社評雙語道

與內地通關更有現實可能性 政府需早做預案

Government should make early preparations as travel resumption with mainland most plausible

原文

本港近日出現兩宗新冠確診個案，皆證實感染了傳染力極強的Delta病毒。迄今傳染性最強的Delta病毒，正造成歐美疫情反彈、澳洲封城兼澳新旅遊氣泡中斷，東京也不排除會封城，新一波疫情風險迫在眉睫，本港與歐美常態通關，變得越來越遙遙無期；而廣東已成功控制變種病毒傳播，中國工程院院士鍾南山指香港與內地可望7月有限度通關。疫情防控態勢顯示，本港與內地通關最有條件、可能性最大，政府有必要及早與內地商定通關預案，可考慮先商務、再探親，積累經驗後再擴大，同時加快疫苗接種步伐，創造通關有利條件。

世衛總幹事譚德塞近日警告指，Delta病毒是迄今發現的傳染性最強的新冠病毒，已有至少85個國家和地區發現了這一變種毒株，且正在未接種疫苗的群體中迅速傳播。中國工程院院士鍾南山指，Delta病毒載量高、潛伏期短、核酸轉陰時間長，在傳播早期不到10天內已有五代的傳播，比普通病毒株傳染性高一倍。

目前，Delta病毒已導致多國疫情反彈。英國近日每日新增的1.8萬確診個案，幾乎全部都是Delta變種病毒個案；美國新增病例有35%感染的是Delta變種病毒；德國預計境內疫情將由於Delta變種病毒而出現反彈；澳洲悉尼感染Delta變種病毒個案增至110宗，悉尼已進入兩星期封鎖，為此新西蘭暫停與澳洲旅遊氣泡3天。最先發現Delta變種病毒的印度，目前更發現傳染性更強的Delta Plus變種病毒，其中馬哈拉施特拉邦已有至少20宗病例。本港最近新增的輸入確診個案皆感染變種病毒，兩宗本土確診病例已證實感染了Delta變種病毒，顯示該變種已進入本港社區，本港與歐美實施常態通關的希望，至少在短期內無法實現。

目前防控Delta變種病毒傳播，廣州已取得成功經驗。據中國工程院院士鍾南山介紹，廣州針對Delta變異株感染的特點，採取了創新的科學管理措施，如迅速鎖定感染源、精準查清傳播鏈；更新了密切接觸者概念，分級制定了封閉、封控等不同的管控模式；通過大數據查出曾到過高危區的人群賦予「黃碼」標誌等。由於廣州已連續一周多未有新增確診個案，鍾南山表示，預計內地與香港恢復通關會比較快，因為最近香港沒有出現社區傳播，疫情控制得比較好，預計7月份應能有限通關。

廣州抗擊Delta變種病毒的經驗，值得本港參考借鑒，而鍾南山院士關於本港與內地通關的時間判斷及理據，亦對本港考慮通關方向、抗疫重點有提醒作用。事實上，內地疫情防控成績有目共睹，本港與內地通關，確是最現實、最可行、最有條件的，特區政府可考慮將疫情防控近期目標，務實地確定為與內地實施分階段通關，為此做好預案，加緊與內地商討，以盡快實現與內地有序擴大範圍通關。

政府還應同時全力推進疫苗接種工作。據倫敦帝國理工學院的研究，年輕人感染Delta變種病毒比率是年長一輩的5倍，美國總統拜登24日亦在社交媒體指，年輕、尚未接種疫苗的人最危險。目前英格蘭地區有超過一半30歲以下的成年人已接種疫苗，當局並在體育館和商場等場所，設立數百個毋須提前預約、可直接前往打針的疫苗接種點。本港可借鑒這些做法，提高年輕人接種疫苗動力，加快本港疫苗接種進度，促進與內地盡快實現通關。

（摘錄自香港《文匯報》社評 2021-06-28）

● 本港與內地通關最有條件、可能性最大。圖為出深圳灣口岸。 資料圖片

Exercise

1. 旅遊氣泡 2. 變種毒株 3. 潛伏期 4. 社區傳播 5. 封城

Answer

1. travel bubble 2. mutant strain 3. incubation period 4. community transmission 5. lockdown

譯文

Both of the two newly confirmed Covid-19 cases in Hong Kong were found to be the highly contagious Delta variant. The Delta variant, the most contagious mutant strain so far, is currently causing a rebound of new cases in the West. It also brought the Australia-New Zealand travel bubble to an abrupt end, leading to lockdowns in the former country. In response to the threat of the highly infectious variant, Tokyo is also considering implementing lockdowns. Under the imminent threat of a new wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the West is becoming less and less likely. Meanwhile, the Delta outbreak has been successfully brought under control in Guangzhou, China. According to Zhong Nanshan, member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, limited travel between Hong Kong and mainland China could resume as early as July. As the current pandemic situation shows that mainland China is in the best position to resume travel with Hong Kong, the government should begin negotiations with its mainland counterparts as soon as possible. The authorities could consider opening up business travels first, and then extend the arrangement to family visits and so on, after accumulating relevant experience. At the same time, the vaccination rate should be further boosted to create a more favourable environment for travel resumption.

