

## LCQ10: Impacts of hot nights' weather conditions

Following is a question by the Hon Martin Liao and a written reply by the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, in the Legislative Council today (July 21):

Question:

The number of hot nights (i.e. the daily minimum temperature being equal to or higher than 28.0 degrees Celsius) in Hong Kong as recorded by the Hong Kong Observatory in recent years has been on the increase, with a record high of 50 hot nights recorded last year. In May this year, 14 hot nights and the longest duration of consecutive hot nights (i.e. six nights) were recorded, breaking the past records for May. A study conducted by scholars of a local university has found that the health threats posed to members of the public by the weather conditions of hot nights (especially consecutive hot nights) were greater than those by the weather conditions of hot days, with the grass roots living in crowded, poorly-ventilated sub-divided flats and residential units being most affected. The study has suggested improving the city's and indoor natural ventilation through urban planning and building design as a starting point, as well as adopting measures such as increasing the greenery ratio, with a view to mitigating the impacts of hot nights. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has collected the following statistics: the monthly numbers of hot nights recorded in each of the 18 District Council districts in the past three years; if so, of the details;

(2) whether it has studied the impacts of hot nights' weather conditions on the health and daily lives of members of the public (especially the grass roots); if so, of the details;

(3) whether targeted measures were taken in the past three years to mitigate the impacts of hot nights' weather conditions on members of the public (especially those living in districts most affected by hot nights as mentioned in the aforesaid study, i.e. Yau Tsim Mong, Tsuen Wan, Central and Sheung Wan, Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai); if so, of the details and effectiveness; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) (i) of the annual utilisation situations of the various temporary night heat shelters under the Home Affairs Department (HAD) (including the number of nights opened for service and the user-times in respect of each shelter), and (ii) whether the HAD received suggestions on improving the service concerned, as well as reviewed and improved the arrangements for service provision at these shelters, in the past three years; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Having consolidated the information provided by relevant policy bureaux and departments, including the Food and Health Bureau, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO), I would like to reply as follows:

(1) The average monthly and annual number of hot nights recorded by the HKO at the weather stations in various districts of Hong Kong from 2018 to 2020 are set out at the Annex. Generally speaking, hot nights in Hong Kong are more common between June and August, with more hot nights recorded at weather stations in urban areas (e.g. Tsim Sha Tsui) than those in rural areas (e.g. Ta Kwu Ling).

(2) In a very hot environment, the body temperature would rise and the bodily functions would regulate themselves to reduce body heat through, for example, more perspiration and faster respiration. However, when the environment becomes extremely hot and the thermoregulation cannot effectively cool down the body, heat exhaustion or even heat stroke will occur. Children, the elderly, people with chronic illnesses such as heart diseases or high blood pressure, and the obese are more vulnerable to heat stroke.

(3) The HKO issued 57, 53 and 67 Very Hot Weather Warnings in 2018, 2019 and 2020 respectively. The HKO will alert the public during very hot weather and provide relevant health advice, such as advising people staying indoors without air-conditioning to keep windows open as far as possible to ensure adequate ventilation. Furthermore, the HAD runs 19 air-conditioned temporary night heat shelters where drinking water is available and users could stay to take rest.

(4) In the past three years, the number of days on which temporary night heat shelters under the HAD were open and the usage of the shelters are as follows:

Year	2019	2020	2021 (as at July 11)
Number of days on which shelters were open	44	58	30
Number of users	7 371	6 880	3 170

The HAD reviews from time to time the arrangements for the opening of temporary night heat shelters to ensure that the needs of shelter users are met. The enhancement measures implemented in recent years include:

(i) starting from 2017, when the Very Hot Weather Warning is in force, the HAD will open the common areas of designated community halls/community centres during daytime to provide shelters for the people in need;

(ii) starting from 2017, disposable bed sheets have been provided for shelter users to further enhance the cleanliness and hygienic condition of mattresses and quilts in temporary night heat shelters; and

(iii) starting from 2018, four additional temporary night heat shelters have been set up in Wan Chai, Southern, Sai Kung and Islands Districts. Temporary night heat shelters are now provided in all 18 districts in Hong Kong to provide services for the people in need.

