

S for S speaks on proposed amendments to Fugitive Offenders Ordinance and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Ordinance

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, at a media session after attending a radio programme today (March 30):

Reporter: Secretary, I have two questions. First question regarding AmCham's (American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong) criticism that they have serious concerns. Do you think these concerns are reasonable? Do they really need to worry? Second question is about you said that in future in the Mainland, only high level departments can request an extradition. Can that really ensure that the process is fair and there would be a fair trial? Can that really soothe concerns away?

Secretary for Security: I will continue to explain what the Bill intends to do to the business sector including business sectors from overseas. It is the international commitment to fight organised crime. In fact, in the United Nation resolution, signatory countries have agreed that this is for the overall good of its country and the world. So, in order to have an environment, which is free of organised crime, I can only think that it will benefit business environment, and I will strongly believe that overseas businessmen, who operate or run a business in Hong Kong or in the Mainland, are law-complying businessmen. So, to create an environment, which will be free of organised crime, in fact, should be productive to business. That's the first thing. The second thing I have been noting is that, a lot of countries have been asking Mainland China to open up to more businesses from overseas to go into to do business, and I think these businessmen, who will of course, go into Mainland China so as to run their business in accordance with the law. So, they want to do more business in the Mainland, and they will be doing business in accordance with the law. We, Hong Kong, try to deal with this matter, so that we will help fight organised crime. So, I think it should benefit (the business sector), but of course I will continue to explain to them. If the accusation is that somebody may unwittingly become a political offender, then I have said repeatedly that the law at present, under our Fugitive Offenders Ordinance, has clearly stated that this will not be possible. There are at least three clearly written provisions to say that political offences, no matter how they are described, they will not be surrenderable. There is a provision to say that no matter how you purport that offence to be, if it relates to political opinion, religion, nationality or ethnicity, then it will not be surrenderable. There is also a third provision, which says that, if a person will be prejudiced as he is tried, or in any way mistreated, because of his political opinion, nationality, religion or ethnicity, then he will not be surrendered. So, for anybody who

thinks that he may then become a political prisoner, I think the law has sufficiently protected him. What is your second question?

Reporter: About in future in the Mainland, high level departments request an extradition. Can that be really ensured a fair trial?

Secretary for Security: I really wish the society doesn't confuse a long-term arrangement with a case-by-case arrangement. The long-term arrangement will not be affected in anyway whatsoever under the present Fugitive Offenders Ordinance. I think you have seen the Bill, anything relates to a long-term agreement will be totally preserved. Our discussion with the Mainland for a long-term arrangement is still going on, so don't confuse that. I am proposing a system, which will allow Hong Kong to deal with a jurisdiction's request on a case-by-case basis when that jurisdiction does not have a long-term agreement with Hong Kong. That's what I am proposing, and there will be a universal standard that I am going to apply, with mutual respect to any such requests. That standard conforms to all the safeguards and the legal procedures of the present law. So, I am not designing this system mainly for the Mainland. But since a lot of people have asked this question, and in fact in some of the communications I have with representatives, they have sent me written request about this point. So I have communicated with my counterparts in the Mainland, their initial response is they will be centralising requests, so that it will be handled at a high level. The usual way to handle a surrender between states will be likely between either foreign offices or the responsible departments of justice. Under the "one country, two systems", the one-country (two-system) operation, then of course, is a different system that may have to apply. So the initial response that was given to me has been that, "yes", they will centralise to ensure that the cases that are dealt with, are cases that are worth the consideration of both places. One other thing which people may have not picked up is, for any surrender under this case-by-case arrangement, it will be done fully under the spotlight. I am sure you will be reporting it almost completely, so it will be done under the sunshine. So, in Hong Kong it will be in the open court. You will be seeing the whole process how the subject person's rights will be fully protected, how the case will be heard, how the government side will argue and the other side will also argue on the case, how a habeas corpus can be applied for and how appeals and juridical review will be done. So, under that spotlight, I am sure everybody will begin to understand more of how the law is going to apply. And also under that spotlight, you will see how strictly all these provisions and safeguards will be enforced. Likewise, when the subject person is handed over, I think the media in that jurisdiction will also put the whole case under the spotlight. So I think this system gives not just safeguards, which is written in the law, but also safeguards by the fourth power. Thank you very much.

Suspected MERS case reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (March 30) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Male
Age	30
Affected area involved	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
High-risk exposure	Nil
Hospital	Tuen Mun Hospital
Condition	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Negative

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed fever or lower respiratory symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

HAB and HAD held a briefing on the exemption of electronic sports venues from the requirement of Amusement Game Centre Licence

The Home Affairs Bureau and the Home Affairs Department held a briefing for the trade today (March 30) on the exemption of electronic sports (e-sports) venues from the requirement of Amusement Game Centre (AGC) Licence.

The Government strives to promote the development of the e-sports. Depending on the actual operation of e-sports venues, their business operation may be subject to the regulation under the Amusement Game Centres Ordinance (Cap. 435) (AGCO). Some of the licensing requirements under the AGCO applicable to traditional AGCs, if applied to the e-sports venues, may hinder the long-term development of the e-sports industry. As such, the Government will adopt an appropriate mechanism to exempt e-sports venues from the requirements of AGC Licence.

The Under Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan, who chaired the briefing session, said, "considering that the mode of operation of e-sports venues is different from that of traditional AGCs, we will, in accordance to section 3 of the AGCO, exempt eligible e-sports venues from the requirement of AGC Licence."

The Home Affairs Department introduced the exemption arrangement to the trade at the briefing. The exemption mechanism will be underpinned by three principles: business facilitation, removing red tape and barriers, and ensuring safety of premises. To facilitate the trade, the Office of the Licensing Authority under the Home Affairs Department will provide one-stop services to process exemption applications for e-sports venues.

The Home Affairs Department will soon publish the "Guidance Note on Application for Exemption of E-Sports Venues from the Requirement of Obtaining an AGC Licence", setting out the details of the exemption arrangements, for the trade's reference and to facilitate their compliance.

President of Panama to visit Hong Kong

The President of Panama, Mr Juan Carlos Varela Rodriguez, will arrive in Hong Kong on April 2 for a two-day official visit.

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, will meet with Mr Varela Rodriguez on April 2 at Government House.

Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Sha Tin tomorrow

Police advise motorists that special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Sha Tin to facilitate the race meeting tomorrow (March 31).

The arrangements will come into effect two hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race meeting.

Appropriate traffic signs will be put up and police will be on hand to guide motorists.

The Police also appeal to people going to Sha Tin Racecourse for the race meeting and to Happy Valley Racecourse for cross betting to make maximum use of public transport.

Parking spaces at the two racecourses are available only to holders of appropriate permits issued by Hong Kong Jockey Club and any vehicles illegally parked will be towed away.