

Red flags hoisted at Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (January 9) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Silverstrand Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at these beaches.

Missing man in Hung Hom located

A man who went missing in Hung Hom has been located.

Lam Wing-nam, aged 40, went missing after he left a hostel on Cooke Street on January 1 afternoon. A staff member made a report to Police on January 2.

The man returned to his hostel yesterday afternoon (January 8). He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

HKSARG responds to US report

In response to media enquiries, a spokesman for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government made the following response today (January 9) to parts of a report related to Hong Kong issued by the United States (US) Congressional-Executive Commission on China:

"The HKSAR Government expressed strong opposition to the enactment of the 'Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act' in the US. The Act clearly intervenes in Hong Kong's internal affairs. It is unwarranted, sends an erroneous signal to violent protesters, and harms the relations and common interests between Hong Kong and the US. The HKSAR Government deeply regretted

that the US has disregarded the genuine concerns raised repeatedly by Hong Kong on the Act and let the Act become US law.

"Since the return to the Motherland, the HKSAR has been exercising 'Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy in strict accordance with the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. The 'one country, two systems' principle has been fully and successfully implemented. The HKSAR Government will continue to implement the 'one country, two systems' principle resolutely in accordance with the Basic Law.

"Safeguarding human rights and freedoms is a constitutional duty of the HKSAR Government. Article 4 of the Basic Law stipulates that the HKSAR shall safeguard the rights and freedoms of the residents of the HKSAR and of other persons in the Region in accordance with law. Human rights and freedoms in Hong Kong are fully protected by the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance and other legislation, in addition to the Basic Law. The HKSAR Government attaches great importance to human rights and freedoms and is determined to safeguard them.

"The Basic Law stipulates that permanent residents of the HKSAR shall have the right to vote and the right to stand for election in accordance with law. At the same time, the HKSAR Government has a duty to implement and uphold the Basic Law and to ensure that all elections will be conducted in accordance with the Basic Law and relevant electoral laws. There is no 'political screening'.

"The Basic Law clearly stipulates that the HKSAR is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Any suggestion for 'Hong Kong's independence' is a blatant violation of the Basic Law and a direct affront to the national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the PRC. 'Hong Kong's independence' runs counter to the successful implementation of 'one country, two systems' and undermines the HKSAR's constitutional and legal foundations as enshrined in the Basic Law. Relevant international human rights convention and court cases have clearly pointed out that freedom of speech is not absolute.

"As for constitutional development, universal suffrage of 'one person, one vote' for selecting the Chief Executive and electing all members of the Legislative Council is enshrined as an ultimate aim in the Basic Law. To achieve this aim, the community needs to engage in dialogues, premised on the legal basis and under a peaceful atmosphere with mutual trust, with a view to narrowing differences and attaining a consensus agreeable to all sides. The HKSAR Government will assess the situation carefully and take 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. As a matter of fact, the HKSAR Government took forward constitutional development in accordance with law between 2013 and 2015, and put forward a practicable proposal for selecting the Chief Executive by universal suffrage. However, the proposal was vetoed by Members of the Legislative Council who claimed to strive for democracy.

"In respect of the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019 (the Bill), the Chief Executive announced on June 15 last year that the Bill was suspended and later made it clear that all the legislative work had come to a complete halt. The Chief Executive further announced on September 4 last year that the HKSAR Government would formally withdraw the Bill when the Legislative Council resumed business and the Secretary for Security withdrew the Bill at the Legislative Council meeting on October 23 last year. It is incorrect for the report to say that the Bill would 'empower the Chief Executive to make decisions on fugitive arrangements on a case-by-case basis'. According to the now-withdrawn Bill, the Chief Executive could not bypass the Court to surrender a fugitive to any requesting party. The HKSAR Government regrets to see the inclusion of this inaccurate statement in the report.

