

# Decision on application for licence renewal by Hong Kong Airlines Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Air Transport Licensing Authority:

The Air Transport Licensing Authority has decided to renew the licence in relation to the application made by Hong Kong Airlines Limited with effect from today (December 12) till March 24, 2028 (both dates inclusive).

Under the licence, Hong Kong Airlines Limited may operate scheduled journeys for the carriage in Hong Kong of passengers, cargo or mail on the following routes at unlimited frequency from and to Hong Kong International Airport:

Beijing/ Beihai/ Changchun/ Changsha/ Changzhou/ Chengdu/ Chongqing/ Dalian/ Fuzhou/ Guangzhou/ Guilin/ Guiyang/ Haikou/ Hailar/ Hangzhou/ Harbin/ Hefei/ Hohhot/ Huai'an/ Huangshan/ Jiamusi/ Jinan/ Kashi/ Kunming/ Lanzhou/ Lhasa/ Lijiang/ Luoyang/ Manzhouli/ Meixian/ Mudanjiang/ Nanchang/ Nanjing/ Nanning/ Nantong/ Ningbo/ Qingdao/ Qiqihaer/ Quanzhou/ Sanya/ Shanghai/ Shantou (including Jiayang Chaoshan)/ Shenyang/ Shenzhen/ Shijiazhuang/ Taiyuan/ Tianjin/ Urumqi/ Weihai/ Wenzhou/ Wuhan/ Wuxi/ Wuyishan/ Xiamen/ Xian/ Xining/ Xishuangbanna/ Xuzhou/ Yancheng/ Yangzhou/ Yanji/ Yantai/ Yichang/ Yinchuan/ Yiwu/ Zhangjiajie/ Zhanjiang/ Zhengzhou/ Zhuhai/ Macau/ Taipei/ Hualien/Kaohsiung/ Magong/ Taichung/ Tainan/ Taitung/ Kinmen/ Tokyo/ Asahikawa/ Fukuoka/ Hakodate/ Hanamaki/ Hiroshima/ Kagoshima/ Kitakyushu/ Kumamoto/ Miyazaki/ Nagasaki/ Nagoya/ Niigata/ Okayama/ Okinawa/ Osaka/ Sapporo/ Sendai/ Shizuoka/ Tottori/ Yonago/ Seoul/ Busan/ Jeju/ Ulaanbaatar/ Bandar Seri Begawan/ Phnom Penh/ Siem Reap/ Jakarta/ Denpasar/ Manado/ Medan/ Surabaya/ Vientiane/ Kuala Lumpur/ Kota Kinabalu/ Kuching/ Langkawi/ Penang/ Naypyidaw/ Yangon/ Manila/ Cebu/ Clark/ Kalibo/ Laoag/ Singapore/ Bangkok/ Chiangmai/ Koh Samui/ Krabi/ Phuket/ Hanoi/ Da Nang/ Ho Chi Minh City/ Dhaka/ Delhi/ Bangalore/ Chennai/ Hyderabad/ Kolkata/ Mumbai/ Male/ Kathmandu/ Karachi/ Colombo/ Almaty/ Bahrain/ Tel Aviv/ Amman/ Kuwait City/ Muscat/ Doha/ Riyadh/ Jeddah/ Istanbul/ Abu Dhabi/ Dubai/ Sharjah/ Luanda/ Cairo/ Addis Ababa/ Nairobi/ Mauritius/ Seychelles/ Cape Town/ Johannesburg/ Vienna/ Brussels/ Zagreb/ Prague/ Tallinn/ Helsinki/ Paris/ Lyon/ Nice/ Berlin/ Dusseldorf/ Frankfurt/ Hamburg/ Munich/ Stuttgart/ Athens/ Budapest/ Dublin/ Rome/ Milan/ Venice/ Luxembourg/ Amsterdam/ Warsaw/ Lisbon/ Bucharest/ Moscow/ St. Petersburg/ Copenhagen/ Oslo/ Stockholm/ Belgrade/ Madrid/ Barcelona/ Geneva/ Zurich/ London/ Birmingham/ Edinburgh/ Glasgow/ Manchester/ Newcastle/ Ottawa/ Calgary/ Edmonton/ Montreal/ Toronto/ Vancouver/ Mexico City/ Guadalajara/ Washington/ Anchorage/ Atlanta/ Boston/ Chicago/ Dallas/ Denver/ Guam/ Honolulu/ Houston/ Las Vegas/ Los Angeles/ Miami/ New York/ Orlando/ Saipan/ San Diego/ San Francisco/ Seattle/ Buenos Aires/ Rio de Janeiro/ Sao Paulo/ Santiago de Chile/ Bogotá/ Lima/ Canberra/ Adelaide/ Brisbane/ Cairns/ Darwin/ Gold Coast/ Hobart/ Melbourne/ Perth/ Sydney/ Nadi/ Wellington/ Auckland/ Christchurch/ Queenstown/ Palau/ Port Moresby

