

Man charged with manslaughter

Police yesterday night (February 10) laid a charge against a 41-year-old man with one count of manslaughter, who is in connection with a case happened on 50 Yuen Long On Hing Street, in which a 73-year-old man and a 66-year-old woman died.

At about 1.45am yesterday, Police received a report that the 73-year-old man and the 66-year-old woman laid on a platform on 50 Yuen Long On Hing Street. The man was certified dead at scene and the woman was rushed to Pok Oi Hospital and was subsequently certified dead at 3.09am.

After seeking legal advice, officers of District Crime Squad of Yuen Long charged the 41-year-old man yesterday night with one count of manslaughter. The case will be mentioned before Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts today (February 11) morning.

Government proactively implements compulsory testing and carries out enforcement operations in "restricted areas" to achieve goal of zero cases in districts

The Government has over the past two weeks in several districts exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make "restriction-testing declarations", under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted areas" were required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing, and carried out enforcement actions to verify that all people in the "restricted areas" had undergone compulsory testing. As of today (February 10), a total of 26 declarations and associated enforcement operations have been made and carried out since January 23.

The relevant declarations and enforcement operations covered various districts, including Yau Tsim Mong District, Eastern District, Kwun Tong District, Yuen Long District, Sham Shui Po District, Kowloon City District, Tuen Mun District and Sha Tin District. During the operations, over 24 000 people underwent testing in the specified "restricted areas" and 20 confirmed cases were found. The Government hopes to identify asymptomatic patients in the community as early as possible through relevant declarations and

enforcement actions so as to cut the transmission chains in the community, ease residents' worries and fears, and regain residents' confidence within the community.

In order to ensure that people within each "restricted area" had acted in accordance with the requirement of relevant declarations and compulsory testing notices to undergo compulsory testing, the Government conducted enforcement operations immediately after the completion of compulsory testing exercises. In the enforcement operations over the past two or so weeks, 234 persons were found not having undergone compulsory testing. The Government issued compulsory testing orders and/or fixed penalties of \$5,000 to them. The Government hopes to raise awareness among members of the public on testing for the sake of themselves as well as that of the others, and appeals to citizens to comply with the requirement of the compulsory testing notice, or else they would have to bear legal consequences. The Government will continue to step up enforcement. Persons who violate a compulsory testing notice will be handled in a strict manner and the act will not be tolerated.

The Government is aware of the inconvenience caused to the public during the compulsory testing operations and enforcement actions. However, in order to identify and cut the transmission chains, thereby curbing the epidemic, the Government appeals for the understanding of members of the public.

To minimise the impact caused to residents, the Government has improved the operation arrangements based on previous experience, such as downsizing the scale of each "restricted area" and compressing the testing time so that an operation can be started in the evening and completed by early morning, thereby minimising the impact on residents' activities in the daytime. The Government has also set up special queues for children, elderly persons and people in need to accord testing priority to them in order to shorten their waiting time. The Government has also arranged door-to-door services for elderly homes, people with impaired mobility and other people in need in a "restricted area" so as to facilitate their testing. Moreover, if staying in a "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to an individual who is not a resident in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his or her personal information for contact purposes.

When the declarations took effect, the Home Affairs Department not only provided simple food (e.g. bread, cake, cup noodles, canned food, corn and soy milk) for persons subject to compulsory testing, but also supplied them with anti-epidemic items including masks, bleach, detergent and hand sanitiser to help them fight against the virus. In addition, hotline services (including the dedicated hotline set up for ethnic minorities when necessary) were set up for persons subject to compulsory testing to make enquiries and seek assistance.

In the operations, nearly 12 000 man-time of civil servants, including those from disciplinary forces and clerical staff members, from over 40

government bureaux and departments were mobilised (see Annex). When necessary, ethnic minority staff members participated and assisted in communication with ethnic minority residents in a district. The Government thanks all participating government staff and the testing agencies for their hard work. The Government is also grateful to those within the "restricted areas" for their support and understanding, as well as owners' corporations for their assistance to ensure smooth implementation of compulsory testing.

The Government hopes to fight against the epidemic with the public, and to conduct testing for all persons within the specified "restricted areas" in a short period of time so as to achieve the goal of zero cases in the districts and so that members of the public can return to a normal life as soon as possible.

Advisory Panel on COVID-19 Vaccines convenes meeting on application for emergency use of COVID-19 vaccine by Sinovac

The Advisory Panel on COVID-19 Vaccines (Advisory Panel) convened a meeting today (February 10) on the application for emergency use of COVID-19 vaccine by Sinovac Biotech (Hong Kong) Limited (Sinovac). The meeting was chaired by convenor Professor Wallace Lau Chak-sing.

According to the Prevention and Control of Disease (Use of Vaccines) Regulation (Cap. 599K) (the Regulation), the Secretary for Food and Health may, under the state of public health emergency, authorise the use of COVID-19 vaccines which fulfil the criteria of safety, efficacy and quality for the purpose of vaccination programmes led by the Government. The Regulation also specifies the conditions and procedures which the vaccine manufacturer or its representative, importer, or wholesale dealer must follow when submitting application for seeking authorisation for emergency use. The Advisory Panel appointed by the Chief Executive under the Regulation will examine the information of relevant vaccine and provide a clear recommendation to the Government. The Secretary for Food and Health will consider the advice of the Advisory Panel before authorising a vaccine for emergency use.

