

# Marine traffic control and safety measures to be followed at New Year's Eve countdown celebration

With regard to the New Year's Eve countdown celebration to be held by the Hong Kong Tourism Board on December 31, the Marine Department (MD) will implement marine traffic control and strengthen the inspection of spectator vessels on the event day to ensure that safety requirements are met.

Closed Areas will be established in two stages on the event day in the waters where barges for the fireworks display will be anchored. All vessels will be prohibited from entering these designated areas. The Closed Area in the waters off the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai will be established from 12.30pm on the event day to about 3am on the following day (January 1), while the Closed Area in the waters off the Hong Kong Cultural Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui will be established from 11pm to about 1am on the following day. A Restricted Area will be established in the Central Harbour from 11pm to about 1am on the following day. Other than authorised vessels, no vessels will be allowed to enter. Scheduled ferry vessels with permission may continue services until 11.40pm.

Spectator vessels could stay inside the Specified Area other than the Restricted Area and the Closed Area for viewing from 10pm to 1am on the following day. To enhance maritime safety during a major event at sea, coxswains of spectator vessels in specified area during specified period must ensure children on board are accompanied by an adult and wear a lifejacket at all times. Coxswains must also keep a passenger and crew list on board for emergency purpose. The MD will step up vessel inspection. If any vessel fails to meet these requirements, the department will initiate prosecution.

In addition, to ensure vessels disperse in an orderly manner, the Eastern and Western Cordon Lines of the Restricted Area will be lifted in stages after the event. The Western Cordon Line will be lifted first at about 1am on January 1. Spectator vessels behind the Western Cordon Line and those wishing to move to the east must follow the instructions of officers from the MD and the Police at the scene. The Eastern Cordon Line will be lifted later depending on traffic conditions in Victoria Harbour. It is anticipated that the Restricted Area will be lifted by about 1.15am on January 1.

For landside crowd control, the public landing steps Nos.4 and 5 at Kowloon Public Pier will be closed temporarily from 8pm on the event day to about 1am on the following Day, and the other landing steps of Kowloon Public Pier will be closed temporarily from 10pm on the event day to about 1am on the following Day, while other public landing steps within the Restricted Area will be closed temporarily from 10.30pm on the event day to about 1am on the following Day. Buffer Zones at Kowloon Public Pier, Kwun Tong Public Pier and Central Piers 9 and 10 will be established immediately after the event for safe and orderly disembarkation of passengers.

Officers from the MD and the Police will also maintain order at major landing facilities after the event. Coxswains and crew members should remind passengers to pack their personal belongings early before the vessels arrive alongside the landing steps, as well as assisting passengers to disembark. Coxswains and passengers should follow the guidance of the MD and the Police at the scene.

The MD and the Marine Police will also strengthen law enforcement, especially on conditions of life-saving appliances, speeding and overloading. Coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels should check again and reconfirm that the operating licence, the certificate of survey and the third-party risk insurance are valid before setting sail.

MD Notice No. 212 of 2023 on the marine traffic control and safety measures has been issued and is available for viewing on the MD's website ([www.mardep.gov.hk](http://www.mardep.gov.hk)).

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## [Appointments to Council of Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts](#)

The Chief Executive has appointed Mr Charles Yang Chuen-liang as Chairman, Professor Douglas So Cheung-tak as Deputy Chairman (reappointed) and Mrs Helen Chan as Treasurer of the Council of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) for a period of two years from January 1, 2024.

The Chief Executive has also appointed the following persons as members of the Council of the HKAPA for a period of two years from January 1, 2024:

Dr Raymond Chan (reappointed)  
Mrs Christine Ip Yeung See-ming (reappointed)  
Mr Jason Joseph Lee Kwong-yee  
Ms Sheryl Lee Ming-chi (reappointed)  
Mr Andrew Leung Chun-keung (reappointed)  
Dr Irene Tang Mo-lin  
Dr Tang Yuen-ha (reappointed)  
Ms Wong Caroline Ho (reappointed)  
Mr Symon Wong Yu-wing  
Ms Stella Lau Yin-ling (reappointed, staff representative)  
Professor Yiu Song-lam (staff representative)  
Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism or his representative (reappointed)  
Secretary for Education or her representative (reappointed)

Other serving members of the Council include:

Mr Nick Ho Lik-ko

Director of the HKAPA (ex-officio)

The Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the outgoing Chairman of the Council of the HKAPA, Mr Edward Cheng Wai-sun, for his invaluable contribution to the HKAPA. "Under the distinguished chairmanship of Mr Cheng, the HKAPA has moved from strength to strength in offering professional trainings to performing arts talent. Mr Cheng has guided the Academy in laying a solid foundation in establishing another campus in the Northern Metropolis," said Mr Yeung.

Mr Yeung also expressed sincere appreciation to the outgoing members, Ms Maisy Ho Chiu-ha, Ms Cynthia Liu Chiu-fun and Professor Clarence Mak Wai-chu (staff representative), for their valuable advice tendered during their terms of service.

The above appointments will be published in the Government Gazette on January 5, 2024.

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## **Financial results for the eight months ended November 30, 2023**

The Government announced today (December 29) its financial results for the eight months ended November 30, 2023.

