

Government welcomes breakthrough in scrutiny of bills by LegCo House Committee

A Government spokesman today (May 9) welcomed the successful handling of a number of bills and subsidiary legislation by the House Committee (HC) of the Legislative Council (LegCo) at its Special Meeting held yesterday afternoon (May 8).

The spokesman said, "In accordance with Article 73 of the Basic Law, one of the major functions of the LegCo is to enact laws. The HC plays the most essential role in LegCo in performing this constitutional function to make preparations for the meetings of LegCo, which includes, deciding if bills committees are required to be set up to scrutinise the bills submitted to LegCo and monitor the progress of these bills committees. However, starting from last October, the HC has held 17 meetings and spent more than 30 hours of discussion but still failed to elect its chairman and deputy chairman for the current term of LegCo, seriously impeding HC and jeopardising its normal operation, creating substantial backlogs of bills that affect social development and economy, as well as people's livelihood."

At the Special Meeting yesterday, the HC completed the handling of a number of bills and subsidiary legislation which had not been dealt with for seven months since last October owing to the delay in chairman election that brought the HC to a standstill. These include:

- 13 bills submitted by the Government during the current legislative session;
- Legal Service Division reports on 31 subsidiary legislation gazetted since March 27, 2020;
- the motion on the endorsement of the appointment of the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, and
- four Reports of Bills Committees (four among the 11 bills which have gone through the First Reading and for which Bill Committees have been formed in the preceding two sessions).

The spokesman said, "The Government is pleased to learn that the impasse in the HC has finally ended which enables the continual scrutiny of bills and subsidiary legislation proposed by the Government. The Government will continue to fully co-operate with LegCo in its work of scrutinising laws in the remaining term of office of the LegCo."

"As of May 8 this year, there are 26 bills that the LegCo is scrutinising. Of these, 15 were proposed during the current legislative session, while the other 11 were first read in the past two legislative sessions and respective bills committees have been formed to scrutinise them. Among the latter, the bills committees have completed scrutiny of seven bills which have yet to be introduced to the full Council for the resumption of

Second Reading debate. Of these seven bills, HC has finished scrutinising the bills committee reports of six bills (four vetted by HC yesterday, and the other two vetted by HC last year, namely the National Anthem Bill and the Trade Marks (Amendment) Bill 2019)."

The spokesman added, "The Bills Committee on the National Anthem Bill, after 17 meetings and over 50 hours of deliberation, had reported to HC on June 14, 2019. Subsequently, at the HC meeting on June 28, HC raised no objection to the Government's plan to resume the Second Reading debate on the Bill in the 2019-2020 legislative session."

The spokesman emphasised, "The national anthem is the symbol and sign of the country. The legislative principle of the National Anthem Bill is clear, that is to fully reflect the legislative purpose and intent of the Law of the People's Republic of China on National Anthem (National Anthem Law) as a national law, which is to preserve the dignity of the national anthem and promote respect for the national anthem; and at the same time to give due regard to the common law system practised in Hong Kong, as well as the actual circumstances in Hong Kong. In accordance with the Bill, a person would only commit a criminal offence if the person publicly and intentionally insults the national anthem. It would not constitute an offence to express one's opinion as long as they are not expressed in the form of public and intentional insults to the national anthem. Therefore, it is completely untrue and fabricated for certain LegCo Members to claim that the law is 'draconian'.

"The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government hopes that LegCo Members would support the Government to continue to take forward the legislative procedures of the aforementioned bills, so that the efforts by the Government, LegCo and relevant stakeholders in formulating policies would not go down the drain."

[Missing woman in Pat Heung located](#)

A woman who went missing in Pat Heung has been located.

Man Chiu-kam, aged 79, went missing after she was last seen at Kam Tin Town, Pat Heung on May 5 morning. Her family made a report to Police on May 6.

The woman was located at Ko Po Tsuen, Yuen Long this afternoon (May 9). No suspicious circumstances were detected.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (May 9), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of seven patients (six male and one female, aged 10 to 82) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

There are 90 patients under isolation currently. So far, 967 patients who had COVID-19 confirmed or probable infection have been discharged upon recovery.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

CHP announces no new local confirmed cases of COVID-19 today

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (May 9), no new local confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) had been recorded, and that the number of cases in Hong Kong remained at 1 045 so far (comprising 1 044 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The CHP again urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives to minimise the risk of infection. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contacting 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 when 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 has set up hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 3pm today, a total of 108 877 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 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 doorknobs, 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
- When 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.

