

SED on national security education and HKDSE Examination History paper

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, and Deputy Secretary for Education, Mrs Hong Chan Tsui-wah, at a media session after attending a radio programme today (May 23):

Reporter: What would be the EDB's role in strengthening national security education? And can you explain why cancelling the History examination question is the only viable solution? Thank you.

Secretary for Education: The National People's Congress has decided to legislate for a new national security law which would be applicable to Hong Kong. We fully support this decision. One of the follow-up that they mentioned is about education on national security in Hong Kong. I think this is more than just school education. It is also about the whole education in the whole community because I believe every citizen also has the responsibility to ensure national security. In schools, of course, when the law is enacted and implemented, we will see how to explain to our students the essence of the law and also the underlying principles to them in our curriculum.

Reporter: The second question is about cancelling the History examination question. Why do you think it's the only viable solution?

Deputy Secretary for Education: The question by design has serious faults. It is not compatible with the History curriculum objectives and the information provided there does not fall into the level of understanding of the students. Because within the curriculum the main emphasis is on the invasion by Japan and, in a very rare case, school teachers would touch upon the economic invasion, literally speaking. But the information provided in the question seemed to lead students to believe that there are merits or good done by the Japanese. So that is, by itself, misleading. Students have not learned this within the curriculum and in the classroom. It is very difficult for them to judge the intricacies of the information provided to arrive at a reliable judgement. So very often they just based on the information to come up with a very superficial understanding, just like doing a comprehension exercise to believe that Japan had done some good to China but that is not true because the problem is that there are malicious intention behind and some historians would regard that as some forms of economic invasions. The information therein are not reliable, not reflected the true picture. So it is very difficult to come up with a reliable marking scheme. From the assessment point of view, for a question with serious faults in design, you cannot come up with a reliable, objective marking scheme to differentiate students. I give an example, if we have a student who comes up with just a few words saying that for that period many Chinese suffered from the Japanese invasion and we can come up with an idea about the good done by the Japanese. So that would be a very short answer. But that reflected his genuine understanding of

the key historical views within that period. But you cannot count the number of points about the good done by the Japanese against the harm done by the Japanese. So it's not that level of comparison, it's not counting the number of points and a balanced treatment. So the design of the question has serious faults. And that's why you cannot come up with a reliable marking scheme to differentiate students. For those who have a thorough understanding, may be they just come up a very strong view about the Japanese invasion without mentioning any benefits. We have thought about that from this perspective and all the reasons are detailed in the panel paper. You can make reference to them.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Red flag hoisted at Pui O Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 23) that due to big waves, red flag has been hoisted at Pui O Beach in Islands District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

Correctional officer stops remand person in custody from committing suicide by hanging

Correctional officer stopped a 57-year-old male remand person in custody from committing suicide by hanging at Stanley Prison yesterday (May 22).

At 8.51pm yesterday, a correctional officer found the remand person in custody committed suicide by hanging with a bedsheet tied to the window grille bars of his cell. The officer immediately called for reinforcement and provided first aid treatment to him. The person in custody was found unconscious at that moment and was subsequently sent to a public hospital for further treatment. The case has been reported to the Police.

A spokesman for the Correctional Services Department said, "The

department uses all possible measures to prevent person in custody from attempting suicide or self-harm. These measures include administrative arrangements, the improvement of institution facilities, staff training and first aid services."

The person in custody was remanded for the offence of trafficking in a dangerous drug in October 2019.

Red flag hoisted at Hung Shing Yeh Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 23) that due to big waves, red flag has been hoisted at Hung Shing Yeh Beach in Islands District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.

Transcript of remarks by SLW on Employment Support Scheme and national security

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on the Employment Support Scheme and national security after attending a radio programme this morning (May 23):

Reporter: You said that no extra fines would be claimed from the bosses if they don't use the entire government wage subsidy for paying wages, so could you explain how it is going to deter them from taking advantage of the system? Could you also explain how you think about the national security law? Do you think this will affect the employment scene in Hong Kong?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: The applicants of the Employment Support Scheme have two commitments (undertakings). One commitment is not to implement any redundancy during the period that they receive the government wage subsidy, that is in June, July and August 2020 for the first tranche.

The second commitment they have to make is that the money that they receive from the government as the wage subsidy will be all spent on the wages of their staff.

But for the first tranche, for the sake of providing clear understanding of the rules and calculations, we have made it very clear that, if the money that we have given to the employers have not been totally spent on the wages, the difference (unspent balance of subsidy) will be clawed back. If the number of paid employees in June, July and August is less than the number of employees in March, there will be a penalty based on the percentage of reduction in staff number and also depending on the size of the company.

But as I said, there are two commitments and both commitments are basically in principle "no redundancy". We haven't yet decided on the eligibility and rules for the second tranche, which is for September to November. There is a high probability that, if people cannot comply with their commitments they have made during the (first tranche) applications, they may not have the opportunity to apply for the second tranche. We will wait and see how it will happen, but the rules for the first tranche have been fixed and the applications will start next Monday (May 25).

As for the possible implication of the Central Government's decision, it is too early to say anything. We have to wait and see what the details of the provisions are, the process, the concerns of the people of Hong Kong and how they are addressed. This point of time is too early to comment on the impact on the economy.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)