

# Liberalisation of cargo fuel surcharge to be implemented from January 1, 2025

The Government today (May 23) announced that the implementation of cargo fuel surcharge (CFS) liberalisation will take effect starting from January 1, 2025, after a six-month lead-in period (i.e. from July 1 to December 31, 2024).

With the liberalisation of CFS, airlines may set their own CFS levels or choose not to levy such surcharges for flights originating from Hong Kong. The prevailing requirement on airlines to impose CFS having regard to the levels promulgated by the Civil Aviation Department (CAD), which may inhibit market competition and further diversification of cargo industry development in Hong Kong, will be removed.

"The liberalisation of CFS aligns with the global trend of deregulating fuel surcharges and encourages competition in the air cargo industry, thereby maintaining the competitiveness of Hong Kong's aviation industry and its status as an international aviation hub. We are thankful for the support and views expressed by various stakeholders to enable us to take forward the liberalisation. In order to facilitate our continuous dialogue with stakeholders on the matter, we will put in place a communication platform to work in collaboration with stakeholders for the smooth transition towards the liberalisation of CFS from January 1, 2025," a Government spokesman said.

In order to ensure transparency after the liberalisation of CFS, the CAD will require airlines to promulgate their maximum CFS levels for flights originating from Hong Kong on company websites or other platforms for the public's information.

With a view to providing the air cargo industry with sufficient time to better prepare for the liberalisation, there will be a six-month lead-in period (i.e. from July 1 to December 31, 2024) prior to the liberalisation. The existing CFS mechanism managed by the CAD for flights originating from Hong Kong will therefore remain in force until December 31, 2024. For details on the existing CFS mechanism, please refer to the CAD's website ([www.cad.gov.hk/english/cargo\\_fuel\\_surcharge.html](http://www.cad.gov.hk/english/cargo_fuel_surcharge.html)).

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## CHP investigates confirmed Mpox case

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) said today (May 23) that it is investigating a confirmed Mpox (also known as Monkeypox) case, and urged the public to heighten vigilance and avoid close physical contact with persons suspected of contracting Mpox. Meanwhile, high-

risk target groups are advised to receive Mpox vaccination.

The case involves a 20-year-old male patient with underlying diseases. He had developed a skin rash on May 11 and visited the Yau Ma Tei Male Social Hygiene Clinic of the DH on May 21. He is in stable condition and arrangements have been made for him to be admitted to Princess Margaret Hospital.

An initial investigation revealed that the patient had high-risk exposure in Hong Kong during the incubation period with no travel history. No epidemiological linkages between this case and other confirmed cases recorded in Hong Kong earlier have been found so far. The CHP is continuing its epidemiological investigations of the case and will report the case to the World Health Organization.

The CHP appeals again to high-risk target groups to receive Mpox vaccination with a view to lowering the risk of infection or the possibility of having more severe symptoms after infection. Persons who experience Mpox symptoms (including rashes, fever, chills, swollen lymph nodes, exhaustion, muscle pain, and severe headaches) or suspect themselves of being infected are advised to seek medical attention and receive treatment at once, and they should not engage in activities with others during which other people may have contact with their skin rash or body fluids. Members of the public should maintain good personal and hand hygiene to prevent virus transmission or infection through contact. They should also avoid close physical contact with persons or animals suspected of infection.

The CHP had earlier set up an Mpox telephone hotline (2125 2373). The hotline operates from Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) from 9am to 5pm, which enables those who suspect or are concerned they have had high-risk contact with confirmed patients, in particular men who have sex with men or those who have sexual practices with strangers, to make enquiries and receive relevant health advice.

The DH provides vaccination service for high-risk groups of Mpox. The following high-risk target groups can receive Mpox vaccination on a voluntary basis:

1. Individuals with high-risk sexual practices, e.g. having multiple sexual partners, sex workers, or having a history of sexually transmitted infection within the past 12 months;
2. Healthcare workers responsible for caring of patients with confirmed Mpox;
3. Laboratory personnel working with zoonotic pox viruses; and
4. Animal care personnel with high risk of exposure in case of Mpox occurrence in animals in Hong Kong.

High-risk target groups can receive Mpox walk-in vaccinations at all of the DH's Social Hygiene Service Clinics (SoCHS) (namely Chai Wan SoCHS, Wan Chai Male SoCHS, Wan Chai Female SoCHS, Yau Ma Tei Male SoCHS, Yau Ma Tei Female SoCHS, Yung Fung Shee SoCHS, Fanling SoCHS and Tuen Mun SoCHS).

