

Budget-related materials to be available tomorrow

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, will deliver the 2024-25 Budget at the Legislative Council at 11am tomorrow (February 28). The full text of the Budget Speech and other related materials will be released simultaneously on the Budget website (www.budget.gov.hk). Members of the public may access the information online.

The public can also watch the live broadcast of the delivery of the speech by the Financial Secretary at the Legislative Council, the Budget-related press conference, a television forum and a radio programme on the above-mentioned website.

Copies of the Budget Speech and a leaflet highlighting key Budget proposals will be available for collection at the 20 Home Affairs Enquiry Centres (HAECs) of the Home Affairs Department after the delivery of Budget.

* 20 HAECs:

Central & Western Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Eastern Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Southern Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Wan Chai Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Kowloon City Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Kwun Tong Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Sham Shui Po Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Wong Tai Sin Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Yau Tsim Mong Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Islands Home Affairs Enquiry Centre (Cheung Chau)
Islands Home Affairs Enquiry Centre (Mui Wo)
Islands Home Affairs Enquiry Centre (Tung Chung)
Kwai Tsing Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
North Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Sai Kung Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Sha Tin Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Tai Po Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Tsuen Wan Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Tuen Mun Home Affairs Enquiry Centre
Yuen Long Home Affairs Enquiry Centre

Copies of the highlights leaflet will also be available for collection at the following places after the delivery of Budget:

* 16 government office buildings:

Queensway Government Offices, Admiralty
Immigration Tower, Wan Chai

Revenue Tower, Wan Chai
Wanchai Tower, Wan Chai
North Point Government Offices
Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices
Ho Man Tin Government Offices
Lai Chi Kok Government Offices
Mongkok Government Offices
Trade and Industry Tower, Kowloon City
To Kwa Wan Government Offices
West Kowloon Government Offices, Yau Ma Tei
Sha Tin Government Offices
Tai Hing Government Offices, Tuen Mun
Tai Po Government Offices
Tsuen Wan Government Offices

* Seven public libraries:

Hong Kong Central Library, Causeway Bay
City Hall Public Library, Central
Kowloon Public Library, Kowloon City
Ping Shan Tin Shui Wai Public Library, Yuen Long
Sha Tin Public Library
Tsuen Wan Public Library
Tuen Mun Public Library

*Five museums:

Hong Kong Museum of Art
Hong Kong Heritage Museum
Hong Kong Museum of History
Hong Kong Science Museum
Hong Kong Space Museum

* Offices of the Labour Department (10 Offices of Labour Relations Division and 15 Job Centres):

14 Taikoo Wan Road, Taikoo Shing
Queensway Government Offices, Admiralty
Western Magistracy Building
North Point Government Offices
Trade and Industry Tower, Kowloon City
Mongkok Government Offices
Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices
Treasury Building, Cheung Sha Wan
Kowloon East Government Offices
Tower 1, Millennium City 1, Kwun Tong
Kwai Hing Government Offices
Tsuen Wan Government Offices
Sha Tin Government Offices
Tai Po Government Offices
Landmark North, Sheung Shui

Tuen Mun Central Square
Victory Building, Tuen Mun
Tin Ching Amenity and Community Building, Tin Shui Wai
Yat Tung Shopping Centre, Tung Chung

* 63 shopping centres in public housing estates:

Hong Kong and Islands

Siu Sai Wan Plaza, Chai Wan
Wan Tsui Shopping Centre, Chai Wan
Oi Tung Shopping Centre, Shau Kei Wan
Hing Tung Shopping Centre, Shau Kei Wan
Stanley Plaza
Shek Pai Wan Shopping Centre, Aberdeen
Wah Fu (II) Commercial Complex, Aberdeen
Fu Tung Plaza, Tung Chung

