

# Government announces latest situation of fresh food supply from Mainland

A Government spokesman announced today (July 20) that the supply of fresh food from the Mainland yesterday (July 19) 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 about 2 800 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 818 tonnes. The average wholesale prices of choi sum and pak choi stood at \$7.00 and \$7.60 per catty respectively yesterday, comparable to their average daily wholesale prices last year. The supply of eggs to the wholesale market remained steady, with the average daily supply standing at about 3.2 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 41 tonnes. The supply of live pigs was plentiful.

The supply of chilled poultry from the Mainland was over 170 000 head yesterday, and over 8 000 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](http://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/agriculture/agr_fresh/agr_fresh.html)).

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## Government enforces “restriction-testing declaration” and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Tan Fung House, Choi Hung Estate, Wong Tai Sin

The Government yesterday (July 19) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 5.30pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Wong Tai Sin (i.e. Tan Fung House, Choi Hung Estate, Wong Tai Sin) were 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. 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, were not required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise.

In addition, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday to any person who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from July 13 to 19, 2022, to undergo compulsory testing on or before July 21, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect. 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 finished the compulsory testing exercise at around 9.30am today (July 20) and is now carrying out enforcement actions in the "restricted area" to verify that all people in the "restricted area" have undergone compulsory testing. The Government will further announce the revocation time of the declaration.

Starting from around 9.30am today, persons in the specified "restricted area" in Wong Tai Sin who have undergone testing and are able to present SMS notifications with negative test results or wear wristbands as proof of having undergone testing may leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer.

The Government set up temporary specimen collection stations in the "restricted area" yesterday and requested persons subject to compulsory testing to collect combined nasal and throat swab samples at the stations to undergo a COVID-19 virus test before 11pm yesterday. Around 1 305 people within the "restricted area" had undergone testing, among which nine cases

tested positive and four cases tested indeterminate were found. The Centre for Health Protection of the DH will arrange to follow up.

Regarding cases tested positive in the specified "restricted area", the Government has provided additional food packs, health advice for persons tested positive pending admission to hospitals or isolation facilities, disinfection products and surgical masks to these persons and their household members pending follow-up arrangement.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 773 households within the "restricted area", among which 154 households did not answer the door. The Government will take measures to follow up.

The Government reiterates that enforcement actions will be taken seriously. Any person who fails to present an SMS notification with a test result or wear a wristband as proof of having undergone testing breaches the compulsory testing notice and may be liable to a fine of \$10,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/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 may be liable to a fine of level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

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## **HK SAR Government vehemently objects to United States Trafficking in Persons Report 2022**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HK SAR) today (July 20) vehemently objects to the biased and unfair assessment of the United States Trafficking in Persons Report 2022 (Report) of the Department of State of the United States (US).

A Government spokesman said, "Trafficking in persons (TIP) is never a prevalent problem in Hong Kong and there has never been any sign that Hong Kong is being actively used by syndicates as a destination or transit point for TIP. The rating of Hong Kong at Tier 2 Watch List in the Report is unfair and not substantiated by facts."

The HK SAR Government has all along been making proactive and multi-pronged efforts in the fight against TIP, and injected an enormous amount of resources to combat TIP and enhance the protection and well-being of foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) in Hong Kong. A high-level Steering Committee to Tackle TIP and to Enhance Protection of FDHs was established in March 2018 and it promulgated the Action Plan to Tackle TIP and to Enhance Protection of

FDHs in Hong Kong (Action Plan) with multi-faceted and targeted measures, covering victim identification, investigation, enforcement, prosecution, victim protection and support, prevention, and partnership with different stakeholders. By end of 2019, all measures in the Action Plan have been firmly in place.

The spokesman said that the Government had sustained its anti-TIP efforts despite the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic over the past two years. In particular, coverage of the initial screening of TIP victims has been fully extended since end 2019 to cover all cases involving persons vulnerable to TIP risks, including illegal immigrants, sex workers, illegal workers, FDHs and imported workers, which have come to the attention of the Hong Kong Police Force, the Immigration Department (ImmD), the Customs and Excise Department and the Labour Department (LD). In 2021, the number of initial screenings conducted by the various departments was around 7 700, a three-fold increase when compared with the number conducted in 2016, with only one victim identified. In 2020, three victims were identified from the 6 900 initial screening conducted.

"Facts speak louder than words. Despite the intensified screening efforts, only a handful of TIP victims were identified. The very small number and percentage of victims identified thus far has once again reinforced our observation that TIP is never a prevalent problem in Hong Kong. It is baseless and unfair to cast doubt on the quality of our screenings and discredit our screening procedure merely because of the low number of victims so identified. In fact, the victim identified in 2021 was initially screened by the FDH Special Investigation Section of ImmD, which was established in December 2019 to step up scrutiny of FDH visa applications to facilitate identification of potential TIP victims and cases of exploited FDHs. This speaks for itself the effectiveness of the new strategy in strengthening victim identification," the spokesman said.

