

LCQ13: Tests on food products imported from Japan

Following is a question by the Hon JoePHY Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (April 10):

Question:

It has been reported that last month, the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety of Korea conducted radioactivity tests on a batch of candies from the Shizuoka Prefecture of Japan and found that each kilogram (kg) of the candies contained one becquerel (Bq) of caesium. Even though the radiation level was below the safety level of 100 Bq per kg, the Korean authorities still required the importer to conduct tests on that batch of candies for other radioactive substances, and the importer also cancelled the import of that batch of affected candies based on the test results. Some members of the public are worried that the 30-year-long nuclear wastewater discharge plan of the Japanese authorities will lead to the gradual accumulation of food safety risks for food products imported from Japan. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will, in the light of the aforesaid situation, draw up a response plan for food products imported from Japan, such as increasing the number of tests and the items to be tested; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) of the number of samples of food products imported from Japan on which the authorities conducted tests for radioactive substance content in each month from February 2022 to February this year, together with a breakdown by test result (i.e. satisfactory and unsatisfactory); and

(3) whether it will tighten the food safety requirements for food products imported from Japan in the future; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

A reply to the various parts of the Hon JoePHY Chan's question is provided as follows:

(1) In response to the report on Japanese candies exported to Korea from the Shizuoka Prefecture being found to contain one becquerel (Bq) of caesium per kilogram (kg) upon radioactivity tests, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department promptly enquired with the authorities of Korea and Japan on March 10, 2024 about the details of the

product in question and is awaiting their replies. According to the safety standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), the guideline level for caesium is 1 000 Bq per kg of food. During the three-month period prior to the abovementioned incident, the CFS took 54 samples of candies from Japan for radiation testing. Upon learning of the incident, the CFS immediately stepped up testing and took a total of 34 samples of Japanese candies for radiation testing from March 10 to 19. The results of all the said samples were satisfactory.

(2) The CFS took altogether about 63 000 samples of food imported from Japan for radiation testing between February 2022 and February 2024. All samples were found to be satisfactory. The relevant breakdown is at Annex. The number of samples taken is determined by the number of batches and quantity of the imported Japanese food and the risk-based surveillance strategy.

(3) In response to the unilateral decision of the Japanese Government to start discharging nuclear-contaminated water into the ocean from 24 August 2023, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order to prohibit the import of aquatic products from 10 metropolis/prefectures in Japan into Hong Kong. All aquatic products originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely, Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, are prohibited from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong if they are harvested, manufactured, processed or packed on or after August 24, 2023, including all live, chilled, frozen, dried or otherwise preserved aquatic products, sea salt, and unprocessed or processed seaweed. For other aquatic products, sea salt, and unprocessed or processed seaweed from Japan that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the CFS 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.

Besides, since the accident at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station in 2011, import control measures have been maintained on certain food products from Japan. All vegetables, fruits, milk, milk beverages and dried milk originating from Fukushima are banned from importing into Hong Kong while such foods originating from the four prefectures nearby Fukushima, namely, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba and Gunma, are allowed to be imported on the condition that they are accompanied by a radiation certificate and an exporter certificate issued by the Japanese authority. Chilled or frozen game, meat and poultry and poultry eggs originating from the above five prefectures are allowed to be imported on the condition that they are accompanied with a radiation certificate issued by the Japanese authority which shows the radiation levels do not exceed the Codex guideline levels.

The CFS will continue to enhance the testing on imported Japanese food, and make adjustment to relevant surveillance in a timely manner with reference to the risk assessment results. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

Inter-departmental help desks set up

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

In response to the fire incident at a building on Jordan Road in Yau Ma Tei, the Yau Tsim Mong District Office today (April 10) has set up interdepartmental help desks. Together with other government departments, the help desks will render appropriate assistance to the public.

