

## [Hong Kong Observatory Almanac 2020 to go on sale](#)

The Hong Kong Observatory Almanac 2020 will go on sale tomorrow (December 19).

The Almanac is bilingual and tabulated by month. It contains information including the traditional Chinese calendar, solar terms and moon phases, as well as the times of daily sunrise, sun transit, sunset, moonrise, moon transit, moonset and high and low tides, with the times of meridian passage and the rising and setting of the sun and planets graphically illustrated. The Almanac also includes a detailed Sun Path Diagram and star maps of the four quarters of the year. In addition, information on the duration of twilight, determination of apparent solar time, details of solar and lunar eclipses and observation of meteor showers and planetary phenomena as well as background information on calendars and the 24 solar terms are included.

At \$44 a copy, the Hong Kong Observatory Almanac 2020 is available for sale at the Hong Kong Observatory Resource Centre and the Publications Sales Unit of the Information Services Department. The public can also purchase the Almanac through the online Government Bookstore at [www.bookstore.gov.hk](http://www.bookstore.gov.hk). A handy Hong Kong Observatory Calendar Card is included with this issue.

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## [LCQ21: Provision of self-financing post-secondary education](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (December 18):

Question:

In its review report submitted to the Education Bureau last year, the Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education re-affirms the Government policy of supporting the parallel development of the publicly funded and self-financing post-secondary education sectors, which is conducive to the diversified development of higher education in Hong Kong. However, some members of the self-financing post-secondary education sector have pointed out that currently the Government has merely launched the "Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors" (SSSDP) and the "Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies in Hong Kong", which are insufficient to promote the development of self-financing

institutions. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information about SSSDP:

(i) the number of applications approved and the total amount of subsidy granted, as well as the average, highest and lowest amounts of subsidy granted in respect of the approved applications, in each of the past three academic years;

(ii) whether it has reviewed the effectiveness of SSSDP; if so, of the criteria adopted for the review; if not, whether it will conduct such a review; and

(iii) whether it knows the post-graduation employment situation of the students who received subsidies; if so, of the details; if not, whether it will conduct a relevant survey;

(2) as a think tank has suggested that the percentage for non-standard entry to programmes of self-financing post-secondary institutions (i.e. admission of students whose results in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination do not meet the basic entrance requirements of undergraduate programmes), which is currently set at 5 per cent, be relaxed, whether the Government will consider the suggestion; if so, of the details and implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it will allocate additional resources to self-financing post-secondary institutions to enable them to strengthen the cooperation with the relevant sectors, thereby ensuring that the programmes that they offer are responsive to market needs; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) as the Government will launch an Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education to provide financial support for self-financing post-secondary institutions which are interested in offering programmes that meet market needs but require high start-up costs, of the specific content of the Scheme (including the expenditure involved, the implementation timetable and the criteria for vetting and approval of the applications)?

Reply:

President,

The Government has been supporting the sustainable and healthy development of the self-financing post-secondary sector and has introduced various measures to support the self-financing post-secondary institutions and their students. Apart from the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors (SSSDP) implemented in the 2015/16 academic year, the Government has introduced a few new initiatives specifically benefitting the self-financing post-secondary sector, including the Non-means-tested Subsidy Scheme for Self-financing Undergraduate Studies in Hong Kong, which was implemented in the 2017/18 academic year, and the Seventh Round of the Matching Grant Scheme, which was applicable to the self-financing degree-awarding institutions only. At the same time, we have been channelling

additional resources to the self-financing post-secondary institutions and their students through various existing measures to assist in the development of new campuses and the promotion of teaching and learning, etc. The major measures supporting the self-financing post-secondary institutions and their students are set out at the Annex.

The Government has accepted in full the review report published by the Task Force on Review of Self-financing Post-secondary Education (the Task Force) in December 2018, and will continue to promote the parallel development of the publicly-funded sector and the quality self-financing post-secondary sector in higher education, so as to better meet the community's needs. The Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education (CSPE) was revamped in November 2019 to enhance its role in facilitating the regulation, support, and co-ordination of the self-financing post-secondary education sector. The CSPE has commenced work on amending the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320). It will work with the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) to explore how to enhance the academic accreditation standards and practices, with a view to raising the standards of self-financing post-secondary education. Furthermore, the Government will introduce an Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education to provide financial support for self-financing institutions which are interested in offering designated sub-degree or undergraduate programmes that meet market needs but require high start-up costs, so as to help such programmes take off and to alleviate the financial burden of students in terms of tuition. The Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Education will be consulted on the details of the scheme.

