

SFH visits Designated Quarantine Hotel Scheme Command Centre (with photo)

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, today (January 4) visited the Designated Quarantine Hotel Scheme (DQHS) Command Centre located at the Central Government Offices to get a better grasp of the overall situation of the DQHS as well as the mode of operation, anti-epidemic measures and disinfection procedures adopted in designated quarantine hotels (DQHs).

Accompanied by the Director of the Office of the DQHS (DQHS Office), Mr Philip Yung, Professor Chan received a briefing from the Deputy Director of the DQHS Office, Mr Vincent Fung; the Compliance Advisor (Infection Control) of the DQHS Office, Dr Edmond Ma; and the Compliance Controller (Operations and Security) of the DQHS Office, Mr Joseph Au, on the latest situation of the DQHS and the daily operation of the command centre as well as the anti-epidemic measures and security inspections being undertaken by DQHs. She also exchanged views with frontline colleagues of the dedicated compliance team.

"The Government has imposed stringent requirements on anti-epidemic measures in DQHs. Inspections are conducted on a daily basis to ensure hotels strictly execute the infection control measures in accordance with the requirements, and that the staff of DQHs have fulfilled the relevant vaccination requirements and received regular testing," Professor Chan said.

The dedicated compliance team of the DQHS Office has so far conducted some 17 400 inspections and handled over 330 cases of violations since the launch of the DQHS. These cases mainly involved quarantined persons leaving their guestrooms. The dedicated compliance team took timely follow-up action and carried out investigation, and persons confirmed to have breached relevant requirements were sent to a quarantine centre.

As some of the imported Omicron cases are confirmed in DQHs, the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health has requested DQHs to conduct additional infection control measures and surveillance with a view to further reducing the possible risk of infection. If an Omicron case has stayed in a DQH, daily testing will be arranged for those who have been staying in adjacent and opposite rooms of the room of the Omicron case until seven days after the transfer out of the patient concerned.

"In view of the increasing number of confirmed cases involving the Omicron variant recently, I conducted community testing centre, mobile specimen collection station and Community Vaccination Centre visits on Sunday (January 2) to understand their operations in response to the rising number of people receiving testing and vaccination," she added.

The Government fully implemented the DQHS and the Designated Transportation Scheme on December 22, 2020, requiring all arrivals from

specified places to undergo compulsory quarantine at DQHs as a measure to further prevent the importation of COVID-19 cases and reduce contact between arrivals and the local community.



[Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo \(with video\)](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (January 4):

Reporter: On COVID, figures are at an eight-month high. Will this affect plans to reopen the border? And experts have said they are really struggling to find out and trace people who have been at the restaurant in question. Will the "LeaveHomeSafe" app be upgraded as they've suggested? And second, last week, and on several other occasions, you denied there was a chilling effect over press freedom concerns. With Citizen News citing vague laws and staff safety as their reason to close, do you accept that, you know, this is a perfect example of the chilling effect? And third, you just mentioned meeting the HKJA (Hong Kong Journalists Association). Would you be willing to meet them again to discuss some of these concerns? Thanks.

Chief Executive: First of all, the spread of the Omicron variant into Hong Kong community is worrying because of the high transmissibility of this variant. That's why we have taken all the measures that we have put in place as a result of two years of experience in fighting COVID-19. But inevitably, with a local infection of Omicron, although the several cases now confirmed could all be traced back to an imported case according to the analysis, that will certainly have an impact on the ongoing discussions with the Mainland authorities on resuming some normal travel. I would not deny that that has an impact, which means that we will have to wait another while before we could put in place this very sought-after resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland.

The second point is about the tracing. I heard some experts were still

commenting on the effectiveness of Hong Kong's tracing system, but I would say that actually, Hong Kong's contact tracing system was pretty effective. If you imagine, with a restaurant with 64 tables involving 207 customers, within a few days we managed to trace 201 and managed to put them into a quarantine centre for 21 days. That was a major achievement by the contact tracing office. By the way, the contact tracing office already involves a lot of disciplinary colleagues. I heard one person saying that, "Why don't you call the Police?" The Police and other disciplinary colleagues have already been deployed to the contact tracing office for quite some time. I think that we have been very effective and the "LeaveHomeSafe" app has broken the record of giving notification to more than 30 000 people who may have patronised this restaurant and other places and hence they have come forward for their compulsory testing in the last few days.

But other than commending the efforts of my own colleagues, I would really want to take this occasion to express my deepest appreciation to the people of Hong Kong. Hong Kong would not have come that far in controlling COVID-19 without the full co-operation of our people. This high discipline of wearing a mask, this willingness to comply with the RTD, that is the restriction-testing declaration, or the CTN, the compulsory testing notice, and being put in quarantine for 21 days through no fault of their own, I really want to thank the people of Hong Kong and they deserve to be recognised by all of us in fighting this epidemic.

