

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (May 14):

Reporter: Good morning, Mr Lee. Firstly, did the Government spend any resources to surveil and monitor Hong Kong residents who have moved to the UK (United Kingdom), including former activists? Do you think that the future of the Economic and Trade Offices (ETOs) in other countries could be at risk following similar arrests in the UK, and also Germany? And what will you do to protect Hong Kong's interests and the ETOs' abilities to provide services for the city's economic interests after this incident, and what assistance would the Government render to Mr Yuen, the person who is arrested and involved in this case? Thank you.

Chief Executive: The Chinese Embassy in the UK has made a statement about this matter. The Hong Kong SAR (Special Administrative Region) Government has also issued a statement on this matter. The Chinese side firmly rejects and strongly condemns the UK's fabrication in the so-called case, and its unwarranted accusation against the Hong Kong SAR Government. That is the statement made by the Chinese Embassy in the UK. The Chinese Embassy in the UK has made serious representations to the UK side on this matter. The Hong Kong Government has demanded the UK Government to provide full information of this matter. We are waiting for their reply. I must emphasise that for the ETO in London, its duties are to maintain close liaison with interlocutors in the local government, business, think tanks in various sectors, with a view to enriching bilateral ties in different areas, such as trade, investment, arts and culture, enhancing local people and enterprises' knowledge of Hong Kong's unique strengths, and promoting the economic and trade interests of Hong Kong. We have seriously demanded the UK side to fairly handle the matter, effectively protect the legitimate rights and interests of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office's Office Manager who was alleged to be involved, and ensure that the normal work of the ETO is not affected. Any attempt to make unwarranted allegation against the Hong Kong SAR Government is unacceptable.

The ETOs will, of course, pursue their duties full-heartedly and legitimately. I have explained the purpose of setting up these offices. The promotion of trade as a result of these ETOs means a lot to Hong Kong and means a lot to different places. And I think the ETOs, in the different places where they are set up, will continue to pursue their duties faithfully and proudly because it is a right thing to do for the benefit of different people. For example, the ETOs in the US (United States) are promoting trade, and the US is enjoying a trade surplus, which amounts to over US\$200 billion over (the past) 10 years. So any attempt to interfere with the work of the ETOs in different places will be against free trade and free economy, and will be harming the economy of the countries that try to do bad things to the

operation of the ETOs. We will, of course, do our best to protect the rightful interest and the rights that they enjoy as a result of legitimate officials working for the Hong Kong Government, and we'll urge all governments to respect the rightful duty of our ETOs in their economies.

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

[Landlord convicted of overcharging subdivided unit tenant for water](#)

A landlord of a subdivided flat was convicted today (May 14) of overcharging her subdivided unit (SDU) tenant for water, in contravention of regulation 47 of the Waterworks Regulations. The landlord pleaded guilty to two counts of offences at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts.

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) received a complaint in October 2023 concerning overcharging an SDU tenant for water at a flat in Wo Tai Street, Fanling, New Territories. Upon completion of the investigation and evidence collection, the WSD instituted prosecution against the illegal acts of overcharging SDU tenants for water. This is the 17th similar conviction case since the first conviction in June 2022, with associated fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$6,500.

A spokesman for the WSD said that the Waterworks (Amendment) Ordinance 2024 (the amended WWO) came into operation on April 19, 2024, which strengthened the power of the Water Authority in evidence collection and information disclosure during the investigation of suspected cases of overcharging for water. The Water Authority can request the landlords and their agents, etc, to provide the tenancy agreement and receipt or payment record for charges for water. Failure to comply with such a request can be an offence and the offender is liable on conviction to a maximum fine of \$10,000 and a further fine of a maximum \$1,000 for each day the offence continues. It is anticipated that there will be more prosecution cases. The maximum penalty for overcharging SDU tenants for water has been raised to \$25,000 to deter this illegal act. Moreover, providing false or misleading information to the Water Authority is also an offence with a maximum penalty of a \$25,000 fine and six months' imprisonment.

The WSD spokesman strongly appealed to landlords to apply for installation of separate water meters for their SDUs, which can greatly reduce the risk of contravening the amended WWO. The water fee deposit and the charge for providing a meter for each separate water meter installed under the Scheme for Installation of Separate Water Meters for Subdivided Units will be waived. Individual water bills will be provided for each water meter account. The first 12 cubic metres of water are free at four-month

intervals. SDU tenants can contact the WSD to raise their request for separate water meters. Upon receiving such requests, the WSD will contact their landlords for installation of the separate meters. If the landlords refuse, the WSD may require landlords to provide information on the recovery of water charges from their tenants for suspected overcharging cases. Details of the scheme can be obtained from the WSD website (www.wsd.gov.hk/en/customer-services/application-for-water-supply/pilot-scheme-for-installation-of-separate-water-me/index.html).