"From June 2019 until now, there have been over 1 000 public demonstrations, processions and public meetings in Hong Kong. Unfortunately, many ended in violent and illegal confrontations, including reckless blockage of roadways, throwing of petrol bombs and bricks, arson, vandalism, setting ablaze individual stores and facilities of the Mass Transit Railway and Light Rail, and beating people holding different views, etc. All these have seriously endangered personal safety, public order and public safety. The Police have been carrying out enforcement actions in strict accordance with the law in order to protect life and property and restore order to society. The Police have in place prudent and stringent guidelines for the use of force. Police officers will only use appropriate force when it is necessary. Such force is used in response to the prevailing situation, and the place and the level of force used depend on the level of violence committed by rioters and the circumstances at the scene. If members of the public could express their views in a peaceful and rational manner, there would be no need for the Police to use any force.

"On the rule of law, the HKSAR Government is committed to safeguarding the rule of law and judicial independence in Hong Kong. Article 63 of the Basic Law entrenches the constitutional principle of prosecutorial independence. The conduct of all criminal prosecutions of the Department of Justice is free from any interference. Decisions to prosecute or not, as the case may be, must be based on an objective and professional assessment of the available evidence and the law, and be in accordance with the published Prosecution Code. No political consideration is being taken into account at all and there is no question of so-called 'political prosecutions'.

"In addition, the HKSAR Government has all along been combating Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and enhancing the protection and well-being of foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) in an all-out and highly proactive manner. The HKSAR Government established in March 2018 a high-level inter-bureau/departmental Steering Committee chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration and promulgated the Action Plan to Tackle TIP and to Enhance Protection of FDHs in Hong Kong. The Action Plan comprises over 30 comprehensive, strategic and targeted measures on victim identification, investigation, enforcement, prosecution, victim protection and support, prevention and partnership-building with different stakeholders, etc. In

addition, the HKSAR Government has allocated additional annual funding of over \$62 million starting from the 2019-20 financial year to support various departments to create close to 100 new permanent posts in the civil service dedicated to the fight against TIP, fully demonstrating our commitment and determination in fighting the crime. Despite our proactive and intensified efforts in TIP victim identification, the percentage of victims identified has remained at a low level of less than 0.3 per cent (with only 18 victims identified in 2018), reinforcing our observation all along that TIP is not prevalent in Hong Kong."

The spokesman reiterated that foreign legislatures should not interfere in any form in the internal affairs of the HKSAR.

LC Urgent Q3: Enhancing measures to cope with epidemic outbreak

Following is an urgent question by the Dr Hon Kwok Ka-ki under Rule 24(4) of the Rules of Procedure and a reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (January 8):

Question:

Recently, there has been an outbreak of pneumonia with unknown causes in Wuhan, and some of the patients are operators in a seafood wholesale market. As the flow of residents between Wuhan and Hong Kong will increase with the approach of the Lunar New Year, there are worries that the disease will spread to Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government take the following measures immediately: enhancing the prevention of the epidemic at the boundary control points (including the deployment of staff to board the planes and Express Rail Link trains coming from Wuhan to carry out quarantine work), stepping up the prevention of the epidemic at the local level (including the enhancement of the disinfection and cleansing work at wet markets), and devising a plan for public hospitals to cope with the epidemic outbreak amid the influenza surge?

Reply:

President,

The Government has adopted various immediate measures after an outbreak of pneumonia with unknown causes in Wuhan. These measures include strengthening port health measures.

Prevention measures at boundary control points are important elements in tackling communicable diseases. Both the Food and Health Bureau and the Department of Health attach great importance to the work on port health

measures. Regarding the cluster of pneumonia cases identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, the Port Health Division has, in addition to regular measures, put in place enhanced measures at all boundary control points since January 1, 2020, with particular attention to incoming flights and Express Rail Link (XRL) trains from Wuhan. Major measures are as follows:

