

Queen Mary Hospital announces sentinel event

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Queen Mary Hospital (QMH) announced a sentinel event today (April 16):

A female patient received a bilateral total knee replacement operation at QMH on April 8. She was hospitalised for rehabilitation treatment afterwards. She received postoperative X-ray examination on the following day and her progress of recovery was satisfactory. On April 12, the clinical team reviewed the patient situation as well as her X-ray image and found that the femoral implant put into the patient's right knee was in fact the component for a left knee.

The doctor concerned met with the patient and her family on the same day to explain the incident and extend an apology. Although there is no serious immediate impact according to clinical assessment, the doctor suggested to perform a revision operation. The patient agreed and underwent the surgery uneventfully yesterday (April 15). The patient is in stable condition now. QMH will continue to provide necessary treatment and assistance.

QMH is concerned about the incident and immediately reminded the clinical team to enhance communication during an operation. The incident has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office via the Advance Incident Reporting System. A root cause analysis panel will be established to look into the incident. The investigation report will be submitted to the Head Office in eight weeks.

Fraudulent websites and phishing instant messages related to Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited relating to fraudulent websites and phishing instant messages, which has been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the websites concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

[Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (April 16), seven COVID-19 confirmed patients were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 11 253 patients with confirmed or probable infection have been discharged.

At present, there are 658 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 214 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 126 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in 18 public hospitals and the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, among which six patients are in critical condition, two are in serious condition and the remaining 118 patients are in stable condition.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

Details of the above-mentioned patients are as follows:

Patient condition	Case numbers
Discharged	11353, 11470, 11472, 11516, 11566, 11586, 11589
Critical	6607, 6794, 8078, 9907, 10358, 10942
Serious	6386, 7468

[Opening remarks by S for S at LegCo](#)

Finance Committee special meeting

Following is the opening remarks (English translation) by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee today (April 16):

Thank you, Chairman. In the draft Estimates for the new financial year, allocation under the Security Bureau (SB)'s responsibility will be \$54.3 billion, accounting for 7.5 per cent of the total government expenditure. The allocation is 5.6 per cent less than last year.

In the interest of time, I would like to briefly introduce our work in several key areas.

Firstly, on law and order, the Hong Kong National Security Law has considerably suppressed the acts of violent riots, "Hong Kong independence" and colluding with external forces that prevailed in 2019-20, and restored normal lives for Hong Kong's residents so that they can live without fear and threat to their safety. However, the violent riots have seriously tarnished the law and order and law-abiding awareness of Hong Kong.

In the four decades or so before the violent riots, Hong Kong has witnessed a steady decrease in its crime figures. The trend, however, was disrupted and reversed by the violent riots. The number of crimes increased by 9 per cent in 2019 and continued to increase by 7 per cent in 2020. Crimes recording more significant increases in 2020 include deception cases, blackmail, as well as vice, gambling activities and drug-related offences. We will therefore closely monitor the crime trend and take strict enforcement actions. We will also have to rebuild the law-abiding awareness through promotion and education, and inform the public about common criminal tactics so that they will be more vigilant. In this regard, the Government, the Police and different sectors in society will have to work together to rebuild positive values and the law-abiding awareness of society.

While order in the community has broadly resumed, security risks still prevail. I would like to remind everyone of three areas.

Firstly, people who endanger national security still leverage on the media, arts and culture, and publications etc, to continue to disseminate the idea of "Hong Kong independence" and destruction, and shamelessly fabricate heroic stories for those violating the law;

Secondly, there are risks of local terrorism lurking in the community, and we have to beware of self-radicalised people pursuing "lone wolf" terrorist acts; and

Thirdly, agents of foreign countries are still present in Hong Kong and external forces are still exploiting every opportunity to interfere and damage the city.

We need to stay vigilant and equip ourselves with the ability to deal with contingencies any time.

In respect of control points, the HKSAR Government will continue to closely collaborate with the Shenzhen Municipal Government to enhance the clearance capability of the land boundary control points between two places, which help facilitate the realisation of the "East in East out, West in West out" planning strategy for cargo traffic. We opened the cargo clearance facilities of the Liantang Port/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point in August 2020 and have provided round-the-clock cargo clearance services at the Shenzhen Bay Port starting from December 2020.

