

LCQ7: Managing passenger flows at land boundary control points

Following is a question by Professor the Hon William Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Ms Mable Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 21):

Question:

It has been reported that during the Labour Day Golden Week holiday on May 2 when a large number of Mainland tourists visited Hong Kong, the mobile network and Wi-Fi system at MTR Lok Ma Chau Station were overwhelmed as a large number of passengers simultaneously used their mobile phones to scan QR code tickets to enter and leave via turnstiles, and thus a significant number of passengers were stranded. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has compiled statistics on the number of passengers stranded at Lok Ma Chau Station on May 2 due to the failure of the mobile network and station Wi-Fi system;

(2) as passengers were being stranded at Lok Ma Chau Station on May 2, whether the Government has communicated with relevant Mainland authorities to notify passengers who intended to enter Hong Kong via the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point that they should use alternative boundary control points (BCPs); given that Shenzhen Metro Line 4 is operated by the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL), whether the Government has urged MTRCL on the same day to immediately notify passengers travelling on Line 4 of the passenger stranding situation at Lok Ma Chau Station and called on them to cross the border via alternative BCPs;

(3) whether the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government has conducted drills with relevant Mainland authorities regarding unexpected incidents at BCPs and formulated various contingency plans; and

(4) whether simulation tests have been conducted at all BCPs to establish co-ordination mechanisms and joint response measures between the Mainland and Hong Kong for handling peak passenger flows and potential unexpected incidents (including emergency situations such as malfunctions of immigration systems, baggage and security screening system failures, and railway service disruptions); if so, of the time when such tests were conducted; if not, whether such tests will be conducted in the future?

Reply:

President,

The Golden Week holiday is the peak period of Mainland visitors visiting Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been maintaining close liaison with relevant organisations and parties to

prepare well for arrangements of boundary control points (BCPs), public transportation, crowd management, etc, with a view to ensuring the smooth operation of various aspects in receiving visitors and offering a high-quality experience to them. In view of this year's Labour Day Golden Week holiday, the MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) had made advance preparations by enhancing the train services for cross-boundary railways (including Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau Stations of the East Rail Line, and the Hong Kong West Kowloon High Speed Rail Station), as well as deploying additional staff and strengthening information dissemination. Meanwhile, the MTRCL maintained close liaison with relevant departments at the BCPs, so as to adjust train services in a timely manner according to the situation at the BCPs, and provide visitors with safe, reliable and convenient railway services.

In consultation with the Security Bureau, the Transport Department (TD) and the MTRCL, my consolidated reply to the question raised by Professor the Hon William Wong is as follows:

(1) As observed by the MTRCL, during this year's Labour Day Golden Week holiday, the number of visitors arriving in or exiting from Hong Kong via the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point using the MTR East Rail Line and the total patronage were slightly higher than those of the same period last year. On May 2 (Friday) this year, the peak arrival and departure periods for Mainland visitors were in the morning and evening respectively, during which an average of approximately 7 500 visitors entered and exited Lok Ma Chau Station per hour.

During the peak departure period in the evening, a relatively large number of passengers used their phones at the same time to activate QR codes at ticket gates, resulting in a sudden surge in mobile data demand within a short period of time; the pressure on the mobile network providers' provision of mobile data also intensified the passengers' demand for Wi-Fi capacity at the station. As a result of the overall overloading of mobile data and Wi-Fi networks, passengers needed longer time for connection to the network to retrieve the QR codes, leading to a higher passenger flow at the stations' entry/exit gates and concourse at certain periods of time. The MTRCL immediately took contingency measures in response to the actual situation, such as diverting passenger queues before the gates, adjusting the operation of individual escalators as appropriate to control the passenger flow, and intermittently allowing passengers to exit the gates without having to tap their cards from approximately 9.45pm to 10.30pm to divert passenger flow. Throughout this period, the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB) and the TD maintained close communication with the MTRCL and promptly urged the MTRCL to enhance services in all aspects to ensure the smooth and safe operation of the station in face of the large patronage.

