

# CHP investigates seven additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, March 30, the CHP was investigating seven additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 462 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 461 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, six are imported cases and one is epidemiologically linked with a local case.

A total of 143 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (March 16 to 29), including 71 local cases of which 19 are 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](http://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 the compulsory testing notice. 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 compulsory testing notices 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](http://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 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.

"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](http://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](https://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.

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## Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (March 30):

Reporter: Analysts said that under Beijing's plan which includes vetting committee and higher nomination thresholds could eliminate the diversity in Hong Kong's politics. Will you be leading the promotion campaign as some media reports suggest, and what would you say to residents who felt that the reform was a retrogression in democracy and was no longer interested in voting anymore? Second, when will the BioNTech vaccination be resumed and what is the progress with Fosun at this moment? What more incentive that the Government would offer to citizens to have enough confidence on these two vaccines? And third, RTHK used to be one of the few broadcasters in Hong Kong which produce high quality, intellectual talk shows and documentaries. Do you think that its new Director was over-killing, as different kinds of shows were being suspended one after the other? Would it be in Hong Kong residents' disadvantage as these quality TV shows are being censored? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Thank you for the three questions. First of all, as you are all aware, the National People's Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC) is meeting yesterday and today at its 27th meeting and one of the main subjects being deliberated on is the improvements to the electoral system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in accordance with the Decision made by the National People's Congress earlier in the month. I'm not in a position to disclose any details before the NPCSC has decided on the amendments to Annex I and Annex II, except to stress that the purpose of the improvements to the electoral system is to make sure that Hong Kong's electoral system is in line with the very important principle of "One Country, Two Systems", and to ensure that it is "patriots administering Hong Kong" so that we could be assured of Hong Kong's stability and prosperity. Without the details it is very difficult to answer your other very specific questions, but I can perhaps give you an advance notice that assuming the NPCSC will announce its decision later today, I will hold a press conference to explain the Decision's content, to announce the follow-up work by the Hong Kong SAR Government, and to answer any other queries that you may have. When I said that I and the Hong Kong SAR Government fully welcome and support the Decision as well as the amendments to be made by the NPCSC, we are committed to do a few things. One is we have a duty to explain to the people of Hong Kong why these improvements are needed. Second, we have to complete within a very tight timetable the local legislation to put into effect the amended version of Annex I and Annex II, and finally is we have to actually conduct the three sets of elections in the next 12 months. There's a lot of work to be done and I'm prepared to explain in more details later on.

The second question about vaccination, as far as the BioNTech vaccine, I believe the Secretary for Food and Health has already explained at her media standup yesterday that the initial or preliminary investigation by the manufacturer does not indicate any problem in the quality or the efficacy of the vaccine; it's about the packaging and perhaps the transportation. We very much hope to have the final report as soon as possible and the alternative, either in terms of supply or certification, to enable us to resume the vaccination of BioNTech, especially for those people who have already taken the first dose to complete the second dose vaccination. You have to wait for the details to be announced.

As far as more incentives, I believe the Secretary has also given some indication yesterday. As I said on this occasion last week, the best incentive is to protect yourself and to protect your family members by taking this vaccine. If people want to see the more tangible effects, or the tangible benefits of taking the vaccine, the Secretary has outlined several things. One is, at the moment, the Government does mandate the taking of a COVID-19 test at regular intervals for certain groups of people. For example, the care staff at the residential elderly homes, the staff of restaurants that want to open for dining in the evening, and also if schools want to resume 100 per cent half-day face-to-face classes, then the teachers and the staff have to take this COVID-19 test on a regular basis. The first tangible incentive is if somebody is fully vaccinated, which means that he or she has taken the two doses of whichever vaccine, and then wait for a period of two weeks, then this having been vaccinated will be a good substitute for the regular COVID-19 test. I have already heard the catering sector representatives saying in public that this is a good enough incentive because going for COVID-19 tests once every 14 days is still quite troublesome for the staff and also for the restaurant operators. This is one illustration of the incentive.

The second incentive is for visitation. I feel very sorry for family members who have not been able to visit their elderly in the elderly homes or their relatives in hospitals. With vaccination by the visitors going in to visit their family members in the elderly homes and the hospitals, this will also be a very tangible benefit if they have been fully vaccinated and on top of that upon admission into the hospitals or the elderly homes, if they are willing to take another rapid test, the antigen test, then we will facilitate visitation, which to many people is very very important after a long period of 14 months.

