

LCQ1: Dangerous goods stolen from university campuses and cases of improvised explosive devices

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hak-kan and a reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, in the Legislative Council today (January 15):

Question:

In recent months, huge quantities of dangerous chemicals have been stolen from the laboratories of three universities; improvised explosive devices and petrol bombs have been seized by the Police on a number of occasions; a secondary school laboratory assistant and two other persons have been arrested on the spot for suspected testing of remote-controlled bombs; a secondary school student has been prosecuted for suspected carrying of the explosive TATP to school; and rumours about plots to vandalise electricity supply facilities and to put poison into reservoirs have been circulated on the Internet. Regarding the law and order in Hong Kong, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the respective quantities of the various types of chemicals stolen from the aforesaid laboratories and, among them, the respective quantities of those recovered and those still missing; the respective numbers of persons arrested and prosecuted for stealing such chemicals; the new measures put in place to ensure that the laboratories of universities and secondary schools are fitted with adequate anti-theft measures, and whether it will take measures to prevent persons with relevant criminal records from being employed to work in laboratories; if so, of the details;

(2) whether it stepped up, in the past six months, publicity efforts targeted operators of hardware stores to remind them not to sell dangerous chemicals to suspicious persons; if so, of the details; and

(3) of the new measures put in place to raise public vigilance against improvised explosive devices; whether it will take targeted measures to guard against attacks on electricity supply and water supply facilities?

Reply:

President,

In recent months, some lawbreakers stole chemicals for teaching and research purposes from university campuses. There were also a number of cases in which improvised explosive devices and petrol bombs were seized. Some cases even involved secondary school laboratory staff and students. In

addition, there were rumours on the Internet of people plotting to destroy electricity supply facilities and put poison into reservoirs. The Government attaches importance to the safety of the public. To ensure that departments are adequately prepared to respond swiftly and effectively, the Government has formulated various preventive and response measures.

Having consulted the relevant bureaux and departments, a consolidated reply to various parts of Hon Chan Hak-kan's question is provided as follows:

(1) In November last year, the Police received reports that dangerous goods including concentrated nitric acid, concentrated sulphuric acid, methanol, boric acid, petroleum ether and acetone, which are toxic, corrosive or flammable, had been stolen from The City University of Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Given that the universities concerned still need time to sort out and count the stolen chemicals and those found on campus, the exact quantities cannot be provided for the time being. In the meantime, the Police are still investigating the cases concerned, including the whereabouts of the missing items, and so far no one has been arrested. For the Fire Services Department (FSD), it has proactively liaised with the tertiary institutions to review the storage of dangerous goods on campus, and reminded them to step up security and report to the Police as soon as possible if any dangerous goods or chemicals are found missing.

In response to the earlier theft incidents, the universities have strengthened the security arrangements for the storage of dangerous goods on campus. At the same time, taking into account their actual requirements, the universities have gradually taken necessary measures such as increasing the number of security guards and patrols, and implementing access control at individual entrances/exits, so as to improve the overall security level of the campuses and ensure the safety of students and staff.

As regards secondary schools, all schools are required to formulate safety management measures for science laboratories in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidelines on laboratory safety. Each school is required to establish a safety management system to formulate, handle and monitor measures and issues related to the safety level of its laboratories. Furthermore, to enhance the safety level of school laboratories, the Education Bureau conducts professional training programmes for teachers and laboratory technicians on a regular basis, as well as school inspections and visits to understand schools' needs and provide appropriate advice on laboratory safety.

The recruitment of staff, whether for universities or for secondary schools, is part of school management. Schools are responsible for employing suitable staff for performing the required tasks. As for the employment of laboratory staff, schools are responsible for assessing whether the staff employed are suitable. At present, there is no legislation or rule restricting the employment of persons with criminal records as laboratory staff. Determining whether a person is suitable for employment falls within the management and autonomy of schools, which will consider and make

decisions in a responsible manner.

