

Temporary closure of Jockey Club Yan Oi Tong Swimming Pool

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (July 17) that due to urgent maintenance work, Jockey Club Yan Oi Tong Swimming Pool in Tuen Mun District has been temporarily closed until further notice.

LCQ10: Hospital services in Kowloon Central Cluster

Following is a question by the Hon Starry Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, in the Legislative Council today (July 17):

Question:

It is learnt that the New Acute Hospital in Kai Tak (the New Acute Hospital) is expected to be completed in 2026, and will by then replace the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) as the leading hospital in the Kowloon Central Cluster (KCC), with most of the services at QEH to be gradually relocated to the New Acute Hospital. Under the "new for old" arrangement, no new general hospital is provided in the Cluster. On the other hand, it is learnt that while QEH is under KCC, its service recipients spread across the entire Kowloon (especially the Sham Shui Po District in the Kowloon West Cluster (KWC)) due to its prime geographical location and excellent transport accessibility. According to the information from the Hospital Authority, the elderly population in KCC and KWC has increased by about 40 per cent over the past 10 years, but the number of general beds has only increased by about 6.7% during the period, which has aroused concern as to whether relying on the New Acute Hospital alone can cope with the substantial increase in the elderly population. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as there are views that the arrangement for the gradual replacement of QEH by the New Acute Hospital in the provision of healthcare services will have significant impacts on the public, whether the authorities will draw up

comprehensive publicity and promotion plans to enable the public to have an early grasp of the arrangement concerned; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether it will consider redeveloping QEH into a major acute general hospital which provides 24-hour comprehensive healthcare services after the commissioning of the New Acute Hospital, so as to increase the overall healthcare service capacity of Kowloon; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will consider including in the second 10-year Hospital Development Plan the planning of an acute general hospital in KCC, so as to cope with the substantial increase in the elderly population and the huge demand for healthcare services in the Cluster; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Hospital Authority (HA), the reply to the question raised by the Hon Starry Lee is as follows:

(1) To dovetail with the implementation of the First Hospital Development Plan (HDP) by the HA, the services of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) will be relocated to the New Acute Hospital at Kai Tak Development Area (NAH) gradually starting from early 2026. Since 2023, the Kowloon Central Cluster (KCC) has commenced to brief the general public on the works progress and basic information of NAH via various channels, such as community activities, seminars and newsletters.

With the topping out of the Specialist Out-patient Clinic Block and the Oncology Block of the NAH, the KCC will, starting from the third quarter of 2024, brief various stakeholders in phases the progress of works, as well as the positioning of NAH as an acute hospital and the service arrangements after commissioning. The KCC will also regularly report to relevant District Councils (DCs) in Kowloon and invite stakeholders, including Legislative Council Members, DC Members and patient groups, to visit the mock-up site of the NAH at a later stage to further brief them on the design and service arrangements of the NAH.

To facilitate thorough understanding of the operation of the NAH by various stakeholders in the community, and exchanges of views about the services of the NAH, the KCC will form a community liaison group starting from the fourth quarter of 2024 and invite representatives of respective District Offices, DC Members and various stakeholders of the community to join the group. The KCC will keep the community abreast of the works progress and service arrangements of the NAH through reporting in regular meetings of the community liaison group.

Besides, the KCC will also enhance the community and in-hospital

publicity from the fourth quarter of 2024, through various public activities, exhibitions and seminars to facilitate the general public to acquire information and service arrangements of the NAH. Platforms such as social media and instant messaging groups will also be used to promote and broadcast relevant information of the NAH to the public. The HA has also established a thematic website for the NAH which provides details of the project, various facilities of the NAH and real-time images of the construction progress for the information of the general public.

As the commissioning of the NAH is approaching, the HA will announce the commencement dates of relevant services and the detailed arrangements of relocation and clinical services in a timely manner. Before the relocation, the clinical departments of the QEH will also provide relevant information, such as appointments and transportation arrangements, to the patients in detail. The KCC will continue to work closely with the media, DC Members, District Services and Community Care Teams and relevant government departments to publicise information about the relocation of the QEH and service arrangements of the NAH to the general public and deliver relevant information to the community and those in need.