The third incentive is in travelling. Several countries have already been talking about they will give facilitation and reduce quarantine arrangement for people who have been vaccinated. Again, this is a very tangible incentive as I'm sure many Hong Kong people are longing for travelling to places that they love to go previously. These are all the incentives that we are considering and will put in place when the vaccination has taken place. I must make another appeal here, that is, people should come forward to receive the vaccination. We have now already expanded the priority groups to anybody aged 30 and over, and that is quite an exceptional

treatment compared to other places. Other places are still injecting the jab for people who are 50 and above, or the high-risk groups or the health care personnel but we have this extensive Government Vaccination Programme in place because we have sufficient supply; we have good infrastructure; we have enough staff to serve the people. Please come forward and take the vaccine so that we together could build up a herd immunity in Hong Kong and for Hong Kong to go back to normal as soon as possible.

The final question about RTHK. Yes, RTHK is a public broadcaster, over the years it has produced programmes which we all love, but RTHK is also a government department. Whether as a government department or a public broadcaster, RTHK has to follow rules, regulations and guidelines. Particularly in RTHK they have signed a Charter, not only with the Government but also with the Broadcasting Authority. Within the Charter they have several rules to follow. It is for us all, including the Director of Broadcasting, to make sure that rules and regulations in the Charter are being followed. The Director of Broadcasting is not just a department head. He has also been given the mandate, the position and the responsibility as the Editor-in-chief. In other words, whatever programmes that come out of RTHK that are not fulfilling, or breaching those rules and regulations or even breaching the law, then the Director of Broadcasting has to be held responsible. That's why he has to be very cautious and I have to recognise what he has done. Since taking office he has been very conscientious and doing exactly what I expect from the Editor-in-chief of RTHK.

Reporter: Would you make vaccination compulsory to participate in air travel bubbles with Singapore, Mainland China and other country? The second question is on electoral reform. Many foreign governments and residents are concerned this will stop any opposition candidates from running. What do you say to those residents who want to vote for pro-democracy candidates but are concerned no one will be allowed to run? Thank you.

Chief Executive: The first question about vaccination and travelling. Of course, vaccination will facilitate the resumption of travel to a certain extent, but I'm sure you realise that when we talk about travelling, it's a bilateral thing. Our people have vaccinated, whether the other side would then make life easier for our people to travel to their own country is a matter for them. What I have asked my colleagues, particularly the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, to revive, to discuss, is what sort of arrangements we could put in place to facilitate bilateral travelling, particularly with Singapore, because as early as last October, November, we did have a very good scheme called the Air Travel Bubble between Hong Kong and Singapore but unfortunately we then had a fourth wave from the second half of November, and that has been suspended. Now that our cases have come down to a very low level, and we start to roll out the Government Vaccination Programme, I think it is very good timing to resume the discussion so that people from both places could start to travel again.

Whether we would make it mandatory depends on the discussion. If the other side says that you have to make sure that travellers from Hong Kong coming to our place, like Singapore, have to be fully vaccinated, then we

will have to tell the people, if you want to benefit from this air travel bubble, you have to be vaccinated. If they don't have that requirement, then we will not make it mandatory. But standing here, I always appeal to Hong Kong people to come forward to receive vaccination because of the benefits to protect themselves, their family members, and community at large.

On electoral reform, as I said, I'm not in a position to talk about details, but I can respond to your question about whether certain types of people with certain political beliefs are still able to run for election – the answer is yes. The whole arrangement to improve the electoral system of the Hong Kong SAR is to ensure that it's "patriots administering Hong Kong" – they have to fulfil a requirement, which actually is in our electoral laws that they have to bear allegiance to the Hong Kong SAR and also to uphold the Basic Law. This is the purpose of this electoral reform. For people who hold different political beliefs, who are more inclined towards more democracy, or who are more conservative, who belong to the left or belong to the right, as long as they meet this very fundamental and basic requirement, I don't see why they could not run for election. That is not only what I say. It has been mentioned by the senior officials in the Central People's Government that this system is not looking for homogeneous candidates. You could have different political stances – as long as you are serving the people of Hong Kong, you are not going to breach national security, then of course you could compete in elections in accordance with the electoral legislation.

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

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## **SJ welcomes passage of amended Annex I and Annex II to Basic Law by NPCSC**

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) today (March 30) passed the amended Annex I "Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" and Annex II "Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures" to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China. The Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, issued the following statement:

I welcome and support the passage by the NPCSC on the amended Annex I and Annex II to the Basic Law for improving the electoral system of the HKSAR. By ensuring that "one country, two systems" is implemented on the right track, the constitutional order as set out by the Constitution and the Basic Law will be effectively safeguarded, thereby achieving the long-term stability, prosperity and safety of the HKSAR.

