

# **Cluster of Respiratory Syncytial Virus cases in Shatin Hospital**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Shatin Hospital made the following announcement today (June 12):

Four patients (aged 69 to 87) in a medical and geriatrics ward have presented with symptoms of fever or respiratory symptoms since June 6. Appropriate viral tests were arranged for the patients and their test results were positive for Respiratory Syncytial Virus. Three patients are being treated in isolation. One of them is in serious condition due to his underlying medical conditions, while the remaining two patients are in stable condition. One patient passed away due to his underlying medical conditions.

Infection control measures have already been stepped up according to established guidelines. Droplet and contact precautions, hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection of the environment and equipment have also been strengthened.

The hospital will continue to closely monitor the conditions of the patients in the ward. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

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# **BFAC appreciates Innovation and Technology Commission's contribution to innovation and technology upgrading in industrial and commercial sectors**

The following is issued on behalf of the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee Secretariat:

The Business Facilitation Advisory Committee held its 54th meeting today (June 12). At the meeting, members were briefed by the Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) on the New Industrialisation Acceleration Scheme (NIAS) to be launched under the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) and the latest progress of various enterprise-oriented funding schemes.

The NIAS will provide funding support to enterprises from industries of

strategic importance (i.e. life and health technology, artificial intelligence and data science, advanced manufacturing and new energy technologies) which set up new smart production facilities in Hong Kong with an investment of not lower than \$200 million on a one (Government) to two (Company) matching basis, subject to a funding ceiling of \$200 million. Furthermore, the NIAS will provide additional financial incentives for NIAS enterprises to engage research talent, and facilitate them in employing non-local technical personnel required for setting up or operating new production facilities in Hong Kong. The ITC aims to attract 50 to 100 enterprises to set up new production facilities in Hong Kong with a corresponding direct investment of no less than \$20 billion from these enterprises under the NIAS starting from 2024-25 over a period of five to eight years.

At present, there are 18 funding schemes under the ITF, supporting five innovation and technology (I&T) areas, namely supporting research and development, facilitating technology adoption, nurturing I&T talent, supporting technology start-ups, and fostering an I&T culture. The ITC briefed members on the latest progress of 11 enterprise-oriented funding schemes (e.g. the Enterprise Support Scheme, the New Industrialisation Funding Scheme, the Research Talent Hub, the Research, Academic and Industry Sectors One-plus Scheme, and the Patent Application Grant).

The Committee appreciated the ITC's effective use of the ITF to help upgrade the I&T standard of the industrial and commercial sectors, and its committed efforts in supporting enterprises in moving towards smart production and promoting the development of downstream industries in Hong Kong.

The Committee also received the work reports of its three task forces:

#### Wholesale and Retail Task Force (WRTF)

- The Fire Services Department (FSD) briefed the WRTF on the key amendments to the Dangerous Goods Ordinance, Cap. 295 (DGO) and e-services for dangerous goods (DG) related applications. Salient points of the legal amendments covered classification, packing, marking and labelling requirements of DG, categorisation of different types of Exempt Quantity, introduction of DG in Consumer Packs, issue of "The Code of Practice for Control of Dangerous Goods on Land" to the trades, etc. The FSD has actively launched and promoted the use of e-services among enterprises and citizens for the development of "Smart Government". The WRTF welcomed the briefing by the FSD on the key amendments to the DGO and its e-services.

- The Department of Health (DH) briefed the WRTF on the new mechanism ("1+" mechanism) for the registration of new drugs in treating life-threatening or severely debilitating diseases in Hong Kong and the updates on the measure of using Hong Kong registered drugs and medical devices used in Hong Kong public hospitals in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) (the Measure). Under the "1+" mechanism, applications for registration of new drugs that are supported with local clinical data and recognised scope of application by local experts are required to submit approval evidence from the drug

regulatory authority of one reference country (instead of two). Furthermore, as a facilitation measure for Hong Kong residents working and living in the GBA to seek healthcare services, the Measure allows designated healthcare institutions operating in the GBA to use Hong Kong-registered drugs and medical devices used in Hong Kong public hospitals with urgent clinical use, subject to the approval of the People's Government of Guangdong Province. The WRTF welcomed the "1+" mechanism, and considered the mechanism would enable Hong Kong to be more proactive in expediting the approval of applications for registration of new drugs for life-threatening or severely debilitating diseases and would also strengthen Hong Kong's capacity of drug evaluation.