Kowloon

Lei Yue Mun Plaza, Yau Tong
Yau Lai Shopping Centre, Yau Tong
Kai Tin Shopping Centre, Lam Tin
Tsui Ping North Shopping Circuit, Kwun Tong
Shun Lee Commercial Centre, Kwun Tong
Sau Mau Ping Shopping Centre, Kwun Tong
On Kay Commercial Centre, Ngau Tau Kok
Lok Wah Commercial Centre, Ngau Tau Kok
Tsz Wan Shan Shopping Centre
Choi Wan Commercial Complex, Ngau Chi Wan
Chuk Yuen Plaza, Wong Tai Sin
Temple Mall South, Wong Tai Sin
Fung Tak Shopping Centre, Diamond Hill
Lok Fu Place, Wang Tau Hom
Shek Kip Mei Shopping Centre, Sham Shui Po
Hoi Fu Shopping Centre, Mong Kok
Oi Man Plaza, Ho Man Tin
Homantin Plaza, Ho Man Tin

New Territories East

Choi Yuen Plaza, Sheung Shui
Ching Ho Shopping Centre, Sheung Shui
Fu Shin Shopping Centre, Tai Po
Tai Wo Plaza, Tai Po
Heng On Commercial Centre, Ma On Shan
Yan On Shopping Centre, Ma On Shan
Mei Tin Shopping Centre, Sha Tin
Shek Mun Shopping Centre, Sha Tin
Hin Keng Shopping Centre, Sha Tin

Kwong Yuen Shopping Centre, Sha Tin
Sha Kok Commercial Centre, Sha Tin
Mei Lam Commercial Centre, Sha Tin
Wo Che Plaza, Sha Tin
Pok Hong Shopping Centre, Sha Tin
Yue Tin Court Commercial Centre, Sha Tin
Shui Chuen O Plaza, Sha Tin
TKO Gateway, Tseung Kwan O
Po Lam Shopping Centre, Tseung Kwan O
TKO Spot, Tseung Kwan O

New Territories West

Cheung Fat Plaza, Tsing Yi
Lei Muk Shue Shopping Centre, Tsuen Wan
Kwai Chung Shopping Centre, Kwai Chung
T Town, Tin Shui Wai
Tin Ching Shopping Centre, Tin Shui Wai
Tin Shui Shopping Centre, Tin Shui Wai
Tin Yan Shopping Centre, Tin Shui Wai
Ping Yan Shopping Centre, Tin Shui Wai
Long Ping Commercial Centre, Yuen Long
Long Shin Shopping Centre, Yuen Long
Hung Fuk Shopping Centre, Hung Shui Kiu
Butterfly Plaza, Tuen Mun
Leung King Plaza, Tuen Mun
Tai Hing Commercial Centre, Tuen Mun
Siu Hong Commercial Centre, Tuen Mun
Yan Tin Shopping Centre, Tuen Mun
Ching Tin Shopping Centre, Tuen Mun
Wo Tin Shopping Centre, Tuen Mun

TAC briefed on Highways Department's contingency measures and emergency recovery works in response to road-related incidents under extreme weather

The following is issued on behalf of the Transport Advisory Committee:

The Transport Advisory Committee (TAC) was briefed today (February 27) by the Highways Department (HyD) in respect of its contingency measures and

recovery works in road emergencies under extreme weather conditions.

Located in a subtropical region, Hong Kong is susceptible to threats such as tropical cyclones, heavy rainfall and storm surges. With the intensification of climate change, the threat of extreme weather is expected to become more frequent and serious. The Government is committed to taking precautionary measures to enhance the resilience of various infrastructures against extreme weather in order to protect the lives and properties of citizens.

On transport infrastructure, the HyD is taking forward a series of preventive measures including the inspection of roads with higher risk, drainage facilities of structures and roadside slopes, etc. The four Emergency Control Centres under the HyD will operate throughout periods of inclement weather to monitor the latest conditions of major public roads in real time and handle road emergencies when necessary. The Emergency Control Centres will also liaise closely with other government departments to provide support in handling emergency incidents in a comprehensive manner. After the threat of inclement weather has subsided, the HyD will carry out road clearance and recovery works for damaged road facilities at full steam, with a view to resuming the public roads and traffic as soon as possible and minimising the impact on travel for the public.

