

Transcript of remarks by Acting CE at media session before ExCo meeting

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Acting Chief Executive, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (November 5):

Reporter: Mr Cheung, I also have three questions for you. So the international import/export in Shanghai is supposed to be the annual event where Chinese leaders meet trading partners from around the world, but President Xi found time to meet Mrs Lam last night to talk about the issues in Hong Kong. So did it show Beijing's worry that the Hong Kong Government has been unable to come up with any concrete measures to stop violence and chaos in Hong Kong? And No. 2, just now you talk about press freedom but police has arrested two journalists on assignment during the protests last weekend. Can you make it clear whether the Government truly values press freedom or really see journalists as troublemakers? If the Government values press freedom, would you talk to the Police and ask them to stop targeting journalists when they are doing law enforcement work? And No. 3, also in the protest during the weekend, five people were badly injured in Tai Koo and there was a HKUST student also in critical condition. I noticed that you visited the Xinhua News Agency yesterday, but would you also consider visiting these people injured in the protest? Thank you.

Acting Chief Executive: Three questions. The first question, I think the fact that President Xi met Chief Executive last night in Shanghai underlines in fact the importance that the Central People's Government and President Xi himself attached to Hong Kong's importance, the importance for Hong Kong. I think the reverse is true. Of course, concern means really care about Hong Kong. I think the very fact that he's so busy, that he found time to meet Chief Executive, really is a vote of confidence in ourselves. And also what he said as reported in papers and the media, is very positive. You know, he has a high degree of confidence in the Chief Executive and certainly recognised the work, positive work, of the present government, and also particularly the political teams, all these are pretty reassuring to us, particularly.

The second point is about press freedom and journalism, the right to report and so on. Freedom of the press is one of Hong Kong's core values and we certainly cherish it, and preserve it, and safeguard it jealously. That's why if there is any 'complaint' against the Police in terms of handling the media, I think the proper channel is to lodge a formal complaint to the Police. The Police, I am sure, will follow through. The Police have already got a media liaison team on the spot, whenever there was an incident on the spot there. So I'm sure that there are means and ways of communication. What we do is really to enhance press reports, enhance understanding, so everybody, particularly the media do not feel that they are being obstructed, and also the Police do not feel that they are being obstructed in carrying

out their duties as well. So it's mutual cooperation we talk about here, mutual understanding. I am sure that we can do a lot more in the future to build up relationship and also to enhance understanding between the media and the Police on the other hand. Okay? Thank you very much.

Reporter ...(about Xinhua News Agency)

Acting Chief Executive: Oh yes, in fact I found a bit of time yesterday, that's why I could drop in at the office of the Xinhua News Agency in Happy Valley, which was ransacked, attacked in fact on Friday night. It also epitomised the importance of press freedom that we attach to in Hong Kong, as I said earlier on how we value our press freedom greatly. That's why local media is equally important to us, okay?

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