

# LCQ1: Enhancing Leisure and Cultural Services Department's SmartPLAY system

Following is a question by the Hon Carmen Kan and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Raistlin Lau, in the Legislative Council today (June 18):

Question:

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)'s intelligent sports and recreation services booking and information system, SmartPLAY, which was developed at a cost of \$500 million, was launched in 2023. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of complaints it has received and investigated since the launch of SmartPLAY in relation to hirers profiting from touting their booked sessions for use of recreation and sports facilities (touting activities); among these cases, of the respective numbers of those being punished according to the LCSD's penalties, prosecuted according to the law, and convicted; whether it has examined the effectiveness of SmartPLAY in combating touting activities, including whether its anti-bot solution can effectively block plug-in programmes from snatching up booking sessions;
- (2) as some members of the public have reflected that the e-payment method for the LCSD venues allows non-hirers to pay venue hire charges, making it possible for touting agents to book the venues on others' behalf, whether there are any countermeasures in place; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; apart from the fact that minors may have their parents book recreation and sports facilities on their behalf, whether there are any other exceptional circumstances where third-party bookings are permitted; and
- (3) as there are views that the current approach to allocation of venues (e.g. grass soccer pitches) by ballot is more effective than the first-come, first-served approach in combating touting activities, whether the authorities will consider allocating all recreational and sports facilities by ballot; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) launched a brand new intelligent sports and recreation services booking information system named SmartPLAY in November 2023 to replace the old Leisure Link Computer Booking System. The SmartPLAY system is an integrated one-stop electronic service platform designed to facilitate the public in searching for and booking the sports and recreation facilities of the LCSD, as well as enrolling in various kinds of sports and recreation activities or competitions through the internet or mobile application. At present, the SmartPLAY system has 1.07

million registered users with 28 000 daily booking transactions on average.

My reply to the the Hon Carmen Kan's question is set out below:

(1) The LCSD has always paid close attention to unauthorised transfer or touting activities in relation to sports and recreation facilities, and adopted a multi-pronged approach to combat touting activities, including enhancing the booking system on an ongoing basis, imposing penalty arrangements, and stepping up inspections. At present, the SmartPLAY system includes the following functions to combat touting activities:

- (i) adopting real-name registration;
- (ii) allocating popular sports and recreation facilities by ballot in addition to the first-come, first-served allocation mechanism;
- (iii) requiring hirers to declare and undertake that they will be present during the use of relevant facilities and that the user permit will not be transferred by any means when booking and signing for facilities via the SmartPLAY system. Offenders may have committed an offence of fraud under the Theft Ordinance (Cap. 210) and be liable to imprisonment of up to 14 years upon conviction; and
- (iv) imposing restrictions to prohibit the booking of overlapping sessions of fee-charging or non-fee charging sports and recreation facilities.

In addition to enhancing the SmartPLAY system, the LCSD closely monitors information on touting and inspects venues from time to time, including conducting surprise inspections and requiring hirers to present identification documents to facilitate investigation and follow-up immediately as necessary. If a hirer is not present during the booked session, it will be counted as a breach. A hirer who has accumulated two breaches within 60 days will result in a 90-day ban on booking fee-charging sports and recreation facilities under the LCSD. Since the commissioning of the SmartPLAY system until May 2025, the LCSD has conducted over 890 000 random inspections, with more than 13 000 hirers being penalised for breaches, i.e. being suspended from booking the LCSD fee-charging sports and recreation facilities for 90 days. From November 2023 to May this year, the LCSD received a total of 435 complaints relating to touting activities. Upon investigation, the LCSD imposed penalties for 50 cases of breaches. The LCSD will continue to monitor the situation and consider imposing heavier penalties on repeated offenders.

Furthermore, the LCSD launched a joint operation with law enforcement agencies in July 2024 at tennis courts in Wan Chai District to combat touting and other illegal activities. Several individuals were arrested successfully. Some of the individuals had been prosecuted and convicted, and were sentenced to imprisonment of four months and six months respectively. Other cases are still under trial or being processed.