To cope with the peak travelling period for visitors during the Labour Day Golden Week this year, the MTRCL anticipated that there would be an increase in demand for network data capacity by passengers. As such, arrangements were made before the Golden Week to increase the in-station Wi-Fi capacity for supplementary purpose to cater for the needs of passengers who require internet access but do not have mobile network data. In light of the situation that occurred on the evening of May 2, the MTRCL promptly

contacted mobile network providers in that same evening to immediately upgrade the mobile data capacity near BCPs as well as further increase the Wi-Fi capacity at Lok Ma Chau Station so as to facilitate the use of QR codes for passengers to take trains.

In response to the aforementioned situation, the TLB has requested the MTRCL to review its arrangements for future visitor peak periods based on the experience gained this time. The MTRCL will also enhance its publicity efforts on Mainland social media platforms to remind visitors to activate their QR codes for payment in advance, thereby reducing the time spent at the gates. In addition, the MTRCL will promote the use of mobile Octopus for tourists as another payment option that does not require internet connection. The MTRCL will further discuss with relevant parties on how to manage passenger flow more effectively and plan ahead to ensure that the peak passenger flow can be handled more smoothly in future.

(2) The Inter-departmental Joint Command Centre, comprising the Police, the Immigration Department, the Customs and Excise Department and relevant parties (including the MTRCL), was activated during the Labour Day Golden Week (i.e. from May 1 to 5, 2025) to monitor the real-time situations at various BCPs. The Joint Command Centre maintained close liaison with the Mainland port authorities through the established port hotlines and real-time notification mechanisms, and took timely contingency actions as necessary to ensure the smooth operation of the land control points.

In addition, relevant departments at BCPs continuously monitored real-time situations at the control points and maintained liaison with the corresponding Mainland port authorities, including immediate mutual notification of the passenger flow situation upon learning about the heavy network traffic at the MTR Lok Ma Chau Station on May 2 this year as well as implementation of appropriate crowd control and diversion measures to facilitate passenger flow and maintain order at the BCP.

(3) and (4) The HKSAR Government and relevant Mainland authorities have conducted incident drills at various BCPs from time to time, simulating emergencies such as fires, power supply failures, immigration system malfunctions and infectious disease incidents. These drills aim to formulate and practise contingency plans, strengthen co-ordination between departments and various parties and enhance overall response capabilities, thereby ensuring safety and order at BCPs in the event of unexpected incidents. Recent joint exercises include the flooding evacuation drill at the Express Rail Link West Kowloon Control Point in March 2025 and the joint exercise at the Lo Wu Control Point in October 2024 to simulate scenarios of power supply and system network incidents at the Hong Kong Port and contingency measures taken by relevant parties.

LCQ16: Commemorative activities for 80th anniversary of victory in War of Resistance

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Yung and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (May 21):

Question:

This year marks the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance, and Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao will also co-host the 15th National Games (15th NG) this year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that in its reply to my question on February 26 this year, the Government indicated that the Working Group on Patriotic Education would co-ordinate various policy bureaux and government departments in launching a series of commemorative activities for the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance, of the current progress of the Government's preparation for such activities; and

(2) whether it will consider combining the publicity work for the 15th NG and the commemorative activities for the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance to achieve a synergy effect, thereby creating a widespread atmosphere of affection for our country and Hong Kong?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the relevant bureaux, a consolidated reply in response to the questions raised by the Hon Chan Yung is as follows:

This year marks the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance as well as the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War. As mentioned in the reply in February this year, the Working Group on Patriotic Education led by the Chief Secretary for Administration has been co-ordinating the relevant bureaux and departments in launching a series of commemorative activities, and relevant preparations are progressing steadily. A diverse range of activities with rich content are under planning, including a memorial ceremony, thematic exhibitions, educational programmes for the public and students, enhancement of hiking trails and related tourism supporting facilities, as well as production of thematic videos for extensive promotion. Through such activities, we hope the members of the public would remember history and pay tribute to the martyrs. Specific examples include:

