

## **Announcement by Judiciary**

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Judiciary yesterday (July 15) was notified by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) that a contractor cleaner at the Labour Tribunal (LT) was tested positive for COVID-19.

The LT (including registry) is undergoing cleansing and disinfection and will be closed from today (July 16) until further notice. All hearings of the LT originally scheduled today and thereafter will be adjourned and refixed to a date and time to be notified by the court in due course. All relevant parties to the proceedings affected should keep in view any further notification by the court or public announcements by the Judiciary.

For enquiries, please call the following hotline during office hours (8.45am-1pm and 2pm-5.30pm, from Monday to Friday):

Labour Tribunal: 3916 6148

Separately, a court user who visited Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts (TMM) was also tested positive for COVID-19 yesterday. The relevant building has undergone cleansing and disinfection.

Since the court user concerned had a shorter stay and a relatively limited visit inside the building, the TMM will operate as usual today and hearings at TMM today will proceed as scheduled. However, the affected floors and other relevant places will be closed after cleansing and disinfection until further notice.

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## **HKSARG firmly opposes the Hong Kong Autonomy Act becoming US law**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government issued a statement today (July 15), expressing its strong opposition to the United States (US) signing into law the so-called "Hong Kong Autonomy Act" (the Act) passed by the US Congress. The HKSAR Government strongly objected to and deplored the series of measures to be adopted by the US under the President's executive order. As mentioned in the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of our country, the move of the US seriously violates international law and the basic norms underpinning international relations, and constitutes gross interference in Hong Kong affairs and China's internal affairs, which is deeply regretted. The HKSAR Government will fully support the Central Government to adopt counter-measures and will not allow the US hegemony to

succeed.

A Government spokesman said, "It is hypocritical for the US to introduce measures to attack China by creating issues in the HKSAR under the pretext of human rights, democracy and autonomy out of its own political considerations. It is egregious for the US to undermine the relationship between the HKSAR and the Central Authority under 'One Country, Two Systems' and to cover its abhorrent acts by the political slogan of 'supporting Hong Kong people'. This move is in violation of international law, and will definitely harm the relations and common interests between China and the US, and that of Hong Kong and the US, causing tremendous damage to the companies and people of the US.

"The US has clearly demonstrated its double standards by rationalising the measures to be adopted under the Act and the executive order on ground of safeguarding its national security, while claiming that the enactment of national security legislation by the Central Authority for the HKSAR is undermining the HKSAR's high degree of autonomy. It is the legitimate right and duty of every state to safeguard its national security. Matters concerning the national security of any local region fall squarely within the purview of the central authorities. For any state, be it adopting a unitary or federal system, legislation on national security is invariably carried out by the central authorities rather than local government. There are at least 20 pieces of legislation that safeguard national security in the US, and the law enforcement agencies are all authorities at the federal level.

"The US should be clear about the fact that the HKSAR is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and a local administrative region which enjoys a high degree of autonomy and comes directly under the Central People's Government. As the highest organ of state power in the PRC, the National People's Congress has the constitutional power and duty to enact national law to safeguard national security in the HKSAR (i.e. the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the National Security Law) adopted on June 30) and to apply it to Hong Kong by promulgation in accordance with the provisions of the Basic Law.

The spokesman stressed, "Since the return to the Motherland, the HKSAR has been implementing the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle, 'Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy in strict accordance with the Basic Law. The Central Government has given the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle unswerving support and acted in strict accordance with the Constitution and the Basic Law."

"In view of the increasingly pronounced national security risks faced by the HKSAR, especially in light of the escalating violence and social chaos since June last year, the enactment of the National Security Law by the Central Authorities is a timely, reasonable and rational decision.

"The National Security Law seeks to prevent, suppress and impose punishment for four types of acts and activities that seriously endanger national security. It targets only an extremely small minority of people

without adversely affecting the basic rights and freedoms lawfully enjoyed by Hong Kong residents. It is a necessary, timely and important step to improve the 'One Country, Two Systems' regime. During the legislative process, HKSAR's practical situation was taken into account and the views of the HKSAR Government and of various sectors of the community were adopted. The National Security Law will not affect the high degree of autonomy, judicial independence and the rule of law in Hong Kong. We strongly believe only when national security is safeguarded can Hong Kong enjoy long-term stability and security.