Further information of the clinics including their locations is available at [www.dh.gov.hk/english/tele/tele\\_chc/tele\\_chc\\_shcf.html](http://www.dh.gov.hk/english/tele/tele_chc/tele_chc_shcf.html) and [www.dh.gov.hk/english/tele/tele\\_chc/tele\\_chc\\_shcm.html](http://www.dh.gov.hk/english/tele/tele_chc/tele_chc_shcm.html).

Meanwhile, the DH's Kowloon Bay Integrated Treatment Centre and Yau Ma Tei Integrated Treatment Centre, and the Hospital Authority's Special Medical Clinics at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital will also provide Mpox vaccination services for their clients.

For more details, please visit the CHP's page on [Mpox](#).

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## **EDB and SCOLAR conclude Biliteracy and Trilingualism Campaign (with photos)**

The Education Bureau (EDB) and the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) held the Closing Ceremony of the Biliteracy and Trilingualism Campaign and Award Presentation Ceremony of the One-minute Video Production Competition today (May 23) to celebrate the success of activities in promoting biliteracy and trilingualism over the past six months.

Officiating at the ceremony, the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, said in her speech that as a city where international talent gathers, Hong Kong needs an abundance of biliterate and trilingual talent to fully leverage its role as a bridge connecting with the world. To consolidate Hong Kong's status as an international financial centre, enhance the development of the "eight centres" as outlined in the National 14th Five-Year Plan, and seize the opportunities arising from the Belt and Road Initiative and the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, it is essential to cultivate biliterate and trilingual abilities.

She said that the EDB has been committed to nurturing Hong Kong students' biliterate and trilingual abilities. In addition to providing support services on classroom teaching, the EDB has been collaborating with schools, the school sector and social organisations to hold various language activities outside classrooms, aiming at enhancing students' interests and abilities in language learning, as well as creating platforms to demonstrate their learning outcomes.

Over the past five months, the EDB and SCOLAR jointly took forward the Biliteracy and Trilingualism Campaign (the Campaign) at various levels of the community to enhance Hong Kong's language strengths and foster understanding and integration across different cultures.

At the ceremony, the Chairman of SCOLAR, Dr Anissa Chan, pointed out

that the success of the Campaign relied on the collective efforts and support from various sectors of society. She sincerely thanked all sectors for their active participation.

With the support of the business community, the promotional videos produced by television stations highlighted the significance of biliteracy and trilingualism to the continued development of Hong Kong's economy, in particular for the hotel and tourism, retail, catering and transportation industries. The videos yielded five million views, effectively conveying the importance of biliteracy and trilingualism to the community. Thanks to the support from the school sector, the One-minute Video Production Competition received enthusiastic responses, attracting the participation of over 700 students and parents from more than 100 kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. Community partners also spared no effort in organising a variety of language activities targeting different audiences to resonate with the Campaign.

Awards of the One-minute Video Production Competition were also presented during the ceremony. The winning entries, portrayed in various styles, depicted the distinctiveness and advantages of Hong Kong in adopting biliteracy and trilingualism.

Community partners, namely the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, the Hong Kong China Rugby, the HKU School of Professional and Continuing Education and Xianggang Putonghua Yanxishe, invited the winners of their activities to perform or share at the ceremony. The content was diverse and intriguing, featuring non-Chinese-speaking students sharing about Hong Kong local food and traditional festival check-ins in Cantonese, a live performance by winners of the Putonghua dubbing competition, and foreign coaches and students introducing rugby in English. The lively atmosphere marked a remarkable end for the Campaign.

The ceremony was held at the Education Bureau Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre with about 400 attendees, including guests from the business and community sectors, teachers, parents and students. For further information about the ceremony and the Campaign, please visit the SCOLAR website ([scolarhk.edb.hkedcity.net/en/index.php](http://scolarhk.edb.hkedcity.net/en/index.php)).



## [Red flag at Kadoorie Beach Lowered](#)

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 (May 23) that the Environmental Protection Department has classified the water quality at Kadoorie Beach in Tuen Mun District as Grade 3, which means the water quality has improved and the beach is suitable for swimming. The red flag has been lowered.

The red flag was hoisted on the beach earlier on due to the water quality being classified as Grade 4 and unsuitable for swimming.

