

# Transcript of remarks by SLW on Budget initiatives

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on initiatives in the 2020-21 Budget after attending a radio programme this morning (March 3):

Reporter: Dr Law, can you give a bit more details (about the proposed cash payout through the Community Care Fund), like who the main targets will be? Mainlanders, new migrants or will it cover other ethnic minorities? When do you hope to give the money out to them?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: Because the Community Care Fund hasn't yet decided the details, what I can say now is that it is more or less as the practice that we had made back in 2011, primarily based on those who are coming here to live in Hong Kong, rather than those who are in transit, such as those studying or those who are imported labour. So, the primary purpose of those who will be covered will be those coming here to Hong Kong to stay, but unfortunately they may not have reached seven years to become permanent residents. This is the major target. Because the amount of money will be disbursed by the Community Care Fund, therefore we need to have a rider on it, and that is they will be someone who have some financial needs, so basically we are talking about the grassroots people.

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

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## CHP investigates additional case of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (March 2), the CHP is investigating one additional confirmed case of COVID-19 and has updated the probable case (the 96th case) announced yesterday (March 1) as confirmed case, taking the number of cases to 101 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 100 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The confirmed case today involves a 63-year-old male patient (the 101st case) who is the elder brother of the 60-year-old female patient of the 85th case confirmed on February 25. The patient, with underlying illness, lives at 8 Tai Hang Road. He is asymptomatic and has earlier been sent to the quarantine centre as a close contact. His deep throat saliva specimen was tested positive for COVID-19 virus. He will be sent to Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital for treatment and is now in a stable condition.

The patient had no travel history during the incubation period. He attended his daughter's wedding banquet on February 22 where the female patient of the 85th case was also present. His wife is asymptomatic and is under quarantine.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. Quarantine will be arranged for close contacts while medical surveillance will be arranged for other contacts. For the progress on the contact tracing of the cases, please see annex.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "According to our preliminary epidemiological investigations, clusters are observed in local community involving large meal gatherings and other gatherings. Members of the public are urged to go out less and reduce social activities such as meals gatherings or other gatherings, and maintain appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible."

The spokesman said, "The CHP strongly urged 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 the 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 and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps); 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, National Health Commission, Health Commission of Guangdong Province and the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has set up a hotline (2125 1122) for public enquiries. The hotline operates from 8am to midnight daily. As at 4pm today, a total of 25 589 calls were received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html)) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public grasp 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 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 liter of water into each drain outlet (U-traps) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- 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.

The public should take heed of the health advice below when travelling outside Hong Kong:

- Do not travel to Hubei Province of Mainland where there is widespread community transmission of COVID-19 virus;
- Avoid unnecessary travel to Korea (especially Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do where the majority of the cases were reported); Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions in Italy which cover Bologna, Milan, Venice and Verona, as well as Iran;
- When travelling to countries/areas with active community transmission of COVID-19 virus, the public should avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms. If it is unavoidable to come into contact with them, put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong;
- Avoid visiting hospitals. If it is necessary to visit a hospital, put on a surgical mask and observe strict personal and hand hygiene;
- Avoid touching animals (including game), poultry/birds or their droppings;
- Avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms;
- Avoid making close contact with patients, especially those with symptoms of acute respiratory infections;
- Do not consume game meat and do not patronise food premises where game meat is served;
- Adhere to food safety and hygiene rules such as avoiding consuming raw or undercooked animal products, including milk, eggs and meat, or foods which may be contaminated by animal secretions, excretions (such as urine) or contaminated products, unless they have been properly cooked, washed or peeled;
- If feeling unwell when outside Hong Kong, especially if experiencing a fever or cough, wear a surgical mask, inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once; and

- After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of any recent travel history and any exposure to animals, and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.
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## **CE visits Immigration Department and Water Supplies Department (with photos/video)**

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, visited the office of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit (AHU) of the Immigration Department in Wan Chai this afternoon (March 2), to express her gratitude for the assistance offered by the officers to Hong Kong residents who are affected by the epidemic or are facing other difficulties outside Hong Kong, in particular for the large volume of extra work they have done for Hong Kong residents still in Hubei Province and those on board the Diamond Princess cruise ship. She later visited the Water Supplies Department (WSD) to learn more about the progress of the gradual resumption of more public services.