(2) According to the Dangerous Goods Ordinance (Cap 295), it is an offence for a person to store, convey or use dangerous goods exceeding the exempt quantity without a valid licence. FSD has been very concerned that recently some lawbreakers recklessly stole dangerous goods and put them to improper use. In light of this, FSD has stepped up inspection and follow-up actions. From June to December last year, FSD proactively conducted over 660 related inspections. Apart from hardware stores, these inspections also covered various tertiary institutions, vehicle repair workshops and blackspots for excessive storage of dangerous goods. A total of 10 cases of unlicensed storage of Category 5 dangerous goods (i.e. flammable liquids) were detected, and FSD is following up on the relevant prosecution work. During inspections, fire personnel also reminded business operators and members of the public not to store excessive dangerous goods. If businesses find any person purchasing dangerous goods for illegal purposes, they should report to the Police for further investigation as soon as possible. FSD will continue to combat these illegal acts using an intelligence-led approach, and proactively conduct surprise inspections from time to time.

(3) Information on methods for making dangerous goods is circulated on the Internet. FSD has stated on many occasions openly that all acts of misusing dangerous goods during protests must stop so as not to endanger the lives and properties of the public. The Police have also repeatedly reminded the public that manufacturing or conspiring to manufacture explosives is a very serious offence, contravening section 54 of the Crimes Ordinance (Cap 200). The maximum penalty for which is 20 years' imprisonment upon conviction. If members of the public spot any dangerous goods, they should seek assistance from the Police as soon as possible, maintain an appropriate distance from such goods and avoid getting close to or touching them to prevent injury.

The Police expeditiously disseminates relevant information on cases involving improvised explosive devices to the public. In the past few months, the Hong Kong Police Force and FSD have been urging the public to enhance their vigilance through channels such as press conferences, press releases and social media (e.g. Facebook and Instagram). For example, in July last year, the Police found over one kilogram of self-produced powerful explosive of TATP in an industrial unit in Tsuen Wan, in December last year in the vicinity of Wah Yan College in Wan Chai, the Police found two radio-controlled improvised explosive devices weighing 10 kilograms in total, and the Police just arrested some persons in connection with a case of improvised explosive devices in Mong Kok and Sheung Shui yesterday. The Police proactively briefed the media on the details of the cases and displayed the exhibits as soon as possible. The Police also held press conferences and explained the hazards and destructive power of the explosives on the Force's social media. In addition, the Police organise sharing sessions with relevant organisations (such as MTR) to raise the awareness of the staff concerned in this respect. I will also use the appropriate occasions at the Legislative Council, such as the Panel on Security and question sessions just as today etc. to remind members of the public of the risks regarding improvised explosives devices, so that they will remain vigilant.

Regarding the security of critical infrastructure, the Police and relevant Government departments have all along been maintaining close liaison with the operators concerned to co-ordinate security arrangements and provide support in a timely manner. The Police have proactively liaised with operators to conduct immediate assessments of high-risk facilities and assist them in formulating security strategies to enhance the security arrangements and defence capabilities. In the past few months, the Police have conducted on-site security walkthroughs for over 25 critical electricity supply and waterworks infrastructure facilities, providing security recommendations and reviewing the situation of implementing security measures of various facilities. In this regard, the two power companies have enhanced the security measures for their power supply facilities based on risk assessments. The Water Supplies Department (WSD) also strengthens the security measures as required. Moreover, WSD regularly monitors the quality of the water from impounding reservoirs, and arranges staff to patrol impounding reservoirs to ensure there is no anomaly in the ecological environment. Raw water from impounding reservoirs is being treated in water treatment works, which have in place effective methods to monitor the quality of raw water received and to ensure the safety of drinking water.

Thank you, President.

