

Hong Kong Customs College open days postponed

Due to the latest situation in various districts and the possibility of traffic disruption, the Customs and Excise Department today (November 27) announced that the Hong Kong Customs College open days originally scheduled for November 30 and December 1 will be postponed. Ticket holders should keep the admission tickets. The rescheduling arrangements will be announced on the department's website (www.customs.gov.hk) later.

LCQ21: Parking spaces for private cars

Following is a question by the Hon Jimmy Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, in the Legislative Council today (November 27):

Question:

The number of private cars in Hong Kong increased from 402 000 in 2006 to 626 000 in September 2019 (representing a 56 per cent increase). However, the ratio of parking spaces for private cars to such vehicles dropped from 1.51 in 2006 to 1.1 in 2019, reflecting that the shortage of car parking spaces has aggravated. Regarding parking spaces for private cars, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the numbers, projected for the coming three years, of new car parking spaces to be provided by the Government and private developers, and among such car parking spaces, the number of those for private cars (with a tabulated breakdown by District Council district);

(2) of the numbers, projected for the coming three years, of (i) public multi-storey car parks to be newly completed and commissioned, and the total number of car parking spaces to be provided therein, as well as (ii) government sites to be let by way of short-term tenancies for use as temporary car parks, and set out the location and the number of car parking spaces to be provided therein for each of such sites;

(3) whether, in order to alleviate the shortage of car parking spaces, it will expeditiously (i) amend the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines to raise the standards on the provision of parking spaces for private cars in housing development projects (e.g. changing the current standard of one car parking space per six to nine residential flats to one car parking space per four to five residential flats), and review the demand adjustment ratio, the accessibility adjustment ratio and the development intensity adjustment

ratio, as well as (ii) take measures to encourage developers to provide more car parking spaces, so that more parking spaces can be provided in newly completed housing development/redevelopment projects; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) given that the continued increase in size of the private cars manufactured in recent years has made it increasingly frequent that the body of a vehicle crosses the boundary lines of a car parking space and the space between vehicles parked adjacently is insufficient for the vehicle doors to be opened for boarding and alighting, whether the Government will review the size standard for parking spaces; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(5) as the Transport Department is taking forward pilot projects of automated parking systems involving six sites with a view to providing more car parking spaces, of the projected numbers of parking spaces to be provided by such projects in the coming three years?

Reply:

President,

The Government's current policy on the provision of parking spaces is to accord priority to considering and meeting the parking demand of commercial vehicles (CVs), and to provide an appropriate number of private car parking spaces if the overall development permits, but at the same time not to attract passengers to opt for private cars in lieu of public transport, so as to avoid aggravating the road traffic. The Government is pursuing a host of measures to increase parking spaces as appropriate, including following the principle of "single site, multiple uses" to provide public parking spaces in suitable "Government, Institution or Community" facilities and public open space projects, as well as taking forward pilot projects on automated parking systems (APSs).

My reply to the various parts of the Hon Jimmy Ng's question is as follows:

(1) and (2) The Transport Department (TD) has been closely monitoring the parking needs of different districts, and will continue to take forward various measures to increase the provision of parking spaces. Since the number and progress in the provision of new parking spaces through the various measures hinge on a host of factors, including the views of stakeholders as well as the progress of seeking funding approval for and the actual implementation of the works projects, etc, TD is not in a position to make a precise projection on the number of parking spaces to be provided in the coming three years.

As regards fee-paying car parks at government sites let by way of short-term tenancies (STTs), according to the Tender Forecast published by the Lands Department (last modified on October 8, 2019), the proposed sites to be let by way of STTs under the Abbreviated Tender System for use as fee-paying car parks from November 2019 to March 2020 and the numbers of parking spaces

involved under the respective District Lands Offices' purview are tabulated below:

District Lands Office	Proposed sites to be let by way of STTs under the Abbreviated Tender System for use as fee-paying car parks	Estimated number of parking spaces
Hong Kong East	1	176
Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing	7	1 342
Sha Tin	1	99
North	1	207

(3) TD is conducting a consultancy study on parking for CVs, which includes reviewing the respective standards on parking spaces and loading/unloading bays for CVs in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG). TD will also review, as part of the study, the guidelines on the provision of parking spaces for private cars in the HKPSG, with a view to updating the requirements for provision of private car parking spaces in housing developments, thereby increasing the number of private car parking spaces in future housing developments. We anticipate that after completion of the review, the revised guidelines will be promulgated in 2020. Prior to that, TD will also require developers to provide parking spaces at the higher end of the current parking standards under the HKPSG for new developments.