Accompanied by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee; the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Patrick Nip; and the Director of Immigration, Mr Tsang Kwok-wai, Mrs Lam visited the AHU to learn about the assistance provided by the unit to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong, in particular their experience in supporting Hong Kong residents in Hubei Province and on the Diamond Princess cruise ship earlier. She then joined the briefing for officers who will go to Hubei Province soon to help Hong Kong residents remaining there take chartered flights back to Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government attached great importance to the operation of the Diamond Princess cruise ship. Apart from about 50 immigration officers led by Mr Tsang, eight healthcare officers from the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority also took part in the operation. Under the assistance of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Japan and the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR, a total of 193 Hong Kong residents stranded on the Diamond Princess cruise ship were successfully brought back to Hong Kong by chartered flights. Indeed, the Immigration Department has since sent over 70 Immigration Officers to Japan, of which 23 of them remain there, providing support to more than 80 Hong Kong residents who are hospitalised or under quarantine in 11 prefectures or cities across Japan. The remaining officers are learning more about their situation from hospitals and are arranging for them to return to Hong Kong.

Praising personnel of the Immigration Department for their bravery and

commitment to their duties and Hong Kong people, Mrs Lam said they deserve deep respect. She said personnel of the Immigration Department will continue to help Hong Kong residents still in Hubei Province to return to the city in an orderly manner. With more than 3 000 Hong Kong people in 37 large and small cities in the province where the public transport network has yet to return to normal, coupled with special circumstances involving pregnant women and seriously ill patients, the operation is more challenging. Noting that some colleagues on their way to join the operation had helped with the return of Hong Kong people from the Princess Diamond cruise ship, she expressed the hope that they would make use of their earlier valuable experience to complete the important mission before them.

Next, Mrs Lam, accompanied by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, and the Director of Water Supplies, Mr Wong Chung-leung, visited the Head Office of the WSD in Wan Chai to learn more about the gradual resumption of colleagues' work with preventive measures in place, while providing services for the public. Mr Lee visited the Hong Kong Registration of Persons Office of the Immigration Department to learn more about the work of the staff there after the gradual resumption of public services.







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## Gradual resumption of public services in smooth and orderly manner (with photos)

Government bureaux/departments gradually resumed more public services today (March 2) in a smooth and orderly manner. Secretaries of Department and Directors of Bureau visited the departments under their respective purviews to learn more about the implementation of the targeted measures to reduce social contact and measures for infection control to protect the health of their staff and members of the public.

Secretaries of Department and Directors of Bureau learned during their visits that departments have implemented effective measures to reduce social contact, for instance, by introducing flexible working hours to reduce staff using public transport during peak hours, and adopting a roster system to reduce the number of staff working in an office at any one time. Colleagues are also arranged to have staggered lunch hours.

The Government has, with regard to the situation on the ground, implemented various infection control measures at government buildings and offices to reduce the risk of infection and the spread of the virus. These measures include enhancing the cleansing of public facilities, such as lifts and escalators, checking the body temperature of persons entering government buildings and offices, providing alcohol hand sanitiser and sanitising mats, etc.

In addition, bureaux/departments also restrict the number of visitors at any one time by making use of measures such as scheduled appointments, drop boxes, quota system, etc.

The Government will stay vigilant as fighting the epidemic remains our top priority. Bureaux/departments will continue to implement targeted

measures to reduce social contacts and measures for infection control, and gradually resume more public services to meet public expectations.



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## 2020 Bun Carnival cancelled

In view of the latest developments of COVID-19 virus infection, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) announced today (March 2) that the 2020 Bun Carnival originally scheduled to be held at the soccer pitch of Pak Tai Temple Playground on Cheung Chau has been cancelled.

The 2020 Bun Carnival is jointly organised by the Hong Kong Cheung Chau Bun Festival Committee and the LCSD. After thorough deliberation, the organising committee has decided to cancel related activities in order to avoid people gathering and to reduce social contact and the risk of the spread of COVID-19 virus in the community.

Activities that have been cancelled include:

- (1) Training on Bun Tower Climbing;
- (2) The Selection Contest for the Bun Scrambling Competition;
- (3) The Climbing Carnival; and
- (4) The Bun Scrambling Competition.

In addition, the assessments of the Student Colouring and Drawing Competitions have been completed. An overwhelming response was received, with students from 13 kindergartens and 10 primary schools in Islands District participating in the competitions. The LCSD will notify the winners individually and awards will be sent to the respective schools. Hard copies of the winning entries will be displayed at some of the LCSD's venues in Islands District, at Central Pier 5 and at Community Art Galleries at MTR Central Station and MTR Tung Chung Station. The LCSD will also upload e-copies of the winning entries to the Multimedia Information System of the Hong Kong Public Libraries in order to promote the Cheung Chau Jiao Festival's tradition of bun scrambling and local customs among the public.

As for the Jiao Festival organised by the Bun Festival Committee, please call 2981 2329 for enquiries. For more information on the Cheung Chau Jiao Festival, which was inscribed onto the Third National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2011, please visit [www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/Museum/ICH0/en\\_US/web/icho/representative\\_list\\_cheungchau.html](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/Museum/ICH0/en_US/web/icho/representative_list_cheungchau.html).