Earlier, in accordance with the Regulation, Sinovac submitted to the Secretary for Food and Health an application for the authorisation of its COVID-19 vaccine (CoronaVac COVID-19 Vaccine (Vero Cell), Inactivated) for emergency use. At the same time, it also provided Phase 1 and 2 clinical data of the vaccine that it had submitted to the World Health Organization (WHO)

and National Medical Products Administration (NMPA), among other information. Moreover, Sinovac provided the Phase 3 clinical information of its trials conducted in Brazil that it had submitted to the NMPA, as well as the Phase 3 clinical information of the trials conducted in Turkey and Indonesia.

The Advisory Panel takes note that the Department of Health has, following relevant guidelines, requested Sinovac to have relevant research data published in medical journals. In view that Sinovac indicated that it has considerable difficulties in compiling the relevant information for publication in medical journals within a short period of time, having regard to the urgency for vaccination, the Advisory Panel has assessed and examined the information on safety, efficacy and quality submitted by Sinovac as mentioned in the above paragraph. The Advisory Panel considers the relevant clinical research data provided by Sinovac to be positive, but the panel requested Sinovac to provide additional data and information to establish that the benefits of using its COVID-19 vaccine for protection against COVID-19 outweigh the risks. The Advisory Panel will convene a meeting two weeks later after receiving the relevant information.

The Government spokesman reiterated, "After the Advisory Panel provides a recommendation on the application for authorisation of the vaccine, the Secretary for Food and Health will come to a decision on the authorisation of the vaccine for emergency use as soon as possible. The Government will ensure that vaccines satisfy the criteria of safety, efficacy and quality, and obtain emergency use approval in accordance with the relevant requirements as well as stringent approval procedures under the Regulation, before arranging for members of the public to receive the vaccines. To enhance the public's confidence in vaccines, the Government's work in vaccine administration will continue to be based on scientific evidence and adhere to the principles of openness and transparency. We will provide members of the public with the latest information on the relevant vaccines through different channels in a timely manner, and make public the views of experts on the vaccines, so that the public can grasp correct and comprehensive information on them."

Use of "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app at all government buildings and offices

A Government spokesman announced today (February 10) that starting from March 1, government employees and members of the public will be required to use the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app before entering government buildings or offices.

The spokesman said, "To better assist the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health in epidemiological investigations and to protect the safety of members of the public and employees, the Government decided to

implement the arrangement at all government buildings and offices."

To allow government employees and members of the public to familiarise themselves with the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app, from February 22 onwards, government departments will first remind government employees and members of the public to use the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app at the entrances of Government buildings or offices. Starting from March 1, government employees and members of the public will be required to scan the "LeaveHomeSafe" QR code or register their names, contact numbers and the date and time of their visits before entering the relevant premises for necessary contact tracing if a confirmed case is found. To fight the epidemic together, we appeal for visitors' co-operation with the instructions given by the staff on site. As a result of the arrangement, the waiting time for public services or entering the relevant premises may be lengthened, we appeal for the understanding of members of the public.

For the sake of themselves as well as that of others, the Government calls on members of the public to download the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app as soon as possible and use it regularly to record their whereabouts, so as to maximise the function of the mobile app. Users will be notified by the mobile app if they are later identified to have visited the same venue that a confirmed patient has visited at about the same time, so as to increase the users' vigilance and sense of self-protection.

Government maintains boarding restrictions for places with severe epidemic situation and compulsory quarantine arrangements

The Government announced today (February 10) that as the global epidemic situation of COVID-19 remains severe, it will maintain the measure under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to restrict persons who have stayed in the extremely high-risk Group A specified places from boarding flights for Hong Kong, as well as the 21-day compulsory quarantine requirement under the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) and Cap. 599H for persons arriving in Hong Kong who have stayed in places outside China.

To facilitate the public's understanding of the boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements under the relevant regulations for persons who have stayed in different places outside China, the Government has categorised the

relevant risk-based boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements for the relevant specified places into three groups.

Any person who has stayed in Group A specified places (i.e. Brazil, Ireland, South Africa and the United Kingdom) for more than two hours on the day of boarding or during the 21 days before that day are not allowed to board for Hong Kong.

For the very high-risk Group B specified places and the medium- to high-risk Group C specified places, all persons arriving in Hong Kong (either via the airport or land boundary control points) who have stayed in places outside China on the day of arrival in Hong Kong or during the 21 days before that day have to undergo compulsory quarantine for 21 days in designated quarantine hotels. Persons arriving in Hong Kong who have stayed in Group B specified places also have to present prior to boarding proof of a negative result of a nucleic acid test for COVID-19 conducted within 72 hours before the scheduled time of departure of the aircraft.

Details on the grouping of specified places and their respective boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements can be found at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/high-risk-places.html.

A Government spokesman said, "The Government recognises that the measures in relation to Group A specified places are very stringent, and maintaining the boarding restriction would inevitably affect the return journeys of a number of Hong Kong residents there. However, it is necessary for the Government to extend the relevant arrangement, so as to protect the health of the overall community in Hong Kong by firmly guarding against the importation of the new virus variants."

The Government spokesman reiterated, "The Government will continue to closely monitor the developments of the global and local epidemic situation, including the extent and pattern of the spread of the disease in a certain place, and will frequently review the epidemic prevention and control requirements for persons returning to Hong Kong from different parts of the world, and suitably adjust them as needed or as practicable."