There was a surplus of HK\$8.8 billion in the month of November. Expenditure for the eight-month period amounted to HK\$472.3 billion and revenue HK\$241.6 billion, with the cumulative year-to-date deficit at HK\$164.1 billion after taking into account the proceeds of HK\$66.6 billion received from issuance of green bonds under the Government Green Bond Programme (Green Bond).

A Government spokesperson said that the cumulative year-to-date deficit for the period was mainly due to the fact that some major types of revenue including salaries and profits taxes are mostly received towards the end of a financial year. The revised estimates for the current financial year will be published along with the 2024-25 Budget.

The fiscal reserves stood at HK\$670.7 billion as at November 30, 2023.

Detailed figures are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

TABLE 1. CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT (Note 1)

	Month ended November 30, 2023 HK\$ million	Eight months ended November 30, 2023 HK\$ million
Revenue	67,205.7	241,580.1
Expenditure	(58,402.5)	(472,271.4)
Surplus/(Deficit) before issuance of Green Bond	8,803.2	(230,691.3)
Proceeds received from issuance of Green Bond	–	66,632.0
Surplus/(Deficit) after issuance of Green Bond	8,803.2	(164,059.3)
Financing		
Domestic		
Banking Sector (Note 2)	(8,129.3)	159,284.9
Non-Banking Sector	(673.9)	4,774.4
External	–	–
Total	(8,803.2)	164,059.3

Government Debts as at November 30, 2023 (Note 3)

HK\$188,208 million

Debts Guaranteed by Government as at November 30, 2023 (Note 4)

HK\$147,586 million

TABLE 2. FISCAL RESERVES

	Month ended November 30, 2023 HK\$ million	Eight months ended November 30, 2023 HK\$ million
Fiscal Reserves at start of period	661,927.3	834,789.8
Consolidated Surplus/(Deficit) after issuance of Green Bond	8,803.2	(164,059.3)

Fiscal Reserves at end of period (Note 5)	670,730.5	670,730.5
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Notes:

1. This Account consolidates the General Revenue Account and the following eight Funds: Capital Works Reserve Fund, Capital Investment Fund, Civil Service Pension Reserve Fund, Disaster Relief Fund, Innovation and Technology Fund, Land Fund, Loan Fund and Lotteries Fund. It excludes the Bond Fund, the balance of which is not part of the fiscal reserves. The Bond Fund balance as at November 30, 2023, was HK\$297,571 million.

2. Includes transactions with the Exchange Fund and resident banks.

3. These were the Green Bonds (equivalent to HK\$188,208 million as at November 30, 2023) issued under the Government Green Bond Programme. They were denominated in US dollars (US\$9,750 million with maturity from May 2024 to January 2053), euros (4,500 million euros with maturity from January 2025 to November 2041), Renminbi (RMB30,000 million with maturity from November 2024 to June 2033) and Hong Kong dollars (HK\$40,800 million with maturity from February 2024 to October 2026). They do not include the outstanding bonds with nominal value of HK\$256,990 million and alternative bonds with nominal value of US\$1,000 million (equivalent to HK\$7,804 million as at November 30, 2023) issued under the Government Bond Programme (with proceeds credited to the Bond Fund). Of these bonds under the Government Bond Programme (including Silver Bonds with nominal value of HK\$138,990 million, which may be redeemed before maturity upon request from bond holders), bonds with nominal value of HK\$84,250 million will mature within the period from December 2023 to November 2024 and the rest within the period from December 2024 to May 2042.

4. Includes guarantees provided under the SME Loan Guarantee Scheme launched in 2001, the Special Loan Guarantee Scheme launched in 2008, the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme launched in 2012 and a commercial loan of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation.

5. Includes HK\$307,544 million, being the balance of the Land Fund held in the name of "Future Fund", for long-term investments up to December 31, 2030. The Future Fund also includes HK\$4,800 million, being one-third of the actual surplus in 2015-16 as top-up.

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## [Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet](#)

## and Currency Board Account

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (December 29) that the total assets of the Exchange Fund amounted to HK\$3,972.4 billion as at November 30, 2023, HK\$19.3 billion lower than that at the end of October 2023. Hong Kong dollar assets decreased by HK\$68.8 billion while foreign currency assets increased by HK\$49.5 billion.

The decline in Hong Kong dollar assets was mainly due to a decrease in Exchange Fund Bills and Notes issued but not yet settled at month end. The rise in foreign currency assets was mainly due to mark-to-market revaluation of investments.

The Currency Board Account shows that the Monetary Base at the end of November 2023 was HK\$1,878.6 billion, increased by HK\$3.4 billion, or 0.2 per cent, from the end of October 2023. The increase was mainly due to amortisation of discount on Exchange Fund Bills and Notes, which was partly offset by the decrease in the outstanding amount of Certificates of Indebtedness.

The amount of Backing Assets increased by HK\$12.8 billion, or 0.6 per cent, to HK\$2,070.4 billion at the end of November 2023. The increase was mainly attributable to interest from investments and mark-to-market revaluation of investments, which was partly offset by the redemption of Certificates of Indebtedness. The Backing Ratio increased from 109.73 per cent at the end of October 2023 to 110.21 per cent at the end of November 2023.

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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 December 2023, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

December 7 (Issued)	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
December 14 (Issued)	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
December 29	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity

## International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) released today (December 29) the analytical data on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's foreign currency reserves and foreign currency liquidity as at the end of November 2023 (Annex). These data are published monthly in the Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS).

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