- (1) immediate referral of inbound travellers with relevant symptoms and travel history to public hospitals for treatment in isolation and follow-up;
- (2) advised the MTR Corporation Limited, the Airport Authority and relevant airlines to enhance the cleaning and disinfection for incoming XRL trains and flights from Wuhan. Cleaning of the XRL West Kowloon Station and the airport terminal buildings has also been stepped up;
- (3) put in place an additional infrared thermal imaging system in the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) designated for checking the body temperature of inbound travellers from Wuhan starting from January 3, 2020;
- (4) deployed additional manpower at the XRL West Kowloon Station for checking the body temperature of inbound travellers starting from January 3, 2020. With effect from January 6, during the arrival of the two XRL trains that have stopped at Wuhan, all inbound travellers will have their body temperature checked by hand-held infrared thermometers to ensure that the body temperature of individual travellers from these two trains is monitored; and
- (5) stepped up the promotion of health messages about the prevention of pneumonia and respiratory tract infection for inbound and outbound travellers at the HKIA and the XRL West Kowloon Station. Health promotion at boundary control points is also enhanced through broadcasts and pamphlets, etc. to remind inbound and outbound travellers to take heed of the preventive measures and maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. When travelling outside Hong Kong, one should avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms. Travellers are also reminded to wear surgical masks, seek medical advice and report their travel history to their doctors when they have a fever or respiratory symptoms.

The Port Health Division will maintain close communication and collaboration with stakeholders of all boundary control points and provide timely updates on the situation and related measures.

Enhancing environmental hygiene

The Government has enhanced full cleaning of all of its venues and facilities. For example, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) will step up the cleaning schedule of their facilities with 1:99 diluted bleach. Other departments, such as the Transport Department and the Housing Department, will also step up cleaning at public transport interchanges, public transport carriers, public housing estates, etc.

The FEHD will step up the cleaning of public facilities under its

management, including public markets, cooked food centres, hawker bazaars, public toilets and refuse collection points. The FEHD disseminates information to the trade associations of the food industry and reminds the operators of food premises to keep their food premises and equipment clean, as well as to maintain hygiene practices in handling food. Holders of hawker stalls are also urged to clean up their stalls.

Preparation during Influenza Season

I would like to give an account on the work of the Hospital Authority (HA) to tackle seasonal influenza during the seasonal influenza season. The Government has been encouraging the public to receive seasonal influenza vaccination as early as possible. To cope with the surge in service demand that may happen during the winter influenza season, the HA started to make preparation in July last year and allocated around \$732 million to hospital clusters in advance to facilitate the early preparation by frontline management staff on manpower and supporting arrangement. In order to increase service capacity, the HA is opening 506 new beds in 2019-20 and has reserved resources for hospitals to open around 900 temporary beds according to operational needs during winter surge.

Regarding manpower, the HA will offer higher pay rate to locum doctors providing services at Accident and Emergency (A&E) sessions and General Outpatient Clinic (GOPC) sessions during winter surge. The locum recruitment has also been extended to Radiographers, Physiotherapists, Optometrists and Medical Laboratory Technologists since December 2019. Besides, the HA has enhanced the arrangement of Special Honorarium Scheme of winter surge by phases to strengthen its manpower.

In addition to the existing 13 GOPCs providing services on public holidays, four GOPCs will also provide services on particular days during long holidays, covering 17 districts in Hong Kong.

In addition, in response to the cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, the HA activated Serious Response Level on January 4, 2020, and subsequently held a Central Command Committee meeting, chaired by Chief Executive of the HA, to review the response measures and allocation of resources in each hospital cluster with seven Cluster Chief Executives of the HA, such as monitoring the supply of personal protective equipment, deploying manpower in a timely manner, and reviewing non-emergency service arrangement. The Cluster Chief Executives will closely monitor the service situation of each public hospital and implement a series of enhanced surveillance and infection control measures in public hospitals and clinics. Public hospitals have completed the widest opening of the fresh air dampers in the air handling equipment in the waiting areas of the A&E departments to achieve higher fresh air rate, and have completed wheeling in mobile High Efficiency Particulate Air filter units to augment the total air change rates in A&E waiting areas. Laboratory testing services have also been enhanced with a view to obtaining testing results as soon as possible for arrangement of suitable treatment for patients. More stringent infection control measures, including restrictions on visiting arrangement, are enforced in public hospitals. Visitors to public hospitals and clinics are required to put on surgical masks and

perform hand hygiene before and after visiting patient. As regards personal protective equipment, such as surgical masks and N95 masks, the current stockpile is adequate for at least three months' consumption. Meanwhile, the HA will maintain close liaison with the suppliers to ensure sustainable supply of protective equipment. The HA will closely monitor the utilisation of isolation beds in the seven clusters and arrange bed deployment in a timely manner.