Now, about press freedom, there have been a lot of criticisms, especially from the Western media, about the closure of these two online media organisations. I could not, on behalf of these two organisations and their responsible people, explain what they mean by a "chilling effect". But I certainly would strongly refute any allegation that this is related to the implementation of the National Security Law. If implementation of the National Security Law would undermine press freedom, then we would not be seeing any press freedom in the Western world. You name me which Western country does not have national security law. They have national security legislation far more draconian than the Hong Kong National Security Law, which is very well defined – it covers offences clearly defined and we already have three convicted cases in court. All these rules and basis have been clearly laid out, so I would really dispute that allegation. Similarly, this morning when I read news saying that because of the closure of an online media organisation, press freedom in Hong Kong faces extinction, or Hong Kong's free press faces collapse, I just could not accept that sort of allegations.

Nothing is more important than the rule of law in Hong Kong, and journalists and media organisations, like all of us, have to respect and comply with the law. If they are fearful of not being able to comply with the law, then they have to make up their mind and take the necessary decisions. Thank you.

Reporter: Will you meet the JA?

Chief Executive: I have no plan to meet it. I was referring to the meeting

when I took office. I just want to say that when I took office, I've been as liberal as possible in engaging people from different parts of the political spectrum. But what has happened? Nobody could anticipate that actually Hong Kong was under that sort of very severe challenges with a lot of people advocating independence, colluding with foreign forces and undermining the power of the state as well as the Hong Kong SAR Government.

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

Yuen Long Swimming Pool temporarily closed

Attention TV/radio announcers:

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

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (January 4) that Yuen Long Swimming Pool in Yuen Long District has been temporarily closed for cleaning and superchlorination following the discovery of a small amount of vomit in the pool.

It will be reopened at 7.05pm today.

The department appeals to swimmers to be considerate and to keep the swimming pools clean. They are advised not to swim after a full meal and should use the toilet facilities if necessary before swimming.

EDB launches Light Up a Bright Future with Your Child video production competition on parent education

To promote positive parent education and celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Education Bureau (EDB) is organising the Light Up a Bright Future with Your Child video production competition on parent education, and issued a circular memorandum to all kindergartens as well as primary and secondary schools

today (January 4) to inform them of the details of the competition and encourage schools, students and parents to actively participate in the event.

A spokesman for the EDB said, "The EDB has been holding the Positive Parent Campaign since June 2020 and has all along been promoting positive parent education through extensive and diversified channels to foster parents' positive thinking and the proper ways and attitudes of raising children. The objective is to foster a positive mindset amongst parents in nurturing their children, with a view to helping their children learn effectively and grow happily."

The spokesman said, "The competition aims to promote the proper ways and attitudes of raising children and encourage parents to adopt positive parenting approaches to nurture their children, with a view to building a bright future together. The competition gives an opportunity for students, parents and the public to unleash their creativity and use videos to express how parents and children work together to establish a good parent-child relationship. The Committee on Home-School Co-operation, the Hong Kong Island School Heads Association, the Kowloon Region School Heads Association, the New Territories School Heads Association and the Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations of the 18 districts have all become the supporting organisations of this event."

In addition to schools, members of the public are also welcome to participate in the competition. The competition is divided into four groups, namely the Primary Group, the Secondary Group, the Parent-child Group and the Open Group. Participants of the Primary, Secondary and Parent-child Groups must enter the competition on a group basis while participants of the Open Group can enter the competition on either an individual or group basis. The panel of adjudicators will select a Champion, a First Runner-up, a Second Runner-up and five Merit Prizes for each group.

Furthermore, there is a Most Liked Award for each group, which will be selected through public voting. The schools that have submitted the highest number of valid entries in the Primary Group and in the Secondary Group will be awarded a Most Active Participating School Award. Apart from receiving certificates of commendation, the winners will be invited to attend the Prize Presentation Ceremony cum Exhibition of Winning Entries. All those interested in participating in the competition can visit the activity website (www.parent.edu.hk/en/article/video_competition) for application and submission of entries from January 18 onwards. The deadline for submission is April 11.

To let those interested in participating in the competition learn professional techniques of video production, the EDB will hold three workshops on video production as well as video shooting and editing in January and February. Interested parties can visit the activity website for details. Online application for the workshops will commence at 4pm on January 10 on a first-come, first-served basis.

For the updates of activities and information of the Positive Parent

Campaign, please visit the EDB's Smart Parent Net website (www.parent.edu.hk/en).

Import of poultry meat and products from areas in Portugal, UK and Poland suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 4) that in view of notifications from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the General Veterinary Inspectorate of Poland about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Santarém District in Portugal, King's Lynn & West Norfolk District of Norfolk County in the United Kingdom (UK), and Milicki District and Åšredzki District of DolnoÅ>lÄ...skie Region in Poland, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the above-mentioned areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, no poultry meat or eggs were imported into Hong Kong from Portugal in the first nine months of last year. Moreover, Hong Kong imported about 70 tonnes of chilled poultry meat, about 2 970 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 250 000 poultry eggs from the UK; and about 4 070 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 24.82 million poultry eggs from Poland in the first nine months of last year.

"The CFS has contacted the Portuguese, British and Polish authorities over the issues and will closely monitor information issued by the OIE and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.