(2) Upon the completion of the NAH, most of the clinical services of the QEH, including the accident and emergency (A&E) services, will be relocated to the NAH; while the Ambulatory Care Centre (Extension) of the QEH will remain at the King's Park site. Situated in Central Kowloon, the NAH will form a service network with the Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital, Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital and Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Wong Tai Sin Hospital in the Kowloon City District; the Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH), Kowloon Hospital and other hospitals in the KCC; and the Ambulatory Care Centre (Extension) of the QEH to provide comprehensive healthcare services to the residents of the community. In view of the commissioning of the NAH, the Government will gradually enhance the public transport and pedestrian accessibility to the NAH to provide convenience to the public.

In fact, as far as the KCC is concerned, based on the population of nearly 1.15 million in its service area, the number of general beds per 1 000 people in the cluster is 4.5 (excluding beds in the Hong Kong Children's Hospital), which is comparatively higher than HA's overall number of 3.2 general beds per 1 000 persons in the whole of Hong Kong.

The Health Bureau (HKB) and the HA are reviewing the Second HDP by taking into account the future planning of Hong Kong (including the latest developments of the Northern Metropolis), anticipated population distribution and projected healthcare service demand. After the relocation of clinical services from the QEH to the NAH, there will be room for development of healthcare services at the King's Park site where the QEH is currently located. Given the convenient geographical location of the QEH, it will be a feasible option to consider the expansion of the ambulatory care services based on the demand of the population in Kowloon. In view of the overall distribution of the healthcare services in the Kowloon Region, and there will be additional 520 beds and 10 operating theatres (OT) upon completion of redevelopment of KWH, especially that the gross floor area (GFA) of the A&E

department (including the emergency medicine (EM) ward) will be increased to about 6 500 square metres which is about thrice the area of the A&E department of KWH before, which could provide comprehensive A&E and inpatient services, therefore the priority of reprovisioning A&E services at the King's Park site will be relatively lower than other districts in Kowloon which currently do not have A&E services in the vicinity, such as the Wong Tai Sin district. The Government will consider the future use and development plan of the King's Park site in the course of reviewing the Second HDP.

(3) The HA plans and develops public healthcare services on a cluster basis, taking into account of a number of factors, including the overall planning of Hong Kong, the increase of service demand arising from population growth and demographic changes, rising prevalence of chronic diseases, technology advancement, manpower availability as well as the organisation of services of the clusters. The HA monitors the service utilisation and plans the public healthcare services according to the population projection parameters of various districts of Hong Kong and the development plans of the Government.

In view of the healthcare services demand of Kowloon, the HA is implementing various hospital development projects in the three Kowloon clusters under the two HDPs to cope with the healthcare services demand in Kowloon. Apart from the 2 400 beds and 37 OT to be provided by the NAH, which are more than the existing about 2 010 beds and 24 OT in QEH, the area of the A&E department of NAH (including the EM ward) at about 13 400 square metres is about thrice the current area of that of QEH, there will also be a total of around additional 2 100 beds and 15 OT to be provided under the First HDP in the three Kowloon clusters, through the redevelopment of KWH, Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital and Kwai Chung Hospital; and the expansion of United Christian Hospital, Haven of Hope Hospital and Lai King Building in Princess Margaret Hospital projects.

When planning A&E services, the HA will ensure that the A&E department is located within a reasonable distance from its catchment areas. In further planning the Second HDP, the HHB and the HA will continue to review the healthcare services development of the Kowloon Region, including the KCC. The Government's latest population statistics, projected service demand, and the clusters' healthcare service utilisation and demand will be considered during the process with a view to providing an optimal healthcare service model and facilities for meeting the long-term needs of the residents. Both the redevelopment or expansion of the existing hospitals in Kowloon and the construction of new hospitals subject to the availability of suitable sites are options that would be considered by the HHB and the HA to meet the demand.

After the completion of the review of the Second HDP, the Government will announce details of the hospital development projects, including those in the Kowloon Region, in due course.

DEP hosts exchange meeting for delegation from China National Environmental Monitoring Centre of Ministry of Ecology and Environment (with photos)

â€‹The Director of Environmental Protection, Dr Samuel Chui, hosted a technical exchange meeting for a delegation from the China National Environmental Monitoring Centre of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment this morning (July 17). The two sides discussed the Cooperation Arrangement on Technical Exchange on Environmental Monitoring signed last year to promote co-operation in areas such as the monitoring of environmental water quality, environmental air quality, ecology and new pollutants.