LC Urgent Q2: Immediate measures to curb spread of epidemic in Hong Kong

Following is an urgent question by the Hon Elizabeth Quat under Rule 24(4) of the Rules of Procedure and a reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (January 8):

Question:

Several dozens of pneumonia cases with unknown causes have occurred recently in Wuhan, and there have been successive reported cases in Hong Kong of persons with a travel history to Wuhan showing related symptoms. In this connection, will the Government immediately raise the response level further, issue a travel alert for Wuhan, and step up the work on epidemic notification with the Mainland?

Reply:

President,

In reply to the question raised by the Hon Alice Mak, I have briefly reported the latest development of the cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, Hubei Province and the major areas of work undertaken by the Government over the past week. Now, I am going to elaborate Government's preparedness and response plan and relevant work on liaison with the Mainland on the disease.

Activation of Serious Response Level

In view of the latest situation of the cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, Hubei Province, the Government devised the Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance (the Plan) last week. The Plan was launched on January 4, 2020, with the Serious Response Level activated with immediate effect.

The Plan sets out the Government's preparedness and response plan in case of an outbreak of Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance where a three-tier response level is adopted. Three response levels, namely Alert, Serious and Emergency, will be activated based on the risk assessment

of the Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance that may affect Hong Kong and its health impact on the community.

Upon the risk assessment of the cluster of cases of viral pneumonia with unknown cause in Wuhan reported by the National Health Commission (NHC), the Serious Response Level was activated, under which the immediate health impact caused by Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance on local population is moderate.

To enhance the overall preparedness and response for public health crises for communicable diseases with public health significance, the Department of Health (DH) has developed contingency plans and conducted exercises and drills to test the capacity of relevant government departments and organisations to cope with possible major outbreaks of infectious diseases and public health emergencies, in order to enhance the awareness, preparedness and the ability of the community and healthcare personnel to detect and respond to possible epidemics. As a communicable disease could be caused by a pathogen currently unknown to cause human disease, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), in collaboration with many other government departments and organisations, held a public health drill exercise code-named "Sunstone" to test the Government's capacity regarding a novel disease in June 2018.

Travel Health Advice

Regarding travel alerts, the Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) System set up by the Security Bureau (SB) aims to help people better understand the possible risk or threat to personal safety in travelling to [88 countries/territories](#) that are popular travel destinations for Hong Kong residents, which do not include the Mainland. When there are incidents in these countries/territories which may affect the personal safety of Hong Kong residents, the SB will assess and consider the need to issue an OTA taking into account factors such as the nature (e.g. whether it is targeted at travellers), level and duration of the threat. Should there be public health reasons, based on the alert level as advised by the Food and Health Bureau and the CHP of the DH, the SB will issue an OTA on countries/territories which are seriously affected by infectious diseases to help the public better understand the possible health risks.

As a matter of fact, based on the available information, the World Health Organization has advised against the application of any travel or trade restrictions on China, and has not recommended any specific measures for travellers. In case of symptoms suggestive of respiratory illness either during or after travel, travellers are encouraged to seek medical attention and share travel history with healthcare personnel. To provide more information for the public's attention when travelling outside Hong Kong, the SB has uploaded the travel health advice from the DH onto its webpage on OTA.

Liaison with the Mainland

As regards the liaison and communication with the Mainland, the Government has been maintaining close liaison with the Mainland authorities

on various fronts. As early as in 2005, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region signed a "Co-operation Agreement on Response Mechanism for Public Health Emergencies" with the Mainland's former Ministry of Health and the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture of the Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region. The CHP has been maintaining close liaison with the NHC under the established mechanism which requires Hong Kong and the Mainland to notify one another on surveillance data on infectious diseases, emergency public health incidents and responses to major infectious diseases. The CHP will continue to maintain close liaison with the NHC and closely monitor the latest development of the cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan. The CHP will timely update the surveillance criteria and testing strategies in accordance with the latest situation, and provide health information for the public in a timely manner.