To effectively combat the abuse of computer programmes for booking sports and recreation facilities, a new generation of Web Application Firewall and anti-bot technology have been introduced in the SmartPLAY system to closely monitor users' log-in activities. SmartPLAY also employs artificial intelligence (AI) to oversee users' behaviour and network usage

for auto-defence, ensuring smooth operation of the system. When AI detects any abnormal operation (such as unusual log-in), the system will automatically intercept suspicious access. Moreover, the LCSD, in collaboration with the contractor, has been closely monitoring the operation of the system and adjusting its settings from time to time. More than five million log-in attempts by suspected bots were intercepted by the system during peak periods in early 2025. The LCSD and the contractor will continue to follow up and actively explore more solutions to prevent bot booking of sports and recreation facilities, thereby enhancing the booking experience of normal users.

(2) SmartPLAY is a one-stop electronic service platform that requires real-name registration. It enables the public to enquire about the sports and recreation facilities of the LCSD and make bookings anytime via the internet or mobile application with e-payment options. Owing to various circumstances (such as a lack of electronic payment tools or insufficient balances therein), individual users may not be able to use e-payment when booking facilities and require the assistance of others who are not hirers to make the payment and complete the process. Besides, parents of minors (aged under 18) may need to help manage their children's accounts for booking and payment. Therefore, the SmartPLAY system does not require the hirer and the payer to be the same person. That said, real-name registration of the hirer is required and the hirer must personally check in and be present to use the facilities.

(3) Currently, the LCSD allocates its sports and recreation facilities using two methods, namely on a first-come, first-served basis and balloting. To facilitate members of the public in planning their exercise schedule, the SmartPLAY system allows users to make seven-day advance bookings or on-the-spot hires of most of the sports and recreation facilities on a first-come, first-served basis. As for balloting, although it is a fair mechanism, it requires users to make advance planning by submitting balloting applications within 14 to 20 days before the usage date. Applicants must also pay attention to the balloting results and payment deadlines. Since both allocation methods have their own merits and drawbacks, the LCSD has conducted a questionnaire survey to collect public views on the mechanisms for booking and allocating various sports and recreation facilities under its purview.

After considering the feedback from different users as well as reviewing the actual usage carefully, the LCSD currently only allocates sessions of popular turf soccer pitches by balloting, while other sports and recreation facilities continue to be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. The LCSD will continue to pay close attention to the usage of its various facilities and review relevant booking arrangements with a view to encouraging the general public to engage in regular exercise.

Thank you, President.

## **LCQ20: Carbon emission reduction**

Following is a question by the Hon Adrian Ho and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (June 18):

Question:

In October 2021, the Government announced Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050, which aims to reduce Hong Kong's carbon emissions by half from the 2005 level before 2035 and outlines four major decarbonisation strategies, namely net-zero electricity generation, energy saving and green buildings, green transport and waste reduction. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it will duly adjust its green policies in response to Hong Kong's actual carbon emissions in recent years to accelerate the overall pace of decarbonisation in Hong Kong and thus achieve its carbon reduction targets as scheduled;
- (2) of the respective performances of various government departments over the past five years in key carbon reduction measures, such as energy saving, emission reduction, consumption and carbon emission reduction, as well as green procurement; whether government departments have set carbon reduction targets and timetables for the series of policy measures implemented in recent years, including the establishment of the Green Technology and Finance Development Committee and the implementation of the Uncertificated Securities Market initiative;
- (3) as there are views that the broad participation of businesses in decarbonisation efforts is vital for Hong Kong to achieve carbon neutrality, how many businesses and organisations have, as of May this year, joined the "Green Hong Kong Carbon Audit" campaign by signing the Carbon Reduction Charter and agreeing to undertake and implement activities in support of reducing greenhouse gas emissions; whether it has assessed the effectiveness of the participating businesses and organisations in formulating and implementing carbon reduction measures;
- (4) as it is learnt that the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited established the Hong Kong International Carbon Market Council and subsequently launched an international carbon marketplace "Core Climate" in 2022, whether Government is aware of the current operational status of both the Council and Core Climate, as well as their respective effectiveness in promoting the implementation of decarbonisation measures among businesses in Hong Kong; and
- (5) given that green transport is one of the Government's decarbonisation

strategies, which includes achieving zero vehicular emissions and zero carbon emissions in the transport sector before 2050 through promoting the electrification of vehicles, and ceasing new registrations of fuel-propelled and hybrid private cars in or before 2035, whether the Government has assessed if the current progress of such efforts will enable the carbon reduction targets to be achieved on schedule?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the reply to the question raised by the Hon Adrian Ho is as follows:

(1) The Government has proposed four major decarbonisation strategies in the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050, namely net-zero electricity generation, energy saving and green buildings, green transport and waste reduction, to lead Hong Kong to halve its carbon emissions from the 2005 level by 2035, with a view to achieving carbon neutrality before 2050. With our efforts in recent years in these four decarbonisation strategies, Hong Kong is making steady progress towards the carbon reduction target of 2035.