At the exchange meeting, Environmental Protection Department (EPD) officers and the delegation members had an in-depth discussion and technical exchange on environmental monitoring of surface water quality and new pollutants in the two places, covering monitoring standards and requirements, monitoring data network, related technology applications and the latest developments.

Dr Chui said, "The exchange meeting will strengthen the co-operation between the two places in areas such as environmental monitoring and assessment of surface waters, air, ecology, new pollutants, etc, monitoring standards and related technical requirements as well as applications of relevant smart technologies with a view to enhancing the capabilities of environmental monitoring and assessment in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and working together to better protect and enhance the environmental quality in the GBA."

In the afternoon, the delegation visited the Smart Command and Control Centre of the EPD and the Real-time Online River Water Quality Monitoring Station at Shing Mun River, Sha Tin, to understand about the application of advanced technology and smart enforcement in water quality monitoring and environmental protection in Hong Kong.

Moreover, the delegation visited the Smart Water Science Centre of the EPD yesterday (July 16) and shared experiences and exchanged views with the EPD officers on the application of water quality models and smart technologies in water quality management. They will visit the EPD's air quality monitoring facilities (including the Central Air Quality Monitoring Station and the Cape D'Aguilar Super Air Monitoring Station) tomorrow (July 18). They will visit the Mai Po Nature Reserve as arranged by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department on July 19.



Tender awarded for site in Sha Tin

The Lands Department announced today (July 17) that the tender for a site, Sha Tin Town Lot No. 623 at Yuen Shun Circuit, Siu Lek Yuen, Sha Tin, New Territories, has been awarded to the highest tenderer, Fair Opal Limited (parent company: Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited), on a 50-year land grant at a premium of \$619,000,000.

The tenderers, other than the successful tenderer, in alphabetical order, with the name of the parent company where provided by the tenderer in brackets, were:

- (1) Flylux Limited (China Merchants Land Limited);
- (2) Harbour Knight Investments Limited (Wheelock Properties Limited);
- (3) Keen Point Limited;
- (4) Make Glory Limited (Far East Consortium International Limited);
- (5) Sky Fly Development Limited (China Resources Land Limited);
- (6) Sunshine Strength Limited (Great Eagle Holdings Limited);
- (7) Top Global Investment Limited (China Overseas Land & Investment Limited);
- (8) United Victory Limited (Sino Land Company Limited);
- (9) Victory Rise Investments Limited (CK Asset Holdings Limited); and
- (10) Wise Guide Development Limited (CITIC Pacific Limited).

Sha Tin Town Lot No. 623 has a site area of about 2 425 square metres

and is designated for non-industrial (excluding godown, hotel and petrol filling station) purposes. The minimum gross floor area and the maximum gross floor area are 8 730 sq m and 14 550 sq m respectively. Both exclude the gross floor area of Government Accommodation, being a 60-place day care centre for the elderly, a centre for home care services for frail elderly persons and a lay-by, all to be constructed by the purchaser under the Conditions of Sale.

LCQ5: Flood prevention capacity in rural areas

Following is a question by the Hon Steven Ho and a reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (July 17):

Question:

It has been reported that the frequent occurrence of extreme weather conditions in recent years has caused severe flooding problems in rural areas, and a pig farm in Ta Kwu Ling was even hit by flooding twice in three years, resulting in heavy losses. I have learnt that one of the main causes of flooding in some rural areas last year was illegal land-filling of watercourses, and the laying of drainage channels on top of certain land-filling locations by the Government as a solution to the problem has led to a much lower drainage capacity of the watercourses concerned than the original design, rendering them unable to withstand extreme weather conditions and hence the frequent flooding. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the monthly numbers of flooding reports in rural areas and residents' expressions of views received by the Drainage Services Department in the past five years, with a breakdown by the 18 districts across the territory; whether it has reviewed if there is a need to update the flood protection standards for the drainage systems in rural areas;

(2) of the monthly number of complaints about illegal land-filling of watercourses in the 18 districts across the territory received by the authorities in the past five years, and the specific handling approach of such cases (including the average expenditure incurred in each case and the parties responsible for the costs); whether it will review the recovery plans for such cases to ensure that the drainage capacity of the watercourses concerned is restored to the original level; and

(3) of the number of instances where rural areas were hit by a "once-in-a-century" torrential rain or flooding in the past five years; the

Government's respective improvement measures in the four areas of planning and design of drainage facilities, disaster alert, emergency response capabilities, and disaster protection mechanism, so as to ensure that rural areas can cope with the rising trend of extreme weather conditions?