SWD announces gradual resumption of subsidised welfare services

In view of the stabilised epidemic situation, subsidised welfare services operated by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) will be resumed by phases, a spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said today (May 9).

In gist, subsidised welfare services will be resumed in a gradual and planned mode whilst keeping a vigilant watch over the COVID-19 epidemic. The running of groups and small-scale programmes, such as talks, will be resumed on a pre-scheduled and appointment basis, with proper infection control measures put in place. For centre-based services, no drop-in is allowed for the time being unless the epidemic further improves, with the flow of people at the centres properly managed. For home-based services, rehabilitation training and other assistive services for both persons with disabilities (PWDs) and the elderly should gradually be resumed to cater for the rehabilitation needs of the clientele, in addition to the existing delivery of meals, escort, nursing care, administration of medicine and personal care services.

Details of service resumption in specific areas are as follows.

Rehabilitation services

- Starting from May 11, operators of pre-school rehabilitation services will further strengthen individual training for service users. Service units may arrange appropriate modes of training, such as centre-based training, e-learning and home training, having regard to service users' circumstances and their parents' preference. Small groups will also be run for no more than three children each at this stage. To align with the resumption of K3 classes in kindergartens on June 15, special child care centres should resume classroom training for upper classes on that day. Pre-school rehabilitation service operators concerned should also provide make-up training sessions for children, especially those being promoted to primary schools, during summer holidays.
- From May 15, home care services for PWDs, namely home care service for persons with severe disabilities and integrated support service for persons with severe physical disabilities, should gradually increase their intensity and frequency with a view to resuming full-range service provision. Services in sheltered workshops, integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres, integrated vocational training centres and day activity centres should also be resumed gradually from May 15.

- Starting from May 27, service users of district support centres for persons with disabilities, integrated community centres for mental wellness, social and recreational centres for the disabled and community rehabilitation day centres may join pre-enrolled groups and programmes, while no drop-in is allowed for the time being.

Elderly services

- Starting from May 15, integrated home care services and enhanced home and community care services should gradually increase their intensity and frequency with a view to resuming full-range service provision.
- Day care centres/units for the elderly should increase service intake gradually to around 30 per cent of their service users from May 15. The service intake should further increase from May 27, with the aim of reaching around 50 per cent of their service users.
- Starting from May 27, service users of district elderly community centres and neighbourhood elderly centres may join pre-enrolled groups and programmes, while no drop-in is allowed for the time being.

Family and child welfare services

- With effect from May 27, the running of groups and programmes by integrated family service centres (IFSCs), as well as the use of play corner/room, should be resumed on an appointment basis. Extended hours sessions in IFSCs should be resumed on the same day.
- Child care centre service will remain open only to children from needy families on an appointment and need basis for the time being.

Youth and community services

- Starting from May 27, service users of centre-based services such as integrated children and youth services centres, children and youth centres, counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers and community centres may join groups and use centre facilities on an appointment basis. Service centres may continue to provide online group programmes and other services.

- With the resumption of classes for higher forms in secondary schools from May 27, school social work service should resume stationing in secondary schools correspondingly.
- With the resumption of P4 to P6 classes with effect from June 8, after-school care programme should be resumed correspondingly.

Services for residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) and residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs)

- With effect from May 27, multi-disciplinary outreaching support teams for the elderly and professional outreaching teams for private RCHDs should resume providing rehabilitation training service for service users at private RCHEs and RCHDs, etc. Assessors under the Standardised Care Needs Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services should resume conducting care needs assessment for needy service users at RCHEs.

Service operators should keep their service users informed of the latest arrangements and provide suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) to their staff having regard to relevant guidelines issued by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health. The SWD will continue to monitor the situation and work with stakeholders to ensure smooth, gradual resumption of subsidised welfare services; and will render assistance to individual service operators which encounter difficulties in acquiring PPE in resuming their services.