The decision of the Authority will be published in the Gazette on December 15.

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## November's monthly gravidtrap index for Aedes albopictus mosquitoes continues to drop

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (December 12) announced that the monthly gravidtrap index for Aedes albopictus mosquitoes in November continued to drop to 1.8 per cent from 2.3 per cent in October, which remained at the lowest Level 1, indicating that the distribution of Aedes albopictus mosquitoes in the areas surveyed was not extensive.

In November, all the 64 survey areas were recorded with a gravidtrap index lower than the alert level of 20 per cent. Moreover, the monthly density index for Aedes albopictus in November remained at 1, which represented that an average of one Aedes albopictus adult was found in the Aedes-positive gravidtraps, indicating that the number of adult Aedes albopictus was not abundant in the survey areas. The gravidtrap and density indices for Aedes albopictus in different survey areas as well as information on mosquito prevention and control measures are available on the department's website at [www.fehd.gov.hk](http://www.fehd.gov.hk).

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "The Government is very concerned about mosquito infestation. The FEHD has continued to intensify mosquito prevention and control work with relevant government departments in areas under their purview, including eliminating mosquito breeding places, applying larvicides, conducting fogging operations to eradicate adult mosquitoes, and placing mosquito trapping devices at suitable locations. The FEHD has also conducted site inspections with relevant departments, and provided them with professional advice and technical support to assist them in formulating and implementing effective anti-mosquito measures swiftly. At the same time, the FEHD has strengthened publicity and education. Under the concerted efforts and collaboration of various parties, the index in November continued to drop. As the weather has turned cooler and drier, the All-out Anti-mosquito Operations launched since March 20 this year will be ended on December 15. Although the index remains at a low level, the breeding and activity of mosquitoes will not stop in winter. The FEHD will continue to monitor the mosquito infestation in all districts, and will conduct prompt and effective mosquito prevention and control work. At the same time, members of the public are advised to continue the routine mosquito prevention and control work, especially the repair and maintenance of structures. Cracks and dents which may accumulate water and become potential breeding grounds should be filled

and leveled so as to reduce the chance of mosquito breeding when the rainy season approaches."

The FEHD appeals to members of the public to work together to carry out mosquito prevention and control measures early, including inspecting their homes and surroundings to remove potential breeding grounds, changing water in vases and scrubbing their inner surfaces, removing water in saucers under potted plants at least once a week, properly disposing of containers such as soft drink cans and lunch boxes, and drilling large holes in unused tyres. The FEHD also advises members of the public and estate management bodies to keep drains free of blockage and level all defective ground surfaces to prevent the accumulation of water. They should also scrub all drains and surface sewers with an alkaline detergent at least once a week to remove any mosquito eggs.

*Aedes albopictus* is a kind of mosquito that can transmit dengue fever (DF). DF is commonly found in tropical and subtropical regions of the world, and has become endemic in many countries in Southeast Asia. The dengue activity in neighbouring areas has remained high and Hong Kong has recorded 59 imported DF cases so far this year. Members of the public should stay vigilant and continue to carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures.

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## Cluster of Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci cases at Tuen Mun Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH) made the following announcement today (December 12):

A 75-year-old male patient in a medicine and geriatrics ward of TMH was confirmed to be a Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE) carrier on December 6. In accordance with the prevailing infection control guidelines, the hospital commenced contact tracing. Two more male patients (aged 79 and 84) were confirmed to be VRE carriers. All patients are now being treated in isolation and are in stable condition.

