

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (June 8):

Reporter: Good morning. Two questions. Firstly, July 1 of this year marks the 24th anniversary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the centenary of the Communist Party of China. So, does the Government have plans to mark this special occasion? Secondly, what do you make of media reports that international study paid university students in Hong Kong to join protests in 2017? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Thank you for the two questions. Yes, in a few weeks' time, Hong Kong will be celebrating the 24th anniversary of reunification with the Mainland and the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. As in previous years, the HKSAR Government will host various types of activities including the flag-raising ceremony and the reception on July 1. And I understand that many associations are also organising similar celebration activities under the restrictions imposed because of COVID-19. It perhaps will not be able to go back to previous years when there were large crowds attending receptions, dinners and large gatherings to celebrate this important day, but I believe that these sort of activities are still going on. This year is also the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party. I have been invited, and I'm very pleased to be able to take part in some of the celebration activities including a seminar on the relationship between the Chinese Communist Party and "One Country, Two Systems" this Saturday, and also an exhibition on the achievements of the Party over the last century. These will be the activities that you will see are taking place in Hong Kong.

The second question, I do not have all the facts with me. I could only say as a matter of principle that, based on the events that we have seen in the latter half of 2019 until the enactment and implementation of the National Security Law, I hope there is now no doubt in the minds of many people that there are external forces quite active in Hong Kong for their ulterior motive. And I have just, in response to one of the questions, mentioned about those ulterior motives, either they want to undermine the Chinese Government, or they have ideological prejudices against China. These external forces are at work, and how they are acting, penetrating into various institutions in Hong Kong including the universities, is something that everyone in position should be very sensitive to. If there are reports that things like this sort are taking place in the university, I would urge the university management, the council chairman and the president to be extremely careful and to make sure that university students will not be easily indoctrinated by those prejudices and bias, let alone to take part in activities that will breach the laws of Hong Kong. Thank you.

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

CHP investigates three additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, June 8, the CHP was investigating three additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 869 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 868 confirmed cases and one probable case).

All of the newly reported cases are imported cases.

A total of 32 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (May 25 to June 7) including three local cases of which one is from unknown sources.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to compulsory testing notices (CTNs). The Regulation also requires all household members of close contacts of confirmed cases to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to CTNs published in the Gazette. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop, and undergo testing as soon as possible.

The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk).

The CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

The spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases

including mutant strains reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges 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 a 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. Moreover, vaccination may help keep people from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19, and, generally speaking, vaccines can also reduce the chance of transmission by those who have been vaccinated. People vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine can also generate herd immunity. Members of the public are urged to get vaccinated as soon as possible and book their vaccination appointments at the website (booking.covidvaccine.gov.hk/forms/index.jsp).

"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."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, 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 performing 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 doorknobs, 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 litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) 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.

Employers and employees should take precautions against heat stroke

As the Hong Kong Observatory has issued the Very Hot Weather Warning, the Labour Department (LD) reminds employers and employees to take appropriate precautions to prevent heat stroke when working in a hot or humid environment.

Heat stroke could occur if an employee works in a hot or humid environment for prolonged periods of time, as the body may fail to regulate its temperature by effective heat dissipation through sweating.

The symptoms of heat-related illnesses include feeling thirsty, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, muscle spasm or even mental confusion, and loss of consciousness or convulsion in severe cases.

Construction workers, cleaning workers, kitchen workers and porters, for example, are more prone to heat stroke as they may be working for long hours in such an environment, especially if appropriate preventive measures have not been taken.

The LD reminds employers to arrange for a suitable assessment of the risk of heat stress in the work environment and take appropriate preventive measures. The LD has produced two leaflets entitled "Checklist for Heat Stress Assessment at Construction Sites" and "Checklist for Heat Stress Assessment at Outdoor Cleansing Workplaces" respectively. Employers engaged in construction or outdoor cleaning work are advised to refer to these checklists in assessing the risk of heat stress at their workplaces. As for heat stress assessment at a workplace in general, employers can refer to a booklet entitled "Risk Assessment for the Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work" produced by the LD.

The LD also reminds employers and employees to take the following precautions to prevent heat stroke:

Employers

- (1) Take heed of the weather report and adopt shift work arrangements for employees to reduce their exposure to the hot environment, or arrange appropriate rest breaks for them during very hot periods;
- (2) Avoid working under direct sunlight and set up temporary sunshade wherever possible;
- (3) Provide cool potable water for employees at all times during work. If necessary, provide drinks containing electrolytes for employees to replenish loss of salt during profuse sweating;
- (4) Minimise physical demands by using tools or mechanical aids at work;
- (5) Increase air flow by enhancing ventilation or air-conditioning as appropriate;
- (6) Isolate heat-generating facilities at the workplace and use insulating materials to minimise heat dissipation to the other work areas; and
- (7) Provide relevant information and training for employees on heat stroke such as preventive measures and first aid treatment.

Employees

- (1) Wear clothing made of suitable materials (for example, cotton) that is loose-fitting and light-coloured to help heat dissipation, minimise heat absorption and allow sweat evaporation;
- (2) Wear a wide-brimmed hat when working outdoors;
- (3) Drink plenty of water or appropriate beverages with electrolytes to replenish the fluids and salt lost through sweating; and
- (4) Whenever there are any symptoms of heat-related illnesses, rest in a cool or shady place and drink water, and inform supervisors to take appropriate action immediately.

