

Hong Kong e-News Bulletin

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SPECIAL NOTICE

In response to the local government's appeal for concerted efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Toronto) (HKETO) has been closed temporarily until further notice. Users may continue to reach us via the following channels:

Toronto

Phone: (416) 924-5544 or

Email: info@hketotoronto.gov.hk

Vancouver

Phone: (604) 331-1300 or

Email: info_vancouver@hketotoronto.gov.hk

For urgent assistance outside office hours, Hong Kong residents in Canada may call the 24-hour hotline of the Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Unit of the Immigration Department in Hong Kong at +852 1868. In the event that Hong Kong residents who need assistance are not able to call the hotline due to the service settings of their telecommunication services operators or other reasons, they may try adding "0000" after entering "1868". Hong Kong residents in Canada in need of consular assistance may contact the Chinese Embassy or Consulate Offices in your province (<http://ca.china-embassy.org/eng/zlqli/>).

RECENT ACTIVITY

HKETO Director joins "Think Asia Think Hong Kong in New Normal" business webinar

Director of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Toronto) (HKETO), Ms Emily Mo, joined the "Think Asia, Think Hong Kong in the New Normal" business webinar hosted by the Hong Kong-Canada Business Association (Greater Toronto Area Section) (HKCBA) as a panellist on May 28.

Ms Mo first updated participants on the COVID-19 situation in Hong Kong, and that Hong Kong did not adopt a complete lock-down approach with most of the restaurants and commercial outlets are in operation with anti-pandemic measures. She noted further opening up of the city is being planned.

In addition, Ms Mo pointed out that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has deployed a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to

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contain the spread of COVID-19 while maintaining Hong Kong's position as an international city. The HKSAR Government is currently distributing to all citizens free reusable facemasks (CuMask+) that are developed by the Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel.

On the business front, the HKSAR Government has launched a package of measures which costs over CAD48 billion to preserve the vitality of the economy. Ms Mo highlighted that though COVID-19 has imposed pressure on economies and financial markets worldwide, Hong Kong's fundamental strengths remain intact.

Before closing, Ms Mo encouraged Canadian companies to get prepared to expand their businesses to Asia through Hong Kong.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.hketotoronto.gov.hk/newsroom/hketo-director-joins-think-asia-think-hong-kong-in-new-normal-business-webinar.html>

HONG KONG NEWS

Chief Executive's letter to Hong Kong citizens

The following is a letter to Hong Kong citizens by the Chief Executive of the HKSAR, Mrs Carrie Lam, which was published in Hong Kong local newspapers on May 29:

Fellow Citizens,

Hong Kong, the home we all treasure, is defined by the "Lion Rock spirit" by which we join hands to pursue our dreams while putting aside our differences. Since our return to the Motherland, Hong Kong has been a SAR directly under the Central People's Government, enjoying a high degree of autonomy and unique advantages under "One Country, Two Systems".

Over the past year, the Hong Kong community has been traumatised. Violence by rioters has escalated, with illegal firearms and explosives posing a terrorist threat. The opposition forces and organisations advocating "Hong Kong independence" and "self-determination" have blatantly challenged the authority of the Central Authorities and the HKSAR Government, pleaded for interference in Hong Kong's affairs by external forces and even begged for sanctions against Hong Kong and thus disregarding the interests of Hong Kong people and our country. Meanwhile, external forces have intensified their interference in Hong Kong's internal affairs, passed laws relating to Hong Kong and flagrantly glorified the illegal acts of radicals, all of which seriously jeopardise our

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nation's sovereignty, security and development interests. Hong Kong has become a gaping hole in national security, and our city's prosperity and stability are at risk.

Regrettably, the current legal system and enforcement mechanisms for Hong Kong to safeguard national security are inadequate or even "defenceless". Despite returning to the Motherland for 23 years, Hong Kong has yet to enact laws to curb acts that threaten national security in accordance with Article 23 of the Basic Law. In view of the current political and social situation, it is difficult for the Executive and Legislative authorities of the HKSAR to complete on its own legislation to safeguard national security in the foreseeable future. The decision now by the National People's Congress (NPC) to establish and improve the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the HKSAR to safeguard national security from the state level in accordance with the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the Basic Law is an exercise of the authority and duty of the Central Authorities. It also demonstrates the commitment of the Central Authorities to fully and accurately implement "One Country, Two Systems" as well as their care for Hong Kong people. There is both the need and the urgency for legislation, the constitutionality, lawfulness and reasonableness of which are beyond doubt.

