

LegCo delegation concludes parliamentary visit in UK (with photos)

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The delegation of the Legislative Council (LegCo) concluded its five-day parliamentary visit in the United Kingdom (UK) yesterday (September 14, London time).

On the last day of its visit in Edinburgh, the delegation met with the Head of Constitution Policy Unit of the Scottish Government, Mr Gerald Byrne, and the Head of Defence and International Policy (Scotland) of the Scotland Office of the UK Government, Mr Nigel Patrick, respectively. During the meetings, delegation members were briefed on issues relating to the scope of devolution in Scotland, the share of power and responsibilities between the UK and Scottish Parliaments, as well as the mechanism of dispute resolution with the sovereign state on constitutional and sovereignty matters.

In the afternoon, the delegation met with the Chief Whip of the Scottish National Party, Mr Gordon MacDonald, to learn about his work as a party whip. Mr MacDonald also shared his experience in the Parliament. Delegation members then attended a guided tour of the Scottish Parliament Building. Delegation members learnt that the design and architecture of the Scottish Parliament Building were inspired by the natural landscape and political values of Scotland.

In summing up the five-day parliamentary visit, Mr Ip Kin-yuen, leader of the delegation, said it was very successful in widening the political horizons of the participating members and enhancing their understanding of the parliamentary affairs in UK and Scotland.

"Members gained useful knowledge and insights on how the legislatures deal with various procedural issues to ensure its smooth operation," Mr IP said.

Mr Ip added, "the visit also provided a timely opportunity for Members to gain first-hand information about the interactions of the UK Parliament and the Scottish Parliament under devolution, as well as issues and the latest progress of the UK's exit from the European Union and what opportunities might present to Hong Kong."

Mr IP thanked for the thoughtful arrangements and warm hospitality provided by the UK and Scottish Parliaments. He also expressed heartfelt gratitude to the British Consulate-General Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in London for their assistance that made the visit concluded smoothly.

Led by the delegation leader Mr Ip Kin-yuen, the LegCo delegation conducted a parliamentary visit in London and Edinburgh from September 10 to 14. Members of the delegation include the deputy leader Mr Kenneth Leung, Mr Charles Mok, Mr Chung Kwok-pan, Mr Alvin Yeung, Mr Andrew Wan, Dr Junius Ho, Mr Lam Cheuk-ting, Mr Luk Chung-hung and Mr Au Nok-hin.



Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Sha Tin tomorrow cancelled

Owing to the cancellation of race meeting in Sha Tin tomorrow (September 16) by the Hong Kong Jockey Club, the "Special traffic arrangements for race

meeting in Sha Tin tomorrowâ€ issued by the Police at 1.34pm today (September 15) has been cancelled.

Make prior work arrangements for typhoons and rainstorms

The Labour Department (LD) today (September 15) reminded employers to make prior work arrangements for staff in times of typhoons and rainstorms.

"To avoid disputes and confusion, employers should make prior work arrangements for staff and contingency measures in times of typhoons and rainstorms," an LD spokesman said.

"In working out and enforcing the arrangements, employers should give prime consideration to employees' safety, both in the workplace and during their journeys to and from work, and adopt a flexible approach. Whenever possible, they should consult their staff."

The work arrangements should cover the following matters:

- * Whether employees are required to report for duty when different typhoon signals or rainstorm warnings are issued;
- * When a typhoon signal or rainstorm warning is issued during working hours, whether employees will be released from work and, if so, the arrangements;
- * After a typhoon signal or rainstorm warning is cancelled, the time for staff who have not reported for duty to resume work and the arrangements;
- * How wages and allowances will be calculated for staff who are required to report for duty, as well as those who are late for work or absent from work during typhoons and rainstorms; and
- * For employees who are required to travel to and from workplaces during typhoons and rainstorms, whether transport facilities will be provided for them and, if so, the arrangements.

"Employers should make realistic assessments of the requirements for staff and require only absolutely essential staff to report for duty in adverse weather conditions. When weather conditions continue to worsen and public transport services are to be suspended shortly, employers should release their staff as soon as practicable.

"When a Pre-No. 8 Special Announcement is issued during working hours, employers should release employees from work in stages as soon as practicable. To ensure the safety of employees and to enable them to arrive home before suspension of public transport services, employees who have mobility problems (for example, pregnant employees or those with physical disability), employees who rely on transport services which are prone to

being affected by adverse weather conditions (for example, ferry services) for commuting to and from work, and those who work in or are living in remote areas (for example, outlying islands) should be given priority to leave. Other employees should be released later in stages according to their travelling distance or the time required for returning home.

"If possible, employers should provide transport services for employees who are still required to travel to and from workplaces when Typhoon Warning Signal No. 8 or above or the Black Rainstorm Warning is in force, or give them a special travelling allowance as encouragement.

"As typhoons and rainstorms are natural occurrences that cannot be avoided, employers should not deduct wages of employees who are absent from or late for work because of inclement weather. Neither should employers dismiss an employee summarily based on these grounds," he said.

The spokesman also reminded employers to observe the statutory liabilities and requirements under the Employment Ordinance, the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, the Employees' Compensation Ordinance and the Minimum Wage Ordinance.

Employers should also note that they have an obligation to maintain a safe workplace for their employees under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance.

"If employees are required to work in times of typhoons and rainstorms, employers should ensure that the risks at work are properly controlled and reduced to levels that are as low as reasonably practicable," the spokesman said.

Under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, employers are liable to pay compensation for death or injury incurred when employees are travelling by a direct route from their residence to their workplace, or from their workplace back to their residence after work, four hours before or after working hours on a day when Typhoon Signal No. 8 or above or a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force.

To provide practical guidelines and samples of work arrangements for the reference of employers and employees, the LD has issued the booklet "Code of Practice in times of Typhoons and Rainstorms". The booklet can be obtained from branch offices of the Labour Relations Division or downloaded from the department's webpage (www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/wcp/Rainstorm.pdf).

HAD opens temporary shelters

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

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

As the Strong Wind Signal No. 3 is issued, the Home Affairs Department has opened temporary shelters for people in need of temporary accommodation. Please refer to the Home Affairs Department's website (www.had.gov.hk) or contact the emergency hotline on [2835 1473](tel:28351473) for details.

Marine Department announcement

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

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

As Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No.3 has been issued, the Marine Department reminds vessel owners, masters and persons-in-charge of vessels that they should take precautionary measures immediately and properly secure their vessels at safe locations.

In case of an accident, a report should be made immediately to the Vessel Traffic Centre at 2233 7801.