

HKSAR Government co-ordinates with Mainland authorities to ensure stable daily goods supply from Mainland to Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government's Task Force of Supplies from the Mainland has been working closely with the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government to explore various means to stabilise the supply of goods to Hong Kong, including vegetables, fruits and other daily food and necessities. The "Sea Express" water transportation service from the Mainland to Hong Kong has been launched with the facilitation and co-ordination of the Mainland authorities and the HKSAR Government as well as the active participation by the trade. Currently, there are at least three daily feeder services supporting waterway cargo supplies, including (1) from Shenzhen Yantian International Container Terminals to Hong Kong Kwai Tsing Container Terminals (KTCT); (2) from Shenzhen DaChan Bay Terminals to KTCT; and (3) from Shenzhen Mawan Container Terminal to Hong Kong River Trade Terminal.

The Mainland authorities have set up specific green channels for ships and trailers, giving priority to safeguarding the green channels for cross-boundary shipping operations between Shenzhen and Hong Kong. Dedicated berths, supporting equipment and yard facilities have been assigned for ensuring that ships carrying cross-boundary goods have priority for berthing operations. More routes are expected to be launched shortly, with a view to supplying more types of goods from Guangdong Province and the Shenzhen Municipality to Hong Kong.

In addition, the HKSAR Government and the Mainland authorities have agreed on a series of measures to ensure the smooth operation of the above arrangements, including redeployment of capacities by ship operating companies, devoting anti-epidemic efforts for sea crews, and ensuring the separation of shipboard operations and terminal operations. The Centre for Food Safety has also set up an inspection point in its existing Food Control Office at Kwai Chung Customhouse to expedite the entry of fresh food into the market.

According to information from the Mainland authorities, the three terminals of Yantian, DaChan Bay and Mawan port transported over 300 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) (around 2 000 tonnes) of supplies to Hong Kong yesterday (February 24), among which more than 30 TEUs (over 300 tonnes) were fresh food and more than 280 TEUs (about 1 700 tonnes) were non-fresh food. Since the launch of the services, a total of about 1 200 TEUs, with over 7 500 tonnes of cargo, have been shipped to Hong Kong from the three terminals, among which about 100 TEUs (about 900 tonnes) have been fresh food and about 1 100 TEUs (over 6 600 tonnes) are non-fresh food.

In addition to water transport, the HKSAR Government is working with the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government to study in depth the feasibility of transporting goods by railways. The Transport and Housing Bureau, together with the trade, the MTR Corporation Limited and relevant government departments, conducted a site visit at Lo Wu this morning (February 25) and will discuss with the Mainland to arrange trial operations as soon as possible.

Due to its staff having contracted COVID-19, the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse was closed today for comprehensive disinfection and the staff had to undergo nucleic acid tests, affecting the supply of local fresh meat. The HKSAR Government is discussing with the Mainland side to deploy professional and experienced personnel to Hong Kong to assist with the resumption of local fresh meat supply at the soonest opportunity possible, with a view to safeguarding the fresh food supply to the people of Hong Kong. The HKSAR Government has requested the meat provider and agents, depending on the actual demand, to increase the import of chilled meat to ensure the supply.

The HKSAR Government expressed gratitude to the Central Government, the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government for their support all along. The HKSAR Government will closely monitor the situation, and continue to facilitate and implement various measures with the Mainland authorities to ensure a stable goods supply to Hong Kong as well as to optimise the operation of cross-boundary transportation of supplies.