The objective of the legislation is to prevent, curb and sanction secession, the subversion of state power, the organisation and carrying out of terrorist activities that seriously endanger national security, and interference by foreign and external forces in the affairs of the HKSAR. It will only target an extremely small minority of illegal and criminal acts and activities, while the life and property, basic rights and freedoms of the overwhelming majority of citizens will be protected. Citizens will continue to enjoy the freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of demonstration, of procession, and to enter or leave Hong Kong in accordance with the law. All relevant law enforcement will be conducted strictly in accordance with the law as well as statutory powers and procedures.

Fellow citizens, every country has its own laws to safeguard national security for the long-term security of their country and the stability of people's lives. The legislation by the Central Authorities for the HKSAR to safeguard national security aims to enable Hong Kong society to find a way out of the impasse, restore stability as soon as possible and resume development of the economy and livelihoods.

I appeal for your full understanding and staunch support for the Decision passed by the National People's Congress (NPC).

Carrie Lam
Chief Executive
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202005/29/P2020052800745.htm>

CE welcomes passage of Decision on establishing and improving legal system and enforcement mechanisms for HKSAR to safeguard national security by NPC

In response to the passage of the Decision on establishing and improving the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the HKSAR to safeguard national security by the NPC on May 28, the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, issued a statement welcoming the passage of the Decision by the NPC. She said that the HKSAR is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China. Safeguarding national sovereignty, security and development interests is the constitutional duty of the HKSAR and concerns every Hong Kong citizen.

Given the difficulty of the executive and legislative authorities of the HKSAR to complete on their own legislation to safeguard national security in the foreseeable future, there is the need and the urgency for the passage of the Decision by the NPC to establish and improve the legal system and enforcement mechanisms for Hong Kong to safeguard national security at the state level. It also shows the care of the country towards the HKSAR. Nevertheless, the HKSAR still has the legal responsibility to enact legislation in accordance with Article 23 of the Basic Law and should complete the legislation to safeguard national security as soon as possible.

Mrs Lam said that the HKSAR Government will fully co-operate with the Standing Committee of the NPC to complete the relevant work on legislation as soon as possible and proactively reflect the detailed situation in Hong Kong during the process. The Government will also proactively explain the objective and the importance of the legislation to various sectors. As required by the Decision, the HKSAR Government will enhance enforcement and public education in relation to safeguarding national security, and report regularly to the Central People's Government.

Mrs Lam stressed that the Decision will not affect the legitimate rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong residents. "One Country, Two Systems" has been Hong Kong's top advantage, and a stable and safe society will provide a favourable business and investment environment. This will help better Hong Kong's development down the road.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202005/28/P2020052800524.htm>

HKSAR Government refutes statements by US Administration

In response to the statement by President Trump on May 29 and comments by the United States (US) State Department, a spokesman of the HKSAR Government on May 30 noted with deep regret that President Trump and his administration continue to smear and demonise the legitimate rights and duty of Hong Kong's sovereign to safeguard national security in the HKSAR which in turn is aimed at restoring stability to Hong Kong society.

The Government spokesman said that Hong Kong is an inalienable part of China. Any suggestion that the People's Republic of China does not have the right to protect its own territory from separatists, terror and anarchy does not stand up to scrutiny and smacks of hypocrisy and double standards. To allege that the improved legal system and enforcement mechanisms targeting an extremely small minority of criminals to be introduced by the national security law is undermining Hong Kong people's freedoms is simply fallacious.

As pointed out by the Secretary for Security of the HKSAR Government in the Legislative Council on May 27, every country has legislation in place to safeguard national security. It is believed that the existence of those laws to safeguard a country's national security and sovereignty does not give rise to fears of the loss of liberties by its people that will warrant international debate or interference by another country. It is generally acknowledged that all citizens should have the duty to safeguard their country's interests and hence the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights explicitly states that the rights of individuals are subject to legal restrictions on the grounds of national security.

If the mere enactment of a national security law is a universal sovereign obligation and does not contradict with individual freedoms and the rule of law, the reactions of the US and other foreign governments since the approval by the NPC of the Decision to enact such a law for application in the HKSAR are totally misplaced. The Decision to authorise the NPC Standing Committee to prepare and enact the law is part of a two-step legislative process and as stipulated in the Decision, the NPC Standing Committee has to prepare the legislation based on clearly stated objectives and basic principles.