The WSD encourages the public to report any illegal act of overcharging SDU tenants for water for follow-up and investigation by the department. The public can call the WSD Hotline 3468 4963 or WhatsApp 5665 5517 to apply for installation of separate water meters for SDUs. The WhatsApp hotline also handles matters relating to water overcharging in SDUs. Alternatively, the public can call the WSD Customer Enquiry Hotline 2824 5000 to report water overcharge cases. After calling the hotline and choosing a language, they can press "7" for reporting to staff directly.

Asia Pacific Geoparks Network Geopark Development Forum held in Hong Kong

The four-day Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN) Geopark Development Forum opened today (May 14) in Hong Kong. Representatives from 22 geoparks in the Asia-Pacific region have gathered to exchange experiences, challenges and good practices in managing geoparks.

To mark the 20th anniversary of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN), Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark (Hong Kong Geopark) and the Chinese Geoparks Network co-organise the Forum, with the support of the Hong Kong Science Museum of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Through roundtable discussions, guest sharing, visits, etc, the Forum provides a platform for in-depth discussion and experience exchange on geopark management, business partnerships, support from government and non-governmental organisations, and science popularisation activities, with a view to promoting the planning and development of geoparks in future.

The Acting Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation, Mr Mickey Lai, while emphasising the significance of Hong Kong Geopark, said, "Hong Kong Geopark has an advantageous location with convenient transportation, which has paved the way for active international exchange. With its diverse and rich geological, ecological and cultural treasures, Hong Kong Geopark has provided invaluable learning opportunities and is committed to serving as a platform for constructing geopark networks and facilitating exchanges."

Second-level Counsel of the Department of Natural Protected Areas

Management of the National Forestry and Grassland Administration Ms Yuan Xiaohong praised Hong Kong Geopark as a crucial member of geoparks in China and acknowledged its abilities in attracting academics and visitors from all over the world. She said that Hong Kong Geopark's unique geological landscapes, abundant natural resources, and vibrant cultural ambience have vividly showcased Hong Kong's image as an international metropolis and achieved fruitful outcomes in geoconservation, nature education and community development, as well as international exchange and co-operation.

Hong Kong Geopark became a National Geopark of China in 2009 and a member of the GGN in 2011. Over the years, Hong Kong Geopark has been actively promoting networking within the GGN and is dedicated to conserving geoheritage, ecological environment, cultural and intangible cultural heritage, developing diversified educational activities and boosting local sustainable development. Since 2019, Hong Kong Geopark has taken up the role of social media co-ordinator for the APGN, and has maintained networking within the APGN through regular online meetings.

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department will later introduce Hing Chun Alliance Heritage Trail to further promote local history, culture and intangible cultural heritage, as well as enhancing visitors' experience.

Fraudulent website and social media page related to DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited relating to a fraudulent website and a social media page, which have been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the website or social media page concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the

Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

AFCD urges public to think carefully before releasing animals

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (May 14) reminded members of the public to think carefully before participating in mercy releases of animals.

A spokesman for the AFCD said, "Some members of the public engaged themselves in mercy release activities which involve releasing animals in recent years. However, releasing animals not in a proper manner, including releasing them into an unsuitable habitat, may affect their survival. In addition, if exotic species or species that are incompatible with the local ecology are released, they may compete with native species for resources and adversely affect the local ecology. Therefore, the Government does not encourage the public to release animals."

The AFCD sends staff at appropriate times to inspect places where animal releasing activities are likely to take place, and carries out publicity and education work.

Under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance (Cap. 169), it is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to animals by releasing them not in a proper manner. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and imprisonment for three years upon conviction.

The spokesman stressed that to safeguard animal welfare, members of the public must think carefully before participating in animal release activities. The AFCD is launching a fish restocking exercise on National Fish Releasing Day on June 6 to release fish fingerlings in Yan Chau Tong Marine Park to enhance local marine resources and ecology. The department will promote to the public the benefits of fish restocking to the environment, with a view to engaging them in supporting and participating in these science-based restocking exercises in lieu of animal releases not properly conducted. They may also consider other charitable activities such as planting trees or participating in volunteer services with animal welfare groups and environmental organisations.