

# CS' "Letter to Hong Kong" (English only)

Following is the "Letter to Hong Kong" by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, broadcast on Radio Television Hong Kong this morning (December 29):

On this last Sunday of 2019, I wish every Hong Kong citizen a warm, peaceful and hopeful year 2020.

A New Year holds welcome promises of a fresh start and a new beginning. The New Year is also traditionally a time for planning, greeting, reminiscing as well as some soul and heart searching.

I believe that many of you would share my feeling that the year 2019 has been a year of unremitting shocks and turbulence to our community and our economy. Indeed, it has been a severely testing time for all in Hong Kong.

It all began with the introduction into the Legislative Council of the bill to amend the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance in April. Responding to strong public sentiment, the Government suspended all work on the bill in mid-June and declared its death in early July. On September 4, the Chief Executive announced the bill's withdrawal. This was done on October 23 when the Legislative Council resumed normal business.

Despite this, the public protests which began as largely peaceful and orderly marches in June soon got out of control. Unprecedented violence and reckless destruction became the norm. Radical protesters attacked police officers as well as police stations and facilities with petrol bombs, iron bars, bricks and chemicals. Some even used high-tension slingshots, bows and arrows. During the past six months or so, over 2 600 people were injured in the social unrest, including over 500 police officers.

Meanwhile, public infrastructure and transport including a cumulative total of 85 heavy rail stations and 62 light rail stations, as well as countless shops, restaurants and shopping malls had been repeatedly vandalised. More so, nearly 21 000 square metres of paving blocks from footpaths were ripped up and used as weapons to attack the Police. Over 52 000 metres of roadside railing were removed and 740 sets of traffic lights destroyed.

Last month, masked protesters battered the Hung Hom Cross-Harbour Tunnel, shutting it down for two full weeks. This vital city artery normally carries 110 000 vehicles a day, accounting for some 43 per cent of the daily cross-harbour vehicular flow. It took a total of 800 government staff and contractor's workers some 100 hours to carry out emergency repair round-the-clock before the tunnel could be re-opened. At the same time, nearby Polytechnic University was overrun by radical protesters. The same happened

to the Chinese University.

Apart from recklessly damaging our universities, violent protesters turned the two campuses into arsenals on a frightening scale. When the last of the protesters finally left the universities, the police seized altogether nearly 8 000 petrol bombs plus numerous explosives, hundreds of bottles of corrosive liquid and weapons of all sorts.

This level of premeditated and organised destruction and violence could hardly be tolerated in any country or economy that upholds the rule of law. Hong Kong, I am proud to say, is among those economies that believe passionately in the primacy of rule of law. It safeguards our economy, our community, our families and our way of life.

In fact, the rule of law is among Hong Kong's much cherished core values, alongside our fiercely independent judiciary, clean government, level playing field for business and enviable freedoms. These freedoms, as enshrined in the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance, include freedom of speech, of the press and free flow of information; freedom of association and assembly; free trade and free port; free flow of capital; freely convertible currency; freedom of religious belief and free education. We have also been the freest economy in the world continuously for 25 years. The unique "One Country, Two Systems" formula has been functioning well and we enjoy the best of both worlds.

Despite the recent social unrest which has affected our economy and labour market, Hong Kong's institutional strengths remain robust and intact. Our fundamentals stay sound and strong. We still enjoy high rating in various areas by international think tanks and agencies. Allow me to say that whilst Hong Kong may not have the full semblance of Western democracy, we do enjoy for a very long time the full substance of real freedom which underpins Hong Kong's success.

Over the past six months, most of the requests for public meetings, processions and protests were given greenlight by the Police. During these public events, be it small or large, Police had dutifully facilitated and ensured the safety of protesters and other road users. When the requests were not approved, it was generally a decision made in the hopes of preventing violence, ensuring peace and public order, as our society has every right to expect of its police and its government.