Hong Kong's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have been on a downward trend after reaching its peak in 2014. With the gradual replacement of coal-fired power generation by natural gas and zero-carbon energy, the popularisation of electric vehicles, the reduction of municipal solid waste disposal, and the increased recovery and use of landfill gas for energy generation in Hong Kong, the total GHG emissions in 2023 were reduced by about 20 per cent from the 2005 level and about a quarter from the peak in 2014. The per capita GHG emissions in 2023 was 4.58 tonnes, which is a new low since 1990. It is nearly 30 per cent lower than those in 2005 and 2014, and is about a quarter of that of the United States and 60 per cent of that of the European Union.

Combating climate change is a long-term task. In line with the spirit of the Paris Agreement, we will review the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050 about every five years to update the strategies and targets for decarbonisation and other climate actions, and expect to release the review result in 2026.

(2) To enhance the performance of government departments in energy conservation and carbon emissions, the Government has promulgated relevant internal circulars and guidelines to require departments to perform well in the area of environmental protection in their daily operations. Specific measures include energy conservation, adoption of renewable energy (RE), waste reduction and recycling, installation of electric vehicle charging facilities, water conservation and recycling, procurement of green products and services, etc. with a view to reducing carbon emissions. These government circulars and guidelines cover environmental targets for government buildings, carbon emission management, preparation of environmental reports by government departments, as well as green procurement, etc.

The Government strives to improve the overall energy performance of government buildings and infrastructure by more than 6 per cent in 2024-25, compared to the 2018-19 baseline. To this end, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) has requested all bureaux and departments (B/Ds) to provide information on the energy consumption and RE of government buildings and facilities annually, and organised briefing sessions to discuss energy performance, and provides technical advice on energy-saving measures and planning of RE projects. As at 2022-23, the Government's overall energy performance has improved by about 5.3 per cent. While the data for 2023-24 is still being compiled, based on the recent trends in energy performance, the Government is confident that the target of over 6 per cent improvement can be achieved. The Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB) will continue to encourage all B/Ds to take measures to enhance energy performance and explore means to leverage innovative technologies to promote cost-effective solutions for improving energy efficiency in government buildings.

To assist government B/Ds in setting emission reduction targets and implementing emission reduction measures in a more scientific way, the Government promulgated the "Carbon Management in Government Buildings" circular in 2017 which requires all major government buildings to conduct regular carbon audits, the results of which should be disclosed to the public through the publication of annual environmental performance reports or other means.

Furthermore, the Government has conducted a three-year (from 2020-21 to 2022-23) energy-cum-carbon audit in about 250 government buildings, to review systematically the energy consumption equipment and systems in these buildings, collect and compile activity data on relevant emission sources to identify energy and carbon management opportunities. To further enhance the Government's carbon management efforts, we progressively extend the carbon audit practice to typical major government infrastructure, including water treatment works, sewage treatment facilities, fresh water and salt water pumping facilities, road lighting systems and ventilation systems at public transport interchanges, etc. The results of the carbon audits will not only help relevant B/Ds formulate carbon reduction strategies for the above infrastructure and similar facilities, but will also assist them in establishing a mechanism and guidelines for conducting carbon audits, which will in turn facilitate the carbon management efforts for other infrastructure in the future. The Buildings Energy Efficiency (Amendment) Bill 2025 was passed by the Legislative Council on June 11 and will come into full effect in September 2026. By then, most government buildings will be statutorily required to conduct regular energy audits. The EEB and the EMSD will provide technical support to various B/Ds to assist and encourage them to implement energy-saving opportunities identified in energy audits.

The Government has been adopting green procurement to implement environmental protection. The EEB has developed a green procurement list, setting out green specifications for the products and services commonly used by the Government, so that B/Ds may practise green procurement. In July 2021, the Government expanded the scope of green procurement by increasing the

number of products and services covered in the green procurement list from 150 items to 183 items, as well as updating the green specifications of each item. In 2024, B/Ds altogether procured green products and services with a total value of \$8.42 billion, which is an increase of about 19.3 per cent as compared to \$7.06 billion in 2023.

