

Flag-raising ceremony cancelled

Owing to the thunderstorm warning, the flag-raising ceremony to be conducted at Golden Bauhinia Square, Wan Chai at 8am today (May 18) will be cancelled.

Chartered flight taking Hong Kong residents stranded in India back home departed from New Delhi

A chartered flight taking Hong Kong residents stranded in India back home departed from New Delhi at around 11pm on May 17 local time (1.30am on May 18 Hong Kong time) and is expected to arrive at Hong Kong International Airport at around 7am today (May 18). There are 249 Hong Kong residents on board, including seven children under two years of age. Upon arrival, the returnees will proceed to the Department of Health's Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at AsiaWorld-Expo by coaches for compulsory COVID-19 testing. After their deep throat saliva samples are collected, the returnees will be transferred by coaches to the quarantine centre at Chun Yeung Estate, Fo Tan, for a 14-day compulsory quarantine period.

The cost for taking the chartered flight is borne by the users. As the overall cost of the flight is lower than originally expected, and there are more people taking the flight than originally planned, the cost to be paid by each passenger is around HK\$3,800 (except for children who do not occupy a seat).

Tuen Mun Hospital announces temporary suspension of negative pressure system in isolation ward

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for the Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH) made the following

announcement today (May 17) concerning a temporary suspension of negative pressure system in an isolation ward this morning:

At around 7.10am this morning, a false fire alarm was triggered at an isolation ward in the main block of TMH. During the incident, air conditioning and negative pressure system were suspended in accordance with the statutory requirement of fire protection and ventilation system design. Upon confirmation by the firemen that there was no fire, staff of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) performed inspection immediately. Air conditioning and the negative pressure system resumed normal at 8.25am.

There were five patients in the concerned isolation ward. While three patients with COVID-19 tested negative and pending transfer to a general ward were staying together in the same room, the other two patients suspected to be infected with closed-tuberculosis of low airborne infectious risk were staying in two single rooms separately. During the incident, there was no one entering or leaving the rooms nor any high risk procedure was performed.

There was no confirmed COVID-19 patient in the concerned isolation ward.

In accordance with the contingency plan, ward staff has put on appropriate personal protective equipment including N95 respirators. The infection risk was assessed to be extremely low.

The TMH is very concerned about the incident and has urged the EMSD to perform a thorough checking to the system to ensure its proper functioning, followed by the submission of detailed investigation report. The smoke detector at the concerned isolation ward has also been changed. The incident has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office via the Advance Incident Reporting System.

CHP investigates three additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (May 17), the CHP was investigating three additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 1 056 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 055 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases announced today involve one male and two females aged between 10 and 79. Among them, all had a travel history during the incubation period. The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and

contact tracing information, please see the Annex.

The CHP urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of infection by contact with infected persons, who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask if having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

The CHP will report the cases to the World Health Organization, the National Health Commission, the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, relevant health authorities and the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has set up hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 4pm today, a total of 115 398 calls had been received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on the COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;

- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
 - Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
 - After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
 - Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
 - Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
 - If having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.
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ISD responds to reports on Government tender exercise on Relaunch Hong Kong

In response to media reports on the Government tender exercise on Relaunch Hong Kong, an Information Services Department spokesman said today (May 17):

"At the close of the application period on May 15, a total of seven bids have been received for the tender exercise initiated by the Information Services Department. Compliance checking is ongoing.

"Once compliance checks are finalised the conforming bidders will be invited to present their proposals.

"We are encouraged by the interest in this tender."

The spokesman added, "As one of the world's most open and inter-connected economies, this initiative will help lay the groundwork to reconnect with global audiences and reopen for business and visitors after the fight against COVID-19 subsides.

"We aim to inform target global audiences of Hong Kong's economic recovery and responses to issues of international interest, including the facts surrounding Hong Kong's efforts to address the COVID-19 crisis, and that Hong Kong remains always welcoming and 'open for business'."