

Secretary for Home Affairs visits Hong Kong Sports Institute

The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, this morning (September 26) visited the Hong Kong Sports Institute (HKSI), where he inspected the operation of the HKSI after the arrangement for a closed-door training camp was lifted. The HKSI had implemented the arrangement of a closed-door training camp since July 29 because of the epidemic. It has been reopened gradually since September 18 to allow full-time athletes of Tier A sports to return for training.

Accompanied by the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Cherry Tse; the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services, Mr Vincent Liu; the Commissioner for Sports, Mr Yeung Tak-keung; the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the HKSI, Dr Lam Tai-fai; and the Chief Executive of the HKSI, Dr Trisha Leahy, Mr Tsui toured various facilities at the HKSI. These included the sports complex, fitness training centre, sports science centre and sports residence, where the visiting officials learned about the training arrangements with anti-epidemic measures adopted by the HKSI.

With safeguarding the health of athletes as the top concern, the HKSI has made flexible arrangements to adjust training programmes and competition plans to help athletes prepare intensively for international competitions, in particular qualifying for Olympic and Paralympic events to be held in Tokyo next year, and achieving outstanding results. Mr Tsui exchanged views with athletes and coaches, encouraging them to dedicate themselves to training while paying attention to anti-epidemic measures and their health.

"The Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics as well as other world championships are postponed due to the epidemic. Elite athletes must not only adapt to new competition schedules and arrangements, but also make unrelenting efforts in keeping in the best shape for their sport. We understand the enormous challenges and pressure faced by them. We will stand with Hong Kong athletes and provide more support to the HKSI. We believe that elite athletes, much admired by the public, shall continue to pursue excellence," said Mr Tsui.

The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) has been funding the operation of the HKSI through the Elite Athletes Development Fund to provide elite sports training and comprehensive support services to local athletes. There are currently 1 300 athletes in the HKSI, with 33 elite sports and eight elite disability sports. The Government this year provided a funding of more than \$700 million through the Elite Athletes Development Fund to the HKSI. Following an injection of \$250 million into the Hong Kong Athletes Fund approved by the Legislative Council Finance Committee in July this year, the HAB has implemented enhanced measures to support the athletes' dual career development and retirement support, including more scholarships and retirement cash incentives. The enhanced measures have benefited a first batch of 35 athletes.

On the same day, Mr Tsui and the other officials also visited the site for the HKSI's new facilities building within the campus and were briefed by the management on the construction plan. The new building will provide world-class training venues as well as various sports science and sports medicine facilities. The HKSI will commence pre-construction works soon and the construction of the building is expected to be completed in 2025.