Regarding the redevelopment of Huanggang Port Control Point and the implementation of the co-location arrangement, I moved on March 24 this year a government motion at the Legislative Council which was supported by all attending Members for us to press ahead with the corresponding work in collaboration with the Shenzhen Municipal Government. I would like to express my gratitude for your support.

Various measures of handling non-refoulement claims have achieved positive progress. The number of non-ethnic Chinese illegal immigrants has dropped by over 80 per cent from the peak, and the number of new non-refoulement claims received has also dropped by about 80 per cent from the peak. The number of appeals pending the Torture Claims Appeal Board's handling has also dropped significantly to 1 600, which are expected to be completed within this year the soonest.

To handle non-refoulement claims more effectively, we have earlier introduced the Immigration (Amendment) Bill 2020 (the Bill) with a view to further strengthening our measures and the legal basis. The Bills Committee has largely completed the scrutiny. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Bills Committee. Taking into account the Bills Committee's comments, we will introduce committee stage amendments to the Bill, including further specifying whether the person concerned is likely to pose a security risk to the community should be taken into consideration when assessing whether the detention period is reasonable and lawful. Subject to the agreement of the House Committee, we will resume the second reading on April 28 this year.

In respect of fire safety in old buildings, the Government agrees that there is a need to consider empowering the Fire Services Department and the Buildings Department to assist in carrying out fire safety improvement works for owners of old buildings who are incapable of complying with the requirements of the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance, and to recover the costs incurred from such owners upon completion of the works. The Security Bureau will make reference to a similar mechanism under the prevailing Buildings Ordinance and take into account the experience of the Buildings Department in the work of building safety, and will do our best to resolve the legal and enforcement issues involved. It is expected that a public consultation will be launched in the second half of this year in order to

formulate a suitable mechanism and amend the legislation to empower relevant departments to carry out the related work.

Lastly, I would like to talk about the anti-epidemic work. In addition to the work reported to the Committee just now, the disciplined services and auxiliary forces under the Security Bureau have fully dedicated themselves to duties and actively participated in the work of the Government in fighting the epidemic, including increasing face mask production in correctional institutions in the early stage of the epidemic, preparatory work for the operation of the quarantine facilities, and assistance rendered to Hong Kong people stranded overseas in returning home. Recently, we have been providing assistance in strengthening contact tracing of close contacts, and stepping up enforcement actions against contravention of the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance. At the peak, over 3 000 personnel from the disciplined services were deployed on a daily basis, especially participating in various work during the operations in "restricted areas".

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the colleagues from the disciplined and auxiliary services for their hard work.

Chairman, the representatives from Departments and I are pleased to answer questions from Members.

Thank you, Chairman.

SLW's speaking notes on welfare and women policy areas tabled at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following are the speaking notes of the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on welfare and women policy areas tabled at the special meeting of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Finance Committee today (April 16):

Chairman and Honourable Members,

In 2021-22, government recurrent spending on social welfare and women's interests is estimated to be \$105.7 billion, accounting for 20.4 per cent of the total recurrent government expenditure of the year, coming first amongst all policy area groups. This amount has not included the supplementary provisions for Working Family Allowance (WFA) and short-term food assistance approved by the Finance Committee (FC) of LegCo on March 26, 2021 (Note 1). Compared with the revised estimate for 2020-21 of \$90.9 billion, there is an increase of about \$14.8 billion (16.2 per cent) in recurrent spending on

social welfare. This reflects the Government's commitment to supporting the disadvantaged. The Government will continue to provide and enhance our support to the disadvantaged, including the elderly, low-income families, children, persons with disabilities and those in need. Now, let me highlight how the Labour and Welfare Bureau will make use of these resources.