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan is as follows:

(1) The SSSDP has been implemented as a pilot scheme since the 2015/16 academic year. It aims to increase the supply of subsidised undergraduate places by leveraging the supply of the self-financing post-secondary education sector, and to nurture talent in support of specific industries with keen demand for human resources. Given the positive response from various stakeholders to the SSSDP, the Government has regularised it since the 2018/19 academic year and increased the number of subsidised places from about 1 000 per cohort to about 3 000 per cohort. The designated programmes under the SSSDP fall into ten disciplines, including health care, architecture and engineering, testing and certification, creative industries, logistics, tourism and hospitality, computer science, financial technology, insurance, and sports and recreation. Moreover, starting from the 2019/20 academic year, the Government has further expanded the coverage of the SSSDP to subsidise about 2 000 students per cohort enrolling in the designated sub-degree programmes in the selected disciplines.

The numbers of programmes, the numbers of subsidised places, the numbers of actual intakes, the subsidy amounts, and the total amounts of subsidies, etc of the designated undergraduate programmes under the SSSDP in the past three years are as follows:

Admission Year	No. of Undergraduate Programmes	No. of subsidised places	No. of actual intakes	Total amount of subsidies (\$ million)
2016/17	15	1 030	991	122.5
2017/18	17	1 062	974	185.9
2018/19	37	2 776	1 817 (Note)	469.7

Note: Starting from the 2017/18 academic year, the Government has been providing non-means-tested subsidies for students pursuing self-financing undergraduate programmes other than those designated undergraduate programmes under the SSSDP. In addition, the number of subsidised places under the SSSDP was significantly increased in the 2018/19 academic year. Although the number of students attracted to pursue programmes under the SSSDP almost doubled, the enrolment rate was affected because of competition from other degree programmes.

In the 2018/19 academic year, students on designated laboratory-based undergraduate programmes were each provided with an annual subsidy of an amount up to \$71,700; and those on other designated undergraduate programmes were each provided with an annual subsidy of an amount up to \$41,000.

The Education Bureau (EDB) has been reviewing the implementation of the SSSDP, including the supply of places and admissions, etc, in the light of Hong Kong's social and economic development needs as well as the views of stakeholders (including students, institutions, and industries). In consultation with the relevant bureaux/departments, we will adjust the arrangements, including the selected disciplines of the SSSDP, the relevant subsidised programmes, and the number of subsidised places. The first cohort of students who received a subsidy to pursue the designated undergraduate programmes graduated in 2019. The participating institutions will submit the employment figures of these graduates in the second quarter of 2020. The statistics will help us understand the situation of graduates joining the relevant industries.

(2) At present, when the HKCAAVQ conducts programme accreditation exercises for the bachelor's degree programmes offered by the non-self-accrediting institutions, it normally allows the institutions to give special consideration to admitting applicants not complying with the minimum entrance requirements or other acceptable equivalent qualifications, subject to an admission ceiling of 5 per cent of the total student intake of the programmes. From the quality assurance perspective, imposing restrictions on the admission of students not complying with the minimum entrance requirements can ensure that there is minimal variation in the learning abilities among students, so as not to affect the quality of teaching and learning. This can also avoid, as far as possible, admitting students who fail to complete their studies because of their learning abilities, which will be a waste of their family's and society's resources, and their own precious time.

The EDB has set up the Sub-committee on Quality Assurance under the revamped CSPE to explore how to enhance the quality of the self-financing post-secondary sector, including the enhancement of the accreditation standards and practices for the self-financing sector. The EDB and the CSPE will continue to work closely with the HKCAAVQ, with a view to striking a balance between providing flexibility in the admission requirements of the self-financing institutions and ensuring the quality of programmes offered by the institutions.

(3) and (4) The EDB has been encouraging the self-financing post-secondary sector to operate programmes that meet community and industry needs. In fact, the self-financing post-secondary sector has sufficient flexibility in launching programmes to provide additional and complementary choices for post-secondary education in Hong Kong and enhance the diversity of our higher education sector as a whole.