[LCQ15: Revitalisation scheme for industrial buildings](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Jimmy Ng and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Development, Mr Liu Chun-san, in the Legislative Council today (January 15):

Question:

Regarding the revitalisation scheme (the scheme) for industrial buildings (IBs), the reactivation of which was announced by the Government in the Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of the following types of applications received by the Government so far: (i) wholesale conversion of IBs, (ii) redevelopment of IBs, (iii) provision of transitional housing in converted IBs, and (iv) broadening the permissible uses of buffer floors; among the applications under each of these types, the respective current numbers of those approved, rejected as well as undergoing the vetting and approval process; the average time taken for vetting and approval of each type of such applications;

(2) given that one of the conditions for the Lands Department to approve, at nil waiver fee, special waiver applications lodged by IB owners for the change of use upon wholesale conversion of eligible IBs is that the owner(s) must designate 10 per cent of the converted gross floor area (GFA) of the IB concerned for specific uses decided by the Government, of the aggregate GFA for each type of such specific uses involved in such applications approved so far;

(3) given that the maximum permissible non-domestic plot ratio may be relaxed for the redevelopment of eligible IBs by the owners of the IBs concerned provided that they pay the land premium in full, whether the Government will consider allowing the owners to have the option, in lieu of payment of land premium, of designating a specific percentage of the GFA of the redeveloped IBs for the specific uses decided by the Government; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) of the latest progress of the Development Bureau's exploration with the Fire Services Department on the feasibility of further widening the scope of uses permissible in a buffer floor under the scheme (including the new permissible uses proposed); and

(5) given that the Government has relaxed the policy on waiver applications for using IB units for five types of non-industrial uses (i.e. art studio, audio-visual recording office, design and media production office, office for specified creative industries, as well as research, design and development centre), of the respective numbers of IB units currently used for these five types of uses, as well as the total number of IBs involved?

Reply:

President,

The reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Jimmy Ng is as follows:

(1) Regarding wholesale conversion of industrial buildings (IBs), private owners may submit a valid application to the Lands Department (LandsD) on or before March 31, 2022 for a special waiver with exemption of waiver fee to implement wholesale conversion of existing IBs aged 15 years or above in "Commercial", "Other Specified Uses" annotated "Business" and "Industrial" zones for uses permitted under the relevant Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs), with an additional condition that 10 per cent of the converted floor space should be designated for specific uses prescribed by the Government. Where a proposed use applied for requires planning permission from the Town Planning Board (TPB), it must be obtained before the waiver application is submitted to the LandsD. As at December 31, 2019, the LandsD had received and was processing two applications in relation to wholesale conversion. Separately, as at January 3, 2020, the TPB had received four other applications for planning permission of proposed uses upon wholesale conversion, among which one was approved so that the owner concerned may submit an application for a special waiver to the LandsD subsequently.

Regarding redevelopment of IBs, private owners may apply to the TPB for relaxation of the maximum permissible non-domestic plot ratio by up to 20 per cent within three years starting from October 10, 2018. The modified lease should be executed with full land premium charged under the prevailing mechanism within three years after the planning approval. As at January 3, 2020, of the 37 applications received by the TPB (including three withdrawn), 12 applications were approved, while the remaining ones were being processed. In accordance with the Town Planning Ordinance, applications for planning permission are to be considered by the TPB within two months after receipt. In relation to the applications with planning permission obtained, four owners have applied to LandsD for lease modification which shall be subject to premium payment. Relevant applications are being processed.

Regarding transitional housing, the Task Force on Transitional Housing under the Transport and Housing Bureau has all along been in liaison with stakeholders, including community organisations and their hired professionals, professional institutes, charitable organisations, commercial sector, owners interested in converting IBs into transitional housing, and in consultation and collaboration with relevant Government departments, on preliminary architectural designs for potential projects and technical issues such as environmental and traffic assessment, fire safety, and infrastructure. If any agreement on conversion of an existing IB for provision of transitional housing is reached, the organisation concerned will announce the details as appropriate. So far, the LandsD has yet to receive any application for a waiver for provision of transitional housing in wholesale-converted IBs.

As for broadening the permissible uses of buffer floors, the LandsD has yet to receive any application so far.