The Green Technology and Finance Development Committee (Committee) was established in June 2023 under the chairmanship of the Financial Secretary to assist in the formation of an action agenda for promoting the development of Hong Kong into an international green technology and financial centre. Members include representatives from relevant policy bureaux, departments and financial regulators, as well as non-official members from finance, technology, academic, professional services sectors, etc. The Committee's discussions cover promoting the development of a green technology ecosystem, green finance, green transport, green buildings, etc., as well as promoting and publicising Hong Kong's strengths in these areas. The Committee will continue to explore accelerating the development of green technology and green finance in Hong Kong across various areas.

In April this year, the Government implemented new arrangements to allow companies to adopt implied consent mechanism for disseminating corporate communication by publication on their websites, in order to promote paperless corporate communication for listed and unlisted Hong Kong companies, thereby improving cost-effectiveness and efficiency of companies and promoting a green business environment.

(3) The Government launched the "Green Hong Kong Carbon Audit" campaign with a view to encouraging organisations of various sectors to support greenhouse gas emission reduction activities. The participating organisations would, according to their respective situations, formulate and implement carbon reduction measures such as promoting carbon audits, establishing environmental management systems, and installing and replacing energy-efficient office equipment. Currently, over 140 organisations, including property management companies, universities, professional bodies, non-profit-making organisations and other business organisations, have joined the "Green Hong Kong Carbon Audit" campaign. In addition to raising the awareness of participating organisations in carbon reduction and encouraging these organisations to conduct carbon audits and implement carbon reduction plans, the campaign also helps corporates prepare for addressing new climate-related disclosure requirements.

The Government launched in December last year the Roadmap on Sustainability Disclosure in Hong Kong (Roadmap), injecting new impetus into the carbon management work of large publicly accountable entities (PAEs) (including large listed issuers and non-listed financial institutions carrying a significant weight). As the first step, Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEX) has introduced new climate-related disclosures requirements (New Climate Requirements) which have been developed based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) S2 Climate-related Disclosures. The New Climate Requirements, covering, among others, mandating all listed issuers to disclose scope 1 and scope 2 GHG emissions, have been

implemented in phases starting from January 2025.

To assist and facilitate sustainability reporting by corporates and financial institutions in Hong Kong, the Green and Sustainable Finance Cross-Agency Steering Group (Steering Group), formed by relevant Government bureaux, financial regulators and HKEX, launched the "Climate and Environmental Risk Questionnaire" for non-listed companies/ small and medium enterprises (SMEs); and GHG emissions calculation and estimation tools in collaboration with the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Available for free public access on the Steering Group's website, these tools help SMEs manage their environmental footprint and encourage market participants to improve sustainable business practices.

(4) HKEX launched the Hong Kong International Carbon Market Council (the Council) in July 2022, with members comprising Mainland, Hong Kong, and international corporates and financial institutions, to facilitate the development of an efficient and effective Hong Kong-based international carbon market with best-in-class market infrastructure, products and services, promoting the transition to a low-carbon economy in the region.

Subsequently, HKEX launched the Core Climate, an international carbon marketplace, in October in the same year, facilitating effective and transparent trading of carbon credits and instruments to support the global transition to Net Zero. It offers quality carbon credits from internationally-certified projects in Asia, South America and Africa, covering forestry, solar, wind and biomass initiatives. Core Climate is currently the only carbon marketplace that offers HKD and RMB settlement for the trading of international voluntary carbon credits. The platform's participant number reached 100 by end of 2024. Core Climate has facilitated carbon credit trading by various corporates through the provision of trustworthy settlement services, enhancing efficiency and mitigating risks, including Cathay Pacific Airways Limited's settlement of 50 000 tonnes of voluntary carbon credits in December last year, fully demonstrating the important role of Core Climate in supporting corporates on their climate transition journey.

The Government will continue to work closely with the financial regulators and stakeholders to collaboratively enhance the carbon market ecosystem, expand related products and services, and optimise trading mechanisms and infrastructure to promote the orderly and healthy development of the carbon market, contributing to the decarbonisation targets of Hong Kong, our country, as well as the world.

(5) The Government is committed to promoting the use of electric vehicles (EV). The Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles announced in March 2021 covers policy directions and targets in various areas in promoting the adoption of new energy transport technologies, so as to guide Hong Kong towards zero vehicular emissions before 2050. In recent years, Hong Kong has achieved remarkable results in the popularisation of EV. The number of EV was eightfold from about 14 000 five years ago to about 110 000 at the end of last year. Currently, about seven out of every ten newly registered

private cars are electric private cars (e-PC), and the proportion is among the highest in the world, with a good growth momentum.

