

Early closure of some LCSD facilities in Central and Western District

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) announced today (January 19) that due to special circumstances which happened nearby, Hong Kong City Hall in Central and Western District is closed; Hong Kong Park Sports Centre and Hong Kong Squash Centre in the same district will be closed at 6pm to ensure the safety of venue users and staff.

Subject to the situation, more cultural and leisure facilities in the same district and any other districts which may be affected will also be closed early and at short notice to ensure the safety of venue users. Members of the public who plan to go to those venues are advised to visit the LCSD website or contact 1823 in advance.

HKSARG responds to public meeting

In response to media enquiries on the public meeting in Central today (January 19), a Government spokesman made the following response:

"Universal suffrage of 'one person, one vote' for selecting the Chief Executive (the CE) and electing all Legislative Council (LegCo) members is enshrined as an ultimate aim in the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (the Basic Law). The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has all along been taking forward constitutional development in accordance with the Basic Law and the relevant Interpretation and Decisions of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (the NPCSC)."

"Article 45 of the Basic Law stipulates that the method for selecting the CE shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the HKSAR and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress. The ultimate aim is the selection of the CE by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures. Article 68 of the Basic Law also stipulates that the method for forming the LegCo shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the HKSAR and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress. The ultimate aim is the election of all the members of the LegCo by universal suffrage."

"On the sequence of implementing universal suffrage for the selection of the CE and the election of all members of the LegCo, according to the relevant Decisions of the NPCSC, after the CE is selected by universal suffrage, the election of the LegCo of the HKSAR may be implemented by the

method of electing all the members by universal suffrage. In other words, we shall first implement the selection of the CE by universal suffrage before the CE selected by universal suffrage and the HKSAR Government under his/her leadership can take forward the method for electing all LegCo members by universal suffrage."

"According to the Basic Law and the relevant Interpretation and Decisions of the NPCSC, the successful implementation of universal suffrage for selecting the CE requires the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the LegCo, the consent of the CE, and the approval of the NPCSC."

"Since the return to the Motherland, the HKSAR has made three attempts to take forward constitutional reform. The HKSAR Government introduced in 2012 the relevant bills to amend the methods for selecting the CE and for forming the LegCo. The bills were successfully passed by a two-thirds majority of all members of the LegCo. As a result, the membership of the Election Committee was increased from 800 to 1 200, while that of the LegCo was increased from 60 to 70. Among the 10 newly-added LegCo seats, five of them are returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, while the remaining five seats (District Council (Second) Functional Constituency) are returned through 'one-person-one-vote' by the registered electors who have not registered as an elector in any traditional functional constituencies. This is a milestone in the development of democracy in Hong Kong. For the 2020 Legislative Council General Election, the five seats in the District Council (Second) Functional Constituency are expected to be returned by around four million registered voters."

"The other two constitutional reform proposals put forward in 2005 and 2015 respectively were vetoed as they failed to obtain support from a two-thirds majority of all members of the LegCo. For the last time in 2015, the HKSAR Government spent a total of 20 months to tackle the issue. Having conducted two rounds of extensive public consultations spanning seven months in total, the Government put forward a universal suffrage package for selecting the CE which is constitutionally in order, lawful, reasonable and rational. Nonetheless, it was regrettably vetoed as it failed to obtain support from a two-thirds majority of all members of the LegCo."

"The HKSAR Government understands the aspiration of the community for universal suffrage. To achieve this aim, the community needs to have a clear understanding that apart from being accountable to the HKSAR, the CE selected by universal suffrage is appointed by the Central People's Government (CPG) and shall also be accountable to the CPG. This is the constitutional order under the 'one country, two systems' principle which should not be ignored. The community needs to attain a consensus on these principles, and premised on the legal basis, to narrow differences through dialogues under a peaceful atmosphere with mutual trust. Any constructive discussion on the issue of constitutional development would be difficult to commence if the aforesaid cannot be achieved."

"The HKSAR Government will act prudently, assess the situation carefully and do its best in creating a favourable social atmosphere to take

forward political reform and carry out constitutional development in accordance with the Basic Law and the relevant Interpretation and Decisions of the NPCSC."

"The HKSAR Government deeply regrets that some participants of the public meeting had called on foreign governments to intervene in the affairs of Hong Kong and to impose sanctions. Foreign governments, legislatures or organisations have absolutely no role in matters relating to the constitutional development of Hong Kong and should not express any opinion or take any action in an attempt to influence or interfere in the discussions of related matters in Hong Kong."

"The HKSAR Government reiterates that foreign countries should not interfere in any form in the internal affairs of the HKSAR."

Full operation of e-Payment facilities at manual toll lanes of Cross-Harbour Tunnel will resume tomorrow morning

The Transport Department (TD) announced today (January 19) that the repair work and testing of the e-Payment facilities (including Octopus and credit cards) for all nine manual toll lanes of the Cross-Harbour Tunnel have been completed and the facilities will resume full operation from 7am tomorrow (January 20).

The facilities of the Cross-Harbour Tunnel were seriously damaged last November and the tunnel was temporarily closed for urgent repair work. It was re-opened to all traffic on November 27. At the time, the "stop-and-go" e-Payment facilities and related systems at toll booths were still under repair and could not be used together with the re-opening of the tunnel. Motorists needed to pay the toll in cash or by Octopus through the hand-held Octopus machines. Credit cards could not be used temporarily.

With the completion of the repair work and testing, the operation of the e-Payment facilities will resume fully. The toll payment methods will resume as normal.

The TD, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department and the tunnel operator will continue to closely monitor the operation of the manual toll collection.

Police urge crowds to leave through MTR Central or Admiralty Stations as public meeting in Chater Garden is suspended

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following message as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

This afternoon (January 19), a large group of rioters have been inflicting damages to the vicinity of Chater Garden, Central by acts of arson, road blockage and even brutal attacks on Police officers who were speaking with the organiser of the public event. In face of the violent situation, Police officers have used the minimum necessary force, including tear gas, to disperse and arrest the offenders.

Police warn the rioters to stop all illegal acts and appeal to the participants to head towards Central or Admiralty to leave the area by MTR.

Police request public meeting in Chater Garden to suspend and appeal to participants to leave as rioters block roads

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following message as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

While conducting stop and search in the vicinity of Chater Garden, Central this afternoon (January 19), Police officers were surrounded by rioters who threw water bottles and other objects at them. In addition, the rioters built barricades with railings, traffic cones and umbrellas in the vicinity of Des Voeux Road Central and Ice House Street. They threw bricks onto the roads; some threw paint bombs and defaced the exteriors of the buildings in the area.

In view of the violence, Police officers have asked the organiser to suspend the public meeting in Chater Garden, Central and urged the participants to head towards Admiralty and leave the area by public transport.