

Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Yat Mei House, Yau Chui Court, Yau Tong

The Government today (August 5) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" (declaration) effective from 5pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Yau Tong (i.e. Yat Mei House, Yau Chui Court, Yau Tong, and certain designated area of the podium; excluding levels below the podium, see Annex) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at around 11am tomorrow (August 6). The operation may be extended depending on test results.

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. Having reviewed a basket of factors, including the viral load in sewage, the information of relevant positive cases, and other circumstantial factors, and conducted a risk assessment, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 11pm today. Arrangements will be made for persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo a nucleic acid test at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will make arrangement to facilitate specimen collection for people with impaired mobility. All persons in the "restricted area" who have tested positive in the past 14 days, including positive cases identified either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests that have been self-declared to the DH, are not required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise.

The Government spokesman said, "We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as

possible. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around 11am tomorrow. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration is revoked officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to individuals who are not residents in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his/her personal information for contact purposes.

According to the compulsory testing notice to be issued today, any persons other than those specified above who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from July 30 to August 5, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before August 7, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$10,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Government announces latest situation of fresh food supply from Mainland

A government spokesman announced today (August 5) that the supply of fresh food from the Mainland yesterday (August 4) was sufficient and stable.

According to the latest information, the quantity of vegetables supplied from the Mainland to Hong Kong yesterday (as of midnight) by land and water transportation was over 2 600 tonnes, comparable to the average daily supply from the Mainland on a normal day. The volume of vegetables sold through the

wholesale markets of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Vegetable Marketing Organization was about 829 tonnes. The average wholesale prices of choi sum and pak choi stood at \$6.10 and \$7.80 per catty respectively yesterday. The supply of eggs to the wholesale market remained steady, with the average daily supply standing at about 3.3 million for the past week, comparable to the average daily supply on a normal day last year.

The total supply of chilled meat from the Mainland yesterday was about 43 tonnes. The supply of live pigs was plentiful.

The supply of chilled poultry from the Mainland was about 160 000 head yesterday, and about 11 000 live chickens were slaughtered locally. The supply was abundant.

Regarding the rice supply, in compliance with the requirement by the Government, stockholders of rice have to maintain the reserve stock of rice at a level sufficient for consumption by the local population for 15 days. The trade generally stocks double the required amount, which is sufficient for one month's consumption by Hong Kong citizens. In recent years, the import and consumption of rice in Hong Kong has stood at a steady level of around 320 000 to 330 000 tonnes per year. The import quantity (including reserve stock) as of end-June 2022 was 30 400 tonnes. Suppliers also maintain a reserve for food that can be stored, such as frozen meat, for around three months' stock generally.

The Government will continue to maintain close liaison with the Mainland authorities and major food suppliers to ensure a stable food supply.

The AFCD updates and publishes the fresh food supply information daily. Members of the public may visit the AFCD website for updates on daily supplies and wholesale prices of fresh food (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/agriculture/agr_fresh/agr_fresh.html).

HAD distributes complimentary COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff in Kowloon City and Central and Western Districts

In light of positive test results for the COVID-19 virus from sewage samples collected in Kowloon City and Central and Western Districts, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) said today (August 5) that the Kowloon City District

Office (KCDO) and the Central and Western District Office (C&WDO) have distributed a total of about 84 000 COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in the Districts.

The KCDO distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Chun Man Court, Dragon View, Parc Regal, Lok Man Sun Chuen, and residential premises around Kiang Hsi Street and Anhui Street for voluntary testing through the property management companies, the Hong Kong Housing Society and a district organisation.

In addition, the C&WDO distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Queen's Terrace, and residential premises around Queen's Road West, New Street and Chuk Lin Lane for voluntary testing through the property management companies and the owners' corporations. The C&WDO also arranged to distribute rapid test kits to households living in "three-nil" buildings with positive sewage testing results in the district.

The HAD made the above arrangements in the hope of identifying infected persons early.

Members of the public may refer to the demonstration video produced by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) under the Department of Health (DH) via www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzFAUzTtmKk to learn how to use the rapid antigen test (RAT) kit.

Persons testing positive through an RAT should take a photo of the test result and declare the result within 24 hours via the Declaration System for Individuals Tested Positive for COVID-19 Using Rapid Antigen Test (www.chp.gov.hk/ratp). If members of the public encounter difficulties in using the online platform, they can call the automated system at 183 6119 to register their identification document and telephone number. The CHP under the DH will contact the relevant person later to complete the report procedure. There is no need to declare negative test results.