Charging network is critical to the popularisation of EV. As of March 2025, Hong Kong had nearly 100 000 parking spaces equipped with charging infrastructure. There are 11 180 public charging facilities, of which about 2 000 are quick or fast charging facilities. We will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach to increase charging facilities, including (i) tightening the exemption measure for calculating the gross floor area of buildings to encourage parking spaces in new private buildings to be equipped with charging infrastructure; and (ii) launching the \$3.5 billion "EV-charging at Home Subsidy Scheme" to assist existing private residential buildings and housing estate car parks to install EV charging infrastructure. It is estimated that by mid-2027, more than 200 000 parking spaces in private buildings will be equipped with charging infrastructure.

In terms of public charging facilities, the Government's Green Transformation Roadmap of Public Buses and Taxis published at the end of last year listed a number of measures to continue to expand the public charging network, including converting petrol filling stations into fast charging stations or adding fast chargers, and opening up chargers in bus depots, etc. The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address also announced the launch of a \$300 million incentive scheme, with the target to provide and put into service 3 000 fast chargers from 2026 to the end of 2028 to support about 160 000 EV. It is expected that the incentive scheme will be launched and start to receive applications in the coming one to two months.

Furthermore, EEB has set up an interdepartmental working group to coordinate and resolve difficulties encountered by various parties in setting up charging facilities.

Through the above measures, we are confident that Hong Kong's increasingly complete charging network will further promote vehicle electrification and ultimately achieve the relevant carbon reduction goals.

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## **LCQ9: Holding of large-scale concerts**

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Kennedy Wong and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Miss Rosanna Law, in the Legislative Council today (June 18):

Question:

It is learnt that a number of large-scale concerts have been held recently at the Kai Tak Sports Park (KTSP), the AsiaWorld-Expo, the Hong Kong Coliseum and the Queen Elizabeth Stadium respectively, attracting tens of

thousands of local and overseas "fans", and large-scale music events will also be held at the KTSP's Main Stadium one after another. Some commercial tenants in Kai Tak have pointed out that their sales volume surged by three times on the days of the aforesaid concerts, while the business of some catering establishments in Kowloon City District also increased by more than 30 per cent. On the other hand, there were cases in which a large number of Mainland fans had to wait for a long time before they could cross the border via the Huanggang Port after the aforesaid concerts. In this connection, will the authorities concerned inform this Council:

- (1) in view of the successive holding of large-scale music events and concerts as mega events, whether the Government has established a regular inter-departmental collaboration mechanism to assess and make preparations before the holding of each of the large-scale activities concerned, as well as to make a summary afterwards and announce the situation in a timely manner; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (2) given that large-scale concerts were held at the AsiaWorld-Expo and various sports venues before and after the opening of the KTSP, whether the Government has compiled statistics on the attendances of such concerts and, among them, the respective ratios of local, overseas and Mainland audiences; and
- (3) whether the Government has assessed the economic benefits in promoting the growth of the hotel, catering, retail and transportation industries, etc, as well as creating job opportunities and so on during the aforesaid large-scale concerts; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Pop concerts brings substantial economic benefits and employment opportunities, creates a positive atmosphere in society and stimulates local consumption. The Government welcomes commercial organisations to hold concerts of singers and groups of Hong Kong and other places in the city. With its official commissioning in March, the Kai Tak Sports Park (KTSP) provides Hong Kong with the largest and state-of-the-art venues, and quickly becomes a new hub for hosting major international sports and entertainment events.

In consultation with the Transport and Logistics Bureau and the Security Bureau, my reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Kennedy Wong is as follows:

- (1) To offer a pleasant experience to residents and tourists participating in large-scale pop concerts, relevant departments and organisations, for example the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Transport Department (TD), event organisers, venue management, public transport operators, maintains close liaison to discuss the detailed arrangements for every large-scale pop concert. Those arrangements include

conducting risk assessments, deploying manpower, formulating and implementing comprehensive plans for crowd control, information dissemination, traffic diversion and control point arrangements, with a view to ensuring that the events will take place in a safe and orderly manner with well-prepared contingency plans for any unforeseen circumstances.