On November 24, we witnessed a peaceful and orderly District Council Election with a record high turnout and voting rates. My colleagues and I are looking forward to working with all new District Council members. We also look forward to expanding our dialogue with the community. While we will continue to engage different sectors of society through our usual channels, the Government will broaden and rejuvenate our communication with the public. Less than two weeks ago and after the one by the Chief Executive in September, my Principal Official colleagues have started a dialogue with the public through Facebook Live. You will certainly see more of us listening and responding to people's views and concerns on these and other communication

channels in the coming year.

We are also establishing an Independent Review Committee comprising experts and community leaders. The Committee will look into the causes and full circumstances of the social unrest and probe into Hong Kong's deep-seated social conflicts, from affordable housing, land supply, wealth gap, upward social mobility and opportunities for our young people to social justice. The Committee will recommend ways to address the real and long-entrenched community concerns that underlie the discord.

Meanwhile, our economy is inevitably affected by the twin blows of social unrest and the trade dispute between the United States and the Mainland. Businesses and people of Hong Kong are yearning for the restoration of peace and order soonest possible, and the recovery of our economy.

In response, the Government has launched four rounds of relief measures since August. These added up to more than \$25 billion. A number of the measures which will benefit grassroots families and small and medium enterprises will be implemented at the beginning of the New Year.

These relief measures would not solve our economic problems. Yet, they could help businesses and people of Hong Kong stay afloat while we strive to heal our divided community and battered economy.

There are deep-seated issues that we must acknowledge and resolve if we are to end the prolonged social unrest that has shaken the familiar Hong Kong which we all love and cherish. We must be patient and perseverant in helping our city to heal, one step at a time.

The past six months have been tough for us, but we will soldier on. Hong Kong is a remarkably resilient and resourceful international city with a strong "can-do" spirit. We have a New Year waiting for us. We have new and expanded channels of communication opened up for us. We expect the first report of the Independent Police Complaints Council to come out soon. And we have research and concrete recommendations of the Independent Review Committee ahead of us. Working together, I am confident that we can rebuild, reclaim and rejuvenate the remarkably resilient spirit of Hong Kong.

On this note, I wish all of you a New Year blessed with peace, harmony and goodwill.

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## **Suspected MERS case reported**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (December 28) 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	39
Affected area involved	United Arab Emirates
High-risk exposure	Nil
Hospital	Queen Mary 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 relevant 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](#).

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## [Princess Margaret Hospital announces Candida auris cases](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) made the following

announcement today (December 28):

A 65-year-old male patient was admitted to the Orthopaedics and Traumatology (O&T) ward and the Medical and Geriatric (M&G) ward of PMH. His clinical specimen was confirmed to carry *Candida auris* on December 19, without signs of infections. In accordance with prevailing guideline, PMH has commenced contact tracing for the patients who have close contact with the index patient. One more 70-year-old male orthopaedic patient was confirmed to carry *Candida auris* without signs of infection. The patients are now treated under isolation; one is clinically stable while the other is in serious condition due to his underlying illness.

The Hospital has reported the cases to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection (CHP). The following enhanced infection control measures have already been adopted:

1. Thorough cleaning and disinfection of the wards concerned
2. Enhance patient and environmental screening procedures
3. Apply stringent contact precautions and enhance hand hygiene of staff and patients

The Hospital will continue to closely monitor the situation of the patients as well as follow up the cases with concerned departments and the CHP.

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## [Appeal for information on missing man in Kwun Tong \(with photo\)](#)

Police today (December 28) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Kwun Tong.

Pang Chung-hang, aged 31, went missing after he was last seen near Hong Pak Court yesterday (December 27) morning. His family made a report to Police on the same day.

He is about 1.75 metres tall, 60 kilograms in weight and of medium build. He has a round face with yellow complexion and short black hair. He was last seen wearing a brown-yellow jacket, grey trousers and white shoes.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of Kowloon East on 3661 0316 or 9886 0060 or email to [rmpu-ke-2@police.gov.hk](mailto:rmpu-ke-2@police.gov.hk), or contact any police station.



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## 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 (December 29).

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.