- Pursuant to the announcement in the 2024-25 Budget, the Government will set up a Digital Corporate Identity (CorpID) Platform to enable the authentication of identity and verification of signatures for enterprises using electronic government services or conducting online business transactions in a secure, convenient and efficient manner without having to go through complicated procedures, thus saving time and reducing the risk of human error. The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) briefed the WRTF on this Platform and collected their views. According to the OGCIO's plan, the Platform will be launched progressively from end-2026. The WRTF welcomed the CorpID Platform and expressed concerns regarding the user-friendliness, digital security and promotion of the Platform. The OGCIO acknowledged members' concerns and will continue to solicit suggestions and opinions from the industry on the Platform through different channels during the implementation process.

#### Food Business and Related Services Task Force (FRSTF)

- The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) briefed the FRSTF on several food business facilitation measures. These include introducing a Composite Permit covering multiple restricted food items, reducing the reminders issued for compliance with licensing requirements by letter or email, new licence fee payment arrangements for temporary food factory licences and exploring the extension of the full licence validity period. The FRSTF welcomed the above new measures, and suggested the FEHD provide flexibility to the trades in selecting licensing period when extending the licence validity period.
- The FEHD briefed the FRSTF on the proposed inclusion of a licensing condition requiring food business operators to provide consumer advice on the consumption of oysters to be eaten raw (raw oysters). The FRSTF raised strong objection to the proposal, queried the effectiveness of the measure and expressed concern about the impact on the catering business.
- The OGCIO briefed the FRSTF on the CorpID Platform to be implemented. The FRSTF welcomed the work on establishing the Platform, and suggested the OGCIO consider the provision of management functions when designing the Platform for companies to ensure the proper use of CorpID by their employees in conducting e-business activities on behalf of the companies.

#### Task Force on Business Liaison Groups (BLGTF)

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- The FSD briefed the BLGTF on the proposed implementation details of the Registered Fire Engineer (RFE) Scheme. Under the Scheme, RFEs will be allowed to provide fire risk assessment and certification services which are currently only provided by the FSD for applications of licences for specified premises. Legislative procedures for the implementation of the Scheme are in progress.
  - The FSD briefed the BLGTF on the enhanced e-services, which aim to cover the entire application process from e-submission, e-payment, to the issuance of licences/certificates in electronic form. Facilitation arrangements have also been made to allow applications made in the capacity of a company to upload an image of their company chop as proof of identity in lieu of a digital signature in the e-submission. The BLGTF thanked the FSD for the briefings and their efforts in introducing business facilitation measures.
  - The OGCI0 briefed the BLGTF on the CorpID Platform to be implemented. The BLGTF welcomed the above Platform and suggested that when designing and implementing the Platform, the OGCI0 should note that the majority of companies in Hong Kong are small and medium enterprises which may not be proficient in mastering the use of information technology in their business operations.

The Committee also expressed appreciation of the commitment and achievements of the bureaux and departments in continuously implementing the business facilitation measures under the Be the Smart Regulator Programme to enhance their business licensing services.

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## [Hong Kong Customs detects smuggling case involving about \\$10 million of goods by river trade vessel \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs on June 6 detected a suspected smuggling case involving a river trade vessel. A large batch of suspected smuggled goods, with a total estimated market value of about \$10 million, was seized.

