

Government condemns vandalism by rioters

A Government spokesman today (March 1) condemned rioters' acts of vandalism in Mong Kok last night (February 29) which breached public peace and seriously jeopardised the safety of members of the public.

Rioters began to gather around Nathan Road and Prince Edward Road West yesterday evening, blocking roads, setting fires, vandalising public facilities, hurling petrol bombs and attacking police officers with bricks and hard objects. Several police officers were injured as a result.

The Police used minimum necessary force to conduct dispersal and arrest operations, and will seriously follow up on these acts which totally disregard law and order. The Police vow to bring rioters to justice.

In addition, South Kwai Chung Jockey Club General Outpatient Clinic in Kwai Shing Circuit, Kwai Chung was attacked with petrol bombs early this morning. The spokesman strongly condemned the malicious behavior of damaging medical facilities, which caused innocent patients to suffer.

The spokesman said that Hong Kong experienced a series of violent demonstrations last year, hitting hard the economy and people's livelihood. Coupled with the COVID-19 epidemic, Hong Kong is facing unprecedented challenges to the economy and well-being of the entire community.

To cope with the current difficulties, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has quickly set up a \$30 billion Anti-epidemic Fund and announced \$120 billion worth of counter-cyclical measures in the newly released Budget Speech to stimulate economic development and relieve people's hardship.

The spokesman said, "At this difficult juncture, a small number of radicals still conducted violent acts of vandalism which disregard law and order. Their behaviour is outrageous. We strongly believe that Hong Kong people will stay united and fight against the disease together, help the Hong Kong community to withstand the current difficulties and gear up for a brighter tomorrow."

HA seriously condemns malicious behaviours of damaging general

outpatient clinic

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an incident of vandalism causing damages to a general outpatient clinic, the Hospital Authority (HA) issued the following statement today (March 1):

The abovementioned incident has caused damages to the South Kwai Chung Jockey Club General Outpatient Clinic in Kwai Shing Circuit, Kwai Chung early this morning. The HA spokesperson seriously condemned the repeated malicious behaviours damaging general outpatient clinics, which threatens the safety of healthcare staff and patients.

The spokesperson said that damaging medical facilities would affect the operations and compromise patient safety.

The HA urges the stoppage of acts of vandalism, and has referred the incident to the Police as well as stepping up the security of the clinic.

Renewable energy facilitation measure takes effect

The Exemption from Profits Tax (Feed-in Tariff Scheme) Order (the Exemption Order) and the Business Registration (Amendment) Regulation 2019 (the Amendment Regulation), which exempt individuals installing renewable energy (RE) systems at their residential premises from the relevant taxation obligations and business registration requirements, came into force today (March 1), a spokesman for the Environment Bureau said.

The Government is committed to creating favourable conditions for members of the public to participate in the development of RE. The Feed-in Tariff (FiT) Scheme, introduced in 2018, allows investors in RE systems to receive payments of \$3 to \$5 for each unit of electricity they generate, thereby shortening the payback period to about 10 years. To simplify the relevant procedures and facilitate participation as far as practicable, the Government pursued legislative amendments through the Exemption Order and Amendment Regulation to exempt individuals (not in the course of any other business) installing RE systems at their residential premises from the payment of profits tax in respect of the FiT payments received through participation in the FiT Scheme, and also exempt them from the requirement to apply for a business registration. Before these legislative amendments came into effect, the arrangement had already been announced and implemented administratively through a notice issued by the Commissioner of Inland

Revenue in October 2018.

Other facilitation and support measures introduced include relaxing restrictions on the installation of solar systems on the rooftops of New Territories Exempted Houses (also known as "village houses"), introducing Solar Harvest to install small-scale RE systems for eligible schools and welfare non-governmental organisations, revamping the "HK RE Net" to provide relevant information on RE and its installation, setting up an enquiry hotline, publishing guidance notes on the general requirements for installing solar energy generation systems, etc.

The Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, said, "We believe that the facilitation measures we have introduced, coupled with FiT, have been effective in spurring the development of RE in Hong Kong. As at end 2019, the two power companies have received over 7 000 FiT applications, of which about 6 000 have been approved. The solar panels used in these approved applications can cover about 70 standard football pitches, while the annual electricity generated can power the residential units of two Tai Koo Shings. In comparison, only some 200 private RE systems were connected to the power companies' grids in the decade prior to introduction of the FiT Scheme. This proves that the FiT Scheme and the related facilitation measures have been effective.

"Everyone can contribute to the fight against climate change. I hope that the various facilitation and support measures can encourage participation in the FiT Scheme and installation of energy generation systems which comply with the relevant requirements. Let's support the development of RE in Hong Kong, so that our city can achieve deep decarbonisation," he added.

A brief on the Exemption Order and the Amendment Regulation is available at www.legco.gov.hk/yr19-20/english/subleg/brief/2019ln190_191_brf.pdf.

Yellow fire danger warning

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Yellow fire danger warning

The fire danger situation today (March 1) is yellow and the risk of fire is high. People are urged to prevent fires breaking out and hikers should also be vigilant.

Statement by Department of Justice on prosecutorial decisions

In response to the arrest of three persons who were charged with offences in relation to criminal intimidation and taking part in an unauthorised assembly, the Department of Justice (DoJ) today (February 29) made the following statement:

As the legal proceedings of the persons in question remains ongoing, apart from reiterating basic principles, any substantive comments are considered inappropriate. It is also wholly speculative and totally baseless to suggest that the prosecutorial decisions were made under undue influence.

The DoJ makes each prosecutorial decision based on evidence, applicable law and the Prosecution Code. All prosecutorial decisions by the DoJ are made with professionalism, without fear or favour. Prosecutors of the DoJ have always been applying the highest professional standards in handling criminal cases and will not be influenced by any investigatory, political, media, community, or individual interest or representation. All cases will be handled in the same manner irrespective of the political beliefs, requests and background of the persons involved.

Article 63 of the Basic Law stipulates that "the Department of Justice of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall control criminal prosecutions, free from any interference". In ensuring the integrity of the criminal justice system in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the DoJ has all along been discharging the prosecutorial duties fairly in accordance with the above principles.