The SSSDP not only encourages students to pursue self-financing programmes that nurture talent for designated industries with keen human resources needs, but also incentivises the self-financing institutions to respond to society's development needs swiftly by operating programmes that complement the manpower needs of the relevant industries. For instance, for allied health programmes at the degree level alone, the self-financing institutions have increased training places over the past few years to provide over 1 300 undergraduate places per year under the SSSDP to meet the needs of the sector. Apart from the allied health disciplines, some self-financing institutions have designed new and specialised programmes to groom talent to meet the needs of the community and emerging industries. Examples of such programmes are testing and certification, horticulture and landscape management, and culinary arts and management. Furthermore, the EDB and the CSPE will conduct suitable strategic coordination for the self-financing post-secondary sector to facilitate the provision of quality programmes by the self-financing institutions, with a view to enriching higher education in Hong Kong and better responding to our manpower needs.

Having considered the recommendations by the Task Force, the Government proposes to earmark \$1.26 billion to set up the Enhancement and Start-up Grant Scheme for Self-financing Post-secondary Education to step up our support for the self-financing post-secondary institutions. This Scheme aims to increase the non-recurrent financial support for the self-financing institutions by offering one-off grants to support the self-financing institutions in offering post-secondary programmes that meet Hong Kong's human resources needs but require high start-up costs, so as to help such programmes take off to nurture the talent needed by the community urgently. We also propose that the additional grants be utilised for enhancement measures (such as facilitating programme and faculty development) or campus facilities improvements, so as to enhance teaching and learning, thereby encouraging the self-financing post-secondary institutions to explore and establish their specialised and niche areas, or undertake projects that are conducive to the sustainable development of the higher education sector as a whole. The EDB will consult the LegCo Panel on Education in early 2020 on the

scheme and seek the LegCo's funding approval.

On the other hand, the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational and Professional Education and Training (VPET) set up in 2018 has been reviewing the promotion of VPET in Hong Kong. One of the tasks of this Task Force is to review how to foster closer collaboration between the industry and institutions to respond to Hong Kong's manpower needs. After considering the views collected during the public consultation period, the Task Force on Promotion of VPET is expected to complete the review and make specific recommendations to the Government in the first quarter of 2020.

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## [Transcript of remarks by S for S on jurisdiction of Eastern Artificial Island of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, at a media session at the Legislative Council Complex this morning (December 18):

Reporter: Mr Lee, why did the Government fail to tell the people that there would be temporary checkpoints in the middle of the bridge and as a result the Hong Konger who was supposed to go to Macao was sent to Mainland China?

Secretary for Security: First of all, I think everybody should understand what a jurisdiction really encompasses. In a jurisdiction which belongs to a particular place that means the law enforcement agencies can enforce the law within its jurisdiction according to the need and according to the actual circumstances. For security operations, it would be up to the responsible jurisdiction to make the operational plan and also the other arrangements which include letting people know how they would operate. In that principle, it would be up to the Zhuhai law enforcement agencies to make that announcement.

I think it is important for people to understand once you leave the jurisdiction of Hong Kong, then you will be subject to the law of the other jurisdiction. That is a lesson, that is a message, that is an important legal concept that I think people of Hong Kong must know, so that they will understand at what point they may be subject to which jurisdiction and what laws.

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

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## LCQ18: New railway projects and Tung Chung traffic

Following is a question by the Hon Holden Chow and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (December 18):

Question:

The Chief Executive stated in this year's Policy Address that the Government would expedite the implementation of the projects proposed in the Railway Development Strategy 2014, including the Tung Chung Line Extension, Tuen Mun South Extension and Northern Link, and would invite the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to commence the relevant detailed planning and design in the coming year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the time needed for MTRCL to carry out the detailed planning and design for the aforesaid projects, and when the authorities will give the public an account of the details of each of the new railway stations (including their locations as well as the arrangements for their entrances and exits);
- (2) of the estimated time needed for completing the relevant public consultation processes; and
- (3) given the continuous population growth in Tung Chung and the fact that it takes time to construct the Tung Chung Line Extension, whether the authorities will consider, prior to the commissioning of the Extension, enhancing the Green Minibus services in Tung Chung and introducing ferry services plying between Tung Chung and the Hong Kong and Kowloon regions, so as to meet Tung Chung residents' outbound transport needs?

Reply:

President,

My reply to Hon Holden Chow Ho-ding's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) The Transport and Housing Bureau had invited the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) to submit proposals for the implementation of the seven new railway projects under the Railway Development Strategy 2014. The MTRCL submitted proposals for the five railway projects of Tuen Mun South Extension, Northern Link (and Kwu Tung Station), East Kowloon Line, Tung Chung Line Extension and North Island Line to the Government successively.

