

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on June 12 to noon today (June 13), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 142 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" (www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 58 669 samples of food imported from Japan (including 37 871 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 14 590 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Hong Kong Housing Authority approves estimated public rental housing allocation for 2024-25

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

The Subsidised Housing Committee of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) today (June 13) approved the estimated public rental housing (PRH) allocation for 2024-25 and noted the actual allocation in 2023-24.

"For the year 2023-24, the actual allocation was 23 598 flats (i.e. the number of flats taken up by applicants before the end of 2023-24), representing 97.9 per cent of the original estimate. As individual projects undertaken by Aggressive Construction Company Limited were not completed as scheduled, the number of newly completed flats was 4 500 less than the original estimate. As a result of the Housing Department's continuous efforts in taking enhanced measures to combat abuse of public housing resources, together with the intake of new subsidised sale flats, the number of recovered flats was about 4 100 more than the original estimate of 15 600," a spokesman for the HA said.

"For 2024-25, we estimated that a total of about 30 200 PRH flats, comprising about 11 100 new flats and about 19 100 recovered flats, will be available for allocation to various categories of applicants. Most of the flats (i.e. 23 300 flats (77.2 per cent)) will be allocated to PRH applicants. The annual allocation quota for non-elderly one-person applicants under the Quota and Points System (QPS) is set at 10 per cent of the total number of flats to be allocated to PRH applicants with an upper limit of 2 200 flats, and therefore the allocation quota for QPS applicants in 2024-25 is 2 200 flats," the spokesman said.

As regards allocation for other categories of applicants, the HA will reserve 1 200 flats for rehousing residents affected by clearance projects planned by various departments, and residents affected by other Government's squatter clearances, emergency clearances, unauthorised rooftop structure clearances and so forth. Moreover, 300 flats will also be set aside for rehousing residents affected by the Urban Renewal Authority's redevelopment projects scheduled for 2024-25.

In addition, 700 flats will be reserved for allocation under the category of Compassionate Rehousing (CR). This figure is not an upper limit and the HA will follow the established policy to handle all the demands for CR as recommended by the Social Welfare Department. Any unused flats reserved under the category of CR will be allocated to PRH applicants.

Under the category of Transfers, 3 700 flats will be used for various

transfer purposes in 2024-25, among which 1 100 flats will be used for the transfer of under-occupation households so that more large flats can be recovered for easing the pressing demand of applicants with four or more household members. Moreover, as with last year, the HA will reserve a quota of around 1 000 for the Transfer Scheme for Improving the Living Environment in 2024-25. The remaining 1 600 flats will be flexibly deployed for other transfer purposes including Special Transfer, the Harmonious Families Transfer Scheme, the Full Rent Exemption Scheme for Elderly Households, Management Transfer, etc.

For the category of Junior Civil Servants and Pensioners, as in 2023-24, the HA will reserve 1 000 flats under the Civil Service Public Housing Quota Scheme in 2024-25.

"The HA will make projections of the supply of PRH flats that can be allocated in the coming year and how such flats may be allocated to the various categories of demands. We will closely monitor any changes in the circumstances and will maintain flexibility in the allocation of PRH flats to optimise the use of resources," the spokesman added.

(Please refer to the attached table on the breakdown of estimated allocations for various categories in 2024-25.)

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, June 13, 2024 is 106.3 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Speech by Acting Commissioner for Tourism at Opening Ceremony of 38th International Travel Expo and 19th MICE Travel Expo (English only)

Following is the speech by the Acting Commissioner for Tourism, Ms Joanne Chu, at the Opening Ceremony of the 38th International Travel Expo and the 19th MICE Travel Expo:

Mr Tong (Founder and Managing Director of TKS Exhibition Services, Mr Tong Kam-shing), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, friends of Hong Kong,

First of all, thank you so much for having me today. It is my great honour to participate in the Opening Ceremony of the International Travel Expo and MICE Travel Expo event. And may I also extend a warm welcome to all of you to Hong Kong. 歡迎到香港 (Our friends from the Mainland, welcome to Hong Kong). I remember there is a very famous book about travel around the world in 80 days. But now I can tell you, you can just do it in one day. The trick, of course, is to come and visit the International Travel Expo. So I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to KS and your team for staging such a wonderful event in Hong Kong about tourism because right now we are promoting tourism everywhere.

So back to the Travel Expo this year. I know the theme this year is "Forward to Full Recovery". I think in Hong Kong, we have a very good story to tell. First of all, in terms of the tourism figures, following the resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the rest of the world, we have been seeing a very good trend of recovery of our tourism market.

Just take 2023 as an example. We received 34 million visitors coming from all over the world. And just in the first five months of 2024, we have already welcomed 18 million visitors coming to Hong Kong from different parts of the world, representing an increase of 78 per cent, compared to the same period of 2023. And we are confident that the increasing trend will continue because thanks to the support of the Central Government, we are welcoming more and more Mainland visitors to Hong Kong under the Individual Visit Scheme, which has recently been expanded to cover 59 Mainland cities, including all the provincial capitals on the Mainland. Under the Scheme, it will be more convenient and much easier for our Mainland friends to come and visit Hong Kong.

