

Inland Revenue Department extends tax deadlines

The Inland Revenue Department announced today (April 4) that in view of the latest situation of COVID-19, deadlines for tax payments and lodgement of objections and holdover applications as well as submission of tax returns and information that fall between March 23 and May 2 are automatically extended to May 4.

The department encourages the public to use its electronic services to handle their tax affairs as much as possible or send their documents to the department by post. A list of the department's electronic services can be found in its website at www.ird.gov.hk/eng/ese/index.htm.

The department will review the situation and make further announcements as necessary.

HAD's statement on complaints against Yuen Long District Council member Mr Lam Chun

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) recently received a large number of emails and letters complaining about Yuen Long District Council (DC) member Mr Lam Chun for publicly declaring his refusal to offer assistance to members of the public who "support the legislation for Article 23".

A spokesman of the HAD said today (April 4), "The DC member's discriminative treatment to members of the public due to their stance on a particular issue will only divide our society, and is contradictory to the spirit of community building and public engagement in community affairs. There is a possible breach of the Code of Conduct for Members of a District Council or Its Committees (Code of Conduct) in this incident. The HAD issued a letter to the DC member concerned, reminding him, as a DC member, to comply with the Code of Conduct and be aware of his words and deeds in order to avoid social conflict and disputes, and damage to community harmony."

The HAD also reminded Mr Lam of the guiding principles in the Guidelines on the Remuneration Package for Members of the District Councils of the HKSAR (Remuneration Guidelines), i.e. a DC member should use public funds in an open, fair and accountable manner. Mr Lam's words and deeds may not be

consistent with the guiding principles of the Remuneration Guidelines.

Furthermore, the HAD referred the complaints to the Chairman of Yuen Long DC so that he can follow up, and hoped that the Yuen Long DC would handle the case impartially, as well as ensure that the DC member would refrain from acts that may compromise or impair his/her integrity, impartiality, objectivity or ability to perform duties and thereby bring the DC into disrepute.

Publicity efforts to encourage foreign domestic helpers and employers to fight COVID-19 together

The Labour Department (LD) announced today (April 4) that mobile broadcasts will be conducted tomorrow (April 5) in popular gathering places of foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to call upon them to comply with the regulation on the prohibition of group gatherings in public places.

Publicity vans will park at popular FDH gathering places on Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories to broadcast reminders in Chinese, English and major FDH languages (including Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia and Thai) on the regulation of the prohibition of group gatherings in public places. Leaflets in the same languages will be distributed to FDHs during the broadcast to appeal to them to comply with the regulation.

With effect from March 29 to April 11, group gatherings with more than four people in public places are prohibited and offenders are liable to a fixed penalty of \$2,000, or if charged in a court, a maximum penalty of a \$25,000 fine and imprisonment for six months.

A spokesman for the department said, "The mobile broadcasts will form part of the wide range of publicity measures rolled out in the past few days. The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, has made a personal appeal in a video message (isd.wecast.hk/vod/?id=10476). We appreciate the contribution of FDHs to Hong Kong society and understand that they would like to go out and meet friends during their rest days. However, it is essential that all of us practise social distancing to prevent the spread of epidemic. We appeal again to FDHs and their employers to exercise mutual understanding on rest day arrangements, including staying home for the rest or taking the rest day on weekdays instead of at the weekend."

Employers are reminded that compelling an FDH to work on a rest day without the agreement of the FDH or failing to grant rest days to the FDH is in violation of the Employment Ordinance. The employer concerned is liable to

prosecution and, upon conviction, to a maximum fine of \$50,000.

A wide range of publicity measures were rolled out to convey the above messages to FDHs and their employers. These include joining efforts with consulates-general to promote the relevant messages to their nationals through their websites and social media platforms, distributing (also via electronic means) and posting leaflets and posters in major FDH languages in public and private housing estates across the territory, broadcasting appeal messages in radio programmes targetting FDHs, promoting on the Government's social media platforms, and screening publicity messages at enquiry centres of the Home Affairs Department.

Furthermore, some frequently asked questions and answers on rest day arrangements and relevant employment matters are available on the dedicated FDH portal (www.fdh.labour.gov.hk) of the LD for employers' reference.

"We hope that the above publicity efforts would further help disseminate the messages to FDHs and employers and provide practical information to them. We appeal to their continued support in fighting the virus," the spokesman added.

For any update and health information on COVID-19, please visit the Government's COVID-19 Thematic Website (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng). Information in Chinese, English, Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Hindi, Sinhala, Bengali, Nepali and Urdu is available.

Should FDHs and their employers have enquiries on employment matters, they may seek the LD's assistance through its dedicated email account for FDH matters (fdh-enquiry@labour.gov.hk) and the online form on its dedicated FDH portal (www.fdh.labour.gov.hk).

A male Police officer preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19

A 46-year-old male Sergeant who is stationed in Kowloon West Region was preliminarily tested positive for the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Posted to the Police Tactical Unit, he participated in anti-crime patrols and crowd management operations, and had no travel history over the past 14 days. He felt unwell on April 2 and sought medical treatment at a public hospital and was preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19 last night (April 3).

In the interest of public health, Police have deployed the following measures:

1. While awaiting further assessment and recommendation by the

Department of Health (DH), all officers from the same unit will be arranged to work from home;

2. All officers working in the Police Tactical Unit Kowloon West Operational Base are required to wear masks, and everyone entering police stations needs to have their body temperature measured in order to ensure health and safety;

3. All police station facilities and quarters concerned have been cleaned and sterilised;

4. Police will deploy resources flexibly to ensure provision of relevant emergency services remains unaffected;

5. Police have reminded officers to pay attention to personal hygiene and reduce social contact to minimise risks of infection. If feeling unwell, they should consult a doctor and report the case.

Police will continue to maintain close communication with the DH and proactively provide information such as the duty record and roster of the Sergeant concerned. Arrangements will be made for close contacts to be conveyed to quarantine centres to undergo quarantine.

Transcript of remarks by SCMA at media session on LegCo election and RTHK programme

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Patrick Nip, at a media session today (April 4) after attending a radio programme:

Reporter: Secretary, if the epidemic continues till the summer, do you think there is room for the LegCo election to be moved back a little bit? Also, I want to ask about RTHK's interview with the WHO representative. We have referred to Taiwan as a "place" throughout the whole episode and also asked the representative whether they would reconsider Taiwan's membership. How does that violate the One-China Principle?

Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs: As regards your first question about the LegCo election, LegCo election is a very important activity. It's for the voters to cast their votes, to elect their representatives in the Legislative Council. The Electoral Affairs Commission and the Registration and Electoral Office are doing all the necessary preparation work for this, including, for example, voter registration,

consultation on the guidelines (on election-related activities in respect of the Legislative Council Election). All this preparation work is ongoing, but of course we will closely monitor the situation, especially the effect of the epidemic on this, and will review the situation as appropriate.

As regards the interview with the WHO representative, I think it's very clear that the membership of the WHO is confined to sovereign states. Hong Kong's participation in the WHO is as a member of the Chinese delegation. So I think the issue on the membership of the WHO is clear enough.

As regards the handling of the interview by RTHK, I think we have looked at it from the angles of RTHK as a government department and also RTHK as a public broadcasting authority. We would look at the issue and review it in accordance with the One-China Principle and the Charter that governs the work of RTHK. These matters are being handled by the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau. Their position has already been articulated very clearly.

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