

Remarks by CE at media session before ExCo

Following are the remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (September 24):

Reporter: My first question is, as the SNSO (Safeguarding National Security Ordinance) has stated that the CE has the power to issue a certificate to certify if a court case concerns national security, yesterday the court has heard that you have issued such a certificate for the HKU Students' Union Council case. So how many of such certificates have been issued in the past, and what cases were involved? My second question is, a French photojournalist working for the Associated Press was denied entry to Hong Kong earlier this month. What are the reasons behind and will it impact Hong Kong's image as an international city? Lastly, is there a time frame for Hong Kong to lift the ban on Japanese food imports after Beijing has agreed to lift the ban? Thank you.

Chief Executive: The Chief Executive certificate was issued in accordance with the law. It has been issued more than once, and it is issued whenever it is considered necessary, but all procedures for national security cases will be done in strict accordance with legal procedures and the relevant laws. I want to repeat again: we will deal with national security offences seriously, and we will enforce the law without hesitation, because national security offences are serious. I think we are doing this in the same way as what other jurisdictions are doing in connection with safeguarding national security.

Regarding the issue of discharge of radioactive water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant into the sea, I am aware that the relevant authorities of China and Japan have recently reached a consensus, and the consensus reads like this: the Japanese side will fulfil its obligation to avoid negative impacts on health and the environment and will continue to carry out impact assessments on the marine environment and ecosystems. Japan will establish a long-term international monitoring arrangement under the framework of the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) to ensure China's participation, independent sampling, monitoring, and inter-laboratory comparisons. The two sides will commence science-based dialogue in the interest of life, health and the ecological environment. After the implementation of the independent sampling and monitoring activities, China will, based on the scientific evidence, consider to adjust the relevant measures. The Hong Kong SAR Government has all along accorded top priority to safeguard health and safety of the Hong Kong people. We emphasise scientific evidence. We have contacted the Commissioner's Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong SAR for more information and have also contacted the Consul-General of Japan for more details to ensure that the Hong Kong SAR Government will have access to sufficient scientific data and evidence to consider any adjustment possibility.

Regarding your question, all entries into Hong Kong must be considered in accordance with the prevailing immigration policies and relevant laws. The Immigration Department is doing the same as all other immigration authorities are doing in other jurisdictions; that is, they will look at the entries' characteristics and examine the entries in accordance with the policies and the laws. I think individuals will be considered according to their own cases, and we are doing it in no way different from other jurisdictions. Thank you.

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