

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

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (May 18):

Reporter: The so-called incentive plan for vaccinated people was not much of a difference. With Europe and the US opening up for travel by summer, is Hong Kong afraid of being left out of the social global reopening if it doesn't do more for vaccinated people? Second question, media reports that the authorities will crack down on the June 4 vigil, from organiser and citizens will be arrested, to District Council (members) will be disqualified. Can you confirm that? And when will the vigil be allowed to happen again? Thank you.

Chief Executive: First of all, the foremost priority of the Hong Kong SAR Government, and indeed of many governments, is to keep the city safe, is to fight COVID-19. I realise it is important to resume a number of activities, to have some travelling with the Mainland and with overseas places, but nothing is more important than to keep the city safe and to keep our people safe. We will not sacrifice this very important mission just because we want to rush to resume travel. This highly responsible attitude is being displayed by Singapore and Hong Kong in postponing for a second time the Air Travel Bubble. I hope this is well appreciated by the people of Hong Kong and also by the global community because fighting COVID-19 is a global endeavour. We need solidarity and co-operation in order to effectively fight COVID-19.

Having said that, I do confess we could do much better in terms of vaccination. We have enough supply – I said that we have administered 2 million doses, but we have another 2 million doses in our storeroom. We have a whole network of Community Vaccination Centres, and from today onwards, we are even reaching out to major companies which have the suitable venue for them to assemble their staff, say up to 150 and 200, and then we will send the medical team to provide vaccination to the staff onsite, the first dose and then later on the second dose. I doubt any places have that sort of service for their people to receive vaccination. I hope that the appeal is not so much to us, it's to the people of Hong Kong. That's why I said I am very pleased to read at least two editorials this morning, one in Chinese, saying that since we are approaching zero (infection), let's do more on vaccination. I think that's an appeal to the people. Then in the English newspaper it said that in light of the Taiwan experience, vaccination is the only way out. That is my response.

On all the other things you have mentioned, they are speculative reports and I'm sorry, the Chief Executive does not wish to comment on speculative reports.

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