Through intelligence analysis and risk assessment, Customs on that day selected a river trade vessel departing from Hong Kong for Macao in the waters off Black Point for inspection. Upon examination, Customs officers onboard the vessel found a large batch of suspected smuggled goods, including suspected scheduled shark fins, bird nests, bags and clothes.

An investigation is ongoing.

Being a government department primarily responsible for tackling smuggling activities, Customs has long been combating various smuggling activities at the forefront. Customs will keep up its enforcement action and continue to fiercely combat sea smuggling activities through proactive risk management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies, along with mounting targeted anti-smuggling operations at suitable times to land a solid blow against relevant activities.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002)).



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## [LCQ11: Applications for processions and assemblies](#)

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Tik Chi-yuen and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (June 12):

Question:

The Government has emphasised that the Hong Kong National Security Law and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance will not affect the public's freedom of procession and assembly, and that the regulation of processions and assemblies is based on considerations under the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of applications for letters of no objection to assemblies, processions and petitions received, approved and rejected by the Police in the past five years, as well as the reasons for refusing to issue such letters of no objection;

(2) among the applications mentioned in (1), of the main demands made by the applicant organisations for holding assemblies, processions and petitions, together with a breakdown by the government policy areas involved in such demands;

(3) of the respective conditions imposed by the Police under Cap. 245 in the past five years regarding each of the applications mentioned in (1); whether it has assessed if such conditions will restrict the public's right to participate in assemblies, processions and petitions;

(4) whether any organisation has refused to comply with the conditions mentioned in (3) and was denied a letter of no objection; if so, of the details (including but not limited to the contents of the applications and the organisation's appeal against the outcome of the applications); and

(5) whether any organisation has made a compromise proposal due to its disagreement with the conditions mentioned in (3); if so, of the following information about such proposals: the contents of the proposals, the number of proposals accepted and rejected, as well as the reasons for acceptance and rejection?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong citizens have the rights to peaceful assembly and procession conducted in accordance with the law. That said, these rights must be exercised in conformity with the relevant legislation to ensure the safeguarding of national security, public order, public safety and the protection of the rights and freedom of others. The impact of such public events on members of the public should also be minimised.

Under the Public Order Ordinance (the Ordinance), in the event that the attendance of public meetings or public processions (whether its nature is related to petition or not) exceeds the respective limits prescribed in the Ordinance, i.e. public meetings of more than 50 persons or public processions of more than 30 persons, a notice must be given to the Commissioner of Police (the Commissioner) in accordance with the Ordinance. The meetings or processions can only be conducted if the Commissioner gives no prohibition or

objection, and the requirements in the Ordinance as well as the conditions imposed by the Commissioner (if any) are complied with.

The reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Tik Chi-yuen is as follows:

(1) The relevant figures of public meetings and public processions that had an attendance exceeding the prescribed limits and were required to notify to the Commissioner in the past five years are tabulated below:

Table 1: Public meetings

Year	No. of public meetings notified to the Police	No. of public meetings with letters of no objection issued	No. of public meetings for which letters of no objection were not issued
2019	436	410	26
2020	71	45	26
2021	4	0	4
2022	2	2	0
2023	71	71	0

Table 2: Public processions

Year	No. of public processions notified to the Police	No. of public processions with letters of no objection issued	No. of public processions for which letters of no objection were not issued
2019	495	474	21
2020	58	42	16
2021	5	1	4
2022	9	9	0
2023	270	270	0

Letters of no objection were not issued having regard to the interests of national security, public order, public safety and the protection of the rights and freedom of others. Every application was considered on a case-by-case basis.

(2) The public meetings or public processions organised by various bodies mainly include festival parades, charity walks as well as events relating to promotion of activities or expression of opinions. The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) does not maintain statistical figures regarding the government policy areas concerned of these public meetings and public processions.

(3) to (5) Sections 9(4) and 14(5) of the Ordinance provide that the Commissioner shall not exercise the power conferred to him to prohibit the holding of a public meeting or object to the holding of a public procession in any case where he reasonably considers that the interests of national security or public safety, public order or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others could be met by the imposition of conditions.