"Under the two-week rule, in case of contract termination, FDHs must leave Hong Kong within two weeks from the date of early termination of contract. The main purpose of the two-week rule is to allow sufficient time for FDHs to prepare their departure. The rule has allowed sufficient flexibility to cater for exceptional circumstances. For example, for FDHs whose contracts are terminated early as they had been abused or exploited, they could apply for change of employer in Hong Kong without first returning to their places of origin. Exploitation of FDHs is never tolerated in Hong Kong. FDHs abused or exploited should not feel inhibited from lodging complaints against their employers."

"On the claim about the lack of a composite trafficking legislation in Hong Kong, the HKSAR Government maintains the view that our current legislative framework, which comprises over 50 legal provisions against various TIP conducts, provides a comprehensive package of safeguards comparable to composite TIP laws found in other jurisdictions, and has served Hong Kong well. Every jurisdiction should have its latitude to determine the best legal framework to tackle the issue and there is simply no one-size-fits-all solution. There is no indication to suggest that the effectiveness

of our anti-TIP efforts has been undermined without a composite trafficking legislation."

The law enforcement agencies remain vigilant in their investigation and enforcement efforts. In 2021, the Police conducted a total of 60 anti-vice operations, representing an increase of 46 per cent when compared with the preceding year. In the same year, a total of 278 persons were arrested for the offence of keeping a vice establishment or prostitution-related crimes under the Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 200).

Meanwhile, 26 FDH employers were prosecuted in 2021 for aiding and abetting their FDHs in breaching their conditions of stay, and 20 FDH employers were prosecuted for other offences such as common assault, assault occasioning actual bodily harm, indecent assault and criminal intimidation. LD also continued to take rigorous enforcement actions against employment agencies (EAs) in breach of the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57), the Employment Agency Regulations (Cap. 57A) and the Code of Practice for EAs. About 2 000 regular and surprise inspections of EAs were conducted each year to ensure that EAs operate in compliance with the law. In 2021, LD successfully prosecuted five EAs, including one for overcharging job-seekers, two for unlicensed operation and two for other offences. In the same year, it revoked or refused to issue the licences of seven EAs.

The spokesman also stressed, "It should be pointed out that the four categories of offences of endangering national security which the Hong Kong National Security Law provides, are clearly defined with the elements of the offences, the penalties, mitigation factors and consequences clearly prescribed. Any law enforcement actions taken by Hong Kong law enforcement agencies are based on evidence, strictly according to the law, for the acts of the persons concerned. Acts and activities endangering national security are distinctly different from normal interactions. Law-abiding people will not unwittingly violate the law. The US Department of State's comments on the Hong Kong National Security Law in the Report clearly do not reflect the facts."

The HKSAR Government has also continued to strengthen anti-TIP training to the frontline officers, with around 1 700 officials having attended TIP-related training in 2021.

The spokesman stressed, "Although our all-out efforts in the fight against TIP have not been received due and fair recognition, the HKSAR Government, as a responsible member of the international community, will continue its firm commitment to combatting TIP and contributing to the global efforts for this important cause."

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## Red flag hoisted at Shek O Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (July 20) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Shek O Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at the beach.

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## CHP reminds public on precautions against heat stroke during very hot weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (July 20) reminded members of the public, particularly those undertaking outdoor activities, to take heed of necessary measures against heat stroke and sunburn in very hot weather.

"The public should carry and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration while engaging in outdoor activities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Those engaged in strenuous outdoor activities should avoid beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee and tea, as well as alcohol, as they speed up water loss through the urinary system," the spokesman explained.

"Children, the elderly, the obese and those with chronic illnesses, such as heart disease or high blood pressure, are more vulnerable to heat stroke. They should pay special attention," the spokesman added.

The public should adopt the following precautions:

- Wear loose and light-coloured clothing to reduce heat absorption and facilitate sweat evaporation and heat dissipation;
- Avoid vigorous exercise and prolonged activities like hiking or trekking as heat, sweating and exhaustion can place additional demands on the physique;
- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or the late afternoon;

- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation;
- Do not stay inside a parked vehicle; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day. If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the workplace where practicable. Start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Move to a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

The public should also note the latest and the forecast Ultraviolet (UV) Index released by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). When the UV Index is high (6 or above):

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Wear long-sleeved and loose-fitting clothes;
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or use an umbrella;
- Seek a shaded area or put on UV-blocking sunglasses;
- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen lotion with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or above. Apply liberally and reapply after swimming, sweating or towelling off; and
- While using DEET-containing insect repellents for personal protection against mosquito-borne diseases, apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent.

If symptoms develop, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, shortness of breath or confusion, rest and seek help immediately, and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

The public may obtain more information from the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather report and forecast](#), [UV Index](#) and weather information for [hiking and mountaineering](#); and [press releases](#) of the Labour Department on precautions against heat stroke for outdoor workers and their employers when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force.