To strengthen its response to the impact of extreme weather on public roads, the HyD has completed a review of the resilience of 75 critical road infrastructures against the threat of flooding. It is now conducting a technical assessment and drawing up an implementation plan for the relevant countermeasures. Meanwhile, the HyD is also working on the installation of flood warning systems for some pedestrian subways near riversides in phases, and exploring the installation of closed-circuit television systems at pedestrian subways in low-lying areas with higher risks so as to further enhance the monitoring.

The TAC Chairman, Professor Stephen Cheung, said, "Members support the various measures undertaken by the HyD to cope with extreme weather conditions and take note of the latest progress of the recovery works at Shek O Road and Yiu Hing Road. We believe that the HyD will continue to step up its efforts in enhancing its capability in handling road emergencies under extreme weather, allowing the community to resume normal operation as early as possible."

Cluster of Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci cases at Kowloon Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for the Kowloon Hospital (KH) made the following announcement today (February 27):

An 81-year-old and a 75-year-old male patient in a rehabilitation ward of KH were confirmed to carry Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE) on February 18 and February 19 respectively without signs of infection. In accordance with the prevailing infection control guidelines, the hospital commenced a contact tracing investigation. Nine more male patients (aged 61 to 100) from the same ward were confirmed to be VRE carriers and asymptomatic. One patient is currently hospitalised at Queen Elizabeth Hospital for other medical needs and two patients were discharged. The remaining eight patients are being treated in isolation at the hospital with stable condition.

The concerned ward has adopted the following enhanced infection control measures:

1. Enhanced hand hygiene and stringent contact precautions;
2. Enhanced attention to contamination-prone procedures; and
3. Enhanced disinfection and cleaning of the concerned ward.

The hospital will continue the enhanced infection control measures and closely monitor the situation of the ward. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

First batch of three new vessels procured under Phase I of Vessel Subsidy Scheme will come into service from March 2024 (with photos)

The Transport Department (TD) announced today (February 27) that the first batch of three fully government-subsidised new vessels procured under Phase I of the Vessel Subsidy Scheme (VSS) will be gradually deployed to provide services from March 2024, operating Central – Cheung Chau, Central – Mui Wo and Central – Peng Chau routes.

The Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, said when attending the launching ceremony of the new vessels, "The Government has launched the VSS to fully subsidise outlying island ferry operators to purchase new vessels, which feature the newly designed promotional logo for government-funded projects. We hope the VSS can enhance the experience of passengers while promoting environmental protection. As the 22 new vessels

under Phase I of the VSS gradually arrive, we will continue to work hand in hand with the trade to provide quality ferry services for the public."

A spokesman for the TD said, "The VSS aims to improve the fleet quality and promote environmental protection, as well as enhance the experience of passengers." The new vessels will provide more comprehensive facilities, including additional breastfeeding areas and dedicated seats for passengers with pets, double or more the number of wheelchair seats as compared with existing vessels, provision of accessible toilets and mobile phone-charging facilities for some of the seats. Moreover, the new vessels were built with lightweight materials such as aluminium alloy and carbon fibre to reduce the weight of the vessels. They are also equipped with environmental-friendly engines which comply with the highest International Maritime Organization Tier III standard to reduce emission of nitrogen oxides.

The Government announced in the Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address that it would implement the VSS to fully subsidise 10 ferry routes to replace the entire existing fleet with greener vessels and newer facilities in two phases. Under Phase I of the VSS, 22 vessels will be procured for the the six major outlying island routes (including Central – Cheung Chau, Central – Mui Wo, Inter-islands, Central – Peng Chau, Central – Yung Shue Wan and Central – Sok Kwu Wan). About half of the new vessels are expected to arrive by the end of this year.





Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 is 105.1 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).