(4) TD is reviewing the parking space standards set out in the HKPSG, including the length, width and minimum headroom of parking spaces for different vehicle types. The review will take into account the prevailing dimensions of licensed vehicles and their distribution ratio. TD will make reference to the review results to decide whether it is necessary to update the existing standard dimensions of parking spaces.

(5) TD is taking forward six APS pilot projects so as to acquire and consolidate experience in building, operating and managing different types of APSs and the associated financial arrangements. This will pave the way for wider application of APSs in government and privately operated public car parks in future.

So far, TD has identified four sites for launching APS pilot projects, having regard to such criteria as parking demand, geographical environment, planning restrictions and impact on local traffic, etc. The identified sites include an STT site in Tsuen Wan, an open space at the junction of Yen Chow Street and Tung Chau Street in Sham Shui Po, the proposed government building on Chung Kong Road in Sheung Wan and the proposed government building on Sheung Mau Street in Chai Wan. For the STT site in Tsuen Wan, TD has already secured support from the Tsuen Wan District Council and it is expected that tender invitation for the site may take place in early 2020. As regards the pilot project in Sham Shui Po, TD is currently assessing the technical feasibility after securing support from the Sham Shui Po District Council. For the proposed government buildings in Sheung Wan and Chai Wan, TD

will consult relevant District Councils in due course. Subject to technical feasibility, the pilot projects in Tsuen Wan and Sham Shui Po are expected to provide about 70 and 200 additional parking spaces respectively. The numbers of parking spaces that could be provided under the pilot projects in Sheung Wan and Chai Wan are being assessed.

LCQ1: Oath-taking by civil servants

Following is a question by the Hon Regina Ip (Hon Yung Hoi-yan to ask on her behalf) and a reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, in the Legislative Council today (November 27):

Question:

At its meeting on November 4 this year, the Panel on Public Service of this Council passed a motion moved by me, urging the Chief Executive (CE) to issue an executive order under Article 48(4) of the Basic Law to require all civil servants to swear to uphold the Basic Law and swear allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (HKSAR). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether CE will exercise the executive powers conferred on her by Article 48(4) of the Basic Law, and formulate a policy and issue an executive order with reference to the Oaths and Declarations Ordinance to require all civil servants (including new appointees) to swear to uphold the Basic Law and swear allegiance to the HKSAR, so as to ensure that civil servants of all ranks and grades will work in solidarity towards common goals, and safeguard the core values of "one country, two systems", "Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong" and a high degree of autonomy?

Reply:

President,

The civil service is the backbone of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). It is responsible to the Chief Executive (CE). It supports the CE and the Government of the day in formulating, explaining and implementing policies; conducting administrative affairs; delivering public services; and undertaking law enforcement and regulatory functions. Article 99 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (the Basic Law) states that public servants must be dedicated to their duties and be responsible to the Government of the HKSAR. Civil servants, being a key component of the public service, have a constitutional role to give their best in serving the CE and the Government of the day.

According to the Civil Service Code (Code), civil servants must be law-

abiding, dedicated, impartial and politically neutral. Political neutrality means that civil servants shall serve the CE and the Government of the day with total loyalty and to the best of their ability, no matter what their own political beliefs are. They shall not allow their own personal political beliefs to determine or influence the discharge of their official duties and responsibilities. When civil servants express their views, they should ensure that their views would not give rise to any conflict of interest with their official duties or possibly be seen to compromise the important principle of maintaining impartiality and political neutrality when discharging their duties. All civil servants, regardless of rank, must observe the Code. The HKSAR Government will, in accordance with the established mechanism, seriously follow up any violations of regulations by civil servants.

At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Public Service on November 4, there were views that the recent arrest of some civil servants for participation in unlawful assemblies and the "disharmony" among members of the disciplined services when performing frontline duties showed that the 180 000-strong civil servants have not acted in concert.