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

1. Enhanced patient and environmental screening procedures;
2. Applied stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene of staff and patients; and
3. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of the wards concerned.

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

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## **LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs and Panel on Transport jointly visit Citybus Hydrogen Refuelling Station and hydrogen bus (with photos)**

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Environmental Affairs and Panel on Transport conducted a joint visit to the Citybus Hydrogen Refuelling Station and its hydrogen bus today (December 12) to understand the latest development in the adoption of clean energy in Hong Kong's public transportation.

Members first took a ride on Citybus's electric double deck bus from the LegCo Complex to the bus company's depot in West Kowloon. Upon arrival, Members received a briefing by the Citybus management on the company's future development direction and its zero-emission transformation campaign. They noted that Citybus plans to operate a full fleet of zero-emission buses by 2045, with a view to supporting Hong Kong to achieve carbon neutrality.

Members then observed Hong Kong's first hydrogen refuelling station and the world's first tri-axle hydrogen double deck bus. They understood that the hydrogen bus has been licensed by the Government and will commence service as early as January next year. The hydrogen bus can be refuelled in about 10 minutes and its driving range is sufficient to meet the daily operational needs of each bus, enabling it to operate on most routes. Meanwhile, Citybus's second hydrogen refuelling station is in the pipeline and is expected to commence operation within next year.

Before concluding the itinerary, Members took a test ride on the hydrogen bus to experience firsthand the environmental friendliness of the hydrogen-powered double-decker, which includes producing only water during the energy transformation process – effectively achieving zero emission.

Members opined that the Government should put in place a legal framework for the production, storage, transportation and application of hydrogen energy as soon as possible, so as to promote the development of hydrogen transport and innovations in hydrogen technologies in Hong Kong.



A total of 10 members and non-members of the Panel on Environmental Affairs and the Panel on Transport joined the visit.



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## [Acting SFST's speech at MPF Symposium 2023 \(English only\) \(with photo\)](#)

Following is the keynote speech by the Acting Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Joseph Chan, at the MPF Symposium 2023 today (December 12):

Ayesha (Chairman of the Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority (MPFA), Mrs Ayesha Macpherson Lau), Yan-chee (Managing Director and Executive Director of the MPFA, Mr Cheng Yan-chee), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

It is my great pleasure to address you for the MPF Symposium 2023. This is a great platform where industry leaders gathered to exchange views on this symposium's theme, the future of MPFTech.

With the continuous effort of both the Government and the community over

the past years, with the MPFA together, our MPF system maintains a steady progress and growth. As at end-September this year, there were over 4.6 million scheme members in the MPF system, involving over 11 million accounts, 404 constituent funds, and 26 schemes managed by 13 trustees, and some \$80 billion contributions each year. Besides, the total MPF assets amounted to around \$1,088 billion. Forty-three per cent of the assets were invested in equity funds, and 34 per cent in mixed assets funds. The net annualised internal rate of return since 2000 was 2.2 per cent, higher than the inflation rate over the same period of 1.8 per cent.

Under a challenging economic environment and a highly volatile market, the MPF system recorded a negative return of 5.9 per cent in the financial year of 2022-23. Nonetheless, we must not lose sight of the design and objective of the MPF as a long-term savings and investment scheme in the overall framework of retirement protection. We should focus on the long-term investment returns, rather than investment performance in individual years or short-term market fluctuations. Indeed, the MPF system has recorded positive return in 14 years since its inception in 2000. Driven by the compounding effect and dollar cost averaging principles, the cost price of purchasing fund units will be evened out, mitigating the impact of short-term market fluctuations on long-term investment returns.

A financially secured retirement is probably everyone's ultimate goal after having worked diligently for almost half of their life. To enhance retirement savings of employees, driving fee reductions has always been one of the top priorities under the MPF system. We launched the fee-controlled Default Investment Strategy (DIS) back in 2017 with the feature of "automatic de-risking", aiming to reduce the investment risks faced by members when they are approaching retirement age and suiting for long-term retirement savings investment. Looking into the development of DIS, around 28 per cent of MPF accounts have chosen DIS funds as at end-September this year.