The proposed law only targets acts of secession, subverting state power, organising and carrying out terrorist activities, as well as activities interfering with HKSAR's internal affairs by foreign or external forces. The five basic principles include firmly safeguarding national security, bettering the system of "One Country, Two Systems", governing Hong Kong in strict accordance with the law, resisting external interferences in Hong Kong's affairs and upholding the legal rights and freedoms of Hong Kong people.

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In a subsequent statement issued by the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council on May 29, it reaffirmed that the enactment of national security legislation would not change the high degree of autonomy enjoyed by the HKSAR; it would have no impact on the HKSAR's judicial independence, including that of final adjudication as enshrined in the Basic Law.

President Trump's claim that Hong Kong now operated under "one country, one system" was completely false and ignored the facts on the ground.

The spokesman remarked that in exercising Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy under "One Country, Two Systems", the HKSAR Government was resolutely committed to upholding its international responsibilities and agreements with the US and all countries in areas such as trade, investment protection, mutual legal assistance, the fight against transnational crime and terrorism, as well as education and cultural exchanges.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202005/30/P2020053000846.htm>

In addition, the HKSAR Government expressed strong opposition to sweeping remarks contained in the so-called report by the US State Department under the US-Hong Kong Policy Act (the report) on May 28.

The spokesman of the HKSAR Government noted that these remarks misrepresented the constitutional relationship between the HKSAR and the Central Authorities, smeared the implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" in Hong Kong and interfered in the internal affairs of the HKSAR.

Throughout the past 23 years, the Central Authorities and the HKSAR Government are conducting Hong Kong's internal affairs in accordance with the Constitution and the Basic Law, and in full accord with the "One Country, Two Systems" principle. It is regretted the unfounded allegations in the report about erosion of HKSAR's high degree of autonomy and the legitimate rights and freedoms enjoyed by the people of Hong Kong.

In response to media enquiries about the "special status" or differential treatment under US law or sanctions to be applied to Hong Kong, the Government spokesman pointed out that Hong Kong's "separate customs territory" status is enshrined in the Basic Law and Hong Kong shall continue to pursue the policy of free trade. As a separate member of the World Trade Organization, it is expected to be fairly treated by the trading partners.

The threat of sanctions to achieve the purpose of interfering with the policy of another place is a violation of international law and international practice. Practically, in Hong Kong–US relationship, any sanctions are a double-edged sword that will not only harm the interests of Hong Kong but also significantly those of the US.

The HKSAR Government hopes that the US Government would adopt a pragmatic attitude, and would, bearing in mind US' own interests in Hong Kong, refrain from interfering with the internal affairs of the nation and Hong Kong, and maintain her economic and trade policy towards Hong Kong.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202005/28/P2020052800819.htm>

In response to a statement by the US Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong on May 26, comments by foreign politicians, and different views expressed by the legal sector on the national security law, the HKSAR Government reiterated that the proposed law only targets acts of secession, subverting state power, organising and carrying out terrorist activities, as well as activities interfering with HKSAR's internal affairs by foreign or external forces. All of the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong people and international investors will remain unchanged. Please visit the links below for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202005/27/P2020052700824.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202005/25/P2020052500828.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202005/24/P2020052400831.htm>

Latest directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation

Since the situation in Hong Kong has stabilised in terms of the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the recent weeks, the HKSAR Government will relax social distancing measures in accordance with the “suppress and lift” strategy.

The Secretary for Food and Health of the HKSAR Government issued the latest directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (the Regulation) (Cap. 599F) through notices published in the Gazette on May 26 to -

- 1) allow bathhouses, party rooms, clubs or nightclubs and karaoke establishments to resume operation;

- 2) allow karaoke activities carried on in catering premises, party rooms and club-houses provided that the applicable directions in respect of karaoke establishments are complied with;
- 3) allow any part(s) of the club-house being used or operated as a party room to resume operation provided that the applicable directions in respect of party rooms are complied with; and
- 4) maintain other measures regulating catering businesses and scheduled premises.

The latest directions came into effect on May 29, 2020 for a period of seven days.

The above measures have balanced the oft-competing factors of public health protection, economic impact and social acceptance. They would help maintain social distancing while allowing room for gradual resumption of social activities.

The Government will continue to closely monitor the epidemic situation and review the various measures in place from time to time with a view to suitably adjusting them taking into account all relevant factors.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202005/26/P2020052600775.htm>

In addition, air transit/transfer services at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) has been resumed gradually from June 1, 2020 until further notice. Only transit/transfer passengers who have been checked through at the origin port and take transit/transfer flights operated by the same airline group are accepted at HKIA. Passengers should confirm in advance that they are able to enter the final destination and check with airlines for details.