(1) The HKSAR Government will host a solemn official ceremony at the Hong Kong City Hall Memorial Garden on September 3, the Victory Day of the War of Resistance, to honour the occasion;

(2) The Home Affairs Department will provide funding and support to organisations for staging commemorative activities in the community, for instance, talks by veterans to recount their experiences during the War, and film shows about the War, with a view to deepening the understanding among members of the public about the historical events of the War on the Mainland and in Hong Kong, and fostering their sense of patriotism;

(3) The Hong Kong Museum of History of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) is working with the National Museum of China on co-organising a large-scale thematic exhibition; the Hong Kong Museum of the War of Resistance and Coastal Defence will jointly organise a thematic exhibition with the Guangdong Museum of Revolutionary History; and the LCSD will also organise a thematic talk "Reapproaching the Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong from interactive map, 1941-1945" and a book display "Days of War" at the Hong Kong Central Library, as well as book displays, photo exhibitions and thematic talks at public libraries in different districts. Besides, the LCSD is planning for an array of workshops, field trips, and film screenings, etc;

(4) The Education Bureau is planning a series of activities including an academic seminar on the 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance, a lecture on the historical contributions of the Hong Kong and Kowloon Independent Brigade of the East River Column, roving exhibitions at schools on the history of the War, a territory-wide comic creative competition for secondary school students on the theme of the War, and field study tours on the history of the War on the Mainland and in Hong Kong;

(5) Through the "HYAB Funding Scheme for Youth Exchange in the Mainland" in 2025-26, the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) provides funding to around 20 non-governmental organisations to organise youth exchange programmes with the theme of the 80th Anniversary of Victory in the War of Resistance, offering around 1 000 places. Also, the HYAB will co-ordinate the youth uniformed groups and non-governmental organisations in organising the relevant activities;

(6) The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) is enhancing the tourism supporting facilities of hiking trails with historical significance during the War, including the Lion Rock Historic Walk, Shing Mun War Relics Trail and Luk Keng War Relics Trail. The AFCD also installed interpretation panels at the Robin's Nest Country Park to introduce the war relics there and the contributions of nearby villagers during the War, and produced and broadcast videos on social media platforms to let the public learn about the war history in the Robin's Nest and Lin Ma Hang areas; and

(7) The Information Services Department is producing a mini drama themed "Commemorating the 80th Anniversary of Victory in the War of Resistance".

The specifics of the above activities are being worked out. We would

announce the details in due course. Apart from the abovementioned activities which are spearheaded by government bureaux/departments, we understand that many community groups or organisations also intend to organise commemorative activities in various forms.

Regarding the promotional plans for the 15th National Games (NG), the 12th National Games for Persons with Disabilities (NGD) and the 9th National Special Olympic Games (NSOG), the HKSAR Government has been launching territory-wide publicity and promotion campaigns through various channels to enhance awareness and interest in the 15th NG and the 12th NGD and 9th NSOG across different sectors of the community. The initiatives include conducting multi-channel publicity through traditional media, social media, city dress-up and roving exhibitions; organising community engagement and school promotion activities in collaboration with local organisations and schools; hosting featured events such as athlete exchanges and sports experience activities in partnering with sports organisations; and establishing a dedicated website and mobile apps for digital promotion.

The next stage of our promotional efforts is to translate awareness into action to welcome the NG, NGD and NSOG to be held at the end of this year. In addition to organising diversified activities, such as the 100-day countdown, torch relay, Sport For All Day, we will also enhance publicity and city dress-up to foster a welcoming atmosphere, boost enthusiasm and participation in the Games, and encourage all Hong Kong citizens and visitors to support the competitions and cheer for Hong Kong and national athletes.