The Central Authorities proactively collected views from various sectors of Hong Kong within a short period of time. The views have been thoroughly considered by the NPCSC. The increase in the size and composition of the Election Committee and the Legislative Council reflect a more balanced and orderly political participation as well as a broader representation of society, signifying an important move to advance the HKSAR's democratic electoral system.

The HKSAR Government will complete local legislation and relevant legislative amendments in accordance with the amended Annex I and Annex II to the Basic Law. I will lead the Department of Justice to render full support to the Government's work with a view to improving the electoral system as early as possible to enhance the governance efficacy of the HKSAR.

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## **CS strongly supports and welcomes approval by NPCSC of amended Annex I and Annex II to Basic Law**

In regard to the approval by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) of the amended Annex I to the Basic Law on Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and Annex II to the Basic Law on Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and its Voting Procedures today (March 30), the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, made the following statement:

I strongly support and warmly welcome the amended Annex I and Annex II to the Basic Law approved by the NPCSC. It ensures that the electoral system of the HKSAR can progress with wider representation and cope better with the actual situation of Hong Kong, with a view to putting Hong Kong's political structure back on a firmer and more promising footing.

Through improving the electoral system of the HKSAR, the fundamental principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong" can be fully implemented; national sovereignty, security and development interests fully protected; the HKSAR's constitutional order established according to the Constitution and the Basic Law fully safeguarded. It will also restore order from chaos and ensure the steadfast and successful implementation of "one country, two systems" and the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong. Political security is the foundation of national security. Without political security, Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability can never be achieved.

Improving the electoral system, ensuring "patriots administering Hong Kong" and safeguarding the overall interests of society are conducive to the

stable development of Hong Kong's democracy.

As the electoral system is improved, Hong Kong can find its way out of a political swamp and create a stable social environment conducive to good governance, thereby enabling the HKSAR Government to focus on developing the economy, improving people's livelihoods, and fundamentally resolving complex and deep-seated social issues and conflicts.

I believe that the executive authorities and the legislature can better interact and co-operate with each other, put aside our differences for the common good of the community, develop a cordial, close and constructive working relationship, and work smoothly together on a people-oriented policy vision to propel Hong Kong forward.

The HKSAR Government will render full co-operation and strive to complete the amendments to the relevant local electoral laws in accordance with the amended Annex I and Annex II to the Basic Law by introducing a bill to the Legislative Council as early as practicable.

As the Chief Secretary for Administration, I will, together with the governing team and the civil service, make all-out efforts in explaining the amendments to the community.

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## **CE's statement in response to approval by Standing Committee of National People's Congress of amended Annex I and Annex II to Basic Law**

In response to the approval by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the amended Annex I to the Basic Law on Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Annex II to the Basic Law on Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and its Voting Procedures, the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, issued the following statement today (March 30):

I and the governing team of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government strongly support the amended Annex I to the Basic Law on Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Annex II to the Basic Law on Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and its Voting Procedures approved by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. The amendments improve the electoral system of the HKSAR, thereby establishing a political structure that upholds the "One

Country, Two Systems" principle, reflects the actual situation of Hong Kong and ensures "patriots administering Hong Kong".

I and the HKSAR Government will spare no effort in taking forward the necessary amendments to the local electoral legislation in accordance with the amended Annex I and Annex II. We will extensively explain the matters to the public such that more and more people will recognise the necessity and urgency of such improvements to the electoral system and render their support. After the passage of the local electoral legislation by the Legislative Council, the HKSAR Government will conduct and regulate election-related activities in accordance with the law in an orderly and efficient manner so as to implement the new electoral system.

I will continue to lead my governing team to dutifully administer Hong Kong according to the rule of law, safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests, and maintain the overall stability of Hong Kong. I firmly believe that by improving the electoral system and implementing "patriots administering Hong Kong", the excessive politicisation in society and the internal rift that has torn Hong Kong apart can be effectively mitigated, thereby enhancing the governance capability of the HKSAR. The HKSAR will then be able to leverage our unique advantages and the staunch support of the Central Authorities to develop the economy and improve the livelihood of our citizens. The steadfast and successful implementation of "One Country, Two Systems", as well as the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, will be assured.