Having examined the proposals submitted by the MTRCL and considered the

urgency of and the land development potential that may be brought about by these projects, the Chief Executive indicated in the 2019 Policy Address that the Government would invite the MTRCL to commence the detailed planning and design for the Tung Chung Line Extension, Tuen Mun South Extension and Northern Link in the coming year, so that work on these three railway projects can commence as early as possible.

The detailed planning and design stage would involve a number of activities, including consultation with the public and stakeholders and resolution of the comments received, carrying out feasibility study, site investigation, project design, gazettal of railway schemes and handling of objections, carrying out environmental impact assessment, seeking authorisation of the railway schemes, as well as preparation of relevant agreements with the MTRCL. In particular, the Government and MTRCL would need to handle technical issues associated with the new railway projects, such as the impact on nearby residents, the environment and ecology arising from the railway alignment and its mitigation measures, the interface with existing railway network, utilisation of resources, etc. When the details of a proposed scheme such as railway alignment as well as location of station(s) and entrance(s) are available, the Government will consult the public in line with established procedures. In respect of projects for which the MTRCL had submitted the proposals, the time required for the detailed planning and design stage is preliminarily estimated as three to five years, including the time allowed for public consultation, subject to the degree of complexities of the projects and the progress of implementing the above activities.

(3) At present, Tung Chung is served by a convenient, efficient and diversified public transport network. Apart from using the railway for travelling to and from various districts of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories, Tung Chung residents may also take franchised buses, ferries, green minibuses and taxis where appropriate to different destinations. In response to the population growth in Tung Chung, the Transport Department (TD) will continue to closely monitor the operation and service quality of the public transport services in Tung Chung, as well as the change in passengers' demand for the public transport services. The department will introduce new services or request relevant existing operators to enhance or optimise their services (e.g. increasing the frequency) in a timely manner in order to further improve the public transport network of Tung Chung and the overall efficiency to meet passengers' demand. Among others, the TD regularly reviews the utilisation of franchised bus service in different districts and works with the franchised bus companies for improving franchised bus service in districts by examining proposals submitted by the companies under the annual Route Planning Programme. These include proposals on introduction of new routes as well as adjustment of the existing service frequency, service hours and routes, in order to ensure the provision of adequate and proper franchised bus services to meet passengers' demand.

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## LCQ7: Administrative detention of Hong Kong residents on Mainland

Following is a question by the Dr Hon Kwok Ka-ki and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, in the Legislative Council today (December 18):

Question:

It has been reported that on August 8 this year, a Hong Kong resident then employed by the British Consulate-General in Hong Kong took a business trip to the Mainland, and was detained by Mainland law enforcement authorities on the same day. He alleged that during his detention, he was subjected to inhuman treatment. He was released after 15 days of administrative detention, and he is now seeking asylum in a third place. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) as the aforesaid person has said that Mainland law enforcement officers had claimed that they would report his case to his family members by sending a letter to the Interpol for onward transmission to the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) and then to his family members, whether HKPF have received such a letter; if so, of the reasons why HKPF have not passed on the letter to that person's family members; if not, whether HKPF will gain an understanding from the Mainland law enforcement authorities if the letter had been sent;
- (2) since the aforesaid person claimed that he was told that he would be taken back to the Mainland if he received media interviews and spoke publicly about anything other than the alleged offence that he had committed, of the measures in place to protect the personal liberty of that person upon his return to Hong Kong, and whether, after he was released by the Mainland law enforcement authorities, the Government has contacted him to offer any assistance that he may need;
- (3) whether the Government will gain an understanding from the Mainland law enforcement authorities in respect of the allegations made by the aforesaid person, and express unequivocal condemnations to the relevant authorities if the allegations were found to be substantiated;
- (4) whether it knows the number of Hong Kong residents who were subject to administrative detention on the Mainland in each of the past three years;
- (5) whether it knows the procedure to be followed by the Mainland law enforcement authorities for notifying the family members of a Hong Kong resident who is subject to administrative detention, as well as the number of times for which such procedure was followed by the relevant authorities in taking law enforcement actions, in each of the past three years;
- (6) of the reasons why administrative detention is not covered by the scope

of the current notification mechanism set up between HKPF and the Mainland law enforcement authorities; whether both parties will discuss the expansion of the scope of the notification mechanism to cover administrative detention; and

(7) whether it knows the number of Hong Kong residents currently employed by the various consulates-general in Hong Kong; of the measures to ensure that such persons have access to the assistance they need when they are subject to administrative detention on the Mainland?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government always attaches importance to cases in which Hong Kong residents are detained or imprisoned outside the territory. It also takes heed of their legal rights and strives to provide them with assistance. At the same time, any person must abide by local laws when they are outside Hong Kong. The HKSAR Government will not and also considers it inappropriate to interfere in the enforcement actions under the jurisdiction of any authorities outside Hong Kong.