Over the years, the average fund expense ratio (FER), which reflects the level of MPF charges, has dropped by around 36 per cent from 2.1 per cent in 2007 to a new low of only 1.35 per cent at the end of September this year. In addition, 30 per cent of MPF constituent funds are now charging an FER of less than 1 per cent. We believe DIS has a positive effect in bringing down fees of other MPF funds. In addition, enhancement has been made on increasing the transparency of fees and costs of the MPF system to enable easy comparison by scheme members and increase market competition.

The Government and the MPFA endeavour to improve the adequacy of the MPF System by diversifying MPF investment. Several measures on risk diversification and investment optimisation have been carried out in recent years. For instance, as earlier in 2012, we launched the "Employee Choice Arrangement", commonly known as "MPF Semi-portability", with a view to giving employees more autonomy in handling their MPF investment. In 2020, we included the Shanghai and Shenzhen Stock Exchanges in the list of "Approved Stock Exchanges" to facilitate MPF investment in China A-shares. In June last year, we added the Central People's Government's central bank and the three Mainland policy banks in the list of "exempt authority" to facilitate MPF

investment in sovereign bonds and enhance investment rules. In November last year, we refined the approval criteria for new constituent funds to enhance requirements for coverage and diversification in relation to the existing range of constituent funds, and to encourage investment in single country equity funds and specialty funds (e.g. ESG-themed funds, sector funds).

As announced in the 2023-24 Budget by the Financial Secretary, there are further initiatives in the pipeline to meet the growing aspirations for stable MPF funds. As an initial step, a certain proportion of the future issuances of government green bonds and infrastructure bonds will be earmarked for priority investment by MPF funds, thereby providing scheme members an additional investment option. The Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the MPFA are also looking into the establishment of an MPF fund with stable return at low cost.

With the constant reviews and reform measures, we will continue to collaborate closely with stakeholders to promote market competition in the MPF industry, drive down fees, improve MPF investment choices and returns, and strengthen the scheme members' selection and management of their own retirement benefits.

Today's theme is the future of MPFTech. Indeed, enhancement on technology is our key strategy echoing with the global trend and our expectation in boosting efficiency. The MPFA is pressing ahead with the development of the eMPF Platform, a centralised and integrated electronic platform to standardise, streamline and automate the administration processes of MPF schemes, thereby enhancing and revamping operational efficiency of the MPF system, reducing administration costs for millions of scheme members and improving user experience.

We expect that the average MPF administration fee will reduce by around 30 per cent during the first two years of operation of the eMPF Platform, and will continue to drop steadily thereafter, with a view to achieving total cumulative cost savings of \$30 to \$40 billion for scheme members during the first 10 years of operation of the eMPF Platform. A drastic reduction in administrative burden that the industry could then redeploy its resources to other value-adding areas, such as optimising investment management and retirement planning services, for the benefit of scheme members.

At the viewpoint of user experience, the eMPF Platform will serve as a one-stop shop for performing various MPF administration functions, ranging from accessing account details, switching funds, consolidating accounts, withdrawing MPF benefits, and comparing performance and expense of different MPF funds, etc.

Paving the way for future reforms and evolution of the MPF system, we believe that with more accessible information, the eMPF Platform further connects employers, employees and MPF intermediaries, and drives healthy competition among MPF trustees in benefitting scheme members, as well as enhancing user experience and driving greater efficiency.

With the phased implementation of the eMPF Platform, scheme members could manage their MPF accounts with greater convenience on a real-time, secure and paperless basis. As pledged in the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address, we target to commence phased onboarding of MPF trustees to the Platform in early 2024 and achieve full implementation in 2025.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Government and the MPFA will continue to develop and improve our MPF system for the retirement benefits of Hong Kong's working population. Throughout the process, we will continue to work closely with you, market participants and industry stakeholders.

On this note, I would like to thank all of you for your staunch support and ongoing contribution to Hong Kong's future. I wish to express my gratitude to the MPFA for organising today's symposium. I wish you all the best of health in the year to come. Thank you.

