

# HKSAR Government mapping out plans to bring back Hong Kong residents stranded in India and Pakistan by chartered flights

In response to media enquiries, a Government spokesman said today (April 25) that the Security Bureau is mapping out plans to take Hong Kong residents stranded in India and Pakistan back to Hong Kong by chartered flights.

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the governments of India and Pakistan have banned all international flight movements since late March, resulting in Hong Kong residents stranded there unable to return to Hong Kong through normal means for the time being. In recent days, the Immigration Department (ImmD) has received requests for assistance in their return arrangement from Hong Kong residents stranded in the two countries, including the lists of assistance requests referred to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government by chambers of commerce and non-governmental organisations which are concerned about the affected people and Legislative councilors.

After receiving requests for assistance from the Hong Kong residents stranded in India and Pakistan, the Security Bureau and the ImmD have been liaising with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR (OCMFA), the Chinese Embassy in the Republic of India (Chinese Embassy in India) and the Chinese Embassy in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (Chinese Embassy in Pakistan) to understand the local situation and take follow-up action, and to provide relevant information as well as practicable and appropriate assistance to the affected Hong Kong residents having regard to their wishes.

Meanwhile, the HKSAR Government has also been liaising with the consulates-general of the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Hong Kong, and contacting several airlines to explore arrangement of flights for the return of the stranded Hong Kong residents.

As at April 24, the ImmD has successfully contacted about 3 200 and 2 000 Hong Kong residents respectively stranded in India and Pakistan, with a preliminary grasp of their basic personal particulars and whereabouts. The ImmD is continuing with the efforts to contact the remaining assistance seekers to facilitate follow-up.

The spokesman said that due to the large number of people requesting for assistance and some of the assistant seekers' contact information being incomplete, the ImmD has strengthened its manpower to proactively follow up the cases with a view to establishing direct contacts with all people concerned as soon as possible. For the Hong Kong residents whom the ImmD has

contacted and obtained detailed information, they are now scattered in different locations in India and Pakistan.

Currently India has imposed strict restrictions on land and air traffic across the nation, and all travel must be approved by the relevant authorities. For Pakistan, it is noted that there is no restriction on domestic transportation and people there are still able to move around, although all international flights have been banned.

Considering the above situations, and having regard to the quarantine arrangements for the returnees and the capacities for testing and the quarantine and treatment facilities, the HKSAR Government would have to adopt a phase approach in assisting the return of the Hong Kong residents by batches subject to the circumstances. The initial plan is to first assist the Hong Kong residents who are now located in New Delhi, the capital of India, or those in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, and their surrounding areas, as well as those with special needs such as people with illness, pregnant women, children and elderly, by taking them back by chartered flights respectively from New Delhi or from Islamabad to Hong Kong. The cost for taking the chartered flights will be borne by the users.

Above said, the detailed arrangements such as the departure date and location of the chartered flights are still subject to various factors, including the approval time of and the facilitation provided by the governments concerned, the actual circumstances and epidemic situation of the concerned country, as well as the land and air traffic or other restrictions of the concerned country. The HKSAR Government will continue to follow up closely with the Chinese Embassy in India and the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, as well as the consulates-general of the two countries in Hong Kong. Updates will be sent to the affected Hong Kong residents as soon as any concrete arrangement is confirmed.

The HKSAR Government appeals to the Hong Kong residents in India and Pakistan who have yet to contact the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the ImmD but wish to take the chartered flights to depart from India and Pakistan to Hong Kong, to call ImmD's 24-hour hotline (852) 1868 or email to 1868@immd.gov.hk for assistance. AHU officers will follow up according to actual circumstances.

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## [Missing man in Pat Heung located](#)

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

Leung Kin-fat, aged 80, went missing after he left his residence in Shek Tau Wai on April 23 afternoon. His family made a report to Police on the same day.

The man was located on Kam Sheung Road this afternoon (April 25).

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## **CHP investigates two additional cases of COVID-19**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (April 25), the CHP was investigating two additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 1 038 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 037 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases announced today involve an 18-year-old female overseas student and a 61-year-old male. Both of them had a travel history. 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 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 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 98 853 calls had been received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://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 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
- 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.

