

Protestors block roads in Central again

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following message as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

At around 10pm today (June 9), protestors occupied the carriageways on Des Voeux Road and Pottinger Street, Central. They built roadblocks with traffic cones. Police officers sped to the scene and directed them to leave the carriageways. As some protestors ignored Police warnings, officers deployed minimum necessary force to enforce the law.

Police warn all protestors to stop blocking the roads as such an act endangers road safety. Police will take resolute enforcement action to arrest lawbreakers.

A large group of protestors blocking the carriageways in Central

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following message as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

At around 7pm today (June 9), a group of protestors blocked multiple lanes on Ice House Street and Queen's Road Central. Some protestors also shuttled between passing vehicles, posing a grave threat to road safety. The obstruction has paralysed the traffic.

Police warn all protestors to leave the carriageways immediately. Resolute enforcement action will be taken to restore road safety.

Government upholds Hong Kong's

international aviation hub status through Land Fund investment

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, announced today (June 9) an investment in Cathay Pacific Airways Limited ("Cathay Group") through the Land Fund. This would uphold Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub, and at the same time generate a return for the Government.

Hong Kong is a world-class international aviation hub. Its comprehensive international air network not only facilitates the flow of passengers and cargoes through Hong Kong, but also underpins the development of a wide spectrum of economic activities, notably trading and logistics, financial services and tourism among others. In 2012, the economic contribution of Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) (including direct, indirect and induced contributions) amounted to some \$94 billion, representing 4.6 per cent of Hong Kong's gross domestic product. About 78 000 people were working in HKIA before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The operating environment of the aviation industry worldwide has been hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a near halt in passenger flights, and causing serious impact to air cargo business. As Hong Kong's most important local airline and the key driver of Hong Kong's aviation development, Cathay Group is also facing unprecedented operational and financial pressure. If this challenge is not properly addressed, it would harm Hong Kong's international aviation hub status and adversely impact other local economic activities to the detriment of the overall interest of Hong Kong. In the face of COVID-19, governments around the world have provided support in different forms (such as share capital, loans and government credit guarantees) to major airlines.

Mr Chan said, "Cathay Group plays a key role in Hong Kong's becoming a leading international aviation hub. I have decided to invest in Cathay Group to help it overcome its present challenge so that it may continue to contribute to Hong Kong's international aviation hub development as well as overall economic development, and at the same time generate a return for the Government."

Under the Resolution of the Provisional Legislative Council on Land Fund (Cap. 20), the Financial Secretary may, at his discretion, authorise and direct the investment of any assets of the Land Fund which are not immediately required to meet expenses in respect of the Land Fund at any time in such a manner as he may determine. When making the decision on the investment of the Land Fund in Cathay Group, the Financial Secretary took into account the policy advice of the Secretary for Transport and Housing and the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, as well as the advice of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and its external financial consultant on the commercial aspects. Other relevant factors have also been considered, including the support rendered by different governments to their local airlines.

The total amount involved in the Government's investment is around \$27.3 billion, comprising preference shares with detachable warrants of around \$19.5 billion and a bridging loan of around \$7.8 billion. Cathay Group will also launch a \$11.7 billion rights issue of shares to existing shareholders. Cathay Group's two major shareholders, Swire Pacific and Air China, have undertaken to subscribe the rights issue according to their respective shareholding, providing funding support to the Group.

Mr Chan added, "The aviation industry is unique and plays a strategic role in the economic development of Hong Kong. The Government's investment signifies our determination in upholding our international aviation hub status, and in preserving the necessary conditions and providing impetus to the much-needed post-COVID-19 revival of the economy in Hong Kong."

Police warn protestors taking part in unauthorised assemblies in Central to leave immediately

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following message as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

At around 6pm today (June 9), some protestors took part in unauthorised assemblies in the vicinity of Chater Garden, Central. Participating in such events may be found guilty of "taking part in an unauthorised assembly" in accordance with the Public Order Ordinance, and may commit certain offences under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation. Police warn protestors to leave immediately.

Police will step up anti-crime patrols to prevent crimes. Any group gatherings taking place during the ongoing pandemic may also increase the risk of spreading the virus. Police call upon members of the public to refrain from taking part in unauthorised assemblies and prohibited group gatherings.

Disbursement of subsidies to food business sector under Anti-epidemic Fund in progress

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (June 9) announced that over \$4.3 billion in subsidies has been disbursed to the food business sector under the two schemes, i.e. the Food Licence Holders Subsidy Scheme and the Catering Business (Social Distancing) Subsidy Scheme, under the Anti-epidemic Fund to provide financial support to the food business sector hard hit by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic.

The Food Licence Holders Subsidy Scheme under the first round of the Anti-epidemic Fund aims to provide financial subsidies to eight types of food business licence holders. Certified eligible licence holders are provided with a one-off subsidy of \$200,000 or \$80,000. A total of 28 540 applications were received under the scheme. Payments were authorised for 28 507 applications, with subsidies totaling over 3.74 billion.

The Government has established the Catering Business (Social Distancing) Subsidy Scheme under the second round of the Anti-epidemic Fund to provide subsidies ranging from \$250,000 to \$2,200,000 to catering outlets with seating areas according to the floor area of the premises, whose businesses have been hard hit by the epidemics and the social distancing measures. In addition, each eligible catering outlet directed to close the whole of its licensed premises under the directions imposed by the Government, including karaoke establishments, nightclubs and bars or pubs, is eligible for a further one-off subsidy of \$50,000. Over 9 000 applications had been received. As of today, payments were authorised for over 2 400 applications, with subsidies totaling over \$580 million.

In addition to eligible food licence holders, 877 applications were received under the subsidy scheme for tenants of cooked food/light refreshment stalls at FEHD markets. Payments were authorised for 868 applications, with subsidies totaling over \$40 million.

The FEHD will process the remaining applications for the relevant subsidy schemes as soon as possible so as to provide assistance to eligible persons promptly.