(2) In making an application for wholesale conversion of an IB, an owner may propose preliminary parameters about the portion for prescribed uses designated by the Government (including the gross floor area, location, layout, fitting/finishes, and any other conversion works), as well as the specified uses of that portion. The specified uses proposed may include those in relation to the arts and cultural sectors, creative industries, innovation and technology industries, social service, sports and recreational facilities, or others which will bring wider community benefits. The Government will evaluate the owner's proposal, and determine the specific parameters of the floor area of the designated portion and the specified uses when processing individual applications. As the LandsD is processing two applications for wholesale conversion received, no breakdown of the specified uses and the floor area involved is available at this stage.

(3) As mentioned in (1) above, since the TPB started to accept applications for relaxation of the maximum permissible non-domestic plot ratio by up to 20 per cent for redevelopment of pre-1987 IBs on October 10, 2018, it has already received more than 30 applications in about a year or so and approved 12 of them. Compared with the previous round of the revitalisation scheme with 14 applications for redevelopment approved during the six-year period

from 2010 to 2016, the market response to the current measure on redevelopment is positive. The Government will continue to monitor the market response and the effectiveness of this measure.

(4) If there is a buffer floor (normally used as car park, electrical and mechanical plant room, or empty floor) in an IB which completely separates the lower floors from the upper portion with industrial uses, the Government would accept proposals for converting the premises on the lowest three floors into other non-industrial uses, including shops and services, restaurants, or arts and cultural facilities, subject to the waiver fees payable and compliance with planning and other relevant requirements.

The Government has completed examining the feasibility to broaden the use of buffer floors in IB. In March 2019, the LandsD announced that the permitted uses of buffer floors be extended to cover "telecommunications exchange centres" and "computer/data processing centres". The Fire Services Department also announced the fire safety requirements applicable to these permitted uses in the same month.

(5) To address the demand for safe, lawful and affordable space of the arts and cultural sectors, creative industries, and innovation and technology sectors, the Government has relaxed the waiver application policy, during the five-year period between February 1, 2019 and January 31, 2024 (initially for five years), to permit five uses in individual units within existing IBs, namely (i) "Art Studio"; (ii) "Office (Audio-visual Recording Studio)"; (iii) "Office (Design and Media Production)"; (iv) "Office" (used by "specified creative industries" only); and (v) "Research, Design and Development Centre". The prerequisite is that such uses are permitted under the land use zoning of the site on the relevant OZP as "Column 1" (i.e. always permitted) uses. In addition, for the sake of public safety, the relaxation does not cover any premises involving direct provision of services or goods. Details of the arrangements are available at the Development Bureau's website (www.devb.gov.hk/en/issues_in_focus/index.html). In addition, we have approached various organisations and stakeholders of the relevant sectors to promote this new measure.

While the five permitted uses are not in line with the lease restrictions for "industrial and/or godown purposes", the LandsD will not take any enforcement action in respect of the breach of the lease restrictions so long as they are permitted under the land use zoning of the site on the relevant OZP as "Column 1" (i.e. always permitted) uses. As the LandsD will not require the owners concerned to apply for a temporary waiver and pay any fee, the Government does not have statistics on various uses in existing IBs covered by this relaxation policy.

The Planning Department commenced in late 2019 the Area Assessments on Industrial Land in the Territories, and is collecting information on the business nature and existing uses of IB units through field surveys and questionnaires. Upon completion of the above Assessments, the results may facilitate an analysis of actual uses in the existing industrial floor area.

Speedpost service to Wuhan and nearby areas returns to normal

Hongkong Post announced today (January 15) that Speedpost service to Wuhan and nearby areas (postcodes 43XXXX to 44XXXX) has returned to normal.

LCQ6: Retail prices of auto-fuels

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Kin-por and a reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (January 15):

Question:

It has been reported that while international crude oil prices have dropped by nearly half from the peak in 2014, local petrol pump prices have gone up instead of going down over the same period and even hit record high time and again. A website which monitors global oil prices has pointed out that, taking the end of last year as an example, the petrol pump prices in Hong Kong was the highest in the world and even far higher than the relevant prices in neighbouring places (e.g. Singapore, South Korea and Japan). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has studied why the local petrol pump prices did not go down in line with the trend of international crude oil prices; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) given that despite the Government's policy to let the prices of auto-fuel products be determined by the market and to let consumers make their own choices through improving price transparency, some members of the public have queried the effectiveness of such policy, whether the Government will consider adopting measures to stabilise petrol pump prices; and

(3) as Hong Kong's economy has slid into a recession, whether it has studied the impacts of the persistently high petrol pump prices on people's livelihood, the economy and inflation rate, and how it prevents the persistently high petrol pump prices from exacerbating public grievances?