At this difficult time of Hong Kong, I cannot agree more that the civil service should stand in solidarity and work together to end the chaos and violence as their priority task. It is thus deeply regrettable that some civil servants were arrested for suspected involvement in unlawful activities. This is especially so since these very few incidents have led people to cast doubt on the solidarity of the civil service in tackling the crisis, and by focusing on a few negative incidents, the community will easily ignore the hard work and effort of the 180 000-strong civil service. That said, I believe that our colleagues will not be disheartened, and instead, will continue to do their part and strive to help Hong Kong restore order as soon as possible.

I have stressed repeatedly that the Government adopts a zero-tolerance attitude towards civil servants who violate the law, and civil servants have been cautioned against taking part in any unlawful activities and actions. A civil servant arrested for participating in illegal activities would be interdicted in the public interest. Civil servants convicted of criminal offence would not only be penalised under the law; the Government would also take disciplinary action against them in accordance with the established mechanism without toleration.

Regarding the incidents of lack of coordination between individual officers of departments, the relevant departments had immediately issued joint statements to clarify and reiterate their continued support for and cooperation with each other. But I admit it is not desirable that there has been coverage about the incidents. I have reminded all departments that they must quickly respond to and handle misunderstandings involving departmental staff so as to avoid such from affecting public perception.

President, I entirely share the view that civil servants must uphold the Basic Law and be loyal to the HKSAR. Please allow me to emphasise once again that Article 99 of the Basic Law stipulates that public servants must be dedicated to their duties and be responsible to the HKSAR Government. The

Code also clearly requires that civil servants must serve the HKSAR Government with total loyalty, be committed to the rule of law and abide by the law, etc. Under the framework of the Basic Law and the Code, it has consistently been the duty of civil servants to uphold the Basic Law and be loyal to the HKSAR.

Under the Oaths and Declarations Ordinance, designated officers, including the CE, principal officials, judicial officers, etc., shall take the oath after their appointment. This requirement does not apply to civil servants and is consistent with Article 104 of the Basic Law.

Regarding the motion passed by the Panel on Public Service on November 4 as mentioned in the question, we have started to look into the issue and will report the progress to the Panel in due course as required.

Thank you, President.

LCQ9: Pharmacists practising in community pharmacies

Following is a question by the Hon Shiu Ka-fai and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (November 27):

Question:

Some representatives of the pharmacy trade and pharmacists have relayed to me that registered pharmacists practising in community pharmacies may perform an important function of enhancing primary healthcare services, thereby alleviating the burden on the public healthcare system. For example, they may provide members of the public with services such as drug consultation and inspection, guidance on proper medication, simple tests (measuring cholesterol, blood glucose and blood pressure levels), and advice on seeking medical treatment. On the other hand, the pharmaceutical trade has been fighting for over a decade for implementing in Hong Kong a system of separation of prescribing from dispensing of drugs (SPD) (i.e. doctors being responsible for disease diagnosis and prescription only while pharmacists for drug dispensing). However, the Government has not given any definite response so far. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that pharmacists are not included in the 10 types of healthcare professionals covered by the current Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme, whether the Government will include pharmacists in the Scheme to increase the options of primary healthcare services available to the elderly under the Scheme; if so, of the details and implementation timetable; if not, the

reasons for that;

(2) whether it studied, in the past three years, the functions that may be performed by registered pharmacists in primary healthcare services; if so, of the details; if not, whether it will conduct such a study expeditiously;

(3) given that at present, quite a number of places (e.g. the United States, the United Kingdom, Taiwan, Beijing and Macao) have implemented SPD, whether the Government will make reference to the relevant practices and implement SPD in Hong Kong expeditiously; if so, of the details and implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it has assessed the conditions that need to be met in order to achieve the dispensing of drugs in qualified community pharmacies to patients with prescriptions by doctors in public hospitals; whether it will launch a pilot scheme which adopts this drug dispensing method to ameliorate the manpower shortage problem in public hospitals and provide patients with an additional option; if so, of the details and implementation timetable of such a scheme; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Shiu Ka-fai is as follows:

(1) Currently, the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme (the Scheme) subsidises eligible Hong Kong elders aged 65 or above with an annual voucher amount of \$2,000 to use private primary healthcare services provided by 10 types of healthcare professionals, viz. medical practitioners, Chinese medicine practitioners, dentists, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, radiographers, medical laboratory technologists, chiropractors and optometrists with Part I registration under the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance (Cap. 359). Vouchers can be used for preventive, curative and rehabilitative services, including the treatment or services prescribed and provided by participating healthcare service providers in their professional capacity to meet the healthcare needs of elders after consultation, as well as the medication and healthcare products provided to elders during the course of treatment. Since the launch of the Scheme, the Government has stipulated that vouchers cannot be used for sole purchase of products such as medication or healthcare products in order to prevent abuse (e.g. purchase of product that is not used by the elder himself/ herself).