The HKPF will maintain communication with the organisers and, upon careful examination on a case-by-case basis, assess the risks to ensure that the public meetings and public processions are conducted in a peaceful, safe and orderly manner in accordance with the law without jeopardising national security, endangering public safety, disrupting public order or infringing on others' rights and freedom. The HKPF may also impose certain conditions, such as requesting the organiser to arrange marshals to maintain order, etc, on a notified public meeting and public procession as reasonably necessary. Imposition of such conditions shall be justified on a proportionality analysis. Regarding the relevant arrangements, the HKPF has published the Guidelines on the approach to the Public Order Ordinance in relation to public meetings and public processions to help law enforcement officers and other parties to understand the mechanism.

Generally speaking, organisers of public meetings and public processions who were issued with letters of no objection could comply with the conditions imposed and conduct the events in an orderly manner. Under the individual circumstances that a person is aggrieved with the Commissioner's decision to prohibit the holding of a public meeting, to object to the holding of a public procession, or to impose conditions on a public meeting or public procession, he/she may lodge an appeal with the Appeal Board on Public Meetings and Processions.

The HKPF does not maintain a breakdown of statistical figures mentioned in the questions.

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## **Results of monthly survey on business situation of small and medium-sized enterprises for May 2024**

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (June 12) the results of the Monthly Survey on Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) for May 2024.

The current diffusion index (DI) on business receipts amongst SMEs decreased from 43.8 in April 2024 in the contractionary zone to 43.0 in May 2024, whereas the one-month's ahead (i.e. June 2024) outlook DI on business



receipts was 46.8. Analysed by sector, the current DIs on business receipts for many surveyed sectors dropped in May 2024 as compared with previous month, particularly for the real estate (from 46.1 to 40.6) and business services (from 48.4 to 45.2).

The current DI on new orders for the import and export trades decreased from 46.4 in April 2024 to 45.2 in May 2024, whereas the outlook DI on new orders in one month's time (i.e. June 2024) was 46.7.

### Commentary

A Government spokesman said that overall business sentiment among SMEs softened in May, with individual sectors showing mixed performance. Meanwhile, the overall expectations on the business situation in one month's time turned slightly better. The overall employment situation showed some improvement.

The spokesman added that while business sentiment will be affected by the complicated external environment in the near term, the continued growth of the economy should provide support. The Government will monitor the situation closely.

### Further information

The Monthly Survey on Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises aims to provide a quick reference, with minimum time lag, for assessing the short-term business situation faced by SMEs. SMEs covered in this survey refer to establishments with fewer than 50 persons engaged. Respondents were asked to exclude seasonal fluctuations in reporting their views. Based on the views collected from the survey, a set of diffusion indices (including current and outlook diffusion indices) is compiled. A reading above 50 indicates that the business condition is generally favourable, whereas that below 50 indicates otherwise. As for statistics on the business prospects of prominent establishments in Hong Kong, users may refer to the publication entitled "Report on Quarterly Business Tendency Survey" released by the C&SD.

The results of the survey should be interpreted with care. The survey solicits feedback from a panel sample of about 600 SMEs each month and the survey findings are thus subject to sample size constraint. Views collected from the survey refer only to those of respondents on their own establishments rather than those on the respective sectors they are engaged in. Besides, in this type of opinion survey on expected business situation, the views collected in the survey are affected by the events in the community occurring around the time of enumeration, and it is difficult to establish precisely the extent to which respondents' perception of the business situation accords with the underlying trends. For this survey, main bulk of the data were collected around the last week of the reference month.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Monthly Survey on the Business Situation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises". Users can

browse and download the publication at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?PCODE=B1080015&SCODE=300](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?PCODE=B1080015&SCODE=300)).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact Industrial Production Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7246; email: [sme-survey@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:sme-survey@censtatd.gov.hk)).