"The special status as a separate customs territory enjoyed by the HKSAR under 'One Country, Two Systems' is conferred by the Constitution of the PRC and the Basic Law. They are recognised by multilateral organisations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), but not granted or revocable by an individual country. On the other hand, the US has enjoyed huge benefit from the economic and trade exchanges between the two places. In the decade between 2010 and 2019, the US enjoyed a cumulative merchandise trade surplus of around US\$310 billion over Hong Kong. The merchandise trade surplus in 2019 alone was over US\$26 billion, the highest among the US's trading partners. At present there are 1 300 US companies operating a wide range of businesses in Hong Kong. They enjoy the same treatments as local companies in accessing the Mainland market. The American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong is the largest international chamber in Hong Kong. 85 000 US citizens call Hong Kong their home. It would be a self-deception if the US thinks that unilaterally introducing various measures that restrict normal business activities or people exchanges would not affect its own interests.

"The HKSAR Government will carefully consider if US's measures contravene WTO rules, and does not rule out the possibility of taking action under WTO rules to protect Hong Kong's interests. Moreover, we reiterate that any measures imposed under the Act and the executive order do not have any legal effect on Hong Kong financial institutions."

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## [UCH announces passing away of COVID-19 patient](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for the United Christian Hospital (UCH) today (July 15) announced that an 89-year-old male confirmed as having COVID-19 (case number: 1450) passed away today.

The patient with chronic illness was admitted to the hospital on July 11 due to pneumonia. His condition continued to deteriorate while receiving treatment and eventually succumbed tonight.

The Hospital was saddened about the passing away of the patient and would offer necessary assistance to his family members.

Including the above case, a total of 10 COVID-19 patients have passed away in public hospitals so far.

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## Queen Elizabeth Hospital update on cluster of COVID-19 suspected of nosocomial infection

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) spokesperson provided the following updates today (July 15) regarding a cluster of COVID-19 suspected of nosocomial infection reported yesterday (July 14):

QEH reported yesterday that three female patients staying in the same cubicle of a medical ward was confirmed with COVID-19 infections. The hospital has followed up with the remaining 42 female patients of the concerned ward. All the patient specimens taken for nasopharyngeal swab were tested negative of COVID-19. Nine patients had been discharged. The hospital will maintain close communication with the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) to follow up the condition of the discharged patients. The two COVID-19 confirmed patients (case numbers: 1513 and 1563) and one preliminary positive patient are in stable conditions and they are under isolation treatment.

QEH has also followed up with the healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and patient care assistants, who had contacted with the confirmed cases. A total of 62 healthcare workers have taken the COVID-19 tests, among them 30 were tested negative to COVID-19 while the remaining tests are still in progress.

On the other hand, a patient care assistant who works in the same ward was also tested preliminary positive of COVID-19 today. She has not returned to the hospital for work during July 10 to 14. On July 12, she attended QEH Accident and Emergency Department with presence of upper respiratory symptoms and her COVID-19 test was negative at that time. She returned to work this afternoon. She had the COVID-19 test again in voluntary basis, and the test result was positive. As per her report, she resides in Tsz Wan Shan district. The hospital preliminary epidemiology investigation shows that the index patient of the cluster of cases was admitted on July 12, meaning that the patient care assistant was not present when the infections took place. It is believed that the patient care assistant was not related to the cluster of cases. There is also no evidence showing that she infected any patient during

her work at the ward.

The hospital will closely work with CHP for further investigation and also monitor the condition of concerned staff and patients. The hospital has stepped up infection control measures and suspended of admitting new patients according to the established mechanism in the concerned ward.

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## Update on investigation into cases of Legionnaires' disease in hospital

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (July 15) reported an update on its investigation into two cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD) in Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH) announced earlier.

The CHP identified one additional patient related to the case. The male patient, aged 45 with underlying illness, was admitted to TMH on June 25 due to medical conditions and stayed in the same ward as the Legionella cases announced on June 26 and 30.

The patient developed fever on July 12. His sputum specimen tested positive for Legionella species upon laboratory testing. His condition is critical. Investigation is ongoing.

"Epidemiological investigations with TMH are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any. Relevant water samples and environmental swabs have been collected from potential sources for laboratory testing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Tracing of contacts including staff and in-patients in ward is ongoing and those identified have been put under medical surveillance. The CHP has provided health advice against LD to staff and in-patients, including those with weakened immunity who should use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing. Investigation is ongoing.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may become infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A

shower may also generate small aerosols; and

- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh-water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2  $\mu\text{m}$  filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
  1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
  2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
  3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
  4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
  5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's LD page, the Code of Practice for Prevention of LD and the Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's risk-based strategy for prevention and control of LD.