The help desks and enquiry hotlines are as follows:

	Location	Enquiry hotlines
1.	Accident and Emergency Department, Kwong Wah Hospital	2384 8151
2.	Accident and Emergency Department, Queen Elizabeth Hospital	2782 7907

LCQ14: Implementing digital government

Following is a question by the Hon Andrew Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, in the Legislative Council today (April 10):

Question:

In response to a question raised by a Member of this Council at a special meeting of the Finance Committee held to discuss the Estimates of Expenditure 2023-2024, the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry indicated that the Government had reserved \$600 million as the expenditure for e-Government audit work and the implementation of digital government initiatives, and targeted to launch 100 digital government initiatives that would leverage advanced technology by end-2025 for providing more services to bring convenience to the public and benefit the business sector. It is learnt that the audit work commenced in 2022 and was completed in end-2023. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the analyses and recommendations of the aforesaid audit work, and set out the relevant information by policy bureaux/government departments (B/Ds);

(2) of the details and timetable of the infrastructural improvement works carried out or to be carried out in the light of the recommendations mentioned in (1); and

(3) as the Government indicated in the reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on January 24 this year that from this year onwards, various B/Ds would progressively launch over a hundred of digital government and smart city initiatives, including the artificial intelligence (AI) initiatives of enhancing security in the public cargo working areas by employing AI and extending the AI chatbot service in the 1823 enquiry service, whether the Government will launch those AI initiatives first in the first half of this year; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that and the specific timetable for launching those AI initiatives?

Reply:

President,

My consolidated reply to the questions raised by the Hon Andrew Lam is as follows:

To further expedite the development of smart city and digital government, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) carried out the e-Government audit from 2022 to review the information technology (IT) systems and services of B/Ds, with a view to recommending digital government initiatives that could leverage technologies to enhance public services. The e-Government audit was conducted in two phases, and the audit work for both phases involving a total of 73 B/Ds had been completed.

Based on the analysis and recommendations of the e-Government audit, some examples on improving the services by leveraging advanced technologies include: application of AI and chatbot technologies to improve government hotline services; application of data analytics, geospatial analysis and visualisation dashboard technologies to improve service management; using blockchain technology to issue and verify certificates or licences electronically; and adopting "iAM Smart" and "Consented Data Exchange Gateway" to achieve "single portal for online government services" and facilitate data sharing among B/Ds. The breakdown of relevant recommendations is at Annex 1.

B/Ds are actively following up on the implementation of the digital government initiatives recommended by the audit, with the target to launch their respective initiatives progressively in the coming two years from 2024 to 2025. Some of the digital government initiatives being implemented are at Annex 2.

Compared with general IT systems, the development of digital service initiatives that adopt AI technology not only involves procurement of relevant technology products and services, but also requires additional processes to establish AI models, including preparing huge amount of training data, training of AI models and repeatedly adjusting and testing the accuracy of the models, etc. Therefore, initiatives that adopt AI technology usually

take a longer time to develop. With regard to the digital government initiative of enhancing security in public cargo working areas by employing AI technology, the implementation work has commenced and is expected for launch in the first half of 2025. As for the initiative of enhancing the 1823 enquiry service through AI chatbot, relevant work is also underway and it is expected to be fully rolled out in the second half of 2024.

To support B/Ds in implementing the digital government initiatives recommended by the e-Government audit, OGCI0 has set up the required digital infrastructures and shared services such as the Government Cloud Infrastructure Services, Big Data Analytics Platform, Shared Blockchain Platform and Chatbot-as-a-Service, etc. B/Ds will also adopt "iAM Smart", the one-stop personalised digital services platform, to realise "single portal for online government services" for enhancing user experience.

CE welcomes appointment of Cui Jianchun as Commissioner of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in HKSAR

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, today (April 10) welcomed the Central Government's appointment of Mr Cui Jianchun as the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

Mr Lee said, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR (OCMFA), the HKSAR has been developing its external affairs in accordance with the Basic Law to foster Hong Kong's external exchanges and co-operation, enhancing its international impact and competitiveness. The OCMFA has also rendered consular protection and appropriate assistance to Hong Kong citizens in distress overseas. In recent years, with the strong support of the Central Government and the assistance of the OCMFA, a number of HKSAR young public officers have worked in the United Nations as Chinese personnel to give their best in the international arena, contributing to the development of the country and Hong Kong, and telling good stories of Hong Kong to the world.