The no-entry restriction for non-Hong Kong residents from overseas remains unchanged.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.hongkongairport.com/en/important-notice/index.page?noticeid=1523424631510-3>

Besides, the HKSAR Government announced on May 21 and 22 respectively the mechanism for the following categories of persons to apply for exemption from compulsory quarantine arrangement:

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- 1) enterprises with an operating base relating to logistics, port and/or shipping business in the Mainland of China; and
- 2) directors of companies listed on the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong or directors of companies applying for listing on the SEHK who (i) are on duty travel from the Mainland to Hong Kong or (ii) return from duty travel from the Mainland to Hong Kong.

The Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) is in force until June 7, 2020. According to section 4(1)(b) of the Regulation, the Chief Secretary for Administration may designate any person or category of persons for exemption from the compulsory quarantine arrangement if he is satisfied that the person's or persons' travelling is necessary for purposes relating to, among others, business activities in the interest of Hong Kong's economic development.

The exempted persons will be subject to certain conditions. All exempted persons should note that currently travellers to the Mainland of China would still be subject to the 14-day compulsory quarantine requirement imposed by the Mainland authorities.

Click the following links for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202005/22/P2020052200694.htm>

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202005/21/P2020052100437.htm>

Seize the opportunity and register online for CuMask+™

The online registration period for the CuMask+™ will end on June 6. The Innovation and Technology Bureau of the HKSAR Government appealed to residents to seize the opportunity and register online (qmask.gov.hk).

As at 9am on May 31, the CuMask+™ online registration system has received over 1.37 million registrations, covering more than 3.75 million registrants in total. Over 3.23 million masks have been delivered successfully by the Hongkong Post.

The online registration for the CuMask+™ is quick and convenient. Both local residential and commercial addresses are accepted.

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202005/31/P2020053100242.htm>

Updates on COVID-19 Infection in Hong Kong

The HKSAR Government has implemented a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus and protect the health of the community while maintaining Hong Kong's position as an international city and aviation hub.

An information page "Latest Situation of Novel Coronavirus Infection in Hong Kong" has been added to the official website of HKETO. Information in the page includes the latest local situation, reported cases, health tips, travel advice etc.

You are invited to browse the page by clicking the banner on top of HKETO website or the following link:

<https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html>

Agreement Concerning Amendment to the CEPA Agreement on Trade in Services implemented on June 1

Under the framework of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), the Mainland and Hong Kong signed the Agreement Concerning Amendment to the CEPA Agreement on Trade in Services (Amendment Agreement) on November 21, 2019. The Amendment Agreement was implemented on June 1.

Since CEPA was signed in 2003, its content has been enriched and updated continuously. CEPA is now a modern and comprehensive free trade agreement, covering four major areas, namely trade in goods, trade in services, investment, and economic and technical co-operation.

The Amendment Agreement introduces new liberalisation measures in a number of important services sectors such as legal services, construction and related engineering services, financial services, testing and certification, television and motion pictures. The new measures make it easier for Hong Kong service suppliers to set up enterprises and develop business in the Mainland of China, allow more Hong Kong professionals to obtain qualifications to practise in the Mainland and more of Hong Kong's quality services to be provided to the Mainland market.

To offer assistance to the trade on a one-stop platform, the Trade and Industry Department has set up a dedicated website on CEPA which provides an information database on services organised by sectors. Hong Kong enterprises and professionals can refer to the database for the latest liberalisation measures and relevant Mainland rules and regulations of their respective areas, as well as frequently asked questions, so that they can utilise CEPA to develop their Mainland businesses.

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Dedicated website on CEPA:

www.tid.gov.hk/english/cepa/index.html

CEPA information database by service sector:

www.tid.gov.hk/english/cepa/tradeservices/trade_services_requirement.html

Click the following link for details.

<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202005/29/P2020052800294.htm>

International media partnership of the Information Services Department

Two articles with branded contents were published at international media platforms to promote Hong Kong. Please click the links of the articles for details.

Financial Times

[Global Engagement Proves Key to the Greater Bay Area](#)

CNBC

[Bringing a Pandemic to Heel](#)

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Brand Hong Kong Instagram page www.instagram.com/brandhongkong/

Brand Hong Kong Twitter page https://twitter.com/Brand_HK

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