Reply:

President,

The Environment Bureau's consolidated reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

In a free market economy, retail prices of auto-fuels in Hong Kong are all along determined by oil companies having regard to commercial principles and their operating costs. However, the Government appreciates the impact of auto-fuel prices on the public, and has been monitoring the changes in local retail prices of auto-fuels and comparing them with the trend movements of international oil prices (benchmarked against the Singapore free-on-board prices, i.e. Means of Platts Singapore (MOPS), for unleaded petrol and motor vehicle diesel). We also urge oil companies to adjust prices promptly when international oil prices drop, in order to lessen the burden on the public.

As Hong Kong has no oil refinery, all auto-fuels sold locally are imported refined oil products instead of crude oil. Crude oil and refined oil, such as unleaded petrol and motor vehicle diesel are different products. Therefore, changes in international crude oil price and changes in prices of unleaded petrol and motor vehicle diesel are not necessarily the same. In analysing the adjustments of local auto-fuel prices, it is more appropriate to make reference to the trend movements of MOPS and the import prices oil companies pay. According to our observation, the trend movements of local retail prices of auto-fuels and those of MOPS are generally in line over the past year, although the timing and magnitude of changes may not be exactly the same due to the following factors:

(a) MOPS prices fluctuate day to day, but oil companies do not adjust their auto-fuel prices daily;

(b) import price of refined oil is only one of the costs making up the local retail price of auto-fuels. Retail price also includes tax (\$6.06 per litre for unleaded petrol and tax free for diesel) and other operating costs, such as land costs, government rent, staff costs, transportation, advertising, operation of oil terminal, etc. When oil companies adjust their prices, they would take into account not only the import prices of oil products, but also changes in these operating costs; and

(c) oil companies generally provide various kinds of discounts and concessions to customers. According to our understanding, the walk-in discount provided by some oil companies has increased from \$0.9 per litre in 2018 to \$1.5 to \$2.1 per litre at present; the membership card discount has increased from \$2.2 per litre to \$2.4 per litre, and the number of days on which the special discount is offered has also increased from one day a week to two to four days a week. Therefore, the actual price paid by customers will be lower than the pump prices listed at petrol filling stations.

The retail prices of auto-fuels in each region or country are determined by various factors, and therefore it is not suitable to make direct comparison. These factors include:

- (1) whether crude oil is available and refined locally or whether auto-fuel products are imported from overseas;
- (2) the market size and structure;

- (3) the quality of the products;
- (4) the mode of operation, marketing strategy and operating costs of individual oil companies; and
- (5) whether the local government has provided subsidies and set safety requirements for transportation and fuel products having regard to environmental protection and other government policies, etc.

In a free market economy, the Government would refrain from interfering with the auto-fuel industry or setting their price level as far as possible. The role of the Government is to make its best effort to ensure a stable fuel supply, maintain an open market and remove barriers to market entry, and at the same time improve the transparency of the prices of auto-fuel products so that consumers can make choices, thereby promoting competition.

The Government certainly understands the impact of rising auto-fuel prices on the expenses of the public and the transport trades. To further alleviate the public's burden of travelling expenses, the Government has enhanced the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme from January 1 this year. To assist the transport and logistics trades in coping with the operating pressure brought by the current economic environment, the Financial Secretary also announced on October 22 last year the introduction of a six-month fuel subsidy or one-off subsidy for the transport and logistics trades. On January 17, the Government will consult the Panel on Transport of the Legislative Council on the details.

Thank you, President.