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## Consumer Price Indices for April 2024

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (May 23) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures for April 2024. According to the Composite CPI, overall consumer prices rose by 1.1% in April 2024 over the same month a year earlier, smaller than the corresponding increase (2.0%) in March 2024. The smaller increase was mainly due to the Government's provision of rates concession in April 2024, whereas there was no such concession in March 2024. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the year-on-year rate of increase in the Composite CPI (i.e. the underlying inflation rate) in April 2024 was 0.9%, also smaller than that in March 2024 (1.0%).

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the average monthly rate of change in the Composite CPI for the 3-month period ending April 2024 was -0.2%, and that for the 3-month period ending March 2024 was 0.0%. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the corresponding rates of change were both 0.0%.

Analysed by sub-index, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 1.1%, 1.0% and 1.1% respectively in April 2024, as compared to 2.3%, 1.9% and 1.7% respectively in March 2024. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 0.8%, 1.0% and 1.1% respectively in April 2024, as compared to 0.8%, 1.1% and 1.3% respectively in March 2024.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, for the 3-month period ending April 2024, the average monthly rates of change in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were -0.3%, -0.2% and 0.0% respectively. The corresponding rates of change for the 3-month period ending March 2024 were 0.0%, 0.0% and -0.1% respectively. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the average monthly rates of change in the seasonally adjusted CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) for the 3-month period ending April 2024 were 0.1%, 0.0% and 0.1% respectively, and the corresponding rates of change for the 3-month period ending March 2024 were 0.0%, 0.0% and -0.1% respectively.

Amongst the various components of the Composite CPI, year-on-year increases in prices were recorded in April 2024 for alcoholic drinks and tobacco (20.8%), meals out and takeaway food (3.1%), miscellaneous services (2.2%), transport (1.8%), miscellaneous goods (1.1%), housing (1.0%), and clothing and footwear (0.6%).

On the other hand, year-on-year decreases in the components of the Composite CPI were recorded in April 2024 for electricity, gas and water (-9.3%), durable goods (-0.8%), and basic food (-0.4%).

Taking the first 4 months of 2024 together, the Composite CPI rose by 1.7% over a year earlier. The respective increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.0%, 1.6% and 1.6% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.0%, 0.7%, 1.0% and 1.3% respectively.

For the three months ending April 2024, the Composite CPI rose by 1.7% over a year earlier, while the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) rose by 1.9%, 1.6% and 1.6% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.0%, 0.8%, 1.1% and 1.3% respectively.

For the 12 months ending April 2024, the Composite CPI was on average 2.0% higher than that in the preceding 12-month period. The respective increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.2%, 1.9% and 1.9% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.4%, 1.3%, 1.4% and 1.6% respectively.

## Commentary

A Government spokesman said that underlying consumer price inflation stayed modest in April. While prices of meals out and takeaway food increased at a relatively fast pace, prices of basic food edged down. Prices of energy-related items declined notably. Price pressures on other major components remained broadly in check.

Looking ahead, overall inflation should remain contained in the near term. Domestic costs may face some upward pressures along with continued economic growth. External price pressures should remain on a broad downward trend, though geopolitical tensions will bring uncertainties. The Government will continue to monitor the situation.

## Further information

The CPIs and year-on-year rates of change at section level for April 2024 are shown in Table 1. The time series on the year-on-year rates of change in the CPIs before and after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures are shown in Table 2. For discerning the latest trend in consumer prices, it is also useful to look at the changes in the seasonally adjusted CPIs. The time series on the average monthly rates of change during the latest three months for the seasonally adjusted CPIs are

shown in Table 3. The rates of change in the original and the seasonally adjusted Composite CPI and the underlying inflation rate are presented graphically in Chart 1.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Monthly Report on the Consumer Price Index". Users can browse and download this publication at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1060001&scode=270](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1060001&scode=270)).

The reference period of the expenditure weights used for compilation of CPIs has been updated to the whole year of 2023 starting from the reference month of April 2024, primarily to better reflect changes in household consumption patterns brought by resumption to normalcy after the COVID-19 epidemic. The updating is technical in nature which is in full conformity with international recommendations and it does not involve revision to the CPIs already released. More details are provided in Part 8 on "Latest Developments" of the note on "Concepts and Methods" in the "Monthly Report on the Consumer Price Index".

For enquiries about the CPIs, please contact the Consumer Price Index Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7374 or email: [cpi@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:cpi@censtatd.gov.hk)).