For the KTSP, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau monitors and guides the Kai Tak Sports Park Limited (the operator) in the communication and collaboration with various government departments, event organisers, and public transport providers to implement different preparatory work. Based on factors such as the number of attendees, the nature, ending times, and ticketing situations of the concerts, we make corresponding arrangements as needed, such as arranging special bus routes, increasing frequency of the Mass Transit Railway services, and notifying border control points. The operator also issues press releases and publicises the latest event arrangements and venue rules on social media prior to large-scale pop concerts. After the concerts conclude, relevant departments and the operator consolidate their experience with a view to further optimising the operation of events and concerts in the future.

To facilitate the flow of passengers travelling through various boundary control points (BCPs) after large-scale events, relevant departments closely monitor the real-time situation of BCPs, make flexible deployment of manpower and operate additional counters and channels as necessary with a view to facilitating passenger and vehicular movements. Relevant departments also maintain close liaison with their Mainland counterparts to ensure smooth operations at BCPs.

Taking the traffic arrangements after the three concerts held at the KTSP, the AsiaWorld-Expo (AWE) and the Hong Kong Coliseum (HKG) on the evening of May 24 this year as an example, as it was expected that a considerable number of passengers would return to the Mainland via the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point after the concerts, the TD co-ordinated with the operators of cross-boundary coaches and Lok Ma Chau-Huanggang cross-boundary shuttle bus (Yellow Bus) in advance to increase the frequency of services to divert passengers. For the traffic arrangements at the KTSP, the number of cross-boundary coaches in service that night was double that of normal days, and about 3 300 passengers who had purchased tickets in advance were diverted within one hour after the concert ended; and after increasing the frequency of the Yellow Bus, it basically completed the transportation of all passengers from San Tin Terminus to Lok Ma Chau Control Point within one hour (from 00.00 to around 01.00).

(2) and (3) According to our estimates, more than 285 performance sessions of pop concerts with over 10 000 spectators would be held throughout 2024 and first half of 2025. As a ballpark, these concerts would attract over 3.9 million spectators, including over 1.4 million tourists, whose spending is estimated to be about HK\$3.4 billion, bringing a value add of about HK\$1.9 billion to the Hong Kong economy.

In 2024 and 2025 (as at May 31), the attendances of all pop concerts at

the Kai Tak Stadium and the Kai Tak Arena, the AWE, the HKC and the Queen Elizabeth Stadium (QES) are set out below:

Venue	Approximate Attendances of Pop Concerts	
	2024	2025 (as at May 31)
Kai Tak Stadium and Kai Tak Arena	Not applicable	590 000
AWE	950 000	221 000
HKC	873 000	275 000
QES	40 000	19 000

Since the official commissioning of the KTSP, various renowned international and Asian bands and singers have staged a total of 15 large-scale concerts at the Kai Tak Stadium and the Kai Tak Arena, with more than half of the spectators coming from the Mainland and overseas. For pop concerts at the AWE, spectators from the Mainland and overseas take up over 30 per cent of the attendances.

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## **LD to hold Youth Recruitment Day**

The Labour Department (LD) will hold the Youth Recruitment Day on June 20 for young people aged 15 to 29 with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below.

The recruitment event will be held at Southorn Stadium, Wan Chai. A total of 27 organisations from various industries, including transport, airline services, public services, retail, catering and property management, will participate in the recruitment event, offering full-time and part-time on-the-job training vacancies for young people.

The job vacancies cover a wide variety of positions that do not require relevant work experience, such as supervisor trainee, aircraft maintenance mechanic trainee, barista, cargo services officer, technical trainee, engineering technician and sales associate. Job seekers aged 15 to 29 with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below are welcome to submit applications on the spot and may be invited for on-site interviews.

The recruitment event also features career talks on the prospects and characteristics of different industries. Artist Cheung Tin-fu and billiard athlete Ng On-yeo have been invited to join the event to share their stories of pursuing career development, encouraging young people to pursue their

career goals with perseverance and determination. The session will be conducted in Cantonese. Priority admission will be given to the Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP) service targets due to limited seats.

Eligible young people can enrol in the YETP on the spot. Various service providers will assist them in selecting and enrolling in suitable training courses and provide advice on resume preparation and career consultation.

The recruitment event will be held from 11am to 5.30pm at Southorn Stadium, 111 Johnston Road, Wan Chai (near Wan Chai MTR Station Exit A3). Admission is free. The last admission time is 5pm. For details, please visit the YETP website at [www.yes.labour.gov.hk](http://www.yes.labour.gov.hk).