Besides, we are also stepping up our efforts to reach out and expand our new source market, including the Middle East and the Muslim market. So we stand ready to welcome our friends from different parts of the world to come to Hong Kong. So please ask your friends to come to Hong Kong; share your unique experience here in your social media to attract them to come.

In fact we know that to sustain the momentum, we have to diversify our tourism products to enrich our tourism offerings. Actually in the past few years, apart from enhancing our very famous local attractions – the two theme parks, the Peak, etc – we have been putting a lot of efforts in developing the thematic tour experiences to our visitors.

Just take the work of the Tourism Commission as an example. We launched two signature projects in the past few years. One is called the Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival. I'm sure most of you will know that Sai Kung is the back garden of Hong Kong. If you have a chance to visit Sai Kung, I strongly encourage you to go there to see the paradise of our city. The idea of the Arts Festival is to connect the beautiful islands of Sai Kung together with arts and culture. Imagine – on one hand, you are enjoying the beautiful sunshine and beautiful natural scenery, and on the other hand, you can immerse yourselves in art installations and different cultural activities. So is it amazing? Sounds very attractive, right? I think I should have something

back from all of you here. The upcoming Sai Kung Hoi Arts Festival this year will start in November in Hong Kong. Please stay tuned for this.

Another signature project that my office is doing is what we called the Design District Hong Kong, #ddHK in short. Again, our idea is to connect the local neighbourhood with arts and culture to showcase the local characteristics. We will have art installations by different artists, and also different cultural activities for visitors and locals to join. We have done the #ddHK in Central and Sham Shui Po before. This year, we will bring that to the New Territories, in Tsuen Wan and Sha Tau Kok, two other emerging tourist destinations to Hong Kong. The #ddHK, again, will come in the fourth quarter of this year. Please also stay tuned for this event.

Ladies and gentlemen, just the efforts of the Government, of course, isn't enough. We have to count on our trade. That's why we have been working very closely with the Travel Industry Council to encourage our local industry practitioners to develop more thematic tours covering local heritage, culture, the rich history of Hong Kong, and even blue and green tourism, so that when visitors come to Hong Kong, through taking part in these thematic tours, they can get a taste of the authenticity, vibrancy, energy and rich culture of the city and, of course, experience the East-meets-West culture of Hong Kong.

Of course I know that just the product is not enough. We have to continue organising different types of exciting and special events for our visitors. Talking about events, there is one event I think you can't afford to miss, which is the upcoming International Dragon Boat Race, to be held this weekend at the Tsim Sha Tsui Promenade. This is a carnival-like event combining local heritage. Of course, it's the legendary dragon boat race, entertainment, sports and tourism. I look forward to seeing you there at the Tsim Sha Tsui Promenade this weekend, because the Hong Kong Tourism Board will also have the Summer Chill Food Lane there, where you can enjoy a variety of local delicacies.

Apart from the dragon boat race, we have already scheduled over 210 events for the rest of the year in Hong Kong. Right now we are also having the Volleyball Nations League in Hong Kong. So do buy a ticket and support the volleyball teams that you like. Besides, if you are arts and culture lovers, right now we are having the Chinese Culture Festival and, later on, the International Arts Carnival. If you are a fan of comics, I am sure the 100% Doraemon and Friends Tour will be your cup of tea. If you are a foodie, no worries, do come and enjoy the Wine and Dine Festival to be held in October this year in Hong Kong.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am sure with the support of the Hong Kong Government and the efforts from all of us here, we can take the next step forward of the tourism industry and bring the industry to a new height. Once again, thank you so much for having me. I wish the twin expo another year of great success. Good health and prosperity to all of you here. Thank you so much.

Light Public Housing to open for applications from June 24 (with photos)

The Housing Bureau (HB) today (June 13) announced that the Light Public Housing (LPH) will be open for applications from June 24, with the Phase 1 application covering two projects at Yau Pok Road, Yuen Long, and Choi Hing Road, Ngau Tau Kok (Phase 1 application projects), which will provide a total of about 4 440 units for gradual intake anticipated from the first quarter of 2025 onwards.

Those eligible to apply for the Phase 1 application projects will receive by post on or before June 24 the application forms sent by the HB in batches. Interested applicants who submit the duly completed application forms between June 24 and July 15 will be handled with priority. From July 16 and beyond, the HB will continue to accept applications, which will be handled upon completion of processing the application forms submitted on or before July 15.

