

## **Public urged to report flooding**

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

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

Members of the public are advised to report any street flooding that comes to their notice to the Drainage Services Department by calling the 24-hour drainage hotline on 2300 1110.

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## **Flag-raising ceremony cancelled**

Â Â Â Â Owing to the thunderstorm warning, the flag-raising ceremony to be conducted at Golden Bauhinia Square, Wan Chai at 8am today (April 26) will be cancelled.

Â Â Â Â If the thunderstorm warning is cancelled and weather conditions permit by then, the flag-raising ceremony may be resumed without further notice.

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## **HKSAR Government strongly opposes resolution of European Parliament**

â€‹The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (April 25) strongly opposed the so-called resolution adopted by the European Parliament against Hong Kong, and strongly condemned the Parliament for making baseless allegations about Hong Kong and smearing the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL) and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (the Ordinance), so as to set the record straight.

A spokesman for the HKSAR Government said, "It is the constitutional duty of the HKSAR to safeguard national security. In accordance with international law and international practice based on the Charter of the United Nations, safeguarding national security is an inherent right of all sovereign states. Many common law jurisdictions, including western countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as Singapore, have enacted multiple pieces of legislation to safeguard national security. Turning a blind eye to the fact and making

exaggerated remarks, the Parliament has demonstrated typical political hegemony and hypocrisy with double standards."

"The NSL and the Ordinance clearly specify that the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Basic Law, as well as the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to Hong Kong, are to be protected in accordance with the law. The European Parliament neglected the relevant provisions and lashed out wantonly, fully exposing its malicious intentions."

"The offences endangering national security stipulated by the Ordinance target acts endangering national security with precision, and define the elements and penalties of the offences with clarity. The prosecution has the burden to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the defendant had the actus reus and mens rea of an offence before the defendant may be convicted by the court. The Ordinance will not affect normal business operations and normal worldwide exchanges of local institutions, organisations and individuals. Law-abiding persons (including personnel, organisations and enterprises from the European Union and its member states) will not engage in acts and activities endangering our national security and will not unwittingly violate the law."

"Extraterritorial effect for the offences endangering national security under the NSL and the Ordinance fully aligns with the principles of international law, international practice and common practice adopted in various countries and regions. It is both necessary and legitimate, and is also in line with those of other countries and regions around the world. It can be seen that the national security laws of various countries, including the member states of the European Union, also have extraterritorial effect under the 'personality principle' and the 'protective principle'. In formulating the extraterritorial effect under the Ordinance, we have already taken into account the principles of international law and international practice of state jurisdiction, as well as the nature of the offences," the spokesman emphasised.

"It is clear that safeguarding national security falls within the internal affairs of a sovereign jurisdiction, so the implementation of the NSL and the Ordinance should be free from any form of intervention. As a matter of fact, during the public consultation of the Basic Law Article 23 legislation, 98.6 per cent of the submissions of opinions showed support and gave positive comments, reflecting a strong consensus in society for the legislation, and it is also the aspiration of the people. The European Parliament blatantly clamoured for so-called 'sanctions' against HKSAR personnel who dutifully safeguard national security. The HKSAR Government strongly condemns its political grandstanding rife with ill intentions, which have been seen through by all."

"As the legal proceedings involving Lai Chee-ying are still ongoing, it is inappropriate for any person to comment on the details of the case. We emphasised that all cases (including the relevant case) are handled strictly on the basis of evidence and in accordance with the law. All defendants will

receive fair trial strictly in accordance with laws applicable to Hong Kong (including the NSL) and as protected by the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights," the spokesman also pointed out.

"Any attempt by any country, organisation, or individual to interfere with the judicial proceedings in the HKSAR by means of political power or media or any other means, thereby resulting in a defendant not being able to have a fair trial that one should receive, is a reprehensible act undermining the rule of law of the HKSAR."

"Following the successful enactment of the Ordinance, the shortcomings in the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the HKSAR to safeguard national security are addressed. We must once again emphasise that the Ordinance is a piece of legislation to defend against external forces that endanger our national security, acting like a sturdier door and a more effective door lock to defend our home. The HKSAR Government strongly urges the European Parliament to stop smearing and interfering in Hong Kong affairs which are internal affairs of China and ensure that their remarks concerning the NSL and the Ordinance are fair and just, and stop making scaremongering remarks," the spokesman reiterated.

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## [TD's response to media reports](#)

â€œIn response to media reports on the importation of drivers by Citybus Limited to operate non-franchised bus (NFB) services, the Transport Department (TD) today (April 25) clarified that the Labour Importation Scheme for Transport Sector – Public Light Bus (PLB)/Coach Trade (the Scheme), which was launched in June last year, covers both the PLB and the NFB trades and does not apply to franchised bus drivers. Applicants for the Scheme must be either PLB operators or NFB operators (i.e. holders of passenger service licenses for the relevant services).

In addition to operating two bus franchises, Citybus Limited is also a holder of relevant passenger service licences to provide NFB services, residents' services, employees' services, etc, and is therefore eligible to import drivers to operate its NFB routes under the Scheme. Citybus Limited has earlier applied and been approved to import 20 NFB drivers. The number of imported drivers fulfills the manpower ratio of imported labour to local labour of not more than 1:2 for each employer. In this case of application, the basis of calculation is limited to the Citybus Limited's manpower provision under its passenger service licence for the provision of NFB services. The manpower provision for its franchised services will definitely not be taken into account. The TD has made it clear to Citybus Limited that the imported NFB drivers under the Scheme are not allowed to take up other duties outside the Scheme, including driving franchised bus routes. The TD will step up its monitoring in the future. If the company concerned is found

to be in breach of the regulations, the approval granted to the imported drivers will be revoked. They will not be allowed to participate in the Scheme for the following two years.