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## **LCQ11: Application fee and visa fee for talent admission schemes**

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Lo Wai-kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council today (June 18):

Question:

The Financial Secretary announced in the 2025-2026 Budget that an application fee of \$600 would be charged for various talent and capital investment admission schemes. The visa fee for approved applications would also increase based on the length of limit of stay of the visa/entry permit, rising from the original flat rate of \$230 to \$600 (not more than 180 days) or \$1,300 (181 days or more). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the number of persons charged a visa fee of \$230 by the Immigration Department for visa applications under various talent admission schemes over the past three years, with a breakdown by length of stay of the visa/entry permit (i.e. seven days or less, eight days to one month, two months to six months, and over six months);
- (2) whether it has estimated the respective numbers of persons who will pay \$600 and \$1,300 visa/entry permit issuance fees each year under the new fee structure, as well as the corresponding total amount of application and visa fees received by the Government accordingly; if it has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (3) as there are views that the new visa fee (with a limit of stay of not more than 180 days) together with the application fee, has actually increased from \$230 to \$1,200, which will greatly impact those coming to Hong Kong for

short-term work (e.g. musicians coming to Hong Kong to compose and perform music for Cantonese opera performances for one to two days), and it is not conducive to the implementation of the policy objectives on culture and tourism, such as the integrated development of culture and tourism in the Greater Bay Area, whether the authorities will consider waiving the relevant visa fees for persons coming to Hong Kong for short-term employment; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The various admission schemes for talents and capital investors (specified admission schemes) have been well received since their introduction or enhancement. In respect of talent admission schemes, the number of applications for first entry has grown from around 58 000 in 2022 to more than 221 000 in 2023 and around 208 000 in 2024, representing an increase of more than 250 per cent compared with 2022. Processing such applications involve substantial administrative resources. With reference to the fees charged for similar applications in overseas jurisdictions, the Government decided to, with effect from the day of the announcement of the 2025-26 Budget, introduce an application fee of \$600 for each of the applications under the specified admission schemes for entry, change of conditions of stay or extension of limit of stay (including principal and dependant applications); and the visa/entry permit fees for approved applications will be increased, based on the length of the limit of stay, from the original rate of \$230 to \$600 (with a limit of stay of 180 days or below) or \$1,300 (with a limit of stay of 181 days or more) to peg to their costs and reflect the "user pays" principle.

Our reply, in consultation with the Immigration Department (ImmD), to the Member's questions is as follows:

(1) and (3) At present, among the seven talent admission schemes, the validity period of the first approved visas/entry permits under the Top Talent Pass Scheme, the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme, the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates, the Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents, and the Technology Talent Admission Scheme is generally 24 months or above. For the employment-tied General Employment Policy (GEP) and the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals (ASMTP), the validity period of the applicants' approved visas/entry permits is generally determined by the validity period of their employment contracts, ranging from one day to 36 months.

In 2022-23, about 160 000 applications of different types under the various talent admission schemes were approved by the ImmD; and about 300 000 applications were approved in both 2023-24 and 2024-25. The ImmD does not maintain the other statistical breakdowns referred to in the question. However, based on the experience from day-to-day processing, more than half of the approved applications under the GEP and the ASMTP are related to short-term/one-off project-based employment, e.g. for conference and performance, with a limit of stay of 180 days or below. Taking into account

the relevant circumstances, the Government introduced two tiers of visa/entry permit issuance fee, which is set at \$600 for visa granted with a limit of stay of not more than 180 days, and \$1,300 for those with a limit of stay of 181 days or more. We consider that the fee levels are modest, and have balanced various considerations including the "user pays" principle and the impact on the applicants concerned. They are affordable to talent and capital investors targeted by the admission schemes. The numbers of applications and visas/entry permits issued under the specified admission schemes in the past few months are comparable to those in the same period last year, indicating that the new fee structure has not affected Hong Kong's attractiveness to outside talent.

(2) In considering the new fee structure, the Government, based on the relevant statistics from early 2023 to end August 2024, estimated that the annual caseload for the three financial years from 2025-26 to 2028-29 would be about 400 000 applications of different types under the specified admission schemes; approximately 340 000 visas/entry permits would be issued for a limit of stay of 181 days or more, while around 26 000 will be issued for a limit of stay of not more than 180 days. On this basis, the estimated annual revenue in the next three financial years arising from the new fee structure is around \$700 million, comprising about \$250 million of application fees and about \$450 million of visa/entry permit issuance fees.