updated voucher conversion factor under the EHCV Scheme. The monthly voucher conversion factor will be displayed at the cashier offices for the elderly's reference.

The spokesman reminded, "Hong Kong elderly persons using EHCVs at any designated medical institution in the GBA should have registered with eHealth. In other words, the relevant arrangements not only apply to the HKU-SZ Hospital, Huawei Li Zhi Yuan CHC, the FAH-SYSU, ZSCXH, the NFUFH, C.K.J Hospital, and Dental Bauhinia, but also the remaining two medical institutions that will launch relevant arrangements under the Pilot Scheme in the future. After joining eHealth, elderly persons can use the mobile app to check their EHCV balance and usage record, as well as access at any time important information such as their medications, allergies and adverse drug reactions stored in the eHealth app. If elderly persons wish to use EHCVs at the GBA medical institutions but they have not yet registered with eHealth, the medical institutions will immediately register them for eHealth upon their consent so that they can use EHCVs right away.

"In addition, elderly persons cannot use EHCVs together with national medical insurance to pay for the fees of the same healthcare service encounter. The scope of using EHCVs on the Mainland is the same as that in Hong Kong, which does not include inpatient services, prepaid healthcare services and day surgery procedures. EHCVs cannot be used solely for the purchase of goods, medication, medical equipment or products, nor can they be redeemed for cash."

The Government included seven GBA medical institutions in the Pilot Scheme in February this year and is carrying out preparatory work for launching the use of EHCVs with the last two medical institutions under the Pilot Scheme, i.e. FAH-NS and Tungwah Hospital. It is expected that the two medical institutions will launch relevant arrangements in early September, and the details will be announced in due course.

Launched in 2009, the EHCV Scheme currently subsidises eligible Hong Kong elderly persons aged 65 and above with an annual EHCV amount of \$2,000 (with the accumulation limit set at \$8,000) for them to choose private primary healthcare services that best suit their health needs. Members of the public may browse the EHCV Scheme website (www.hcv.gov.hk) or call the EHCV Scheme hotline (2838 2311) for information on the EHCV Scheme.



Transport Department monitors refund arrangements by green minibus operator after overcharging of fares

The Transport Department (TD) reported today (August 5) that the New Territories green minibus (GMB) operator which overcharged fares earlier arranged for refund to the affected passengers through various channels from today. The TD will closely monitor the refund arrangements.

GMB routes No. 501A, 501C, 501K and 501S operated by Fully Mint Limited had charged passengers fares higher than the effective fares approved by the TD from May 19 to July 26. The differential ranged from \$0.3 to \$1 per trip.

A spokesman for the TD said that the GMB operator and Stored Value Facility operators arranged for refund to the affected passengers from today. Overcharged fares paid by Stored Value Facilities or cash can be refunded in full:

- Octopus: The overcharged fares can be refunded to the same Octopus card via the mobile application or at any of the 51 Octopus Service Points (including MTR Fanling and Sheung Shui Station) across the territory on or before April 30, 2025. The GMB operator's staff will also assist affected passengers on refund at the Wo Mun Street Public Light Bus (PLB) Terminus in Luen Wo Hui, Fanling at designated time slots (9am to 1pm; and 6pm to 8pm daily);
- Alipay and AlipayHK: The overcharged fares have been refunded directly to the relevant accounts of the affected passengers this morning; and
- Cash: The affected passengers can visit Wo Mun Street PLB Terminus at designated time slots (9am to 1pm; and 6pm to 8pm daily) and collect the overcharged fares in cash on site from the GMB operator's staff on or before September 4, 2024, after providing their name and contact information, etc.

As beneficiaries under the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities were not affected by the overcharging incident, refund is not needed. The GMB operator will reimburse the Government for the overpaid subsidies under the Scheme.

For enquiries, affected passengers may call the respective hotlines or visit the mobile applications or websites of the operators:

	Hotline	Website
Fully Mint Limited	9137 7273	www.ma-minibus.com

Octopus Cards Limited	2266 2222	www.octopus.com.hk
Alipay Financial Services (HK) Limited	2245 3201 (Hong Kong) 400 1032826 (Mainland)	www.alipayhk.com/en/shoppers/