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## **Remote payment functions in “HKeMeter” mobile application resume service**

A spokesman for the Transport Department said today (July 21) that the remote payment functions in the "HKeMeter" mobile application, which were affected by a backend system problem, have now resumed service. For enquiries, motorists can contact the service hotline at 2332 3700.

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## **Appeal for information on missing man in Tsing Yi (with photo)**

Police today (July 21) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Tsing Yi.

Cheng Chi-fai, aged 28, went missing after he left a hotel on Tsing Yi Road yesterday morning (July 20). His family made a report to Police on the same day.

He is about 1.7 metres tall, 68 kilograms in weight and of medium build. He has a round face with yellow complexion and short black hair. He was last seen wearing a black short-sleeved T-shirt, black shorts and black sports shoes.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of New Territories South on 3661 1176 or 9320 5612 or email to [rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk](mailto:rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk), or contact any police station.



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## LCQ16: English proficiency of students

Following is a question by the Hon Starry Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (July 21):

Question:

An international language education institution conducted last year a survey on the English proficiency of adults around the world, the results of which showed that Hong Kong ranked the 33rd among the 100 countries and regions surveyed and the fifth in the Asia region. On the other hand, the Government has indicated that it is necessary for Hong Kong people to maintain excellent English proficiency in order to consolidate Hong Kong's status as a metropolis. Regarding the English proficiency of students, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it compared, in the past five years, the English proficiency of Hong Kong students with that of the students in other regions; if so, of the outcome; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) whether, in the past five years, it allocated additional resources to schools, strengthened training for teachers, assisted schools in enhancing the methods for teaching English, and implemented other measures, with a view to enhancing students' English proficiency; if so, of the details (including the expenditure involved); and

(3) whether it has evaluated the effectiveness of the various measures mentioned in (2); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

We reckon that the survey mentioned in the question is likely to be an English Proficiency Index test conducted by a commercial international language education institution. According to the information published online by the institution, the test-takers were those who were interested in learning English or keen to know his/her own English proficiency, and their participation was voluntary. Hence, the sampling of the test might not be comprehensive and could not represent the population of the entire region. Furthermore, as the test was administered only online, people who could not or did not use the Internet during the testing period were automatically excluded from the test. The median age of the test-takers was 26, and 20 per cent of the test-takers aged above 35. Therefore, the test did not reflect the English proficiency of students. In gist, the results of the Index test neither represented the English proficiency of students nor reliably reflected the English proficiency of the population of the participating regions. We should be cautious in interpreting the relevant figures and ranking.

Our reply to the question raised by the Hon Starry Lee is as follows:

(1) The Education Bureau (EDB) has been keeping track of the English proficiency of Hong Kong students through various channels, including large-scale assessments like the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examinations and the Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA). Since the inaugural HKDSE Examinations in 2012, at least 77 per cent of students attained Level 2 or above in the English language subject, meeting the requirements for applications of civil service posts and sub-degree programmes. The percentage of students attaining Level 3 or above, i.e. meeting the minimum requirement for admission to local 4-year undergraduate university programmes, increased from 50.1 per cent in 2012 to 55 per cent in 2020. Furthermore, the TSA, which is administered to students upon their completion of Primary 3, Primary 6 and Secondary 3 studies, provides objective, comprehensive and quality data. Concerning the basic competencies in the English language subject, primary and secondary students in Hong Kong performed steadily in the TSA in recent years. In the past few years (from 2014 to 2019), around 80 per cent of Primary 3 students attained the basic competencies in the English language subject every year. The relevant statistics for Primary 6 students also steadily reached 72 per cent; and that for Secondary 3 students stood at around 70 per cent every year. The above shows that students of the respective grades have sustained a steady performance all along. The EDB did not make comparisons on the English proficiency between local students and students in other regions.