Reply:

President,

Regarding each part of the questions, my reply is as below:

(1) In the past five years (i.e. 2019 to June 2024), the Drainage Services Department (DSD) received 150 flooding reports in rural areas. The monthly flooding report figures by district are provided in Appendix.

The flood protection standards of main drainage channels in rural areas are generally based on a 50-year return period for design. The relative low population density and less economic and commercial activities in rural areas, striking a balance between the flooding risks involved and the corresponding social costs were considered. Such drainage design standard for rural areas is similar to those adopted in other advanced cities. Making reference to the report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change of the United Nations and the results of its relevant studies, and the rainfall data of heavy rainstorm in Hong Kong in September last year, the DSD updated the Stormwater Drainage Manual (SDM). In the updated SDM, the design rainfall intensity for 50-year return period, i.e. the design standard for the main drainage channels in rural areas, is increased from 128 millimetres per hour to 134 mm per hour, in order to enhance the design drainage capacity of new stormwater drainage systems in rural areas. On the other hand, the DSD is conducting a long-term study to assess the impact of climate change on Hong Kong's stormwater drainage systems till the end of the century. It is anticipated that the study will be completed in the fourth quarter this year.

(2) In the past five years, the DSD received a total of 39 cases of suspected illegal landfilling in watercourses, and had carried out investigation and follow-up actions on these cases. Reinstatement works at the watercourses for six cases that posed a higher potential flooding risk were completed. The remaining 33 cases were referred to relevant departments for follow-up actions. For those illegal landfilling cases, the Government would charge the relevant cost of watercourse reinstatement works to the persons concerned with the illegal landfilling works.

(3) In the past five years, there were two rainstorms in the rural areas with rainfall intensities larger than that of a "100-year return period".

The DSD has been adopting various strategies to upgrade the flood protection ability of the stormwater drainage systems. The flood prevention works in rural areas mainly involve river training works and village flood protection scheme. Over some 30 years in the past, the DSD completed a total length of over 100 kilometres river training works in rural areas, and implemented village flood protection schemes for 27 low-lying villages. Upon

the completion of the above drainage improvement works, widespread flooding situation in relevant areas has been significantly reduced.

In response to the new land planning and developments, the DSD has conducted the Drainage Master Plan Review Studies for the rural areas in phases and formulated and progressively commenced relevant drainage improvement works. Currently, three drainage improvement works in North District and Yuen Long District are in progress. In addition, the two drainage improvement works in Tai Po, Sha Tin and Sai Kung Districts are targeted for commencement this year after obtaining the funding approval from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council. Upon completion, the risk of flooding in the relevant rural areas will be greatly reduced.

In addition, the DSD keeps close liaison with the Hong Kong Observatory. For areas where flooding is anticipated to be caused by heavy rainstorm, the DSD will early deploy emergency teams for inspection. Currently, there are about 220 flooding prone locations, of which more than half are in rural areas.

The DSD also proactively applied innovative technology by making use of approximately 320 remote flood control devices, most of them in rural areas, to collect rainfall, tidal level and water level data for real-time monitoring to ascertain whether the water level would exceed the alert level in order to take appropriate contingency measures, notify relevant departments and evacuate residents. The department has planned to conduct trial on artificial intelligence flood monitoring system in Yuen Long this year, analysing real-time street footage to assist early detection and response to flooding incidents.

In addition, the DSD has increased the number of emergency response teams and emergency support stations covering 18 districts in Hong Kong to support emergency operations.

The Development Bureau will integrate and allocate the contractors' resources in various public works departments, including labours, machines and equipment to ensure that sufficient resources could be flexibly deployed during emergency situations.