The Government appeals for the co-operation of members of the public to safeguard the health of themselves and their families by undergoing testing on a voluntary basis and fighting the virus together. The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases that tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons to reduce the transmission risks of COVID-19.

SED calls on parents to arrange early COVID-19 vaccination for children (with photos)

The Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, today (August 5) visited TWGHs Yau Tze Tin Memorial College to attend the "School Vaccination Day" activity, which was organised by the Education Bureau (EDB) and a school sponsoring body for the first time.

The activity was jointly organised by the EDB and the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (the Group) with participation from 10 secondary schools, primary schools and kindergartens under the Group and in Tuen Mun District. A total of about 170 students and parents have enrolled for vaccination.

Dr Choi said, "Vaccination is the most effective way to protect against COVID-19 and can reduce the risk of severe cases and fatalities. The Government has announced the lowering of the minimum age for receiving vaccination to 6 months old. Young children may receive the Sinovac vaccine to enhance personal protection."

She appealed to parents to arrange early vaccination for their children. Eligible students who have received the first and second doses of vaccine should receive the third dose of vaccine as soon as possible for more comprehensive and effective protection. She also encouraged more school sponsoring bodies to organise joint school vaccination activities to help parents take care of vaccinated students and concentrate resources on a single spot for providing the different doses of vaccine.

From May to July this year, the School Development Sections of different districts under the EDB worked closely with regional principals' associations and schools to organise 25 rounds of the "School Vaccination Day" activity. Additionally, at least seven rounds of such activity have been scheduled for August.

Schools (including kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres) may organise outreach vaccination activities for students, teachers, school staff and parents through the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme School Outreach. They may also arrange transportation for students to receive vaccination at a Community Vaccination Centre through the group booking services under the Civil Service Bureau. The designated website for the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/programme) provides the latest information including details on vaccination venues, reservation and enquiry hotlines.

In addition, the EDB today announced the arrangements for face-to-face classes at the start of the 2022/23 school year. In light of the latest development of the epidemic, the preparedness of schools and health experts' advice, the EDB has decided to continue half-day face-to-face class

arrangements for the 2022/23 school year until further notice. Individual secondary schools which have reached the required vaccination rate (i.e. all teachers and school staff directly employed by the schools have met the requirements of the "Vaccine Pass" and 90 per cent or more of the total number of students of the school eligible to receive vaccination have received two doses of vaccine for more than 14 days) may arrange whole-day face-to-face classes for students. Individual secondary or primary school students who have received two doses of vaccine for more than 14 days may attend non-academic extra-curricular activities at school after lessons or during the other half-day of a school day.

As the daily rapid antigen test (RAT) arrangement helps with gatekeeping at school, after listening to the views of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health, the EDB considered it necessary for schools to maintain the daily RAT arrangement in the new school year until further notice. The EDB will continue to distribute RAT kits to students with financial need through the schools.

Schools should continue to strictly implement the various anti-epidemic measures stipulated in the "Health Protection Measures for Schools" updated by the EDB from time to time and the "Health Advice to Schools for the Prevention of COVID-19" issued by the CHP, including the requirement of staff and students to wear masks on campus at all times and maintain an appropriate social distance.

The EDB reminds parents to continue to adopt the preventive measures against communicable diseases during the summer vacation, maintain a clean and hygienic household environment, pay attention to the health conditions of their children, and avoid taking their children to crowded places with poor ventilation. They should also closely observe the physical conditions of their children, and seek medical advice promptly if their children have fever or develop symptoms of other communicable diseases.





Hong Kong's latest foreign currency reserve assets figures released

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (August 5) that the official foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong amounted to US\$441.7 billion as at the end of July 2022 (end-June 2022: US\$447.2 billion) (Annex).

Including unsettled foreign exchange contracts, the foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong at the end of July 2022 amounted to US\$440.1 billion (end-June 2022: US\$447.2 billion).

The total foreign currency reserve assets of US\$441.7 billion represent about six times the currency in circulation or 42 per cent of Hong Kong dollar M3.

At present, four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to disseminate monetary data in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. For the month of August 2022, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

August 5	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
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August 12	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
August 31	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
August 31	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account