The NG, NGD and NSOG will be co-hosted by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao for the first time, marking also Hong Kong's inaugural participation as a co-host. This collaboration has great significance in raising Hong Kong's profile for organising mega sports events, advancing the development of sports industry across the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and fostering stronger people-to-people bonds. Through various publicity efforts, we aim to raise public awareness that the Games represent a major important national event while showcasing Hong Kong's commitment as the host city, highlighting the seamless co-operation among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, and underscoring the professionalism in event organisation and the sportsmanship of the athletes – all of which serve to deepen the national pride of Hong Kong people. We have specifically recruited 2 000 youth group volunteers to further strengthen their sense of belonging to our country, promote people-to-people exchanges between Hong Kong and the Mainland, and cultivate the spirit of patriotism.

The 80th anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance and the NG, NGD and NSOG are an excellent entry point for promoting patriotic education. Winning the War of Resistance is a great victory of the national spirit with patriotism at its core. It is of great historical significance and is an essential component for patriotic education. On the other hand, the NG, NGD and NSOG together is a national mega sports event. The co-hosting of the event by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao would strengthen bonding among people, and is an excellent opportunity to disseminate the message of patriotism. The HKSAR Government will conduct the publicity work of the two events under the overarching theme of patriotic education, with a view to

promoting the messages of patriotism and cultivating a sense of belonging to the country among the public. Considering that the two events have their own distinctive meaning and focus in publicity, the HKSAR Government will launch targeted publicity on the two events at different points in time, and in an orderly manner, so as to ensure that the core message of the respective event will be fully delivered and the respective impact of the two events maximised, thereby enriching the patriotic education experience of the public.

LCQ22: Liquor duty

Following is a question by the Hon Jimmy Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, in the Legislative Council today (May 21):

Question:

The 2024 Policy Address announced the reduction of the duty rate for liquor. There are views pointing out that reduction of liquor duty will help promote liquor trading, and at the same time benefit industries such as catering, hotel, logistics, warehousing, auctioning, financial and professional services, arousing public concern about whether the Government will further reduce liquor duty. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has compiled statistics on the respective numbers of additional companies engaging in the liquor-related businesses and new jobs in the liquor-related industries after the reduction of liquor duty;

(2) as it has been reported that the Government will review in a timely manner whether liquor duty will be further reduced, of the details of the relevant work (including the estimated time required for the work and the staff establishment involved); and

(3) whether it will make reference to the successful experience of abolishing the duty on wine and study the complete abolition of liquor duty as early as possible; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the consolidated reply to the question raised by the Hon Jimmy Ng is as follows:

According to the results of the Quarterly Survey of Employment and Vacancies conducted by the C&SD, as of the end of 2024, the number of

establishments in alcoholic beverage-related industries (Note), covering liquor, wine, beer, etc., was around 2 130 with approximately 6 720 persons engaged, representing an increase of 110 establishments and a decrease of 270 persons respectively compared to the end of 2023. Nonetheless, the C&SD does not compile statistics broken down by type of alcoholic beverage. In fact, most companies selling alcoholic beverages also sell liquor and other alcoholic beverages at the same time, making it difficult to distinguish businesses specifically related to liquor.

Since the reduction of duty rate on high-end liquor until late April this year (i.e. a 6.5 month period), we note that the volume of duty-paid liquor imported (in litre) rose by more than 15 per cent as compared with the 6.5-month period before the reduction of duty rate, while its value went up significantly by nearly 60 per cent, reflecting that the two-tier system introduced by the Government is effective in boosting high-end liquor trading. Moreover, the trade grasped the opportunity brought about by the reduction of liquor duty and organised various kinds of wine and spirits fairs, in which the proportion of liquor on sale has evidently risen. Some liquor traders have also lowered the prices of liquors. The response of the market has been positive.

