

## LCQ20: Developing panda tourism

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Yung and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Miss Rosanna Law, in the Legislative Council today (June 11):

Question:

There are views that the official public debut of Hong Kong's first pair of locally born giant panda twins, elder sister Jia Jia and little brother De De, has sparked a new wave of "panda fever" in the city, which is currently home to six giant pandas, and the authorities should seize this opportunity to develop the panda tourism industrial chain, promote the growth of the panda tourism and related industries in Hong Kong. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) since Hong Kong became home to six giant pandas, whether the authorities have compiled statistics on the direct economic benefits they have brought to Ocean Park; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) whether the authorities have compiled statistics on the direct and indirect economic benefits brought to Hong Kong as a whole by the six giant pandas respectively (including the sales of panda merchandise and revenue growth across various trades and industries); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) whether the Government has further plans for the future to promote the healthy and sustainable development of the panda tourism and related industries in Hong Kong, e.g. Ocean Park's subsequent plans to optimize facilities and services, as well as budget arrangements, or plans to develop the panda tourism industrial chain in collaboration with various trades and industries; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The reply to the questions raised by the Hon Chan Yung is as follows:

The giant pandas An An and Ke Ke made their debut on December 8, 2024 at the Hong Kong Jockey Club Sichuan Treasures at Ocean Park, followed by the debut of the pigeon pair of giant panda twin cubs Jia Jia and De De on February 16, 2025 at the "Giant Panda Adventure" of the park. They have been well received by both locals and visitors, and Ocean Park's attendance has since then increased by around 19 per cent over the same period last year. Together with giant pandas Ying Ying and Le Le, the Hong Kong giant panda family has brought additional revenue to Ocean Park by way of admission tickets, merchandise, etc. The Ocean Park Corporation's overall financial performance for its Financial Year (FY) 2024-25, including the revenues on

admission, food and beverages as well as merchandise in the same FY, will be reported in its 2024-25 Annual Report.

The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB), jointly with the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) and Ocean Park, has collaborated with various parties in Hong Kong to organise a series of promotional activities themed "Come and Enjoy a Pandastic Hong Kong" since September 2024. The Hong Kong giant panda family has been serving as Hong Kong's tourism ambassadors to promote "tourism is everywhere" travel experience in Hong Kong, attracting visitors from around the world to Hong Kong and driving tourism development. As a result of CSTB's active promotion, different policy bureaux/departments, the tourism industry and related sectors have launched a number of promotional and marketing campaigns with the theme of giant pandas.

The above promotional events and initiatives have successfully sparked the craze for giant pandas across the city, creating favourable conditions for various trades and industries and encouraging them to explore and seize the business opportunities, as well as attracting more visitors to Hong Kong. A number of large shopping malls in various districts have displayed giant panda decorations and installations; the catering sector has introduced various giant panda design products; the retail sector has rolled out a variety of crossover products featuring giant pandas; and the MTR Corporation Ltd has collaborated with Ocean Park to offer tourism products bundling High Speed Rail and Airport Express tickets with Ocean Park admission tickets, etc.

Ocean Park has also actively partnered with various brands to launch giant panda-themed promotions and merchandise, such as giant panda design jewellery, accessories, stationery, household products, Chinese snacks, wood carving items, mobile accessories, red wine, "fai chuns", red envelopes, cars. Currently, the number of giant panda-themed merchandise under Ocean Park's catalogue has exceeded 500, which is fourfold of the number before the giant panda cubs were born. Many items of the merchandise are well received and the sales performance is satisfactory.

Moreover, Ocean Park has launched "A Treasured Moment with the Giant Panda Twins" programme since February 18, 2025 to allow visitors to meet the giant panda cubs in the morning before the park opens, with a daily quota of 40 participants. The programme has so far attracted more than 3 000 enrolments. At the same time, Ocean Park is organising various giant panda workshops, such as "Giant Panda Discovery", "Giant Panda Poo Paper Workshop" and "Wowotou Studio", which allow the participants to learn about the physical features and habits of the giant pandas through hands-on experience and observation, as well as acquire knowledge of the conservation of giant pandas, thereby bringing a unique giant panda experience to both locals and visitors. It is anticipated that the above activities and promotions will continue to drive up Ocean Park's attendance and revenues from ticketing and merchandise, etc.

On promoting the further development of panda tourism, the CSTB will continue to work with the HKTB, Ocean Park and various sectors of the community to better seize the opportunities presented by the Hong Kong giant

panda family and exercise creativity to launch more giant panda-related promotional activities and merchandise. The CSTB and the HKTB have also rendered full support for large-scale, giant panda-themed events hosted by other organisations. Those events organised in the past few months have garnered positive responses from locals and visitors. During the recent Dragon Boat Festival, the HKTB hosted the Dragon Boat Carnival featuring "Panda Friends@Ocean Park Hong Kong" festive photo spots. The Hong Kong giant panda family in festive costumes made their debut at the Avenue of Stars in Tsim Sha Tsui, allowing visitors to take photos with the giant panda family against the iconic backdrop of the Victoria Harbour. A pop-up store was also set up on site offering a great variety of giant panda-themed and festive merchandise. Both initiatives were well-received by the locals and visitors.

The CSTB will continue to encourage Ocean Park to capitalise on its advantage of being home to the largest number of giant pandas outside the Mainland by launching more Hong Kong-themed giant panda-related promotional activities, merchandise, cultural and creative products, comics and animation products, video games, tourism products, etc., including designs using the giant pandas intellectual property (IP) which were created according to the physical features of the six giant pandas residing in Hong Kong. In addition to the extensive use of the relevant IP in Ocean Park's social media contents and merchandise, Ocean Park will continue to make use of the relevant IP to launch giant panda-themed festive events, immersive experience activities, light shows, thematic performances, amusement facilities, etc.

The 15th of this month is Father's Day, which is also the first Father's Day for Le Le as a father and hence of special significance. Additionally, the 26th and the 28th of this month are the first birthdays of Ke Ke and An An respectively after their arrival in Hong Kong while August 15 is the one-year-old birthday of Jia Jia and De De. The CSTB together with the HKTB and Ocean Park will launch a new wave of giant panda promotions to keep creating favourable conditions and business opportunities for Ocean Park and different sectors.

As for the facilities for giant pandas, to provide the giant pandas with a habitat closely resembling the natural environment, Ocean Park completed the first phase of enhancement works in Hong Kong Jockey Club Sichuan Treasures before the arrival of An An and Ke Ke in September 2024, including addition of climbing frames, plants, etc., with sponsorships totalling about \$9 million solicited from a number of private organisations. Furthermore, a funding of \$121 million was received from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust in September 2024 to take forward upgrading works for the Hong Kong Jockey Club Sichuan Treasures and the "Giant Panda Adventure". The existing ecological facilities will be enhanced to provide the giant pandas with a high-quality, safe and age-appropriate living environment that closely resembles the natural habitat. The upgrading works is expected to commence in the fourth quarter of 2025 and to complete in the second quarter of 2027.