World Health Organisation Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus recently warned that the Delta virus is the most contagious variant of Covid-19 so far. At least 85 countries or regions have already reported cases of this variant, and it is still spreading rapidly among unvaccinated groups. According to the Chinese expert Zhong Nanshan, the Delta variant is not only more contagious than previous ones, but also has a shorter incubation period and requires a longer time to turn negative in testing. A fifth-generation transmission has been recorded in only less than 10 days, showing that the Delta virus is twice as contagious as the common strain.

At present, the Delta virus has caused a rebound of new Covid-19 cases in many countries. Almost all of the 18,000 newly confirmed cases per day in the UK are Delta variants, while 35 per cent of the new cases in the United States were also Delta variants. Germany is expecting a rebound in new cases due to the threat of the Delta virus. In Sydney, Australia, the number of Delta variant cases has increased to 110, forcing the city to enter into a two-week lockdown. The country's travel bubble arrangement with the neighbouring New Zealand was also consequentially suspended for three days. India, where the Delta variant was first discovered, has now discovered an even more contagious Delta Plus variant, of which there have been at least 20 cases in its state of Maharashtra. Back in Hong Kong, the newly imported cases along with the two local cases have all been infected with the Delta variant. This indicates that the Delta variant has entered the local community already. Given the circumstances, it is highly unlikely that the hopes of resuming travel with Europe and America could be fulfilled in the short term.

Meanwhile in Guangzhou, the spread of the Delta variant has been successfully brought under control. According to Zhong, innovative measures were taken to target the Delta variant specifically. These measures include swift source identification, accurate investigation of transmission chains, expanded definition of close contacts, and tiered control of local communities. People who went to high-risk areas were also tracked and assigned "yellow codes" with the help of big data. Since there have been no new confirmed cases for over a week in Guangzhou, and that no community transmission is found in Hong Kong recently, Zhong believes the resumption of travel could happen sooner between mainland China and Hong Kong, with limited travel starting as early as July.

Guangzhou's fight against the Delta variant is a valuable lesson for Hong Kong, while Zhong's advice on when to resume travel between Hong Kong and mainland China has also provided some hints for the city's border re-opening and anti-pandemic efforts. Mainland China's success on pandemic control is evident to all, and as such is in the best position to resume travel with Hong Kong. The SAR government may consider setting a phased resumption of cross-boundary travel with the mainland as its short-term goal. To this end, the authorities should make preparations together with their mainland counterparts.

At the same time, the government should spare no effort in promoting vaccination. According to research conducted by Imperial College London, the possibility of younger people catching the Delta variant is five times higher compared to older people. US President Joe Biden also stated on social media on 24 June that unvaccinated young people are the most at risk. Over 50 per cent of adults under the age of 30 in England have now been vaccinated. The relevant authorities have set up hundreds of vaccination points in stadiums and shopping malls, of which the public can go directly without having to make an appointment. Hong Kong can learn from these practices to motivate younger generations to take the jab, so that the overall vaccination rate could be boosted further, and travels between Hong Kong and mainland China could be resumed as soon as possible.

● Jeffrey Tse

「宅男皇帝」唔見人 大臣唔撈自己走

歷史今昔

對於明朝的評價，不少人都偏向負面，因為明朝的奇葩皇帝還真不少，有些喜歡玩木工，有些喜歡打仗，但就是不喜歡治理國家。而今天，就跟大家說一個「宅男皇帝」的故事。

話說在明朝中期，皇帝很喜歡其中一個兒子，想把他立為繼承人。可惜的是，這兒子並不是嫡長子，所以朝臣群起反對，要求皇帝遵照傳統，立長不立幼，弄得雙方很不愉快。雖然皇帝擁有絕對權力，但在立太子一事上卻不能不顧群臣反對，結果只能把事情擱置，然後關起門來當宅男。達成這個前無古人後無來者的成就，就是明神宗，也因其年號而被稱為萬曆皇帝。

這件事可以說是神宗的無聲抗議，大臣們既然不讓我自己選太子，我就不見你們，結果在萬曆十五年左右，官員真的再也見不到皇帝，而且一「潛水」就快三十年。這後果就嚴重了，大臣們整天無所事事，不做事白領薪水也算了，最慘的是有病還不能辭職。