Elderly care

The recurrent government expenditure on elderly services in 2021-22 is estimated to reach about \$14.2 billion, representing an increase of about 20 per cent over the revised estimate of about \$11.9 billion in 2020-21 and an increase of about 85 per cent over about \$7.7 billion in 2017-18. In 2021-22, the Government will provide an additional 1 887 subsidised residential care places for the elderly, including 111 places provided by contract homes and subsidised homes and 1 776 EA1 places under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme, as well as 164 subsidised day care service places for the elderly. The Government has also allocated additional resources to an additional 1 500 service quotas under the Integrated Home Care Services (Frail Cases) in April 2021.

Short-term food assistance service

The Government will make the Short-term Food Assistance Service Projects a permanent one from August 2021 upon completion of the existing service contracts. The Government has earmarked \$415 million to meet the recurrent expenditure. To help individuals and families temporarily affected by the pandemic, the Government will relax the asset limits of the service in June 2021 on a one-year time-limited basis by pitching the asset limits to those of the WFA, which will require an additional expenditure of about \$430 million.

Cash assistance

Having regard to the protracted COVID-19 pandemic and the employment conditions, the Government launched the time-limited "Special Scheme of Assistance to the Unemployed" under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme to implement two measures, namely (i) relaxing the asset limits for able-bodied persons by 100 per cent for one year from June 1, 2020, to May 31, 2021; and (ii) disregarding the cash value of insurance policies of able-bodied CSSA applicants as assets for six months from April 1 to September 30, 2021, during the grace period of one year. The FC approved a one-off commitment of \$3,520 million to meet the relevant expenditure.

Separately, notwithstanding that the WFA Scheme must be based on the employment and working hour requirements applicable to its applicant households, the FC approved on March 26, 2021, the substantial reduction of the WFA basic working hour requirement for non-single-parent households by half (i.e. from 144 hours per month to 72 hours per month) for a one-year period, so as to assist households facing under-employment as a result of the

pandemic. It is crudely estimated that some 24 000 additional households will benefit, involving an additional expenditure of \$954 million. Meanwhile, the Government will abolish the Individual-based Work Incentive Transport Subsidy (I-WITS) Scheme to redeploy resources for implementing the time-limited substantial reduction of WFA working hour requirements and handling the continued surge in WFA applications. The above measures will be implemented concurrently in June 2021.

Furthermore, the Financial Secretary has proposed in the 2021-22 Budget to provide an extra allowance to social security recipients equal to half a month of payment, which will involve an additional expenditure of about \$2,382 million and is expected to benefit about 1.51 million persons. Similar arrangements will apply to recipients of WFA and I-WITS. It is expected that some 70 000 WFA households and 20 000 I-WITS recipients will benefit from this initiative, involving an additional expenditure of about \$121 million.

The various time-limited and one-off cash assistance measures mentioned above involve an additional expenditure of about \$7,000 million.

Supporting pre-school children with special needs

To provide early support for pre-school children with special needs, the number of places for on-site pre-school rehabilitation services has been increased by 1 000 to 8 000 in this school year and is expected to further increase to 10 000 in 2022/23 school year.

Women's development

In 2021-22, the Government has earmarked around \$41.2 million to promote women's interests and support the work of the Women's Commission (WoC). These include the provision for assisting the WoC in implementing the "Capacity Building Mileage Programme", and implementing the "Funding Scheme for Women's Development" under which women's groups may implement programmes that are conducive to women's development.

Lotteries Fund

The revenue for the Lotteries Fund has dropped substantially due to the pandemic. In view of this, the Government will make an injection of \$1.1 billion (Note 2) into the Lotteries Fund, so as to ensure that development projects in respect of much-needed social welfare services premises (particularly major facilities for elderly and rehabilitation services) can proceed as scheduled, and that the feasibility studies and detailed design work for such projects will not be affected. The Government will brief the Panel on Welfare Services on the injection proposal, and will then submit the relevant funding proposal to the FC.

Chairman, this concludes my opening remarks. Members are welcome to raise questions.

Note 1: FC approved on March 26 the supplementary provisions for 2021-22 of \$795 million and \$280.4 million for WFA and short-term food assistance respectively. Also, there is an increase in commitment of \$18.3 million for short-term food assistance.

Note 2: It is not included in the recurrent spending of \$105.7 billion mentioned in paragraph 1.