The Government is very concerned about the employment and remuneration package of local drivers. To safeguard the interests of local drivers, employers participating in the Scheme must accord priority to employing local drivers and commit to providing training to fill job vacancies. Relevant employers, who wish to participate in the Scheme, must advertise for local drivers for 14 consecutive days and show that they cannot recruit suitable drivers in Hong Kong four months prior to the submission of application. Employers can only apply for quotas to import drivers through the Scheme to fill the vacancies if they are experiencing genuine difficulties in recruiting suitable local drivers. In addition, an employer can only apply to import a maximum of one driver while recruiting every two full-time local employees, and the salary of an imported driver must not be lower than the median monthly wage of the relevant post as set by the Government. The importation of drivers should not result in the layoff of local drivers in service. In case of layoff, the employer should prioritise laying off the imported driver.

The TD will strictly review all applications in detail to ensure that each application meets all requirements in the Scheme, including whether priority is given to employ local drivers, the failure to recruit suitable drivers in Hong Kong, etc. Finally, quota application will be approved or rejected after taking into account the advice provided by the interdepartmental liaison group. Ineligible applications will not be approved.

Upon arrival, imported drivers must be directly employed by the same employer and perform the duties specified in the Standard Employment Contract. They must work for fixed routes or pre-assigned and specified routes and vehicles registered under the specified passenger service licence. Under the existing legislation, NFB drivers imported under the Scheme are not permitted to undertake other duties outside the Scheme. Employers who contravene the legislation in Hong Kong may be prosecuted. Any employers found to be in breach of the Scheme or the relevant regulations under the Standard Employment Contract or other relevant legislations may also be subject to administrative sanctions (i.e. the approval obtained for the imported drivers will be cancelled, and the employers will not be allowed to participate in the Scheme for the following two years). The above arrangements fully protect the rights and interests of local drivers. The Government will monitor the situation to ensure that the employers and imported drivers comply with the relevant legislation in Hong Kong.

Upon the approval of imported drivers' quota, employers will arrange the drivers to come to Hong Kong in good time for pre-service training and driving test in order to obtain the relevant full driving licence. After the completion of route training, imported drivers will be ready for service. Imported drivers under the Scheme must comply with and pass the same arrangements and standards of the relevant driving tests as those for local drivers. In other words, all persons taking the relevant driving tests must

meet the uniform standards set by the TD to achieve passing results in order to ensure road safety.

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## CHP investigates local case of dengue fever

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (April 25) investigating a local case of dengue fever (DF), and hence again urged the public to maintain strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures both locally and during travel.

The patient is a 28-year-old man with good past health. He developed a fever on April 20 and visited a private doctor the following day. He presented with generalised skin rash on April 22. He sought medical attention at St Paul's Hospital on April 23 and 24 and attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital on April 24, and was admitted for treatment. He is now in stable condition. His blood sample was tested positive for dengue virus upon laboratory testing.

Initial enquiries revealed that the patient lives in Cheerful Garden in Siu Sai Wan. He had no travel history within the incubation period and recalled no history of mosquito bites in the past three weeks. His home contacts are currently asymptomatic and have been put under medical surveillance.

"The DH is working closely with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) to assess and prevent possible spread of infection. The FEHD's vector investigations, surveillance and control are ongoing. The CHP's epidemiological investigations will continue," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Officers of the CHP has inspected the patient's residence and will conduct field investigations to neighbouring residents by questionnaire surveys.

Persons who have been to Cheerful Garden in Siu Sai Wan with DF symptoms should call the CHP's hotline (2125 2371) which will operate from 9am to 5pm from tomorrow (April 26) to April 28, and from 9am to 5.30pm starting from April 29, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) for laboratory investigation or referral as appropriate. Furthermore, the CHP will hold a health talk jointly with the FEHD at 10.30am on April 27 at Siu Sai Wan Community Hall, during which the CHP will also conduct free DF antibody test for people in the district with relevant symptoms.

"Letters will be issued to local doctors and hospital to alert them to the latest situation," the spokesman added.

This is the first local DF case recorded this year. Meanwhile, 19 imported DF cases had been recorded so far this year.

"Apart from general measures, travellers returning from areas affected by DF should apply insect repellent for 14 days upon arrival in Hong Kong. If feeling unwell, seek medical advice promptly and provide travel details to the doctor," a spokesman for the CHP said.

The public should take heed of the following advice on mosquito control:

- Thoroughly check all gully traps, roof gutters, surface channels and drains to prevent blockage;
- Scrub and clean drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs;
- Properly dispose of refuse, such as soft drink cans, empty bottles and boxes, in covered litter containers;
- Completely change the water of flowers and plants at least once a week. The use of saucers should be avoided if possible;
- Level irregular ground surfaces before the rainy season;
- Avoid staying in shrubby areas; and
- Take personal protective measures such as wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body when doing outdoor activities.

DEET-containing insect repellents are effective and the public should take heed of the tips below:

- Read the label instructions carefully first;
- Apply right before entering an area with risk of mosquito bites;
- Apply on exposed skin and clothing;
- Use DEET of up to 30 per cent for pregnant women and up to 10 per cent for children\*;
- Apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent; and
- Re-apply only when needed and follow the instructions.

\*For children who travel to countries or areas where mosquito-borne diseases are endemic or epidemic and where exposure is likely, those aged 2 months or above can use DEET-containing insect repellents with a DEET concentration of up to 30 per cent.

The public should call 1823 in case of mosquito problems and may visit the following pages for more information: the DF page of the [CHP](#) and the [Travel Health Service](#), the latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), and the CHP [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#).