古代官員想辭職，要先得到皇帝批准，稱為「致仕」，不辭而去就是有罪，但萬曆一朝中，就出現了不少官員遞了辭職信卻收不到回覆的個案，結果官員們等來等去都等不到批准，只好遞了信就當皇帝收到，自己收拾行李回鄉，所以讀《明史》中關於萬曆一朝的記載時，常常見到某某「拜疏自去」，像是戶部尚書趙世卿、吏部尚書孫丕揚、兵部尚書掌都察院事孫瑋、吏部尚書趙煥、禮部右侍郎孫慎行等。

大臣們辭職不幹，但空缺卻沒人補上，造成各級官員都不夠的局面，而明朝的國勢也日漸衰弱。

不過，也替萬曆帝說句公道說話。他雖然不見大臣，但萬曆一朝倒也沒有用過奸臣，而他對朝政亦非不聞不問，至少也打了三次仗，稱為「萬曆三大征」，最著名的就是日本豐臣秀吉進攻朝鮮的時候，萬曆帝動員四萬大軍渡過鴨綠江支援，擊退日軍之餘，也間接令豐臣政權崩潰。有歷史學家認為，萬曆皇帝雖然當「宅男」，但他仍看奏章，所以對嚴重的事件還會有反應，朝政其實不算太糟。

至於萬曆帝為什麼長年不上朝，現代又有另一套說法，認為除了和大臣鬥氣之外，也因為萬曆帝本身的身體問題。歷史學家在1958打開了萬曆帝的陵墓，發現他的腳一長一短，即患有嚴重腿病，甚至影響走路，認為某程度上令他晚年不想見到大臣。

不過，這說法也有問題。根據史料記載，其實萬曆皇帝也不是完全不露面，重要的儀式還是有親自主持，像是明軍擊退日軍後班師回朝，萬曆帝就親自在午門受俘，接受百官朝賀，所以身體因素有多大影響，還留待歷史學家繼續考證。

● 萬曆帝的定陵在上世紀被考古學家打開，現已成為定陵博物館。 資料圖片

● 布安東（歷史系博士，興趣遊走於中西歷史文化及古典音樂。）

我們與巴黎協定的距離

氣象萬千

今次的疫情令到人類活動大受影響，2020年全球的碳排放亦曾經短暫減少，但氣候變化整體形勢有否紓緩呢？為遏止全球暖化趨勢而通過的《巴黎協定》，目標是把全球本世紀末的升溫，控制在較工業化前水平上升2℃之內，並盡可能將溫度升幅限制在1.5℃內，我們距離這個目標，到底相差多遠呢？

世界氣象組織表示，2020年的全球平均溫度已較工業化前水平高出約1.2℃，成為全球最暖三個年份之一。而香港2019年和2020年亦是有記錄以來最熱的兩年，2020年本港的酷熱日數與熱夜數目都打破紀錄，北半球在2020年經歷了有記錄以來最熱夏季，同年6月西伯利亞的平均溫度較正常高出超過5℃。

全球升溫，格陵蘭及南極洲的冰蓋融化速度較1990年代快了6倍，在2003年至2019年期間，這兩處的冰蓋平均每年流失3,180億噸冰。陸地冰雪融化加上海水受熱膨脹，導致全球海平面上升，20世紀的上升速度是過去三千年來最快，並且正在加快，而香港海平面就每十年平均上升31毫米，數據分析顯示，高水位事件出現的頻率越來越高。

氣溫上升亦加強了大氣盛載水汽的能力，大雨出現機率隨之增加，2020年極端降雨就引致亞洲多個地區嚴重水浸。香港方面，以往的一小時雨量紀錄要幾十年才打破一次，但幾十年卻是經常創出新紀錄。

此外，氣候變化帶來的其他極端天氣，包括乾旱及高溫，近年亦加劇了美國、澳洲、巴西、西伯利亞等地的山火災害。

說到全球變暖的主要元兇二氧化碳，濃度已經超過410ppm，比工業化前水平高約50%，而根據聯合國的2020年碳排放差距，2019年全球溫室氣體排放連續三年刷新紀錄，若果要達到《巴黎協定》的2℃目標，各國承諾的減排力度就必須增加3倍，假如要去到1.5℃目標，減排力度就更必須增加5倍以上。

氣候變化沒有因為疫情而停止，氣候警鐘已敲響，我們要立即行動，刻不容緩。

● 氣溫上升會加強大氣盛載水汽的能力，大雨出現機率隨之增加。 資料圖片

● 香港天文台（本欄以天文台的網上氣象節目《氣象冷知識》向讀者簡介有趣的天氣現象。詳請可瀏覽天文台YouTube專頁：https://www.youtube.com/user/hkweather。）

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