When Hong Kong residents are detained or involved in criminal litigations or proceedings in the Mainland, the Immigration Department (ImmD) and/or Offices of the HKSAR Government in the Mainland will, depending on the circumstances of individual cases and the wishes of the assistance seekers (usually the family members of the Hong Kong residents concerned), inquire of the assistance seekers about details of the cases and explain to them the relevant legislation, regulations and criminal procedures in the Mainland; remind the assistance seekers to consider engaging lawyers in the Mainland to act as their legal representatives and give legal advice on their cases; and if necessary, provide information on the lawyers' associations in the Mainland. At the request of the assistance seekers, Offices of the HKSAR Government in the Mainland will also assist them in conveying their requests to the relevant Mainland authorities through the established mechanism as appropriate.

In respect of the alleged case cited in the question which was also reported by the media, the Mainland authorities have stated that the subject was in administrative detention for 15 days for soliciting prostitution in breach of the Law on Penalties for Administration of Public Security, and that during the period the Mainland authorities had in accordance with the law protected the various legal rights of the subject. Therefore, our reply to Dr Hon Kwok does not imply our acknowledgement of the allegations and details mentioned in the question.

Regarding the question raised by the Member, my reply after consultation with relevant departments is as follows:

(1) to (3) In respect of the case mentioned in the question, upon receipt of

request for assistance from the subject's family on August 9 this year, ImmD immediately inquired about and followed up the matter via the HKSAR Government's Economic and Trade Office in Guangdong, and provided appropriate assistance and advice according to his family's wishes. Meanwhile, the Police also received report from the subject's family and classified the case as missing person. In late August, the subject returned to Hong Kong upon release, and he has not raised further requests to the HKSAR Government for assistance. Other issues mentioned in the question are details of the case and we will not comment on them.

Law enforcement agencies outside Hong Kong, including those of the Mainland and overseas, do not have the authority to enforce laws in Hong Kong. If law enforcement officers of non-Hong Kong jurisdictions take law enforcement actions in Hong Kong, this will contravene Hong Kong laws. If there is any illegal act, the Police will handle in accordance with the law. Any person who is worried about his or her personal safety may contact the Police direct.

(4) to (7) Under the current reciprocal notification mechanism, the Mainland and the HKSAR should notify each other of the following two kinds of cases regarding residents of the other side: i) the imposition of criminal compulsory measures or institution of criminal prosecutions; and ii) unnatural deaths.

The Mainland authorities notify the HKSAR Government of criminal compulsory measures imposed on Hong Kong residents suspected of having committed crimes, including detention, arrest, putting on bail and residence under surveillance. From January to November this year, the Mainland authorities made 855 notifications concerning the imposition of compulsory measures on Hong Kong residents, involving 659 Hong Kong residents who were suspected of having committed crimes such as drug abuse, fraud and smuggling. After receiving notification from the Mainland, the HKSAR Government will inform the family members of the Hong Kong resident concerned as early as possible of the imposition of criminal compulsory measures on him or her in the Mainland, so that the person's family members may consider and decide whether to engage a local lawyer or to render other assistance to the person. They may also seek assistance from the HKSAR Government where necessary.

Cases of administrative detention commonly involve unlawful acts committed by the subjects concerned in the Mainland in breach of the Law on Penalties for Administration of Public Security. Such cases do not fall within the reciprocal notification mechanism. Despite this, the Mainland law enforcement agencies will notify the family members of the subject in accordance with the laws and regulations of the Mainland, although the subject may not want the case to be disclosed to his or her family members. In any event, upon receipt of requests for assistance from Hong Kong residents, ImmD and/or Offices of the HKSAR Government in the Mainland will provide appropriate assistance having regard to the circumstances of the cases and the wishes of the assistance seekers.

The Administration does not maintain the figures requested in the question.