(2) The EDB provides schools with recurrent resources every year and has implemented various measures with a view to enhancing the English proficiency of Hong Kong students. Furthermore, the Government set up the Language Fund (LF) in 1994 and injected a \$5 billion seed money to the LF in 2014 to

provide a steady stream of funding to facilitate the long term strategic planning and development of language education. In 1996, the Government also established the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR), which has been advising the Government on language education issues in general as well as the use of the LF. Through the use of the LF, SCOLAR has complemented the efforts of the Government and other advisory bodies as well as stakeholders by funding and implementing various measures to assist the people in Hong Kong, particularly students and working adults, and enhance the Chinese and English proficiency of people in Hong Kong (including students).

Concerning the support to schools, since 2004, the Task Force on Language Support under the EDB has been providing school-based support services on English language to primary and secondary schools to enhance teachers' professional knowledge and their teaching skills. Moreover, in order to enhance the teaching of English language, the "Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme" has been implemented in public-sector secondary and primary schools. NETs collaborate with local English language teachers to bring diversified teaching strategies and methods/beliefs, their professional experience and cultural literacy to local English language classrooms to enrich students' language learning experience and strengthen the English language learning environment. Also, in the 2017/18 school year, the EDB launched the "Grant Scheme on Promoting Effective English Language Learning in Primary Schools", which provides a one-off additional grant to primary schools to facilitate their development of school-based measures for further enhancing English language teaching.

Regarding the professional development of teachers, the EDB has continuously provided or commissioned universities and etc. to conduct professional development programmes for in-service teachers on the effective implementation of the English language curriculum and language across the curriculum. In addition, the "Scholarship for Prospective English Teachers" attracts individuals who are proficient in English to pursue relevant local bachelor degree programmes and/or teacher training programmes for the necessary qualifications to become English teachers upon graduation.

In order to arouse students' interest in learning English and to enhance their exposure to English language, the EDB has been organising or co-organising with different organisations various types of English language activities, such as English language video-making competitions; public speaking/debating competitions; and drama competitions, including the "English Sayings of Wisdom Creative Writing Competition" and "Poetry Remake Competition" held in the 2020/21 school year to promote language learning across the curriculum. The LF also sponsors various organisations to organise English language related activities in the community, such as theatre experiences and story-telling and writing workshops, so as to provide primary and secondary students with enjoyable English language learning experience and boost their confidence in using English.

Meanwhile, the EDB conducts on-going renewal of and optimises the curriculum. The EDB has reviewed the "CDC English Language Education Key

Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 – Secondary 6)" (the Guide) in 2017 and enriched the content by incorporating e-learning, information literacy, and reading/language across the curriculum in the Guide. The optimising measures of the Senior Secondary English language subject was also announced in April 2021.

In the past five years (i.e. from 2016-17 to 2020-21 financial years), the average total annual expenditure of the aforementioned support measures on English language education was about \$900 million.

(3) We conduct ongoing evaluations of the above-mentioned measures through various means, including curriculum development visits to and lesson observations in participating schools; inviting participants of the schemes to take part in questionnaire surveys and/or focus group interviews; holding quality assurance meetings with organisers of the schemes, and vetting the progress and final reports submitted by relevant organisations. All in all, positive feedback was received from schools/participants. They agreed that the schemes had helped teachers in devising teaching strategies that cater for the needs of their students so as to enhance students' English learning abilities and arouse their interest in learning English. As mentioned in reply (1) above, students' results in the English language subject of the HKDSE Examinations were overall satisfactory and their performance in the TSA was also steady.

The EDB will continue implementing various measures to enhance English language education with a view to raising students' English proficiency.