Mr Lee said that as a veteran diplomat, Mr Cui has significant experience in overseas assignments. Mr Lee said he firmly believes that under Mr Cui's leadership, the OCMFA will continue to work closely with the HKSAR Government in taking forward different areas of work. The HKSAR Government will continue to dovetail with the overall strategy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and accurately explain Hong Kong's latest developments to overseas audiences, telling good stories of Hong Kong and the "one country, two systems" principle.

Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Happy Valley

Special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Happy Valley today (April 10). The arrangements will come into effect one and a half hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

A. Traffic arrangements before the commencement of the first race

1. Road closure

Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp outside the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) will be closed except for vehicles heading for Aberdeen Tunnel.

2. Traffic diversions

- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the up-ramp outside HKJC will be re-routed one way northbound;
- Traffic along eastbound Queen's Road East heading for Wan Chai and Happy Valley will be diverted to turn left to Morrison Hill Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic along Queen's Road East cannot turn right to Wong Nai Chung Road except for vehicles heading for Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Queen's Road East will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Morrison Hill Road to turn right at the junction of Wong Nai Chung Road and Queen's Road East; and
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley or Racecourse will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, southbound Morrison Hill Road, Sports Road and Wong Nai Chung Road.

B. Traffic arrangements before the conclusion of race meeting

1. Road closure

The following roads will be closed from about 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- The up-ramp on Wong Nai Chung Road outside HKJC leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Queen's Road East and the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel;
- Southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Village Road and the Public Stands of HKJC;

- Westbound Leighton Road between Wong Nai Chung Road and Canal Road East; and
- Southbound Morrison Hill Road between Leighton Road and Queen's Road East.

In addition, southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between the up-ramp leading to Aberdeen Tunnel and the Public Stands of HKJC will be closed from about 10 minutes before the start of the last race.

2. Traffic diversions

The following traffic diversions will be implemented from about 35 minutes before the start of the last race:

- Eastbound Queen's Road East at its junction with Morrison Hill Road will be reduced to one-lane traffic heading for northbound Canal Road flyover;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Wan Chai will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, U-turn slip road beneath Canal Road flyover, Canal Road West and Hennessy Road;
- Traffic from Cross Harbour Tunnel heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via the down-ramp leading from southbound Canal Road flyover to Canal Road East, eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road will be diverted to turn left to eastbound Leighton Road;
- Traffic along southbound Morrison Hill Road heading for Happy Valley will be diverted via eastbound Leighton Road and Wong Nai Chung Road; and
- Traffic along westbound Leighton Road will be diverted to Wong Nai Chung Road.

C. Learner drivers prohibition

Learner drivers will be prohibited to turn left from Caroline Hill Road to Leighton Road between one and a half hours before the start of the first race and one hour after the last race. In addition, learner drivers will be prohibited from accessing the following roads within the above period of time:

- Shan Kwong Road between Yik Yam Street and Wong Nai Chung Road;
- Village Road between its upper and lower junctions with Shan Kwong Road;
- Percival Street between Hennessy Road and Leighton Road;
- Canal Road East; and
- The service road leading from Gloucester Road to Canal Road flyover.

D. Suspension of parking spaces

Parking spaces on southbound Wong Nai Chung Road between Sports Road and Blue Pool Road will be suspended from 11am to 7pm during day racing, from 4.30pm to 11.59pm during evening racing, and from 5pm to 11.59pm during night racing.

Any vehicles found illegally parked within the precincts of the above affected areas will be towed away without prior notice.

Actual implementation of road closure and traffic diversion will be made by the Police at the time depending on traffic conditions in the areas. Motorists should exercise tolerance and patience, and follow the instructions of Police on site.