We understand that the trade welcomes the measure and considers it conducive to increasing business opportunities. Regarding the suggestion from some members of the trade that the Government should further reduce or even abolish the duty for liquor, we would like to reiterate that the purpose of lowering liquor duty is to encourage the trade and auctions of high-end liquor in Hong Kong, thereby giving impetus to the development of other high value-added sectors such as logistics and storage, tourism as well as high-end food and beverage consumption. At the same time, we are also mindful of the need to avoid increasing liquor consumption among the public as a result of reducing liquor duty, thereby leading to other problems.

When introducing the relevant measures, the Government has fully balanced different policy considerations such as promoting economic development, maintaining stable public finances and protecting public health. We will closely monitor the development of the liquor trade and review the effectiveness of the measures in a timely manner. Any further adjustments will require careful consideration of the impact on different aspects with prudent planning.

Note: Alcoholic beverage-related industries refer to manufacture of beer, manufacture of alcoholic beverage other than beer, export trading of alcoholic drinks, import for wholesale of alcoholic drinks, wholesale of alcoholic drinks, and retail sale of alcoholic beverages in specialised stores.

CHP reminds public on precautions against heat stroke during very hot weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (May 21) reminded members of the public, particularly those undertaking outdoor activities, to take heed of necessary measures against heat stroke and sunburn in very hot weather.

"The public should carry and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration while engaging in outdoor activities," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Those engaged in strenuous outdoor activities should avoid beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee and tea, as well as alcohol, as they speed up water loss through the urinary system," the spokesman explained.

"Infants and children, the elderly, pregnant women, those with chronic illnesses such as heart disease or high blood pressure, outdoor/manual workers, and individuals who are overweight are more vulnerable to heat stroke. They should pay special attention," the spokesman added.

The public should adopt the following precautions:

- Wear loose and light-coloured clothing to reduce heat absorption and facilitate sweat evaporation and heat dissipation;
- Avoid vigorous exercise and prolonged activities like hiking or trekking as heat, sweating and exhaustion can place additional demands on the physique;
- Perform outdoor activities in the morning or the late afternoon, if possible;
- For indoor activities, open all windows, use a fan or use air-conditioning to maintain good ventilation;
- Do not stay inside a parked vehicle; and
- Reschedule work to cooler times of the day if feasible. If working in a hot environment is inevitable, introduce shade in the workplace where practicable. Start work slowly and pick up the pace gradually. Move to a cool area for rest at regular intervals to allow the body to recuperate.

â€‹The public should also note the latest and the forecast Ultraviolet (UV) Index released by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). When the UV Index is high (6 or above):

- Minimise direct exposure of the skin and the eyes to sunlight;
- Apply a broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen product with a sun

protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 or higher when participating in outdoor activities. Reapply every two hours if you need to stay outdoors for a prolonged period, or after swimming, sweating or towelling off;

- While using DEET-containing insect repellents for personal protection against mosquito-borne diseases, apply sunscreen first, then insect repellent;
- Seek shade;
- Wear UV-blocking sunglasses;
- Wear long-sleeved and loose-fitting clothes; and
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat or use an umbrella.

â€œIf symptoms develop, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, shortness of breath or confusion, rest and seek help immediately, and seek medical advice as soon as possible.

â€œThe public may obtain more information from the DH's Health Education Infoline (2833 0111), [heat stroke](#) page and [UV radiation](#) page; the HKO's Dial-a-Weather (1878 200), latest [weather report and forecast](#), [UV Index](#) and weather information for [hiking and mountaineering](#); and [press releases](#) of the Labour Department on precautions against heat stroke for outdoor workers and their employers when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force.

Very Hot Weather Warning issued

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

The Hong Kong Observatory has issued the Very Hot Weather Warning.

To prevent heat stroke, avoid prolonged activities outdoors.

If engaged in outdoor work or activities, wear a wide-brimmed hat and light-coloured, loose-fitting clothes. Stay in shaded areas as much as possible.

Drink plenty of water, and avoid beverages containing caffeine or alcohol.

If you feel sick, consult a doctor right away.