When considering whether to expand the types of healthcare service providers under the Scheme, the Government needs to take into account the services that can be provided by the newly added healthcare service providers in the community, the elders' needs for and receptiveness to the relevant services, the risk of abuse of the vouchers, and the views of different stakeholders, etc. As shown in the outcome of the review of the Scheme completed by the Department of Health earlier this year, the majority of

elders interviewed considered the coverage of healthcare services under the Scheme sufficient. We will keep on reviewing the operation of the Scheme, with a view to ensuring that the Scheme can continue to meet the Government's objective of enhancing primary healthcare services for the elderly.

(2) In a bid to shift the emphasis of the present healthcare system and mindset from treatment-oriented to prevention-focused, the Food and Health Bureau is now setting up District Health Centres (DHC) in all 18 districts across the territory for providing district-based primary healthcare services through medical-social collaboration and public-private partnership. The aim is to enhance the public's capability in self-management of health and provide support for the chronically ill.

Through the operator and engagement of private healthcare network, DHC provides primary, secondary and tertiary prevention services. The government-funded services in DHC, including health promotion, health assessment, chronic disease management and community rehabilitation, will be provided by a multidisciplinary team, comprising nurses, allied health professionals, pharmacists, social workers and supporting staff.

Pharmacists are one of the core members of DHC's multidisciplinary team. The first DHC in Kwai Tsing District commenced operation in September 2019. Currently, the Kwai Tsing DHC has engaged a full-time pharmacist to provide medication consultation services to the clients in order to maximise the benefit of drug treatment, reduce reliance and lower risk in the use of medicines. The pharmacist will also work with other professionals of the multidisciplinary team in health promotion and health education activities.

Taking into account the experience gained from the Kwai Tsing DHC, we will adopt an evidence-based approach to evaluate the effectiveness of DHC key services. Under the guidance of the Steering Committee on Primary Healthcare Development, we will review ways to further expand other primary healthcare services through DHC and the coordination between the professionals to align with the development of primary healthcare.

(3) and (4) Under the current arrangement in the public healthcare system, doctors are responsible for consultation and prescription, while pharmacists are responsible for the dispensing of drugs. In addition, patients have the right to ask their doctors at private clinics for a prescription and obtain the drugs from pharmacists in community pharmacies. However, if a comprehensive separation of prescribing from dispensing of drugs were to be mandated, it would have far-reaching implications on, amongst others, the current role of doctors in solo-practice, manpower demand for pharmacists and medical expenditure of the public. It would also involve a major shift in the health seeking behaviour of the public. The matter would require an extensive and thorough discussion by the community as a whole.

As regards the arrangement to allow dispensing of drugs in qualified community pharmacies to patients with prescriptions by doctors in public hospitals, it involves various considerations including legal responsibility, protection of patient privacy and resource allocation. Issues regarding the

supply, management and quality assurance of drugs, service certification, fee arrangement, and the division of responsibilities between community pharmacists and pharmacists of the Hospital Authority in the treatment of patients throughout the entire service process, etc. also require careful consideration.

We consider that any changes to be introduced should be conducive to the co-operation between doctors and pharmacists and that the well-being of patients should prevail. Before making any major changes, a consensus should be reached by members of the community. The Government will continue to listen to the views of all the stakeholders.

[Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected illicit cigarettes \(with photos\)](#)

â€‹Hong Kong Customs yesterday (November 26) seized about 680 000 suspected illicit cigarettes with an estimated market value of about \$1.8 million and a duty potential of about \$1.3 million at Lok Ma Chau Control Point.

Customs officers intercepted an incoming truck declared as carrying bricks at Lok Ma Chau Control Point yesterday. After inspection, Customs officers found the batch of suspected illicit cigarettes enclosed by bricks on six pallets.

During the operation, a 67-year-old male driver was arrested and the truck suspected to be in connection with the case was also detained.

Investigation is ongoing.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Members of the public may report any suspected illicit cigarette activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