The LD also urges employers to provide for employees as far as practicable covered space with good ventilation for rest and meals. Furthermore, some employees may have difficulty in adapting to a hot working environment owing to their own health conditions. Employers should take this into account and consider the recommendations of their doctors when assigning work to these employees.

In addition to the publications on risk assessment, the LD has produced a leaflet entitled "Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work in a Hot Environment" for the public. The publications can be obtained free of charge from the offices of the Occupational Health Service of the LD, or downloaded from the department's webpage at www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/content2_9.htm.

The LD organises occupational health talks in public places and at its own training venues regularly to raise employers' and employees' awareness of occupational health. Details of health talks on the prevention of heat stroke at work in a hot environment from June to July are as follows:

(A)

Dates and Time: June 10 and 25 (Half-day (am)); June 16 (Half-day (pm))
Venue: Occupational Safety and Health Training Centre of the Labour

Department,
13/F, KOLOUR·Tsuen Wan I, 68 Chung On Street, Tsuen Wan, New Territories

(B)

Date and Time: June 22 (Half-day (am))

Venue: Occupational Safety and Health Centre of the Labour Department,
G/F, Kwun Tong Community Health Centre Building, 60 Hip Wo Street, Kwun Tong
(MTR Kwun Tong Station Exit A1)

(C)

Date and Time: July 15 (3.30pm to 5pm)

Venue: Lecture Hall, Hong Kong Space Museum, 10 Salisbury Road,
Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon
(MTR Tsim Sha Tsui Station Exit E)

For enrolment or enquiries about these occupational health talks, please call 2852 4040 or 2361 8240 (for talks organised at the Occupational Safety and Health Centre). Moreover, the LD also provides an outreach health education service and occupational health nurses will, on invitation, disseminate occupational health information at workplaces at a convenient time. Please contact the nursing officer at 2852 4062 for details. All these health talks are free of charge.

Infection control measures taking into account the latest COVID-19 epidemic developments will be adopted at the venues. All the occupational health public talks must be pre-registered.

[Offers of 2021-22 civil service pay adjustment](#)

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) made pay offers to the staff side of the four civil service central consultative councils today (June 8), under which the pay for civil servants in the upper, middle and lower salary bands and the directorate be frozen for 2021-22, effective retrospectively from April 1, 2021.

The above decisions were made by the Chief Executive-in-Council (CE-in-Council) after considering all relevant factors under the established annual civil service pay adjustment mechanism, including:

- * the net pay trend indicators;
- * the state of Hong Kong's economy;
- * changes in the cost of living;
- * the Government's fiscal position;
- * the pay claims of the staff side; and

* civil service morale.

"There are unfavourable and encouraging factors at the same time as far as the state of the economy is concerned. While the unemployment rate still stands at a high level, the state of the economy has shown a clear trend of recovery. Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is forecast to grow by 3.5 per cent to 5.5 per cent in 2021, and real GDP resumed appreciable year-on-year growth of 7.9 per cent in the first quarter of 2021. Although the COVID-19 epidemic in the past year has had a great impact on various industries in Hong Kong, labour market conditions will likely improve in the period ahead as the economy continues to recover, particularly so if the epidemic remains well contained. Local inflation may go up slightly alongside the recovering economy. At the same time, the efforts and contributions of civil servants at all ranks in fighting the epidemic in the past year are worthy of recognition. The CE-in-Council, after balancing all relevant factors, made an offer to freeze pay," a CSB spokesman said.

"The CE-in-Council will make a decision on the 2021-22 civil service pay adjustment after considering the response from the staff side and in accordance with the established mechanism," the spokesman added.

[CHP reminds public on precautions against heat stroke during very hot weather](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (June 8) reminded members of the public, particularly those undertaking outdoor activities, to take heed of necessary measures against heat stroke and sunburn in very hot weather.

"The public should carry and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration while engaging in outdoor activities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Those engaged in strenuous outdoor activities should avoid beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee and tea, as well as alcohol, as they speed up water loss through the urinary system," the spokesman explained.

"The obese, the sick, including those with heart disease or high blood pressure, the old and the young are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses. They should pay special attention," the spokesman added.

The public should adopt the following precautions:

- Wear loose and light-coloured clothing to reduce heat absorption and facilitate sweat evaporation and heat dissipation;
- Avoid vigorous exercise and prolonged activities like hiking or trekking as heat, sweating and exhaustion can place additional demands on the physique;
- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or late afternoon;
- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day.

If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the workplace where practicable. Start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Move to a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

The public should also note the latest and the forecast Ultraviolet (UV) Index released by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). When the UV Index is high (6 or above):

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Wear long-sleeved and loose-fitting clothes;
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or use an umbrella;
- Seek a shaded area or put on UV-blocking sunglasses;
- Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen lotion with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or above. Apply liberally and reapply after swimming, sweating or toweling off; and
- While using DEET-containing insect repellents for personal protection against mosquito-borne diseases, apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent.

If symptoms develop, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, shortness of breath or confusion, rest and seek help immediately, and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

The public may obtain more information from the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather and forecast](#), [UV Index](#) and weather information for [hiking and mountaineering](#); and [press releases](#) of the Labour Department on precautions against heat stroke for outdoor workers and their employers when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force.