LCQ12: Providing support for owners of three-nil buildings

Following is a question by Dr Hon Priscilla Leung and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Lau Kong-wah, in the Legislative Council today (January 15):

Question:

It is learnt that currently quite a number of buildings which do not have owners' corporations (OCs) or any form of residents' organizations, or have not engaged property management companies (PMCs) (commonly known as "three-nil buildings") are plagued by poor building management, which has given rise to problems in respect of hygiene, security, fire safety, building maintenance, etc., thus making it difficult for the residents concerned to live in peace. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the current number of three-nil buildings in the territory, with a breakdown by District Council (DC) district;

(2) of the respective numbers of OCs formed and re-activated with the assistance provided by the Building Management Professional Advisory Service Scheme (BMPASS) since its implementation by the Home Affairs Department (HAD) in 2011, with a breakdown by DC district;

(3) whether HAD reviewed, in the past six months, the effectiveness of the implementation of (i) BMPASS and (ii) the Resident Liaison Ambassador Scheme; if so, of the outcome of the review; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) whether it will consider introducing a pilot scheme on joint building management to engage PMCs to (i) provide property management services for multiple adjoining three-nil buildings and (ii) assist the owners of such buildings in forming or re-activating OCs, within a specified timeframe; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) whether it will, by making reference to the Operation Building Bright and the Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme, provide financial assistance to the owners of three-nil buildings to help them solve problems in respect of hygiene, security, etc., arising from poor building management?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the five parts of the question raised by Dr Hon Leung is as follows:

(1) "Three-nil" buildings refer to buildings which do not have owners' corporations (OCs) or any form of residents' organisations, or do not engage property management companies (PMCs). As at October 2019, there were around 5 300 "three-nil" buildings in Hong Kong. The number of "three-nil" buildings by District Council (DC) district is at Annex 1.

(2)-(3) Effective building management could be difficult for "three-nil" buildings, as owners and residents lack the platform to discuss and handle issues of common concern. For "three-nil" buildings which are relatively aged, the lack of proper management and maintenance may lead to building dilapidation, which may also have implications on building and public safety.

In view of this, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) launched the Building Management Professional Advisory Service Scheme (BMPASS) and the Resident Liaison Ambassadors Scheme (RLA Scheme) in November 2011 to provide support services for "three-nil" buildings.

The BMPASS is now in its third phase (from April 2017 to March 2020). Under the BMPASS, PMCs are commissioned by HAD to provide owners of eligible aged buildings (i.e. residential or composite building aged 30 years or above; the annual average rateable value of the residential units therein does not exceed the specified limits; and the common parts of the building are in disrepair or dilapidated condition requiring maintenance or repair),

in particular those in "three-nil" buildings, with a range of free professional advisory and follow-up services on building management. The scope of services include facilitating the formation or re-activation of OCs, assisting in the recruitment of Resident Liaison Ambassadors (RLAs), attending OC meetings to provide professional advice and secretarial support, assisting OCs in applying for various subsidy schemes and loans for maintenance works, assisting OCs in the procurement of third party risks insurance, providing training on building management, etc. Through the above services, the PMCs help owners overcome the hurdles of initial start-up and co-ordination, so that owners can be progressively trained to take up the management responsibilities.

The RLA Scheme seeks to establish a resident liaison network for promoting the message of effective building management by recruiting owners or tenants who live in "three-nil" buildings of 30 years or above as RLAs. RLAs will assist in engaging residents to discuss and handle daily building management matters (such as cleanliness, security, fire safety, etc. of the building) and encouraging residents to share their experience and knowledge in building management. RLAs will also assist government departments in contacting residents to disseminate messages on building management-related matters.

Since the launch of the BMPASS, the PMCs has reached out to about 3 800 buildings (involving 58 000 units) and successfully made around 18 000 household visits, encompassing all eligible "three-nil" buildings under the scheme. The key results of the BMPASS are summarised as follows:

	As at October 2019
Number of OCs formed/re-activated	530
Number of buildings with assistance provided to apply for maintenance loan/subsidy	341
Number of buildings with assistance provided to appoint consultants/contractors for maintenance works	207
Number of buildings with assistance provided to procure third party risks insurance	297
Number of RLAs recruited	About 2 700

The numbers of OCs formed/re-activated by DC district is at Annex 2.