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## **LCQ14: Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect**

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Chun-ying and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, in the Legislative Council today (July 21):

Question:

In June last year, the authorities of the Mainland, Macao and Hong Kong made a joint announcement on the decision to implement a two-way cross-boundary wealth management connect pilot scheme in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, which would allow residents in the Greater Bay Area to carry out cross-boundary investment in wealth management products distributed by banks in the area. They also signed a memorandum of understanding earlier this year on matters such as the principles of supervisory co-operation involved. On May 6 this year, the People's Bank of China Guangzhou Branch issued the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

Cross-Boundary Wealth Management Connect Pilot Scheme implementation details (Consultation Paper) (Consultation Paper). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Consultation Paper has mentioned that Hong Kong and Macao investors carrying out businesses under the "Northbound Wealth Management Connect" should meet the relevant requirements set by the financial regulators in Hong Kong and Macao, whether the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) has drawn up the relevant requirements in this regard; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) as the Consultation Paper has mentioned that the investment products which may be purchased by Mainland investors under the "Southbound Wealth Management Connect" will be subject to the regulations set by the regulators in Hong Kong and Macao, whether HKMA has drawn up the regulations in this regard; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether HKMA has discussed with the Mainland authorities, in order to tie in with the implementation of the "Southbound Wealth Management Connect", allowing banks in Hong Kong to make enquiries, through the credit information system of the People's Bank of China, about the credit reports of those Mainland investors who intend to purchase investment products offered in Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The People's Bank of China, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the Monetary Authority of Macao jointly announced in June 2020 the decision to implement the two-way cross-boundary wealth management connect pilot scheme (Wealth Management Connect) in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) to allow residents in Hong Kong, Macao and nine Mainland cities of the GBA to carry out cross-boundary investment in wealth management products distributed by banks in the area to address the wealth management needs of the residents. Not only will Wealth Management Connect bring enormous business opportunities to the entire financial industry value chain and other professional services in Hong Kong, it will also promote the cross-boundary flow and use of Renminbi (RMB), reinforcing further Hong Kong's position as the global offshore RMB business hub and the international asset management centre. The regulators of the three places announced in early February this year that they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the principles of supervisory co-operation under Wealth Management Connect. In May, the Guangdong regulators promulgated the draft implementation guidelines for public consultation. The HKMA has been working closely with the relevant authorities of the three places on various preparation work with a view to expediting the implementation of the scheme.

My reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1)&(2) The HKMA has conducted several rounds of industry consultation in



drawing up the implementation details of Wealth Management Connect. The industry provided many constructive suggestions that have helped us draw up the scheme with a view to offering investors and the industry the necessary convenience while ensuring proper risk management. Our current proposal on the implementation arrangement for the Northbound investor eligibility and the Southbound wealth management product scope is as follows:

Northbound investor eligibility: Hong Kong residents who hold Hong Kong identity cards (including permanent and non-permanent residents) and are assessed by Hong Kong banks as not being vulnerable customers in accordance with the HKMA's circular of September 25, 2019 "Investor Protection Measures in respect of Investment, Insurance and Mandatory Provident Fund Products" (Note) can participate in the Northbound Scheme.

Southbound wealth management product scope: Considering the need for individual investors to gradually gain a better understanding of the wealth management products and market landscape across the boundary, we plan to include relatively low-risk and simple wealth management products at the initial stage of the implementation of the scheme. Therefore, structured products or products mainly involving derivatives (e.g. futures and options) will not be included in the scope of eligible products. We expect that at the initial stage, the Southbound Scheme will mainly cover deposits, low to medium-risk and non-complex bonds and Hong Kong domiciled funds authorised by the Securities and Futures Commission.

(3) Based on the current proposal of the implementation arrangement, Mainland investors' funds in their Hong Kong investment accounts should originate from their Mainland remittance accounts or be generated through investment gain under the Southbound Scheme. These funds can only be used to purchase eligible wealth management products under Wealth Management Connect and cannot be used for purposes such as pledging, or as leverage or guarantee. Therefore, we expect that Hong Kong banks do not need to obtain the credit conditions of Mainland investors for conducting due diligence and managing subsequent investment activities.

Note: Vulnerable customers (VCs) refer to customers who have lower ability to understand the risk and withstand the potential losses of an investment. In determining whether a customer is a VC, banks consider holistically the circumstances of a customer, including the level of financial sophistication (e.g. investment experience), the state of mind (e.g. ability to make investment decision) and the level of wealth.