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## **Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (April 25), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 28 patients (19 male and nine female, aged 13 to 76) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of COVID-19. Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

There are 296 patients under isolation currently. So far, 753 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.

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## **Subsidies to local primary producers open for registration and loan repayment deferral and interest waiver for Fisheries Development Loan Fund borrowers**

To provide immediate financial relief to local primary producers who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government will provide subsidies to local primary producers and provide an interest-free loan repayment deferral arrangement for loan borrowers under the Fisheries Development Loan Fund (FDLF) under the second round of the Anti-epidemic Fund. The Government will also provide a subsidy to wholesale traders operating in the fresh food wholesale markets.

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said today (April 25) that the Government will provide a subsidy of \$10,000 to each local primary producer (including owners of vegetable farms, hydroponic farms, flower farms and nurseries, marine fish culture farms, pond fish farms, fishing vessels and fish collector vessels, but excluding livestock farms). Those who have already benefited from the Subsidies for Live Marine Fish Wholesale Traders and Fishing Vessels with Mainland Deckhands in the first round of the Anti-epidemic Fund will not be eligible. About 7 600 local primary producers will benefit from the above measure. The total amount of subsidy involved is approximately \$76 million.

The application period has started and will end on June 1. Application forms will be distributed to eligible applicants by post and uploaded to the AFCD website (Agriculture: [afcd.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/what\\_agr/what\\_agr.html](http://afcd.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/what_agr/what_agr.html); Fisheries:

[afcd.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/what\\_fis/what\\_fis.html](http://afcd.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/what_fis/what_fis.html)). Completed application forms together with the required documents must be submitted to the AFCD as stated on the forms. Subsidies will be disbursed to successful applicants as soon as possible.

Moreover, the Government will provide one-off interest-free deferral of loan repayment for a period of one year to loan borrowers under the FDLF. The AFCD will issue a letter together with a confirmation slip to all borrowers. Upon receipt of the borrower's confirmation of acceptance, the AFCD will make the new repayment arrangement.

Furthermore, to support the wholesale traders operating in the fresh food wholesale markets, who provide a stable food supply to Hong Kong, the Government will provide a subsidy of \$40,000 to each eligible wholesale trader (the ceiling of the grant for each wholesale trader under the same business registration operating multiple stores is \$200,000). Those who have already benefited from the Retail Sector Subsidy Scheme and the Food Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme in the first round of the Anti-epidemic Fund will not be eligible. About 1 300 wholesale traders will benefit from the measure. Eligible applicants for the measure include:

- fresh marine fish wholesale traders in the Fish Marketing Organization (FMO) markets;
- vegetable wholesale traders in the Vegetable Marketing Organization (VMO) market;
- freshwater fish/vegetable/fruit/egg wholesale traders in the AFCD wholesale food markets; and
- freshwater fish/vegetable/fruit wholesale traders in the Yuen Long Freshwater Fish Wholesale Market, the Yuen Long Temporary Wholesale Vegetable Market and the Yau Ma Tei Fruit Market.

The application period has started and will end on June 1. Application forms will be distributed to eligible applicants through staff of the AFCD or the organisations concerned, and uploaded to the AFCD's website (Agricultural products: [afcd.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/what\\_agr/what\\_agr.html](http://afcd.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/what_agr/what_agr.html); Fisheries products: [afcd.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/what\\_fis/what\\_fis.html](http://afcd.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/what_fis/what_fis.html)). Completed application forms together with the required documents must be submitted to the AFCD as stated on the forms. Subsidies will be disbursed to successful applicants as soon as possible.

For more details, please contact the department on the following hotlines:

Sectors	Hotline
Vegetable and hydroponic farms, flower farms and nurseries	2670 1161
Marine fish and pond fish culture farms, fishing vessels and fish collector vessels, and loan borrowers of the FDLF	2150 7109

Fresh marine fish wholesale traders in the FMO markets and vegetable wholesale traders in the VMO market	2710 0930
Freshwater fish/vegetable/fruit/egg wholesale traders in the AFCD wholesale food markets or private wholesale markets	2150 6709