As for the RLA Scheme, since its inception, over 4 000 RLAs have been recruited, and 474 OCs were formed with RLAs' involvement as at October 2019.

With the continuing efforts in promoting better building management and the support measures mentioned above, the number of "three-nil" buildings has decreased gradually over the years, from about 6 600 in mid-2011 to about 5

300 in October 2019. Noting that the BMPASS has been well-received by the owners of the target buildings and relevant members of the community, who consider that the scheme has assisted owners of aged buildings in improving building management, living environment and building safety, as stated in the 2019 Policy Address Supplement, we will regularise the BMPASS. We will also continue to implement the RLA Scheme, so as to provide continuing support to owners of "three-nil" buildings and aged buildings.

(4) The daily management of a building encompasses different aspects, including common ones such as environmental hygiene, building security, maintenance of common facilities, etc. The arrangements and costs involved should be discussed among the building's owners and handled in accordance with provisions of the Deed of Mutual Covenant (DMC). If decisions are instead made by PMCs engaged by the Government, it would go against the principle that private owners should be responsible for managing and maintaining their own buildings, and may also lead to unnecessary disputes or even lawsuits.

Furthermore, apart from specifying the common parts of a building, the parts for exclusive use of individual owners and the undivided shares of each flat, the DMC of a building also sets out the detailed requirements and guidelines on various building management matters. The DMC of a building is a private contract drawn up according to the specific circumstances of that building. Since different buildings have their own DMCs, the obligations and rights of owners as set out in those DMCs also differ.

Hence, any scheme on "joint building management" must be discussed and unanimously agreed among all owners of the relevant buildings before implementation. Considering the actual circumstances of "three-nil" buildings, it may not be practicable to manage them by way of "joint building management" in the absence of any residents' organisations to rationalise the handling of management issues arising from the provisions of the DMCs of different buildings. Even if the PMCs engaged by the Government would provide centralised property management services for adjoining "three-nil" buildings, it would remain incapable of resolving the fundamental issue of the need for discussion and agreement among owners of the relevant buildings due to the variation in owners' obligations and rights across the different DMCs.

As for assistance to owners in forming or re-activating OCs, as mentioned above, the PMCs under the BMPASS have been providing assistance through household visits, recruitment of RLAs, etc. We will continue to assist owners of "three-nil" buildings in forming OCs through the BMPASS and the RLA Scheme.

(5) In terms of financial support, according to the Development Bureau, the Operation Building Bright 2.0 provides financial and technical support to owner-occupiers of eligible buildings, so as to assist them in carrying out the inspection and repair works prescribed under the Mandatory Building Inspection Scheme. The Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme promotes lift modernisation in the community through the provision of financial incentive with appropriate professional support to owners of eligible buildings. The

primary objective of the above schemes is to encourage owners to conduct the relevant building maintenance works and lift modernisation through subsidy schemes, thereby safeguarding public safety. The schemes are applicable to eligible buildings and are not targeted at "three-nil" buildings.

As for "three-nil" buildings, the PMCs commissioned under the BMPASS have been assisting OCs in applying for various subsidy schemes and loans for maintenance works, including the Operation Building Bright 2.0 and the Lift Modernisation Subsidy Scheme, with a view to encouraging "three-nil" buildings to form OCs.

In addition, HAD has been providing subsidies through the Community Care Fund-Subsidy for Owners' Corporations of Old Buildings to relieve the burden relating to the daily operating expenses of the OCs of aged buildings, and to help such OCs comply with the relevant legislative requirements. This also serves to encourage owners of "three-nil" buildings to form OCs. Depending on the conditions and needs of "three-nil" buildings, some District Offices also provide assistance such as one-off cleaning service through the District-led Actions Scheme, with a view to demonstrating the effectiveness of good building management and incentivising residents' participation in building management.