

SJ fully supports legislative work for safeguarding national security in HKSAR

In response to the summary of the explanatory statement by an official of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) at the 19th session of the Standing Committee of the 13th NPC on June 18 on a draft law on safeguarding national security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China, the Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, today (June 21) made the following statement:

The passage of the Decision on establishing and improving legal system and enforcement mechanisms for HKSAR to safeguard national security (the Decision) by the NPC on May 28, and the enactment of the legislation by the Standing Committee of the NPC for inclusion in Annex III of the Basic Law to be promulgated by the HKSAR are premised on constitutional and legal grounds. The legislation only aims to prevent, curb and sanction an extremely small minority of criminals who threaten national security, so as to safeguard the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and the implementation of "one country, two systems".

Article 4 of the Decision stipulates that the HKSAR must establish and improve institutions and enforcement mechanisms for safeguarding national security to strengthen enforcement power and the enforcement work on national security. It is also set out in the explanatory statement that a commission for safeguarding national security should be set up by the HKSAR. The Department of Justice, as one of the government departments which shoulder the major responsibilities in implementing the relevant enforcement work, will establish a dedicated unit to handle prosecutions in relation to national security.

Hong Kong has experienced social unrest with frequent violence over the past year. There is even advocacy of independence. In view of the increasingly serious situation the HKSAR is facing in relation to national security and the difficulty of the executive and legislative authorities of the HKSAR to complete on their own legislation for safeguarding national security in the foreseeable future, there is the need and emergency for the NPC to take steps at the national level to improve the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the HKSAR to safeguard national security.

"The explanatory statement clearly points out that the HKSAR, in safeguarding national security, should respect and protect human rights and freedoms which are applicable in Hong Kong under the Basic Law, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The provisions should be able to address public concerns. I will lead the Department of Justice to provide full support to the legislative work for

safeguarding national security in the HKSAR." Ms Cheng said.

Flag raising and lowering ceremony to be suspended

Owing to the improvement works on the flag poles and the podium at the Golden Bauhinia Square, Wan Chai, the flag raising and lowering ceremony tomorrow (June 22) and on June 23 will be suspended.

The flag raising ceremony will resume at 8am on June 24.

Registration for Cash Payout Scheme went smoothly on the first day

Registration for the Cash Payout Scheme went smoothly on the first day and public response was enthusiastic, the Government said today (June 21).

As at 5pm today, about 2 million people submitted electronic registrations through the 21 banks participating in the Scheme and about 8 000 people submitted electronic forms through the Hongkong Post website.

In addition, special arrangement has been made under which about 1 000 bank branches and 120 post offices over the territory opened from 9am to 5pm today to facilitate the submission of paper registration forms. Registration by paper form will be conducted by three batches according to date of birth. The first batch (i.e. people born in 1955 or before) may submit registration starting from today. People may put completed paper registration forms into drop-in boxes at banks/post offices or mail them to GPO Box No. 182020. The Government spokesman said that people registered in the first two weeks will receive payment or notification for cheque collection simultaneously from around July 20. Therefore, people do not need to rush for registration in the first days or submit registrations in person.

The Government spokesman stressed that registering electronically through banks to receive payment by bank transfer is the fastest and most convenient, and also the quickest way to receive payment. For electronic registrations submitted through banks before end of this month, payment will be deposited simultaneously into the bank accounts specified by the registrants from around July 8. For electronic registrations submitted on or after July 1, registrants will receive payment around one week after

registration.

Registration for the Scheme is open until December 31, 2021.

The public may visit the website of the Scheme (www.cashpayout.gov.hk) or call 18 2020 for detailed information on the Scheme.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (June 21), one COVID-19 confirmed patient (case number: 1099) was discharged from hospital in the past 24 hours. So far, a total of 1 078 patients with confirmed or probable infections have been discharged.

At present, there are 613 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 179 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 46 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in seven hospitals, among which two patients are in critical condition (case numbers: 595 and 1100), and the remaining 44 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.

CHP investigates three additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (June 21), the CHP was investigating three additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 1 132 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 131 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases announced today involve a male and two females aged between 29 and 37. All of them had a travel history during the incubation period. 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.

The CHP again urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives to minimise the risk of infection. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contacting infected persons who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

A spokesman for the CHP 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, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. 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 infection, 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;

- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- 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.