A spokesman for the HB said, "The Chief Executive has put forward in the 2022 Policy Address that the Government will expeditiously build about 30 000 LPH units by 2027-28 through making use of government and private land not yet earmarked for long-term development in the near future with standardised simple design and the Modular Integrated Construction approach or through converting existing government properties. This serves to fill the short-term gap of public housing supply and improve the living conditions and quality of life of people living in inadequate housing as soon as possible.

"It takes about two and a half years only from putting forward the LPH initiative for the first time in October 2022 to intake of the first batch of LPH units starting from the first quarter of 2025. This clearly shows the determination and execution ability of the current term of the Government in solving the housing problem faced by our people. Apart from the two projects in Yau Pok Road, Yuen Long, and Choi Hing Road, Ngau Tau Kok, we will continue to actively take forward the remaining 11 LPH projects across Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. Taking into account the progress of works, we will announce in due course the application arrangements for the other LPH projects."

The spokesperson added, "The environment as well as the leisure and living facilities of LPH are much better as compared with the inadequate housing conditions. LPH also offers an affordable rental level, which is set at around 90 per cent of the rent of traditional public rental housing (PRH) of the same type. The two projects being launched this time are located at the New Territories and the urban areas respectively with their own

advantages."

Details of LPH Phase 1 application are as follows:

(1) Eligibility for application: General applicants who are on the waiting list for traditional PRH for three years or more (calculated from the last intake date for the Phase 1 application projects, i.e. May 2025) are eligible to apply for LPH, with priority given to family applicants. Those meeting the eligibility criteria will receive by post the application forms sent by the HB in batches.

(2) Application period: Applicants who submit the duly completed application forms between June 24 and July 15 will be handled with priority. From July 16 and beyond, the HB will continue to accept applications, which will be handled upon completion of processing the application forms submitted on or before July 15.

(3) Submission methods: Interested applicants may submit their duly completed application forms by post to P.O. Box of the Dedicated Team on Light Public Housing of the Housing Bureau (P.O. Box 28222, Gloucester Road Post Office, Wan Chai, Hong Kong); or by depositing into the drop-in boxes during office hours (from 9am to 6pm, Mondays to Fridays, except Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays) at the following locations:

- Light Public Housing Information Counter at Podium Level 2, Hong Kong Housing Authority Customer Service Centre, 3 Wang Tau Hom South Road, Kowloon
- Office of the Dedicated Team on Light Public Housing at Room 801, 8/F, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

In addition, if the applicant and all family members have registered for "iAM Smart+", they may opt to complete, sign and submit the e-Form by scanning the exclusive QR code pre-printed in the application form.

Information on Phase 1 application projects is as follows:

(1) Yau Pok Road, Yuen Long: Providing about 2 150 units (including units for one to two persons, and three to four persons) with anticipated intake date in the first quarter of 2025. There are shops, launderettes, study/activity rooms, community services facilities, etc, within the project. There are also bus terminus and minibus stops within the project for providing public transport services, and it takes about 15 to 20 minutes to travel to Yuen Long Town Centre, Sheung Shui or Tai Lam Tunnel Bus Interchange. The estimated monthly rent ranges from about \$740 to \$1,420 (depending on the unit size) (Note).

(2) Choi Hing Road, Ngau Tau Kok: Providing about 2 290 units (including units for one to two persons, three to four persons, and four to five persons) with anticipated intake date in the second quarter of 2025. There are minibus stand, small shops, launderettes, study/activity rooms, community services facilities, etc, within the project. There are also a number of minibus and franchised bus routes in the vicinity travelling to/from Choi

Hung MTR station as well as different places in Hong Kong and Kowloon. It takes about five to 10 minutes on foot to reach Choi Fook Estate Market, Choi Tak Shopping Centre or Choi Wan Shopping Centre. The estimated monthly rent ranges from about \$1,110 to \$2,650 (depending on the unit size) (Note).

The HB will process the application forms received as soon as possible and make arrangements for the allocation procedures. To give priority to those families in need to move into LPH, if the applicants are currently living in inadequate housing; having special medical conditions; or having minor children, newborn babies, elderly persons, etc, in the family composition, they will be given higher priority for LPH allocation. The first batch of applicants who are successfully allocated LPH units under the Phase 1 application projects will be notified by the HB in batches starting from the fourth quarter of 2024, and will be arranged to go through eligibility verification and intake arrangements. For those applicants who are not allocated any LPH unit, their information will be retained for processing together with other applications received during the other phases of LPH application.

For information about the LPH Phase 1 application, please refer to the enclosed LPH Promotional Pamphlet, or browse the LPH website of the HB (www.hb.gov.hk/eng/lph). For enquiries, please call 3464 0700, or send email to lphapp@hb.gov.hk.

Note: Rents vary depending on the unit size and the district. The rental level is preliminarily set at around 90 per cent of the rent of newly completed traditional PRH in the same district and is estimated based on the current rent of traditional PRH. Having regard to the biennial rent review of the traditional PRH, the rent of LPH will also be adjusted accordingly.



